The Assembly Project – Meeting-places in Northern Europe AD 400-1500 (TAP)

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Valorisation of thing sites, past and present:

The famous pre-historic thing site at Anundshögen, Sweden, which was used until the 15th century

The Heidelberger thing site, Germany, is one of the circa forty thing sites created during the period of National Socialism, and designed by the architect H. Alker
Part A - (CRP) A1.1 Concept and objectives of the CRP:

Research question: What was the role of assemblies (things) in the creation, consolidation and maintenance of collective identities, emergent polities and kingdoms in early medieval Northern European populations and communities? This project, via 3 interlocking strands of multi-disciplinary research addresses this fundamental question, key to our academic understanding of the emergence of nation states in early Historic Europe.

(1) The first strand examines assembly within the political development of kingdoms in Viking and early Historic Scandinavia and those areas colonised and settled by the Norse. This will be done by analyses of archaeological, historical, linguistic and geographical evidence from selected case studies: The historical core areas of Eastern and Western Norway (Vestlandet and Viken); medieval Denmark (Fyn and Skåne) (IP1); the Danelaw in England (IP2) and the areas of Norse settlement in Scotland and the Faeroe Islands (IP3 & 4). By comparing the establishment of administrative frameworks in Scandinavia with new systems established in colonised regions (inhabited and uninhabited); we will examine how authority was articulated in landscape terms by new and developing kings and kingdoms and how ideas of control and consensus were transferred and established.

(2) The second supporting strand focuses on systems of governance and assemblies in the British Isles and NW Europe. Research on archaeological and topographic attributes in the UK is advanced, but many areas/regions of the British Isles and Northern Europe remain unexplored. Integrated, comparative discussion has yet to occur. This strand will create for the first time, from disparate literature and unpublished data, a cohesive account of the development of administrative systems within early medieval Britain & Europe (IP1, 2, 3, 4), thus offering comparative and contextual data for strand 1 and a new state of the art understanding of administrative frameworks in early medieval Britain and Europe before, during and after Scandinavian settlement.

(3) Finally, in order to reflect critically upon assemblies within the Scandinavian core area of study and the areas of comparison, the third supporting strand comprises historiography of research on the ways in which assembly has been treated in past and present scholarship. Thing sites appear in the earliest topographical records from the 17th and 18th centuries and have been ascribed with hosting rational, non-religious, legal practices in pre-historic times. The thing sites were thus turned into significant pieces of evidence of older legal traditions, at the time when theologians and lawyers fought over the control over the legal institutions. This strand will assess how assemblies have formed a nucleus in pan-European perceptions in the period of the Enlightenment, and how this changed to romantic perceptions of past societies and claims on national identities in the 19th and 20th centuries.

A1.2 Progress beyond the state-of-the art:

The Assembly Project – Meeting-places in Northern Europe AD 400-1500 will address the development and strengthening of early historic European collectives, which lie at the centre of our current understanding of ‘Europe’. Identity is seen as a subjective construction, which is dynamic, negotiable and variable. Scholars of anthropology and sociology often define collective identities as ‘abstract communities’ (Bourdieu 1977, 1990; Hylland Eriksen 1993, 1996). From a historic and archaeological point of view, assembly sites and legislation play an active role in the creation and maintaining of such fellowships. The assembly as a means of early government and social control was central to ‘Germanic’ society, perhaps as early
as the first century AD (Church & Brodribb 1877). Most previous research on assembly sites has however focused on the written evidence and scholars between the 1920s and 40s produced lists of thing sites in various provinces on the basis of medieval documents. These works are useful, but provide little or no discussion on the exact location or features of thing sites (e.g. Bugge 1920; Turén 1939; Wilde 1931). With the rise of landscape archaeology some scholars (e.g. Brink 2004; Friðriksson 1994) have brought archaeological features into the centre of the discussion. These studies, however, include a very limited number of sites, and do not provide any overviews of the thing organisation. This is lacuna is what this CRP will address. It will link thing sites to 4 established areas of research: trade and economy (IP3), royal power (IP1), Christianisation (IP4) and modern theory on historiography and perception (IP2), and will therefore use established knowledge in new contexts, bringing novel methodical and theoretical insights. This project would move away from national perspectives, taking account of shared European traits and allowing evidence to be examined within the framework of societies that may have differed in religious orientation, but which shared the developing political and social geographies of emerging complex organisation and kingdom formation, thus opposing common preconceptions e.g. ‘Vikings’ v. ‘Anglo-Saxons’ and ‘pagans’ v. ‘Christians’.

A1.3 A short bibliography supporting the research case:
These are the most important works relating to the areas of research integrated into this CRP. Full references are found in the CRP bibliography below. For assembly specific research, see Barnwell and Mostert 2003; Bugge 1920; Helle 2001; Pantos and Semple 2004. Works on modern theory of historiography and perception, of which some deal particularly with assembly sites: Fischer-Lichte 2005; Goessler 1938; Iggers 1997; Lenzing 2005; Thomas 1996. In order to integrate assembly studies with research on royal power and state formation, see: Andrén 1983; Bassett 1989; Binding 1996; Iversen 2008a; Olausson 2000; Reynolds 1994; Skre 1998. For links between assemblies and trade/economy, the classic studies of Ellumers 1972, Hodges 1982 (1989), and also Curtin 1984 (1998), will be relevant. Newer perspectives are found in e.g. Pestell and Ulmschneider 2003 (with references). Finally, for Christianisation and its ‘enforcement’ into society (via assemblies), see: Fletcher 1997; Mayr-Harting 1991; Sanmark 2004; Yorke 2006.

A1.4 Work plan: the overall strategy
All participants will start working on 1 June 2010. At this point the main concern will be data collection and finalising all the details of the IPs and the CRP as a whole to make sure that everyone will be working in conjunction with each other and that no overlapping sets of data will be produced. Indeed great synergy effects are expected as all participants are concentrating on assemblies, albeit with different geographical and thematic focus. A joint online bibliography will be set up, which all participants will be able to access and also add information to. Here web links to online publications will be posted as well as digital versions of the participants’ own publications. This web page will be hosted by the Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo. Iversen will keep in regular contact (once a month, via skype, email, telephone) with the PIs to make sure all is progressing smoothly. The first of 4 planned workshop will take place in mid-April 2010 with all participants as well as invited advisors. After this initial meeting, research and work towards the publications will be in full flow.
The CRP has been designed to follow 6 milestones, when all participants will deliver a required publication to Iversen (Table 1). Milestones 1-3 concern papers from all IPs. Milestone 4 is the deadline for delivery of papers for the synthesis and milestones 5 and 6 are for the monographs (PhD students, Sanmark and synthesis). Milestones 1-4 occur before a workshop so that contributions can be discussed at the next meeting. Conference attendance is scheduled to take place shortly after the milestones in order for the PIs to present their new results to diverse audiences.

The CRP outputs are summarised in Table 2. In total there will be 12 articles, 6 monographs (including CRP synthesis), 12 conference presentations, 1 website (at the MCH) and an exhibition. In this way, the CRP publications and material will be made accessible to different audiences (academic and popular) in various media. 4-6 articles will be published by open access on the TAP webpage, in line with the recommendations of the ERC and EURAB. The remaining articles will appear in peer reviewed international journals.

A1.5 Research design and methodology: Research & scholarship on early medieval assembly and administration has until now taken place only at a national level and this issue, central to our understanding of the emergence of complex societal organisation and centralised control of widening power systems, has been studied in isolation, often from highly charged nationalistic standpoints. Within Ireland, for example, assembly and assembly sites have often formed the basis of arguments for a uniquely archaic and Iron Age system of sacral kingship and authority which can be linked into the Irish desire to
assert an historic rite to an independent identity; whilst in England, scholars have vied far more towards assembly and administrative frameworks lying at the heart of a protestant democratic ethos that of course underpinned the later development of parliament. This is not to dismiss all past research, the topic has come to the fore of widening debates on polities and political states in early medieval Europe, in recent years, several publications which have sought particularly to integrate debate and draw together a range of European scholarship on consensus, kingship, assembly and authority (Barnwell and Mostert 2003; Pantos and Semple 2004). Building on this platform of research excellence, this project seeks to move the debate away from both a national focus and a nationally comparative agenda. Instead the project will create a series of fora, which will allow cross-European comparative, critical evaluation of how and why systems of administration and administrative networks evolve in emergent complex societies. Research within countries has been overly generalised and introverted and localised and regionalised study within a broader European framework is therefore much needed, if we are to understand in detail how families and individuals articulated control over the landscape in the early historic era. Each component of the project will work therefore at a series of scales: local; regional; national and European and report back on all within the scheme of meetings and conferences. The outputs are designed not merely to juxtapose research from the contributing countries but to allow debate and dialogue and the formulation of integrated models, ideas and new research trajectories.

Through a strict methodological framework, the characteristics, localisation and function of assemblies can be analysed, as well as similarities and differences in time and space. The project will therefore move away from the national constraints of previous studies and produce comparable material, despite different research traditions and discursive practices. The main question will be studied through 4 themes that will throw new light on the assembly sites as physical and social phenomena.

(1) **Time.** Did the assemblies become more uniform over time? The different components of the sites (e.g. mounds, booths, ‘law rocks’) will be studied through visual analysis. Data will be collected from national sites and monuments records (SMRs) and older maps. Particularly interesting sites will be photographed and surveyed with a DGPS and/or scanned with LiDAR (e.g. for creation of 3D-models). The relationship between identified elements can be studied as ‘theatrical’ compositions. The assembly is one of the few physical locations still present today where rhetoric was practised. It was here that the lawmen read out the laws from memory. Rhetoric also formed part of the legal proceedings, which had to conform to a rigorous pattern, or the case would fail. The likeness between assemblies established at similar points in time (Sanmark and Semple 2008, Sanmark forthcoming a and b), suggests that the sites were rhetoric expressions of power in the landscape. Can differences and similarities between sites and areas illustrate presence and development of collective identities? Assemblies have been seen to have certain common features, although differences in time and space have also been identified, and a uniform model cannot be expected (Brink 2002; 2004, Sanmark and Semple 2008, forthcoming; Sanmark forthcoming a). Is a relative chronology of assembly possible? Can we distinguish developments over time by focussing on the siting and physical attributes of assembly locales (cf. Meaney 1995; Sanmark and Semple 2008)?

(2) **Space.** How were assemblies located within the secular administrative landscape (e.g. herred, skipreide, wapentakes)? A central question concerns the relationship between
the assembly sites and administrative boundaries, as a central location within a district may suggest a place lower down in the hierarchy, while a location on a boundary indicates a higher rank since the site may then have served more than 1 district (e.g. shire moot, law thing). Variations in boundary patterns may indicate presence of older assemblies. Another significant question concerns the location of the assemblies in relation to other monuments and landscape characteristics. This will be approached through analysis of the relationship of the 'intentional vicinity' of assembly sites to archaeological remains and landscape features, which will be tested by statistical analysis. Relevant data (assemblies, communication routes, churches etc) will be entered into a joint GIS, which will serve as the main analytical tool for all areas included. This data will be collected from on-line maps and SMRs. At the Museum of Cultural History all administrative boundaries within the study area have already been digitised. For England, hundred and wapentake boundaries are available for digitisation via Pantos 2002, and for Scotland via documents in the National Library in Edinburgh. Material for Denmark and the Low Countries is available online (HisGis). For the Faeroe Islands, material will be obtained from H Michelsen and S Arge (Faeroese National Museum).

(3) The social dimension. Written sources (e.g. charters, laws and sagas) will be utilised to determine who controlled the assemblies, which social groups and genders had access to the meetings and which did not? What was the role of widows and unmarried daughters? The next part will focus on how the formation of territories and assemblies related to each other. This will be approached through geographic methods, i.e. assemblies will be analysed in relation to property ownership and characteristics of the farm to which the assembly belonged. This data is available from taxation registers (e.g. Domesday Book, Skattematrikler). Attention will also be paid to the nature of burials, farms and place-names.

(4) Reception and Valorisation. How were assembly sites chosen and established? How have these sites contributed to collective identities? How have studies of law and administration affected our modern view of the development of the past and the transition from 'barbaric pagans' to 'civilised Christians'? These questions will be approached through historic and ethnographic methods. In the early modern topographical records, such as the Scottish Statistical Accounts and the 1743 Survey of the Danish Realm (incl. Norway, Iceland, the Faeroes), certain types of features were commonly identified as assemblies (e.g. 'court circles'), which now are known to have been unrelated to assemblies (Friðriksson 1994; Omland 2007). The origin of these ideas together the 18th to the 20th century valorisation of assemblies, such as the Thingspiel movement in 1930s Germany (Fischer-Lichte 2005), will be examined.

A2 - A2.1 Description of the CRP management structure and procedures: Iversen is the director of the MCH's Archaeology dept. He has substantial experience of management through his previous research projects and current position. His role is to manage the CRP and make sure that all IPs are achieving their targets at the specified time. He will also stimulate a good working environment and favourable conditions for research and cooperation. His department will be responsible for the administration of the CRP. Sanmark and Semple will also contribute to the review of the overall aims and the detailed planning of the project. At the 4 workshops all participants will present their work, followed by discussion and exchange of ideas. Information on new developments, publications, networks
TAP

will also be given, as well as fieldtrips to assembly sites. CRP management meetings are folded into these workshops thus reducing travel costs. As part of the quality control of publications, all manuscripts must be delivered for the mile stones (see Table 1) and will then be circulated within the group and subjected to critical discussion during workshops. Advisors will be invited, to provide feedback on presentations and give insights as to how TAP should proceed, and will be leading scholars in Europe from a range of disciplines, chosen according to the theme of each workshop:

- **Workshop 1.** Valorisation: modern history / Rhetoric: drama & literature
- **Workshop 2.** Territorialisation: geography / Migration of administrative frameworks: political sciences
- **Workshop 3.** Societal norms: social anthropology & sociology / Gendering: gender studies
- **Workshop 4.** Economic activity: history of economics / Collective identities: social anthropology

Participants in ongoing, related projects will also be invited (see A3.2).

All PIs will be responsible for managing their respective IPs and to arrange the workshop held at their home university together with the PL, but co-operation across IPs forms a crucial part of the CRP. Within IP1 Iversen is responsible for the research on state-formation processes and supervision of the PhD students. Sanmark was not part in the 1st Hera round, but was closely involved in its production and has many years experience of assembly research. Since August 2009, she works at the Centre for Nordic Studies in Orkney and would thus form an ideally based partner. She will be responsible for the work in Scotland and the N Atlantic. To redress the balance of the research staff, caused by the loss of the PDRA from round 1, a Durham PhD-student has been added. Semple will supervise this student, with Sanmark as external supervisor, and also research past and current scholarship. Mehler manages the research on economic aspects and will be responsible for fieldwork together with Sanmark. Mehler’s expertise will useful for the CRP’s PhD students.

**A2.2 Research, objectives, contributions:** All PIs have integrated roles in this CRP, drawing on their own expertise. Iversen has a strong track record on the growth of royal power/state formation. This goes back to his PhD (2008a), analysing the social landscape around royal manors. In his post-doc, focus shifted from a Norwegian to a European perspective, analysing data from AD 500-1400 (in press, 2009; 2008b; 2007b; 2005a). He has considerable experience of archaeological fieldwork, report writing and issues of heritage legislation (2007a; 2005b). For Sanmark and Semple, the archaeology of assembly in Britain and Scandinavia represents a key research area, represented by many publications (Sanmark 2006, forthcoming a and b; Sanmark and Semple 2008, forthcoming; Semple 2003, 2004, 2008, forthcoming) They are award holders of a British Academy Small Grant for a field project on monumentality of Swedish assemblies. Mehler’s research focuses on historical archaeology and she has considerable experience from fieldwork and research in Iceland, Shetland, the Faeroe Islands and Norway as well as project management. Her work now focuses on trade in the N Atlantic, from the Viking period to modern times and she has a strong track record of publications in this field (Gardiner & Mehler 2007; Mehler 2007; Mehler 2009).
Iversen’s objective is to connect the research on royal power and state formation to assembly sites, comparing different areas and providing the European background. His expertise lies in interpreting Norse written sources of various periods, combining them with older maps and archaeology, for detailed landscape analyses. Together with Sanmark he will be responsible for creating and maintaining the GIS, having worked with digital mapping for 10 years.

Semple will consolidate current understanding of assembly in Britain and produce a position statement thus offering a contextual basis from which to launch the independent regional and local studies. She will also see how assembly has been researched and valorised in differing countries and strands of scholarship. This will allow a more critically nuanced framework of knowledge within which to site the IPs. The studentship will move knowledge of assembly in the UK forward, to redress the imbalance of research focussed on Southern England and to explore changing political structures and colonisation.

Mehler focuses on economic aspects of assemblies in the N Atlantic, comparing sites from different countries and periods to investigate what that they mean for local societies and traders. Her research is interdisciplinary (archaeology and written sources) and for the first time these issues will be addressed on a cross-national basis. Her work will be carried out as a senior post-doc position (part time), including fieldwork and material studies in Iceland, Norway, Greenland, the Faeroes and Shetland, the latter 2 together with Sanmark. She will be drawing on her fieldwork experience, DGPS and LiDAR, and also previous studies of relevant material culture. Her collected data will go into the GIS of the whole CRP.

Sanmark will produce the first overarching interdisciplinary research on administrative organisation in areas of Norse settlement. The significance of assemblies for the functioning of society and the role of women in the assembly procedures will be analysed. She will carry out fieldwork in Shetland and the Faeroes (with Mehler) and survey 15 assembly sites in Scotland. Her expertise lies in her knowledge of written sources, research and fieldwork of assemblies in Scandinavia, Iceland and England, evidenced by her strong publication record.

A2.3 Description of consortium: The set-up, which stems from preliminary network meetings and Iversen’s research in Britain, will set up strong links between the institutions, which belong to the most highly regarded in their respective country and would therefore form a very strong cooperation, with great synergy effects. It would also strengthen links between universities and museums, tying different research traditions together.

The MCH is Norway’s largest archaeological museum, and has the necessary infrastructure to host large projects. It is currently aiming to be one of the leaders of Viking research and become a centre of excellence by 2013. The Archaeology Dept has 14 researchers and 6 PhD students, and is responsible for research and the museum collections. Regular seminars are held with invited speakers contributing to a vibrant research environment and community.

The Durham Archaeology Department was ranked the best in the UK in the Research Assessment Exercise 2008. It is considered a leading centre of excellence for medieval archaeology, with an international reputation for high-quality and wide-ranging research and supervisory expertise. It has a thriving community of postgraduates, close links with the Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies which facilitates cross-disciplinary events. The Dept is thus both an ideal collaborator and an ideal location for the PhD student.
The Dept of Prehistory and Historical Archaeology at Vienna is one of the cradles of research in this field in Europe. It has a practical focus on new scientific surveying and documentation techniques and the Aerial Archive has been elected as outstanding in Europe by the international Scientific Advisory Board. Attached to the department is the Vienna Institute of Archaeological Sciences carrying out and developing prospection techniques such as LiDAR and geophysics.

UHI Centre for Nordic Studies, based in Orkney and Shetland, was established in 2006 under the leadership of Dr Donna Heddle as a research and teaching unit. The CNS focuses on interdisciplinary study of the Northern Isles within a global context and thus provides a nexus for studies in this area. It is the only locative academic focus point for the study of Orkney and Shetland’s cultural history, and would therefore form an ideal partner for the TAP project. The CNS has 2 postgraduate programmes and an increasing body of PhD students, all contributing to a vibrant post-graduate community. The CNS also has strong links with the UHI Archaeology Dept in Orkney. Members of this Dept. are part of the THING sites network (see A3.2) are therefore keen to co-operate with the TAP project.

### TAP-theme (Key-word) (see A3.1)

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**Table 3 reflects the complementary character of the project**

All IPs have different emphasis and knowledge will be transferred between them, information on e.g. valorisation in one IP will be transferred to another IP that deals with this specifically. This form of exchange is an important part of the method. The Hera key-words (see A3.1) create the outline for the synthesis and the basis for the 4 workshops (Table 3).

### A3. A3.1 Relevance: This CRP will establish, for the first time, the archaeological diversity of assembly and administration in NW European societies. We will examine how these formed and changed and how differing social modes of organisation impacted and interacted with each other and therefore engage with one of the largest European and global current research themes: how complex societal organisation develops and what social mechanisms facilitate the transition from localised organisations and micro-polities to large-scale kingdoms and nation states. We will examine assemblies as long-term mechanisms of social organisation, territorialisation, as expressions of collective identities and facilitators of power and hierarchical control. By undertaking research at differing scales, from localised and intra-site to macro-level landscape survey, we will investigate assembly and assembly sites as active components in the following processes:

**Territorialisation:** How did assemblies fit within existing and emerging kingdoms? How were they used to consolidate territorial identities and mediate territorial control?

**Collective identities:** How were collective identities created and maintained through assemblies? How did assemblies strengthen and unify collective identities?
Societal norms and ‘othering’: How did the processes of assembly establish social categories and how did assemblies serve to integrate relationships between groups?

Migration of administrative frameworks: How were systems of administration planted in new areas? How did they impact on existing systems, and what changes took place?

Valorisation: How were assemblies chosen and established? How were they defined, monumentalised and changed across time? Were they spatially dynamic? Were they remembered and celebrated? How were they received in the long-term?

Rhetoric: Were assemblies created as rhetoric expressions in the landscape? Can they be perceived as arenas using the old and new as stages for political expression? Did different communities create different physical arenas and thus expressions of regionalised identities?

Economic activity involving differing ethnic and social groups: How were assembly sites used for commerce and trade? Within what networks where they established? How did they facilitate trade and interaction between differing social and ethnic groups?

Gendered power-structures: Were assemblies open to all of society? How were social taboos broken and under what circumstances? Which genders and social strata could access the assembly, and which were excluded?

A3.2 Expected outcomes: Despite the significance of the assembly institution for state formation, the locations of the assembly and the processes that took place there remain rather unexplored. The cross-national, comparative approach of this project has not previously been attempted (for comparison between England and Sweden: Sanmark & Semple 2008) and will provide a whole new view of the assembly institution. Early research in this field, although very interesting, consist of small-scale studies, which generally focus on a few well-known sites within the different geographical areas, seen from a national perspective. The methodological themes will make use of these previous publications, but will each bring new knowledge and development.

Time: The establishment of a relative chronology of sites, with the help of better visual data, will develop methods established by Sanmark and Semple (2008). Remaining ruins and ‘assembly fields’ have not previously been studied through LiDAR data, nor digitally mapped on a greater scale. This will highlight the significance of assembly sites as historic monuments. The majority of these sites remain outside the national SMRs, and the identification of these sites would therefore place them under heritage laws.

Space: Administrative boundaries have not yet been related to assemblies, which is striking as they were the focal points for the population of the districts. The hierarchy of sites, known from written sources, has not been observed in the archaeological material, apart from those at the top of the hierarchy. Here, local sites and collective forces will be examined for the first time. Another novel angle, is the role of assemblies in processes of territorialisation. We will establish how law and collective norms and values were established and enforced onto colonised/conquered areas. The consolidation of communities, centralisation of power and legislation is moreover a process currently relevant for the European Union. Also, by studying the mercantile/economic aspects of assembly sites it is hoped that future research of either trade or assembly in the North will pay attention to the fact that those actions are very often interwoven and influence each other.

The social dimension: Through written sources and property ownership studies, the sites can be analysed from a gender perspective and new views of power relations and assembly
access will be revealed. Past analyses of medieval law (Maurer 1878; Amira 1913; Kroeschell 1986) will thus be combined with recent archaeological developments.

Reception: There is no existing study of the historiography of assemblies and their role in early modern societies and current ideas of national identities and states. Comparative research also provides an opportunity to use theories and approaches prevalent in Scandinavian scholarship, but less accepted within English early medieval studies, particularly the acceptance of long-term trajectories for social and ritual practice encompassing the prehistoric to early historic eras. Assembly could thus be examined in terms of its longevity as a social practice, its possible duality with cultic or ritual concerns and its potential as a tool of emerging kingship in early proto-historic and historic societies.

We will form links to other groups working on similar themes, e.g. the newly funded project on Anglo-Saxon assemblies in southern England based at University College London. Another example is the European network THING sites. A shared hidden heritage aiming to see how assemblies can be presented to popular audiences. Sanmark will attend the network’s next conference in Iceland to report on new research, and has been invited to join the Orkney/Shetland part of the network. An exhibition for local community and tourists will be held in Orkney after fieldwork season 2, focussing on the role of assemblies in formation of local and national identities.

A3.3 Measures for the dissemination: Open access publishing will be used for 4-6 of the articles. The 5 monographs and synthesis will be published by selected publishers, such as Brill’s series The Northern World. North Europe and the Baltic c. 400-1700 AD. Peoples, Economies and Cultures. All PIs will give 3 papers at international conferences over the 3 years, such as the medieval congress at Leeds and the conference of the European Association of Archaeologists. At these events the results from the IPs and the CRP as a whole will be presented to international audiences. Mehler will in addition attend 2 conferences on economic history (without own paper). Sanmark and Semple have provisions for these conferences included in their positions and this item is therefore not included in their budgets. The PhD students will be able to get a certain amount for conference attendance from their departments.
IP 1. Creating kingdoms in the Middle Ages - rethinking the role of Assembly sites
Main responsible: Frode Iversen. This IP concerns strand 1 and 2 as outlined in A1.1

B1.1 Concept and objectives of the Individual Project 1

IP 1 will establish, via 8 case studies in 6 different countries, the role of the thing institution as a stimulus and propagator of supra-regional royal power systems in Northern Europe in the Middle Ages. Recent studies suggest similar tiered-systems of authority and power developed across Scandinavia and Northern Germany during the transitional stages between tribal organisation and early statehood and that the thing or assembly acted as a key constituent in expanding and consolidating these systems of governance. IP 1 thus addresses the core question of how assembly mechanisms, systems and sites facilitated increasing royal control over expanding kingdoms. This project interlocks with the multi-scalar national and regionally intensive studies IPs 2, 3 & 4, and offers an overarching study that seeks to model emergent complex power systems in proto-states in Northern Europe. IP1 will test the differing types of royal ownership in each country, focusing in particular on the two tiers of proto-governmental structures present by AD 1000-1050: the areas dominated by the king’s dynastic property (*bona patrimonium*), representing the ‘cradles’ of supra-regional power (Iversen forthcoming) and the areas with a high density of property and estates that belonged to royal office (*bona regalia*), which characterise provinces subordinated to extending royal power. The project will examine the emergence of this system of overlordship and the function of the thing as a progenitor and facilitator of developing complex systems of state. In each country a multi-scalar approach will be used to explore three phases of development: a primary dynastic or local elite system of control; its development into a more complex system of governance necessary for controlling larger areas and subordinate provinces; and finally in culmination the consolidated system of governance, necessary for the management of nation states, with highly organised local mechanisms and patterns of authority managed by a supra-regional royal power. IP1 will contribute to the CRP by answering the following research questions:

Collective identities: In what ways did the things on regional and national levels, in conjunction with expanding royal power, contribute to the creation of new collective identities? How were the things organized in royal core areas? Were the assemblies more systematically organized in subordinated areas? Can regional and local differences in organisation still be discerned?

Territorialisation: How did things facilitate the creation of petty power centres? How were systems of power extended over subordinate territories? What was the role and function of the thing in these processes? How central was the thing as an institution in the consolidation of proto-states? Did things retain regional and local authority despite functioning as supra-regional tools?

Migration of administrative frameworks: How was power extended in new areas of control? How were indigenous patterns of organization managed? How central was the thing in facilitating new systems of authority and overlordship? Were new systems of power syncretic? Did they adopt local and regional systems of authority and assembly sites or replace them?

Rhetoric
Rhetoric: Medieval laws and sagas demonstrate the role of rhetoric at assemblies, both for lawmen and thing participants. This power play will be studied in detail. Another important issue is the changing role of the lawmen over time, from ‘lawspeakers’ to royal servants.
The role of the thing sites as rhetoric expressions in the landscape and as statements by regional groups will also be addressed.

B1.2 Work plan IP 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task IP 1</th>
<th>Where</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper 1 Milestone 1</td>
<td>Stockholm/Gothenburg/Oslo</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper 2 Milestone 2</td>
<td>Cologne/Amsterdam/Oslo</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper 3 Milestone 3</td>
<td>Odense/Lund/Oslo</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper for synth. Milestone 4</td>
<td>Oslo</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>Oslo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRP work-shops</td>
<td>Oslo,Durham,Vienna,Orkney</td>
<td>Q</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editing synthesis</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervising PhD student</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>PhD courses</td>
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<td>PhD article 1</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>PhD article 2</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD monogr.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Work plan and detailed timeline for IP1 (per month/3 years). Grey shading: individual research tasks for the PL. Coloured shading: Common tasks for the PL and work plan for the two PhD students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IP 1</th>
<th>List of outputs</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Hours/month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual tasks for the PL 1</td>
<td>• 3 articles (Denmark, Sweden and Germany), 1 contribution to the synthesis</td>
<td>• 50% over 9 months (4,5)</td>
<td>5,5 month (793 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common tasks for the PL 1</td>
<td>• Administration (8 weeks)</td>
<td>• 5% over 3 years (2)</td>
<td>6,5 month (923 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Editing the synthesis</td>
<td>• 50% over 4 months (2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Administration Joint workshops</td>
<td>• 25% over 4 months (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Supervising PhD student 1 (180 hours = 5-6 weeks)</td>
<td>• Total 1,5 months over 3 years (1,5)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD 1</td>
<td>• 1 monograph</td>
<td>• 100% 3 years</td>
<td>36 months (5100 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 1 contribution to synthesis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 1 article (area 7, Western Norway)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD 2 (funded by AHKR, UiB)</td>
<td>• 1 monograph</td>
<td>• 100% 3 years</td>
<td>36 months (see B1.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 1 contribution to synthesis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 1 article (area 8, Eastern Norway)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. List of outputs IP1

B1.3 Research design and methodology

The transformation from petty to supra-regional kingdoms in northern Europe between the 8th and the 14th century has previously been seen as a teleological process that resulted in ‘nature-given’ planned national states. In this process the importance of personal alliances has been stressed, together with the establishment of monasteries and churches. It is now clear that state formation was a complex process, in which assembly sites must have played a crucial part. Another question not previously examined is the relationship between assemblies and royal manors and power centres. These matters will be addressed by IP 1.

This IP consists of three interlocking strands: (A) The European background (B) In depth analysis of one royal core area (C) In depth analysis of one subjected area. The PL's research on the European background will complement the two PhD projects that will contain detailed studies of two key areas in Norway:
In this work, Dr. Iversen will draw on his previous research carried out over the last 3 years, where he focussed in particular on how supra-regional royal power established solid administrative systems in new subordinated provinces and conquered kingdoms. IP 1 will examine the relationship between "the top down"- (royal manors) and the somewhat more "bottom up"-institutions (the thing sites) of these societies in areas with different degrees of lordship (strong/weak), discussing elements of stability and change in the organisation of the administrative landscape over time (area 1-6, Figure 1).

Studentship 1 (Years 1-3): The PhD student will study the development of the administrative landscape in western Norway (area 7, Figure 1). This part is today considered as the geographical starting point for the rise of a supra-regional kingdom in Norway in the 9th and 10th centuries (Krag 1991 and 1995, Bjørkvik 1999, Helle 2001).

Studentship 2 (Years 1-3). The PhD student will study the Viken-area, eastern Norway (area 8, Figure 1), which makes a particularly interesting case in the development of supra-regional royal power and state formation in Norway. This survey will take place on two levels; (1) examining the assembly places on a regional level and (2) make a detailed study of 5-10 identified assembly places.

How to do it: IP1 will test and make use of the multi-scalar approach presented above and thus examine differences in how the thing institution was organised/re-organised in (1) expansion areas (with a high proportion of bona regalia) and (2) royal core areas (with bona patrimonium). Comparing their locations with cultural key features in the landscape (e.g. boundaries, roads, burial sites, standing stones, churches, farmsteads), as well as a variety of topographic features (e.g. elevation, rivers). The relations between assembly sites and administrative boundaries will be of great importance here, and particular stress will be placed on clarifying the location of thing sites of various ranking.

Geographical focus: Not only will IP1 argue for a chronological distinction between bona regalia and bona patrimonium, but it will also highlight the fact that these two types of royal manors/estates/rights had uneven distribution within the states of northern Europe (Iversen forthcoming). The PL has in the last year identified and mapped such estates in Northern Europe, drawing on various sources - cadastres (Denmark), medieval laws (Sweden), place-names (e.g. Köningshof/Huseby)(the Netherlands, Norway/Sweden), and royal charters (all countries) and different sagas (Saxo, Snorre, Knytlinga saga)(relevant for Norway /Sweden /Denmark)(see Figure 1). Iversen will argue that the development of bona regalia represents a key to understanding the process of state-formation, and most likely influenced where assemblies were held, and how they were organised. This has been crucial for the selection of this IP’s study areas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Royal core area</th>
<th>Submitted area</th>
<th>Strand a-c</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1+2</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>The island of Fyn</td>
<td>Skåne</td>
<td>Strand a: The European background (PL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3+4</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Östergötland</td>
<td>Uppland</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5+6</td>
<td>Germany/Belgium/ Netherlands</td>
<td>Köln/Liege</td>
<td>The low countries (Netherlands)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7+8</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>Vestlandet</td>
<td>Viken</td>
<td>Strand b/c. In-depth analyses (PhD student 1 and 2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6. Study areas for IP1
The tools: Dr. Iversen has developed a comprehensive GIS project for Northern Europe, together with Dr. Alexandra Sanmark and PhD student 2.¹ This GIS contains high-quality geo-referenced data from national sites and monuments records, such as medieval royal manors, castles, cities, roads and administrative areas, in addition to various topographic aspects (Figure 1). The first step for the PhD students will be to collect additional data and mapping the actual thing sites, via Tingbøker. GIS is a strong tool to make comparative landscape studies of royal power in northern Europe, for this IP as well as for the CRP as a whole. In this way, the assembly sites will be put into their contexts on different scales.

Figure 1. Study areas for IP1. Are there differences between the thing organisations in areas of strong and weak royal power?

¹ The GIS is developed as part of Dr. Iversen’s ongoing research project Realm and Province (RP), AHKR, University of Bergen (http://www.arkeologene.no/frodeiversen/). This is funded by the Norwegian Research Council and runs to March 2010.
**IP 2. Landscape, Authority and Power: past and current understandings of assembly places and structures in Britain and Europe.**
Main responsible: Dr Sarah Semple. This IP concerns strands 2 and 3 as outlined in A1.1

**B1.1 Concept and objectives of the Individual Project 2**

IP 2 is a data collection and synthesis project that interlocks with IPs 1, 3 & 4 and will provide a firm critical basis from which the CRP can advance its new and innovative, intensive regional and cross-regional studies in the North Sea and North Atlantic regions. IP 2 will achieve the following objectives and outcomes:

1. **(1)** Create a position statement on past and current scholarship, emphasising divergences in assembly practices and structures as well as shared traditions and themes at a NW European level, AD 400-1300. Drawing on disparate published research (e.g. Brink 2004; Pantos 2002; Fitzpatrick 2004; Barnwell and Mostert 2003; Pantos and Semple 2004; McKitterick 2008; Sanmark and Semple 2008; Sanmark forthcoming a) Semple (interlocking with IP4) will develop a critical and contextual study of assemblies as a common theme in emergent medieval political frameworks in NW Europe (one joint-authored journal paper with Sanmark).

2. **(2)** Establish a new critical understanding of ‘assembly studies’ by appraising scholarship past and present by means of selective, historiographic research on the treatment of assembly as a research theme. This research by Semple will focus on how assembly has been valorised in differing strands of scholarship over time, e.g. its use as evidence to support ideas of nationhood, legitimate authority, migratory patterns and shared ethnic descend in Britain and in Europe. It also aims to deconstruct current tendencies to research assembly in isolation – as a practice indigenous to separate nation states and national identities (see above and Warner 1988; Reynolds 1999; Pantos 2002; all papers in Pantos and Semple 2004 etc.) (two single-authored journal papers).

3. **(3)** Advance understanding of the dynamics of assembly and political organisation in areas of impact, colonisation and social flux in Northern England. Although research on assembly places and practices is now advanced in Britain (Pantos 2002, 2003; Pantos and Semple 2004; Semple 2004, 2008, 2009; Reynolds 1999), assembly in England has been treated in isolation, as a static phenomenon. Little attention has been paid to apparent differences between the north and south, or evidence of regional preferences in terms of administrative arrangements (Pantos 2002; Pantos and Semple 2004). IP 2 contains a PhD studentship focused on the Danelaw (the region of England subject to Scandinavian authority and control in the 9th/10th centuries), that will investigate how systems of political administration and processes of assembly were established, changed and hybridised AD 400 – 1100. This strand will move scholarship forward by considering how assembly places and practices emerged and changed in local/regional power systems as a consequence of shifts in ethnicity/ identity & power structures.

This IP will focus on and contribute to the following CRP’s research questions:

**Valorisation:** How have assemblies been researched and investigated over time? How do different European and national scholarly traditions regarding the origins, role and development of assembly relate and differ? How have national traditions and identities affected research in different nations and regions?
Collective identities: How has scholarship on assembly past and present, fed into and been affected by senses of national and regional identity? Can we see shared and differing traditions in medieval systems of assembly and political organisation in NW Europe? How did assemblies at different levels act as markers, strengthening collective identities?

Territorialisation: What role did individual assemblies play in newly settled areas and emerging kingdoms? How were they used to consolidate territorial identities, particularly in areas where the population was of mixed descent? How were assemblies used to mediate control in regions with indigenous and migrant groups?

Migration of administrative frameworks: How were systems of administration developed? How regionally cohesive were systems of governance prior to Danelaw? Can we see differences in assembly linked to regional identities and patterns of migration in England? How were new systems of assembly planted in areas of Norse colonisation? How did these assemblies fit within existing administrative frameworks?

B1.2 Work plan IP 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IP 2</th>
<th>List of outputs</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual tasks for the PI 2</td>
<td>1 joint-authored position paper</td>
<td>7.5 hours/week over 3 years = 6.75 months across 3 years</td>
<td>1012.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 single-authored paper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 single-authored paper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 joint-authored paper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common tasks for the IP</td>
<td>Supervising PhD studentship (min 0.5 hr/ week). 1 monograph (finally) + 1 contribution to synthesis</td>
<td>1 hour a week over three years = 0.9 months across 3 years</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Management of IP</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organisation of Durham Workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sum</td>
<td></td>
<td>7.65 months</td>
<td>1147.5</td>
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Table 7. List of outputs IP 2

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<tr>
<th>Task IP 2</th>
<th>Where</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper 1, milestone 1 (joint w/Sanmark)</td>
<td>Durham</td>
<td>J</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper 2, milestone 2</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper 3, milestone 3</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper 4. Synthes. Milestone 4</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workshops/CRP meets</td>
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<td>S</td>
<td>V I</td>
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Table 8. Work plan and detailed timeline for IP 2 (per month/3 years)

B1.3 Research design and methodology

Assemblies in medieval Europe have been subject to sporadic and partial study. In each nation, schools of research and individual researchers have valorised and prioritised differing elements of assembly formation and function (Warner 1988, 2004, Aitchson 1994 etc., Kemble 1849; Loyn 1974 & Wormald 1999). IP 2 seeks for the first time to consolidate current knowledge at a European level and to critically appraise past research, thus offering a firm basis from which to launch new studies on assembly practices informed by new theoretical insights into local, regional, supra regional and supra national interactions. Building on recent volumes that have brought together scholarship on European assemblies
(Barnwell and Mostert 2003; Pantos and Semple 2004), IP 2 will move scholarship forward: by creating a position statement on the current state of knowledge of assemblies in NW Europe and their role in nascent political systems of governance (Obj 1, Paper 1); by critically reflecting on past scholarship on assembly, reviewing the influences and contexts of differing strands of scholarship that have investigated assembly as part of the history and archaeology of proto-statehood in NW Europe 400-1300 (Obj 2, Papers 2 & 3); and by appraising how current scholarship can begin to understand assemblies as components in power networks relevant to sub-national identities (regional, local and even individual power structures) (Obj 3, Paper 4).

The objectives and outputs will be achieved through extensive literature review, at Durham University and UK copyright libraries. The CRP workshops are a primary point of contact, discussion and networking. The collaboration between the IPs will provide opportunities for capturing data/results and information on ongoing and research on similar themes in NW Europe. Short research trips will be necessary to Spain, Germany, Denmark and Norway to collate photographic records of relevant assembly places and review unpublished/archive literature on sites and systems of assembly in particular relating to the later use/reinvention of assembly sites as political and religious arenas. These are regions which have seen limited research and publication on assembly, however, the expertise of the project team, and workshops will facilitate a comprehensive sense of how scholarship has developed at a NW European level.

**Year 1:** the production of a summary position paper with Sanmark will draw on the established expertise of both PIs in the field of assembly studies. Semple is a joint editor of Assembly Places and Practices in North West Europe (2004) and a joint organiser with Sanmark of sessions on this theme at the EAA 2006 and UEA (Suffolk) 2006 and with Sanmark holds a British Academy award for the project Space, place and performance: archaeological and topographic perspectives on Assembly in Southern Sweden. Semple’s research has dealt with the theme of assemblies and assembly places in the British Isles (2004; 2008; 2009) and she is in contact with specialists across Europe working on similar themes. The completion of the position paper is a project that can be undertaken and completed in year 1 without extensive travel or new data gathering.

**Years 1 + 2:** Semple will use Durham University & UK copyright libraries (+interlibrary loans) to collate and analyse past trajectories of research on assembly. Here, antiquarian accounts will be valuable and several European visits will be needed to view archives and antiquarian material that cannot be accessed any other way. Semple has a reading knowledge of French and German and will rely on CRP colleagues for translation from Scandinavian languages. The research in Years 1+2 building towards Papers 2 and 3 will be selective in terms of collecting data to address the topics for papers 1, 2 and 3. These are not intended as exhaustive accounts of the European scene but as summaries using selected case studies profiling key issues on each theme.

**Year 3:** having supervised the PhD student at Durham with Sanmark, a joint paper will be produced with the student as a co-author, that draws on previous publications on assembly, profiling the new results from the PhD in terms of political and administrative impacts and interactions in the Danelaw and sets them within the critical context of the wider trajectory of research on both assembly and on assembly studies in Europe. Thus new data gathering and analysis will be undertaken by the student under joint supervision from
Semple and Sanmark. Their role is to offer a contextual basis for the launch of the results of the Danelaw study.

**Studentship (Years 1-3):** ‘Impact and Change: Early Medieval Assembly Places and Practices in Northern England before and during Danelaw’ is a 3-year independent PhD study that will compare and contrast the developing political and administrative scene in northern England against the well established patterns of authority and governance in the south (Reynolds 1999). Highly systematised patterns of authority using regularised meeting places locked into a formulated hundredal system are argued for Wessex and large parts of southern/central England. Systems in the north are less well researched but initial study suggests that although present, these functioned over larger areas, were less regulated, and were locked into large systems of royal and monastic control over the estates and polities of the northern English landscape that ultimately coalesced as Northumbria (Pantos 2002; Rollason 2003). This study will use place-name evidence, historical sources, archaeological evidence and landscape historical approaches to evaluate and map the patterns and systems of governance and authority, central places, routes of communication and assemblies that existed in the north of England prior to the colonisation by Scandinavian settlers in AD 790-1100 and the formation of the region that became the Danelaw. The studentship will focus on reconstructing the new systems of administration based on Wapentakes, and the new patterns of assembly places and practices instituted under Danelaw and scrutinise if older systems were adopted and absorbed or changed and altered by the colonisation and new political overlordship. The end of Danelaw will also be explored, to see if systems stayed in place or changed despite changing political authority. The studentship will result in a thesis, publishable as a monograph, but the main outcome will comprise the joint-authored paper with Semple.
IP 3. The Thing in the North, its mercantile aspects and the implications (AD 800-1500)
Main responsible: Dr. Natascha Mehler. Concerns: strands 1 and 2 as outlined A1.1

B1.1 Concept and objectives of the Individual Project
Many trading sites of the Viking period and the Middle Ages are clearly connected to a thing site. The objective of this IP focuses on the economic activities of thing sites and analyses the complex mercantile aspects of those sites in some of the Nordic countries and the implications for the local societies and visiting foreigners. Trading actions at the thing sites involved different ethnic and social groups. The geographic areas this individual project focuses on include Norway, Iceland, the Faeroe Islands, Shetland and Greenland, although adjoining societies will be taken into consideration from case to case. These areas is characterized by the fact that the people there were all Norse, or later successors of the Norse, thus representing a rather uniform culture, even sharing a common Nordic land- and seascape.

Economic activities: During the meetings at the assembly sites trade and exchange took place on a substantial basis, either between locals or locals and foreigners. In addition, during the assemblies trade undertaken at other places was also regulated. In Iceland, for example, the price of goods traded at other sites was each year determined by chieftains or goðar, local sheriffs or later by síslumenn. Moreover, foreign traders were only allowed to stay during the summer months (Ellmers 1972:250; Naumann 1987:377; Sigurðsson 1999:204; Gardiner & Mehler 2007). This system had a considerable effect on international commerce in e. g. Iceland, controlling for example activities of the merchants of the Hanseatic League who were thus neither free in their pricing policy nor in the time of their residence on the island. As a consequence, a very distinctive form of Hanseatic colonialism emerged, and the term colonialism should be understood here as an economic and cultural phenomenon, rather than in its territorial sense where one power seeks control over another (Mehler 2009).

Valorisation: Maritime traders needed to establish their places of exchange along coast lines with good natural harbours. In many cases the merchants erected their trading sites near or directly at an already existing assembly site. Thus, during the later Middle Ages for example, the interaction between foreign merchants and local assemblies would have a great impact on the valorisation, i.e. whether to establish a new assembly site or whether old sites could be used also during this period. In addition, also changes in natural conditions had an effect on the spatial dynamics of such sites. In Iceland, for example, erosion often led to silting up of the coasts and harbours therefore needed to be re-located. Previous research suggests that the re-located sites were again situated near assembly sites (Gardiner & Mehler 2007:389 and 392).

Societal norms and 'othering': How did the processes of assembly serve to establish social categories and divisions in the different types of regions? In what way did assemblies act as a means of integrating and formalising relationships between groups? This will be studied both within regions and also how assemblies could strengthen links between royal core areas and newly subordinated ones.

The main objectives of IP 3 are: How were assembly sites used for commerce and trade? What infrastructure lies behind the establishment of an assembly site? Where they spatially dynamic? What is the nature of the mercantile aspects of assemblies in the North
and what does that imply for local societies and foreigners? What network systems where they established within? How do assembly sites topographically relate to trading sites, and were these places used continuously or successively? How did they facilitate trade and interaction between differing social and ethnic groups? All these questions will be addressed using a long-term perspective in order to detect possible changes over time, starting roughly with the beginning of the Viking period and up to ca. 1500.

B1.2 Work plan IP 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task IP 3</th>
<th>Where</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Field work 1-3</td>
<td>1 Faroe/Shetland 2 Norway 3 Iceland/Greenl.</td>
<td>1 1 1</td>
<td>2 2</td>
<td>3 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field reports 1-3</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material studies</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monograph</td>
<td>Vienna</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper 1-3 and contribution to synthesis, milestone 1-4</td>
<td>Vienna</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint CPR workshops</td>
<td>Oslo, Vienna, Durham, Orkney</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


B1.3 Research design and methodology

The historical and archaeological study of Viking Age or medieval assembly sites in the area of discussion has mostly been restricted to questions concerning the formation of nationality, territorial and national power and identity (e.g. Sigurðsson 1999; Nölsøe & Jespersen 2004:53-124; Vésteinsson 2006). Mercantile aspects of assemblies have been investigated by historians (e.g. Naumann 1987) but these studies are based on written sources and focus almost entirely on the Viking and early Saga periods. Later centuries have hardly been considered so far. Likewise, archaeologists have concentrated on questions concerning power, religion, topography and centralisation, also with a focus on the Viking period (e.g. Vésteinsson 2006; Gulløv 2008), fading out aspects and implications of (international) trade.

Only recently archaeological research investigating the economic activities of assembly sites began. Dr. Mehler has already worked on some aspects, e.g. the connection between Hanseatic trading sites in the Faeroe Islands and Iceland and thing sites (Figs. 1 and 2) (Gardiner & Mehler 2007; Arge & Mehler, forthcoming). In spring 2009 she surveyed Avaldsnes, Norway, the site of a royal manor, a late medieval Hanseatic trading site and also a thing site through a terrestrial Laser Scan (see Fig. 2). However, research of the proposed IP will not only be limited to the Hanseatic period but rather take a long term...
perspective starting with the Viking Age. Her IP concentrates on the issues neglected so far, that is the mercantile aspects of assemblies during the Viking period and the Middle Ages and the implications on native and foreign societies for the area of discussion.

The objectives outlined in B1.1. will be investigated in several steps using different interdisciplinary methods. All work will be carried out by Dr. Mehler, who applies for a half time senior post-doc position for the period of three years (or 18 months full time work). Additional short time work will be carried out by a field assistant and a technician.

![Terrestrial Laser Scan Avaldsnes, Norway](image)

**Material studies**: Since some assembly sites have been excavated by archaeologists a substantial basis of artefacts has already been collected during previous fieldwork. In many cases these old evaluations have concentrated on aspects other than commerce and trade or focused on the Viking period alone. Thus, a lot of archaeological material is to be found in museums in the North which has not been analysed so far. Three months (full working time) of material studies, carried out by Dr. Mehler, are thus intended in order to examine previously collected finds and documentation in the light of the outlined research objectives. This includes the archaeological remains of Avaldsnes and Vågar (Norway) (stored in Stavanger and Tromsø), Garðar and Herjolfsnes (Greenland) (stored in Copenhagen and in Greenland), and of Tórshavn (Faeroe Islands) (stored in Tórshavn). Material culture studies will be synthesised with a study of relevant written documents, especially from the later Middle Ages. The documentation of recorded structures needs to be evaluated, digitalized, and analysed, along with artefacts and other data such as areal photographs. During previous work and research Dr. Mehler has already gained a first overview of the amount of the material in question and established access to it.
**Fieldwork:** New fieldwork will be undertaken in Norway, Iceland, the Faeroe Islands, Shetland and in Greenland especially outlined according to the objectives. This fieldwork consists of surveys, excavations and underwater recordings, since many combined assembly and trading sites are to be found in coastal areas (see Fig. 3), adding a marine aspect to the whole project. The surveys are intended to localize possible surviving structures and will be carried out combining place name studies and the recording of surviving building remains using differential GPS and terrestrial Laser Scanning. These methods have already been applied by Dr. Mehler in her previous research and proved very effective for the identification of assembly/trading sites (Gardiner & Mehler 2007; Mehler & Gardiner, in preparation) (see Fig. 2). This data will go into the general CRP and GIS. Sites are planned to be surveyed and excavated in Norway, Iceland, Greenland, the Faeroe Islands and Shetland, the latter two in collaboration with Dr. Alexandra Sanmark. The excavation work will provide the basis for the three planned articles. Here the investigations will concentrate on the mercantile aspects of the sites, e. g. the identification of possible trading areas and the nature of trade via artefact studies.

**Analysis and dissemination:** After finishing material studies and fieldwork all obtained data will be analysed. The results of each site will be put together in order to get an overall picture of the mercantile aspects of assembly sites in the far North. The results will be presented in three articles published in peer-reviewed journals and be visualized with the help of GIS which will afterwards be available for future research. In addition, the synthesis will be integrated in a monograph Dr. Mehler is currently writing.

*Figure 3. Thing sites (red dots) and trading sites (black dots) in the Faeroe Islands and Iceland*
IP 4. Assembly and Colonisation (AD 800-1500).
Main responsible: Alexandra Sanmark. This IP concerns strands 1 and 2 as outlined in A1.1

B1.1 Concept and objectives of the Individual Project

The objective of this IP is to explore the establishment of the Norse thing organisation and assembly sites in the areas of Viking settlement and colonisation, compared and contrasted to the situation in the Viking homelands, and set within the wider context of assembly in NW Europe. This is an interdisciplinary project drawing on a range of written sources (e.g. laws, sagas, charters), archaeological evidence and place-names. Fieldwork will be carried out at a select number of sites in Scotland and the Faeroe Islands. Only through such an integrated approach can assembly research be significantly moved forward. The geographical focus will be the areas of Viking settlement in Scotland and the North Atlantic islands (see Fig. 4), using previous research from Sweden (Sanmark forthcoming a, Sanmark and Semple 2008, Brink 2004), Norway (Bugge 1920) Iceland (Friðriksson 1994, Whitmore forthcoming), Greenland (Gulløv 2008, Sanmark forthcoming b) and also the work produced by the PIs and PhD students. IP 4 will result in a single authored monograph entitled Assembly and Colonisation, a summary position paper with Semple, a joint article on fieldwork in Shetland with Mehler and a single authored article for the synthesis. The UK PhD student would be jointly supervised by Semple and based at Durham (see IP 2).

This IP will focus on and contribute to the following of CRP’s research questions:

Valorisation: How did the Norse choose the location of assembly sites in the newly settled areas? What impact did Christianity have on the design of the thing sites and the thing proceedings (cf. Sanmark forthcoming a). Did they reuse sites already monumentalised by the local population or did they create new sites? Are these Norse sites different from those in the Viking homelands in terms of features, characteristics and location? If such differences can be established, how can they be explained? In what ways did the Norse define and monumentalise their assembly sites and how were they developed, remembered and celebrated over time? Is the continuity of traditions from prehistory into modern times observed at Tynwald, Isle of Man (Pantos and Semple 2004), an exception, or are there other examples to be found?

Territorialisation: The sites established by the Norse will be mapped and studied detail for the first time. What role did the individual assemblies play in the newly settled areas and emerging kingdoms? How do they relate to territorial markers, such as boundaries and burials? How were they used to consolidate territorial identities and mediate control, particularly in areas where the population was of mixed descent?

Migration of administrative frameworks: What form did the new systems of administration planted in the areas of Norse settlement take? How did these assemblies fit within existing administrative frameworks, where those were present? Did the Norse cause such systems to change or cease, or perhaps strengthen them? In what ways did the Norse administrative systems change as a result of migration?

Collective identities: How did the Norse use assembly and administration to create and maintain collective identities in the newly settled areas? In what ways did the assemblies at different levels of society act as identity markers, strengthening and unifying collective identities? Can differences and similarities between sites illustrate presence and development of collective identities? What hierarchies of sites can be observed?
**Gendered power-structures:** Written sources, such as Icelandic sagas, laws and land registers/maps will be analysed in order to determine which members of society could access the assemblies, in theory and practice. Traditionally, assemblies have been seen as an exclusively male sphere. This is despite the fact that certain women legally had access to the courts and evidence shows that they did take part in the proceedings. It is therefore necessary to establish which genders and social strata could access the assembly, and which were excluded. The assemblies will also be analysed in relation to property ownership and characteristics of the farm to which the assembly belonged.

Proposed chapter outline of the monograph: 1) Introduction and background. Assemblies in the Viking homelands. 2) The Norse westward expansion and the establishment of administrative structures. 3) The role of assemblies in new territories. 4). The power politics of the assemblies. 5) Assemblies in the longue durée. 6) Conclusions: the significance and heritage of assemblies in the North.

**B1.2 Work plan (including the overall strategy of the work plan, detailed timeline and the list of outputs)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IP 4</th>
<th>List of outputs</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual tasks for the PI 4</td>
<td>Monograph + 3 articles</td>
<td>18.75 hrs/wk for 10 months in yr 1 and 11.5 months in years 2 and 3 (+ UHI 18.75 /wk for 3 yrs) 300 hrs for 2 months</td>
<td>2163.5 with Hera funding (+2531) 300</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fieldwork 2 months (1 month and 1 week with Mehler)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Common tasks for the PI 4</td>
<td>Joint workshops + organising the Orkney workshop and supervising the UK PhD student</td>
<td>0.5 hr /wk for 3 yrs</td>
<td>67.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum</td>
<td></td>
<td>18 months (+ 18 months)</td>
<td>2531(+2531)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11. List of outputs for IP 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task IP 4</th>
<th>Where</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase 1</td>
<td>Orkney</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Phase 2.</td>
<td>Scotland/ Faeroes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 3.</td>
<td>Orkney</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Monograph</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint article w/ S. Semple, milestone 1</td>
<td>Orkney</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Joint article w/ Mehler, milestone 2</td>
<td>Orkney</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Synthesis, milestone 4</td>
<td>Orkney</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>Joint CRP workshops</td>
<td>Oslo, Vienna, Durham, Orkney</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD supervision</td>
<td>Orkney</td>
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</table>

Table 12. Work plan and detailed timeline for IP 4 (per month/3 years)

**B1.3 Research design and methodology**

The thing institution formed the backbone of Norse society, as it was through this that kings and chieftains exercised their power. Despite this, research on this topic has so far been very limited. No comprehensive overview that examines the form, function and location of these sites has been carried out, neither in Scandinavia nor in the settlement areas. In fact, as has been demonstrated in the CRP, very little research has been done on
this topic since the 1940s. Discussions regarding thing sites and thing organisation have thus often been based on assumptions and conjecture. A thorough study, such as the one proposed here, would thus be a highly valuable contribution to medieval research, both in itself and as a base on which other scholars can build their work.

The research questions outlined above will be approached through a thorough study and mapping of assembly sites, their features and wider landscape contexts. This will be done with the aid of a GIS and utilise the data previously collected as part of Iversen’s post-doctoral research project and Sanmark’s long-running assembly project in Sweden, as well as the new data produced by the CRP’s PhD students. The GIS-information relevant for IP 4 includes assembly sites in Norway, Sweden and Denmark and their relation to archaeological remains (such as burials, rune stones and ritual deposits), communication routes (land and water), administrative boundaries and significant place-names. On a separate occasion, Sanmark has also collected the corresponding data for Orkney, Shetland and Greenland. In order to carry out the project proposed here, further data will be collected from on-line sites and monuments records for the remaining parts of Scotland, and the Faeroe Islands. For Iceland, use will be made of Alice Whitmore’s forthcoming work, due to be finished in early 2010 and the previously published volume by Adolf Friðriksson (1994).

This IP consists of three major phases: Data collection, identification and mapping of sites. 2. Visits to a selection of the identified thing sites. The most interesting ones will be mapped with a DGPS and analysed in detail. Fieldwork with Mehler at Tingwall, Shetland and in the Faeroes. 3. Concluding analyses and writing of final publication.

(1) Phase one concerns collection of the primary and secondary source material still lacking. It is important to point out that through Sanmark’s previous work on Norse assemblies she already has an almost complete archive of secondary works on relevant topics for all areas included in this study, as well as images and maps. What remains to be collected is medieval charters, old maps and aerial photographs for Scotland, which will be obtained from the National Library of Scotland. For remote areas, such as Shetland, where the quality of the available aerial photographs is low, LiDAR scanning of select areas will be carried out by the Vienna Institute of Archaeological Sciences (VIAS). During this phase the missing GIS-data, described above, will also be collected, and the position paper with Semple produced (see IP 2), which draws on the joint expertise of Sanmark and Semple in the area. Sanmark has received several research grants, e.g. from the Swedish Royal Academy and together with Semple a British Academy grant, on various aspects of research on Norse assembly sites and practices. This work has resulted in a number of publications (e.g. Sanmark 2006; forthcoming a and b; Norr and Sanmark 2008; Sanmark and Semple 2008 and forthcoming). The position paper can thus be completed in year 1 without travel or new data gathering. Sanmark also has an extensive pan-European network of scholars working in this field and has therefore been invited to join several relevant academic networks.

(2) During phase two, a selection of the identified thing sites will be visited and surveyed. The aim is to gain a clearer understanding of their location in the landscape. In order to fulfil this aim, travel within Orkney, to Shetland, the Faeroes and mainland Scotland will be necessary. The results will then be added into the GIS and maps of individual sites can thus be produced. This is a relatively simple procedure which will enable Sanmark to establish what features and characteristics were present at the different sites,
to carry out visual analyses (cf. Gansum, Jerpåsen and Keller 1997), and add temporal aspects by studying the date of different archaeological features (such as burials). This methodology has been proven particularly useful for analysing power structures and how these changed over time. Examples of features to be searched for and studied are: traces of temporary settlements, such as ‘tents’ or booths, evidence of markets having been held at the sites, traces of enclosures that according to written sources were constructed for the lawmen at thing sites, man-made and natural markers for thing sites, location in relation to cult sites, churches and communication routes. As part of this Sanmark and Mehler will carry out fieldwork in the Faeroe Islands and Shetland. In the Faeroes the aim is to pinpoint assembly sites and their location in relation to trading sites. In Shetland, Tingwall, existing features (e.g. causeway and enclosure) will be surveyed and investigated. We also aim to establish if other types of archaeological remains exist at the site. The results will be presented in the joint article with Mehler. Methods: DGPS survey, geophysics (by the Department of Archaeology, UHI) and excavation. Costs for the Shetland fieldwork are included in Mehler’s budget. A DGPS will be hired for Sanmark’s own surveys (see budget B).

(3) Phase three involves the final analyses and will aim to answer the questions outlined in B1.1. During this phase all chapters will be finalised and edited and images produced. The paper for the synthesis will also be produced during this time (see IP2). Sanmark’s contribution will consist of the results from the work for the monograph and will therefore not require any further research.

Figure 4. Study areas, apart from the Faeroes, for IP 2 and IP4
Literature

- Bourdieu, P. 1990. *In Other Words: Essays toward a Reflective Sociology* [Choses dites, 1987]. Stanford
- Bugge, A. 1920. ’Tingsteder, gilder og andre gamle mittpunkter i de norske bygder’, *Norsk historisk tidskrift* 5:4


• Iggers, G. I. 1997. Historiography in the twentieth century: from scientific objectivity to the Post-modern Challenge. Middletown, CT


• Lenzing, A. 2005. *Gerichtslinden und Thingplätze in Deutschland*. Königstein i. Ts


• Maurer, K. 1878. *Udsigt over de nordgermanske retskilders historie*. Kristiania


• Olausson, M . 2000 (ed). *En bok om husabyar* (red. Michael Olausson), Uppsala

• Iversen, F 2004. *Eiendom, makt og statsdannelse : kongsgårder og gods i Hordaland i yngre jernalder og middelalder*. Avhandling for dr. art, Universitetet i Bergen


• Sanmark, A. 2006. The communal nature of the judicial system in early medieval Norway, Collegium Medievale 19 (2006), 31-64
• Sanmark, A. forthcoming a, Thing Organisation and State Formation. A Case Study of Assembly Sites in Viking and Medieval Södermanland, Sweden, Medieval Archaeology 53
• Sanmark, A. forthcoming b, The Case of the Greenlandic Assembly Sites, Journal of the North Atlantic
• Thomas, J. 1996. Time, Culture and Identity (London and New York)
• Turén, S. 1939. Om rätt tingsplats enligt Västmannalagen, Västmanlands fornnäsförenings årsskrift 27
• Wildte, F. 1931. Västergötlands medeltida tingsställen, Rig
• Yorke, B. 2006. The Conversion of Britain. Religion, Politics and Society in Britain c. 600-800. Harlow