Lars Ivar Hansen

On the View of “the Other” – Abroad and At Home. The Geography and Peoples of the High North, According to *Historia Norwegiae*[1]

In this discussion I want to focus the spotlight on what *Historia Norwegiae* (hereafter H.N.) reports on relations in the Far North, on the Sámi and on the interaction between Norwegians and Sámi, as well as additional peoples further to the east in the North Calotte.[2] I shall concentrate on a summary of the peoples who were perceived, to a greater or lesser extent, as standing outside the Norse, Christian cultural complex. In this context I shall not, therefore, occupy myself with the populations of Iceland or the islands of the North Sea, which in H.N. are summarized using the term “tributary islands” (*tributariae insulae*).

I shall seek to present the depiction of these peoples in the light of research results within the social sciences and humanities that relate to ethnic affiliation and ethnic demarcation. This includes how various groups of people relate to one another, use various aspects of their cultural property to mark their own identity and distinctiveness from others, and how they place different ethnic “labels” and other “characteristics” on one another in the course of these processes. Finally, I want to focus on the conclusions we can draw from this analysis regarding the work’s provenance and the author behind the text. Before I embark on my main subject, however, I want to make some comments on the work itself, and try to place and characterize it as a textual source.

1) Historia Norwegiae as a literary product.

H.N. is an outstanding example of a genre of Latin-language texts authored by educated clerics in the Early Middle Ages and High Middle Ages that include descriptions of a geographical and ethnographical character, as well as chronicle representations of historical events, principally linked to kings and other figures of authority as well as their kinship relationships and dynasties. Regarding texts of a comparable style preceding and contemporaneous with H.N., one might point to e.g. Adam of Bremen’s account of *The History of the Archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen* (*Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae*

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[1] This article is a translation of Hansen, Lars Ivar: ‘Om synet på de “andre“ – ute og hjemme. Geografi og folkeslag på Nordkalotten i følge Historia Norwegiae’, in *Olavslegenden og den latinske historieskrivning i 1100-tallets Norge*, ed. By Inger Ekrem, Lars Boje Mortensen and Karen Skovgaard-Petersen (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2000), pp. 54-88, and published here by kind permission of Museum Tusculanum Press.

[2] By the *North Calotte*, I here refer to northern Fennoscandia and parts northwestern Russia, i.e. the Kola peninsula and the White Sea region.

pontificum), and *Theodoric the monk's History of the Kings of Norway from Antiquity* (*Historia de Antiquitate Regum Norwagiensium*), without at this stage making any decision concerning the mutual influence and interdependency between these texts and H.N.

From the first publication of this work, by P.A. Munch in 1850, and up until the aftermath of the Second World War in the mid-twentieth century, there was extensive discussion of the work's origins, the identification of the author, and the works, submissions and traditions on which the author was building. A series of alternatives were launched throughout this debate concerning the probable dating of the text and the identity of the author; a wide range of circumstances were discussed regarding the origins of some of the reports and individual items of information, as well as both direct and indirect citations incorporated by the author in the text. The debate seemed to quieten down somewhat after about 1950, but central, significant contributions nonetheless continued to be submitted up until the turn of the century.[3]

The questions relating to the exact date of the work and its presumable author were thoroughly illuminated by *Inger Ekrem* (1998) who, besides a detailed historiographical review, made a persuasive argument that the work must have come into existence before 1152/1153, and that this reflects Norwegian clerical endeavours to establish a Norwegian, national ecclesiastical province (archdiocese).[4] So far, the most comprehensive presentation of H.N. and the discussion of the work's dating, place of origin, style and narrative – as well as previous research – is the book by Inger Ekrem and *Lars Boje Mortensen*, published in 2003 bearing the title "*Historia Norwegie*". It also contains an updated English translation by Peter Fisher.[5] Basing himself on various information given in the work, Mortensen sketches out various plausible time-spans for the work's origin: A completely certain interval between 1140 and 1265 A.D.; and a narrower, earlier one between 1150 and 1200 A.D. However, he concludes that the period c. 1160–1175 appears most appealing.[6]

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[3] Aside from the observations made by Munch in his edition, central contributions to the research debate have been made by: Gustav Storm, in his edition of *Monumenta Historica Norvegiae*; Hægstad, "Tillegg. Det norske skriftgrunnlaget i *Historia Norwegiae*'; Paasche, 'Norges og Islands litteratur indtil utgangen av middelalderen'; Skard, 'Målet i Historia Norwegiae'; Aðalbjarnarson, *Om de norske kongers saga*; Koht, *Innhogg og utsyn i norsk historie*; Koht, '1. Historia Novegiae'; Hanssen, *Omkring Historia Norwegiae*; Steinnes, 'Meir om *Historia Norvegiae*'; Robberstad, 'Ordet patria i *Historia Norvegiae*'; Nordal. Litteraturhistorie B. Norge og Island'; Ellehøj, *Studier over den ældste norrøne historieskrivning*; de Vries, 'Altnordische Literaturgeschichte, Bd. II: Die Literatur von etwa 1150 bis 1300. Die Spätzeit nach 1300'; Chesnutt, "The Dalhousie Manuscript of the Historia Norvegiae'; Lange, 'Die Anfänge der isländisch-norwegischen Geschichtsschreibung'; Ekrem, *Nytt lys over Historia Norvegie. Mot en løsning i debatten om dens alder?*; Ekrem and Mortensen, *Historia Nowegie*. The principal views and main features of the older debate are summarized by Anne Holtsmark in a separate article about the work in *KLNM* (vol. VI, columns 585–87) and by Astrid Salvesen in the introduction to her translation, published in *Thorleif Dahls kulturbibliotek* (Salvesen, *Norges historie – Historien om de gamle norske kongene – Historien om danenes ferd til Jerusalem*).
[4] Ekrem, '*Nytt lys over Historia Norvegie. Mot en løsning i debatten om dens alder?'*.
[5] Fisher, 2003, pp. 49–105. The citations from H.N. in this article are quoted from Fisher's translation.
[6] Ekrem & Mortensen, 2003, pp. 11–24.

I shall not dwell further on this debate of identifying the exact date of the work or its likely author in my presentation, but concentrate on the overall picture that these investigations have been able to confirm concerning the profusion of texts, manuscripts, reported items and points of view on which the author draws in assembling his manuscript. It has been observed, for instance, that the author quotes the Bible from the Vulgate version, and he gives the impression of having studied at a French or Anglo-Norman school. It is further assumed that he has knowledge of an Icelandic version of the genealogy of *Ynglinga Tal* [7], and may have had access to a lost Latin work by *Sæmundr fróði*.[8] This latter work may also have served as a source for Ágrip. At any rate, it seems that H.N., Ágrip and Oddr Snorrason the monk all drew on common sources, which may – according to Bjarni Aðalbarnarson – have included a lost "Opplandssaga".[9] The author also has a knowledge of an edition of the English line of kings (up to Henry I), which was included in the work *Liber de legibus Angliae* and incorporated in the annals of Roger of Hoveden.[10]

Of the more refined observations, one might single out Asgaut Steinnes's conclusion that the author must have had access to a Latin manuscript that was lost in the Fire of Copenhagen in 1728, of which we know the contents through diverse archive registrations, the so-called "Sorø manuscript". The contents of the Sorø manuscript included the following: 1) transcripts of parts of Adam of Bremen's work on the Archbishops of Hamburg; 2) transcripts of two works by French theologian and author Honorius Augustodunensis[11] (ca. 1080–ca. 1156): *Imago mundi* and *De philosophia et ratione mundi*; 3) excerpts from some works by the Roman geographer *Solinus* (3rd century); and 4) other, minor works, such as a genealogy of the Kings of Denmark and a mnemonic for school purposes about the use of synonyms. The author of H.N. is guilty of confusing Honorius with Solinus, and believes himself to be citing Solinus when he is in fact referring to Honorius.[12] The reason for this is supposedly to be found in the Sorø manuscript, where the works of Honorius were quoted anonymously and inserted between the other texts in such a way that the mistake could be made.[13] On that basis, Steinnes maintains that the author of H.N. must himself have been resident in Roskilde (possibly in exile), became acquainted with the manuscript there and may even have prepared H.N. itself in these surroundings.

According to both Skard and Steinnes, a number of features are to be found in H.N. which the author appears to have borrowed or copied from *Imago mundi* by Honorius: several formulations appear in the introductions to both works, similarly several imitations

[7] *Ynglinga tal* is a skaldic poem presenting the genealogy of old – and mythic – Norse kings, cited by Snorre Sturlason in the first part of his work Heimskringla: the *Ynglinga Saga*. See Snorre Sturlason: *Heimskringla or The Lives of the Norse Kings* (ed. Erling Monsen). 1990, pp. 1–35.
[8] Holtsmark, 1961, column 586.
[9] Steinnes, 1946.
[10] Storm (ed.), 1880, p. XXI.
[11] = from Autun, France.
[12] In the section about earthquakes and other natural phenomena, under the description of Iceland.
[13] Steinnes, 1946, pp. 17–30.

of transitional forms between paragraphs.[14]

Of the remarkable accounts that are also to be found in a number of earlier works, the story of the “beaver bondsman” may be singled out. In connection with an otherwise sober and factual account of the beaver’s habitat and the furnishing of a beaver den, it is claimed that “bondsmen”, or slaves, are to be found among beavers, used amongst other things as work animals and a means of transport by the other beavers. Such bondsmen would supposedly lie on their backs and be used as a sledge to transport tree-trunks home to the den.[15] As early as the 1880 edition, Gustav Storm claimed that this story was a *Leitmotif* found in other sources dating from about the same time (or a little later, if we accept Ekrem’s suggestion regarding the date of the text). Thus, the Welsh archdeacon Gerald of Wales (*Giraldus Cambrensis*) uses it in his *Topographica Hiberniae I* (dating from 1187), *Itinerarium Cambriae* (II, 3, dating from 1191) and his *Descriptio Cambriae* (I, 5, dating from 1194). According to Steinnes, the story is also included in a Danish book of history *Chronicon Lethrense*, written in Roskilde in 1170, or a little earlier.[16] It is further repeated in well-known historical summaries dating from succeeding centuries, including those of the thirteenth-century German scholar *Albertus Magnus* (*De Animalibus* liber XXII, tract. II, cap. I: *de castore*) and *Olaus Magnus* (*Historia de Gentibus Septentrionalibus...*, 1555, book XVIII, ch. 5).

The work of foreign origin that it is perhaps easiest to find traces of in H.N. is *Adam of Bremen*’s work on the Archbishops of Hamburg. Researchers seem to agree that the author of H.N. had access to Adam’s entire work. There is no doubt that material has been borrowed from the preface and the second book, and from the fourth and final book containing the geographical report of the Nordic countries.[17]

One curious example, which is of special interest in this context, is the interpretation of Kvenland as “women’s land”, or *terra feminarum*. Kvenland as a place-name is well-established in Norse sources and its localization in the coastal landscapes around the innermost and northernmost parts of the Gulf of Bothnia seem undisputed, not least following the investigations of Finnish historian Kyösti Julku (1986). After providing a sober description of the non-Christian peoples to be found to the east of Norway, the author of H.N. slips in the following, attributing the information to some errant seafarers:

> … they finally put in among Greenlanders and Bjarms, where, they claimed, they came upon

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[14] Skard, 1930a; Steinnes, 1946, p. 17.

[15] “When the beavers have sweated a good deal gathering their winter provisions, they saw round lofty elms with their teeth (they are particularly fond of chewing the bark of this tree), and load the wood on to one of their slaves, who lies on his back holding a log between his forepaws; in this way, using him as a cart, they drag home a large stack of timber, for by gripping the log with their jaws on each side, they help to drag their porter along.” “(Fisher (transl.), 2003, p. 61)

[16] Steinnes, 1949, p. 176.

[17] Steinnes, 1946, p. 17.

people of extraordinary size,[18] and land of maidens, who are reputed to conceive when they have sipped water."[19]

Here is an abbreviated rendering of Adam's observations on "the land of women", which he identified as the "Land of Amazons", perceived partly as situated beyond the Land of the Swedes and partly as an island in the Baltic Sea:

> In this sea there are also very many other islands, all infested by ferocious barbarians and for this reason avoided by navigators. Likewise, round about the shores of the Baltic Sea, it is said, live the Amazons in what is now called the land of women. Some declare that these women conceive by sipping water. Some, too, assert that they are made pregnant by the merchants who pass that way, or by the men whom they hold captive in their midst, or by various monsters, which are not rare there. This explanation we also believe to be more credible.[20]

These examples serve to illuminate a phenomenon named *intertextuality* by literary theorists, as this appears in H.N.: through innumerable overt and obscure citations and allusions, references, reproductions of individual clarifications and entire reports, genealogies and chronological histories, the account builds on earlier writings to varying degrees. This applies both to works of foreign origin and to works that form part of the oldest sections of Norwegian-Icelandic (Norse) Saga literature. Traditional material in general circulation was incorporated as well.

This is a methodological consideration to have in mind, when we are about to review items of information about other peoples – both near and far – and determine whether there is any system or "inner logic" in the way they are depicted. If their depiction builds upon the compilation of a wide range of information from various works and different traditional sources then we cannot expect to find any great systemization or innate developed "logic" in the way in which these peoples are depicted and presented.

H.N. is nonetheless not, in my opinion, presented in a purely *compilatory* fashion. As I now embark on a discussion of the Sámi, Norwegians and other peoples of the High North, my working hypothesis will be twofold:

1) In the first place, the depictions of the Sámi and the author's overall perspective of them seem to be of a nature such that it is reasonable to assume that the author is here building on his own information, or upon a separate traditional source that it is not really possible to find a trace of anywhere else: neither in works of foreign origin nor within the roots of Norse Saga literature.

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[18] See also Adam of Bremen, book 4, ch. 41, where Frisian seamen are said to have encountered an island north of Iceland where there were "surprisingly tall men" (*homines mirae altitudinis*).

[19] Fisher (transl.), 2003, p. 55.

[20] Adam, book 4, chapter xix. Translation by Tschan, in Francis Joseph Tschan, trans. and Timothy Reuter, ed. *History of the archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen*. Vol. 53. Columbia University Press, 2002, p. 200.

2) Secondly, there seems to be an essential difference between the way in which the author treats the Sámi – in respect of being one of the not-yet-Christian peoples who have the greatest contact with the Norwegians – and the other peoples located further east. In the case of the latter, their depiction seems to be based to a greater extent on the perpetuation of information provided by others, but nevertheless in a way revealing essential characteristics of the way in which Christian northerners and these other peoples related to one another.

Apart from Inger Ekrem (2003), very few have addressed or focused on the ethnographical description of the Sámi and other peoples of the High North with regard to an assessment of the provenance, authorship and tradition behind H.N. True, *Andreas Holmsen* (1977) analysed H.N.'s geographical and ethnographical descriptions with regard to mapping relations between the Norwegians and the Sámi, and the broadening of Norwegian state power in the northern regions during this period. But the items of information contained in H.N. were then first and foremost used for charting the actual situation, and not for analysing the conceptual framework.

2) On the labelling and naming of ethnic groups.

Traditional perceptions of ethnic groups, ethnic identity and affiliation tended to link the question of ethnicity closely to culture, emphasizing the content or "substantial" differences in the various cultural complexes manifested by ethnic groups. Cultural differences then tended to be perceived as determined and "objective".

Against this – since the 1960s within the social sciences sphere, and gradually and increasingly in humanities research – ethnic divisions have been regarded as social phenomena, as the results of communicative processes, essentially concerned with ethnic groups' categorization and delimitation in relation to one another. The focus is thus on the "relational dimension", where ethnic differences have been regarded as the result of communication between the groups, and where cultural traits are emphasized, sustained and altered due to changing needs for the consolidation of a group's own values internally, and a clear demarcation in relation to the values of other peoples externally.[21] By means of these processes, some cultural traits acquire the character of symbols marking their own identity, unity and consolidation within the group, at the same time as appearing to highlight external contrast and an identification of "the Other". At an external level, different traits such as language, costume traditions, architectural styles and livelihood adaptation may act as markers of this kind. Regardless of historical origin and the possible borrowing of certain cultural elements from other groups, however, such symbols gain their own weight over time and form part of the overall cultural repertoire that each generation inherits from its forebears through a process of socialization.

[21] Cf. Barth, 1969; Odner, 1983 and Hansen & Niemi, 1999.

This relational, dynamic perception of ethnicity and ethnic divisions has won through, partly on the basis of recognizing that the traditional substantive approach paid excessive regard to culture as a uniform, unwieldy and almost predetermined entity of objectified cultural expressions. The traditional perception also tended to perceive ethnic identity as something static: something allocated once and for all.

In contrast to this, the relational approach emphasizes the dynamic aspects of both ethnicity and culture. This implies that the criteria for ethnic identity may change over time and space, and further offers opportunities for various choices and changes in ethnicity. On the contrary: instead of cultural standards, values and peculiarities being allocated once and for all, they are subject to a continuous and extensive process of negotiation, both internally within the group and externally – a process of negotiation that covers both verbal and non-verbal expressions. In our own time, for example, discussions have been registered about what is, or should be, "typically Norwegian".

This perpetual discussion or process of negotiation is in the deepest sense historically situated. Firstly, the existing values, standards and distinctive traits which serve as cultural building blocks do not, of course, emerge from nothing – from a social vacuum. They are primarily communicated, delivered and deeply influenced by the traditionally-transmitted values and perceptions of previous generations, enshrined in the current results of those generations' social practices, and they are to be found, internalized, in the younger generation through a process of socialization. Secondly, the existing realization that should be allocated to these values, standards and distinctive traits is at all times largely determined by the existing situation in which the group of people finds itself – both in terms of its own conditions for cultural expression and with regard to the kind of relationship the group has with other actors and ethnic groups at the time. In other words, context plays a significant role in determining which concrete expressions an ethnic sense of affiliation or identity will assume at any time.

Such a perspective is, I think, also fruitful to resort to concerning the different ethnonyms or designation of peoples encountered in older sources. Ethnonyms are the designations of ethnic collectives, but simultaneously verbal cultural elements (cultural expressions) which form part of the reciprocal process of communication that takes place between ethnic groups, and internally within a group – and which may form part of the ongoing process of internal consolidation and external demarcation. This implies that it must be more important to try to obtain an overview of what comprehensive system of oppositions and relationships individual designated groups of people are included in, than to focus on the etymological roots of individual designations and their semantic content. If we cast a quick glance at the designations at play in older sources, we might quickly conclude that these are far from "commensurate": that they cut across one and the same reading, and are thus based on the same type or similar criteria. In fact the reverse is true: we find a blissful mixture of specific, self-referencing terms and their correct translations, as well as directly disparaging designations, and names that are allocated from an outsider's

perspective. Here, the outsiders may have taken vastly different phenomena into account in their naming practice: a people's lifestyle, for example, or their distinctive habitat, their particular religious identity, or administrative units, or landscape naming. In addition to names that seem to have functioned as fairly equivalent designations for collective ethnic units, as we know them in our own time, designations of association are also to be found of an economic-functional type, which may not necessarily be ethnic in their differentiation.

With this as a starting-point, it becomes clear that in the past, a "name for a people", or a name for other social groups, did not necessarily have to demonstrate exact compliance with, or be able to be identified unambiguously with, the ethnic categories and labels known to us in our own time or from the immediate past. Nor did the use of language in previous centuries need to be reciprocal or symmetrical, in the sense that a group of people had specific designations for all the other groups of people in their vicinity, who in turn had their own specific designations. On the contrary: certain peoples used what might be called "sack categories", into which they lumped a number of their neighbours.

Finally, one should also be aware of the relationship between "in-group designations" (endonyms) and "outside-group designations" (exonyms). This implies a significant difference, depending on whether the external designations represent a correct translation of a people's own self-reference or not. A lack of compliance here *may* be an indication of asymmetry at other levels, e.g. exploitation through tribute or taxation, or other forms of dependence.

3) The depiction of the Sámi in H.N.

If we now turn directly to H.N. directly and take into account the places where the author relates about the Sámi or the Finns – one of the closest "foreign peoples" – we first observe the reference at the beginning, in conjunction with three "zones" into which the writer divides Norway lengthways: initially, in fact, the author draws up a physical geographical outline of the lands covered by the Kingdom of Norway. This sketch is based on a longitudinal division of the country into three parts, into three inhabited or habitable "zones": *zona maritima*, *zona mediterranea* and *zona silvestris*, i.e. 1) "the coastal zone", 2) "the middle zone" and 3) "the wooded zone". This last, forest zone – which also forms a *section* of Norway – is specifically itemized as comprising the settlement areas for the Sámi: *tertia silvestris, quae Finnis inhabitatur, sed non aratur*.[22] ("… the third is wooded and populated by the Finns, but there is no agriculture there.")[23]

There is thus a contradiction between Sámi settlement and agriculture: "the Finns" do not practise agriculture and this is well-matched to the stereotypical picture of the difference between the Norwegian and the Sámi way of life that are related in contemporaneous Norse sources.

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[22] Storm (ed.), 1880, p.73.
[23] Fisher (transl.), 2003, p. 53;

In the next section – where the author describes in greater detail the division in areal and administrative (legal) terms of this "tripartite settlement of Norway" – Hálogaland is depicted as the last of four *patriae* into which the coastal zone is divided. As far as the coastal zone is concerned, the designation *patria* has mostly been identified as *lagdømme* (law province).[24] We are informed that the fourth *patria* in the coastal belt is Hálogaland,

> "The fourth [law province] is Hålogaland, whose inhabitants dwell a good deal with the Finns, so there are frequent transactions between them; this law province forms the northern boundary of Norway next to Vegestav, which separates it from Bjarmaland."[25]
>
> *Quarta Halogia, cujus incolae multum Finnis cohabitant et inter se commercia frequentant; quae patria in aquilonem terminat Norwegiam juxta locum Wegestaf, qui Biarmoniam ab ea dirimit.*[26]

Here it is implicitly stated that the Sámi are not considered as actual inhabitants of Hálogaland, but that these (Norwegian) inhabitants nevertheless *live together with* the Sámi and pursue extensive trading transactions with them.[27] At the same time we are told that "this law province bounds Norway in the north at a place called Vegestav, separating Bjarmaland from Norway."

When the author subsequently starts to depict the Sámi separately, in a section of their own called *De Finnis*, however, he begins by locating them in an "absolute wasteland" that stretches beside and *up to* Norway:

> On the borders of Norway is an immense wilderness, which divides the country along all its length and separates the Norwegians from the heathens. Only Finns dwell here and wild animals whose flesh they eat half-raw and whose skins they clothe themselves with. They are truly the most skillful huntsmen, patrolling alone and always on the move; for homes they occupy leather tents, which they carry on their shoulders; with smooth planks fastened beneath their feet, implements which they call '*ondrar*'[28], swifter than birds they are conveyed with their wives and little ones, swept forward by their reindeer across packed

[24] The individual treatment of the "Uplands" (*De montanis Norwegiae*) may, however, raise doubts as to how *patria* should be understood. Here it is maintained that the middle belt "comprises four *patriae* and twelve *provinciae* [= counties?] and extends as far as Trondheim". The four *patriae* are identified as follows: Romerike with Ringerike, Telemark, Hedmark, and Gudbrandsdalen. This division has caused Knut Robberstad to assert that the author selected *patria* in place of ON *lǫg*, which might also have indicated a smaller statutory area of law than in the case of a *lagdømme* (law province), Robberstad, 1950, pp. 188–191; Helle, 1974, pp. 47, 61.
[25] Fisher (transl.), 2003, p. 57
[26] Storm (ed.), 1880, p.78.
[27] Håvard Dahl Bratrein has demonstrated that the Sámi must have been involved in commercial fishing on a considerable scale as early as the twelfth century, see below.
[28] Regarding the use of the term *onder* to signify the shortest ski in a pair of different lengths, related semantic content may be observed in the following Sámi words: the verbs *oandut* (to be a little slow; to drag one foot slightly) and *oanedit* (to shorten; to pay off debt), as well as the adjective *oanehis* (short; short-term) and the adverb *oadni* (in short; scarce).

snow and down mountain slopes. For they have no fixed abode, inasmuch as the supply of wild beasts dictates their hunting-grounds at any one time. – In that region there live vast numbers of animals, including bears, wolves, lynxes, foxes, sables, otters, badgers and beavers […][29]

Est igitur vastissima solitudo affinis Norwegiae. dividens eam per longum a paganis gentibus, quae solitudo Finnis et bestiis incolitur, quarum carnibus semicrudis vescuntur et pellibus induuntur. Sunt equidem venatores peritissimi, solivagi et instabiles, tugurea coriacea pro domibus insidentes, quae humeris inponentes levigatis asseribus pedibus subfixis (quod instrumentum ondros appelant) et per condensa nivium ac devexa montium agitantibus cervis cum conjuibus et parvulis ave velocius tranferuntur. Est enim illorum incerta mansio, prout copia ferarum tempore instante eis dictaverit venationis loca. Ibi infinit numerositas bestiarum, scilicet ursorum, luporum, lyncum, vulpium, sabelorum, lutrearum, taxonum, castorum ...[30]

Firstly, the Sámi are emphatically characterized as a hunting people and their mobile (actually semi-nomadic, cyclical) form of settlement is commented upon from the perspective of the residential, farming population. In addition to this, the greater part of the Sámi settlement area is evidently perceived as a territorially-bounded area that *borders* the Norwegian polity, and so does not form part of the Norwegian *ríki* (realm), and is therefore not part of *Hálogaland*, either.

By portraying the Norwegian national unity in this way, as bordering to "a great wasteland", the author is also conveying ancient Germanic notions of how a proper kingdom should be boundered. Curt Weibull,[31] amongst others, has pointed out that a kingdom should, in the Old Germanic perception, be surrounded by an extensive wasteland, which not only functions as the boundaries of the dominion but also serves to the greatest possible extent as protection against enemy attacks, by constituting a hindrance to transport. Weibull selects statements about the Teutons in the work of Roman geographer Pomponius Mela (writing in the middle of the first century) and in the works of Caesar and Tacitus to illustrate this:

It is most praiseworthy for states to be surrounded by wasteland to the greatest possible extent, with border areas kept free of people; they consider it a special sign of strength that the neighbours draw away, displaced from their fields, and with no-one daring to settle in the vicinity; thus they feel more secure, since the fear of sudden invasion is cleared away .[32]

Civitatibus maxima laus est quam latissime circum se vastatis finibus solitudines habere. Hoc proprium virtutis existimant expulsos agris finitimos cedere neque quemquam prope se audere consistere; simul hoc se fore tutiores arbitrantur repentinae incursionis timore sublato.[33]

[29] Fisher (transl.), 2003, pp. 59–61.
[30] Storm (ed.), 1880, pp.82–83.
[31] Weibull, 1917. – I owe thanks to Thomas Wallerström for drawing my attention to Weibull's article.
[32] translated from the author's Norwegian translation of the original text.
[33] Caesar, *De bello Gallico* VI, ch. 23, A. Guthardt (ed.), 1973, p. 176.

Nonetheless, it is said that *where these Sámi live*, outside Hálogaland itself:

> In Finnmarken there are also very large numbers of squirrels and ermines. From all these animals' pelts the people pay a large tribute every year to the Norwegian kings, who are their overlords.[34]
>
> *Sunt etiam apud Finnos scuriones quam plures ac mustelae, de quarum omnium bestiarum pellibus regibus Norwegiae, quibus et subjecti sunt, maxima tributa omni anno persolvunt.*[35]

Even the Sámi, who are *outside* the actual national unity that encompasses Hálogaland, are therefore required to pay tribute to the King of Norway. Now, a perception of this distinct, forest-clad Sámi settlement area as spatially separated in relation to the area included within Norwegian state power, and thus in a certain sense *adjoining* Hálogaland, might fit in well with the way that "Finnmǫrk" is referenced in Norse and Norwegian sources dating from that time or somewhat later.

In *Egils saga Skallagrímssonar*, for example, which is believed to have been written in the early thirteenth century, the region is described as follows:

> Finnmark is a vast territory, bordered by the sea to the west and the north, and all the way to east with great fjords, while Norway lies to the south of it. It extends as far south along the mountains as Halogaland does down the coast. East of Namdal lies Jamtland, then Halsingland, Kvenland, Finland and Karelia. Finnmark lies beyond all these countries, and there are mountain settlements in many parts, some in the valleys and others by the lakes. In Finnmark there are incredibly large lakes with great forests all around, while a high mountain range named Kjølen [= "mountain ridge] extends from one end of the territory to the other.[36]

The Icelandic documentary, handwritten text *Rímbegla*, which was compiled towards the end of the twelfth century, also portrays an apparently straightforward, spatially-defined border, but this time at Malangen: "Next there is a fjord called Malangen, it divides Finnmǫrk from settled men (= farmers)." (*Þá er fjǫrdr, er Malangr heitir, hann skilr Finnmǫrk vid búmenn*).[37]

But the author of H.N. is clearly capable of holding several apparently contradictory thoughts in his mind, and forcing readers to experience this as well – since he has simultaneously pointed out to us the existence of the Sámi in Hálogaland itself, too. This region (possibly this *law province*) is characterized precisely by the fact that its inhabitants "live largely with the Sámi." The interaction and the contact area between the peoples of Hálogaland is also emphasized and made concrete by reporting particular events took place between them.

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[34] Fisher (transl.), 2001, p. 61.
[35] Storm (ed.), 1880, p. 85.
[36] Bernard Scudder (transl), 2004, pp. 23-24.
[37] quoted after *Alfræði islenzk*, published by Kr. Kålund, 1917-18.

Firstly, the text depicts a “classic shaman séance”, with all its associated elements – as far as we are able to judge by comparison with later material. Regarding the circumstances of this séance, the following is stated: “Once when Christians who had come to trade had sat down at table with some Finns, their hostess fell forward all of a sudden and expired.”[38] (*Quadam vero vice dum christiani causa commercii apud Finnos ad mensam sedissent, illorum hospital subito inclinata exspriavit*; ...)[39]

It was also told that it happened, once, when some Sámi and Norwegians were fishing together:

> Again, when the Finns, together with the Christians, had gone about catching by hook a flock of fish such as these heathens had seen in Christian dwellings, they drew almost full traps out of the deeps with their wand, and so loaded the boats to capacity.[40]
>
> *... Item dum Finni unacum christianis gregem squamigeram hamo carpere attentassent, quos in casis fidelium pagani perspexerant, sacculis fere plenis unco suo de abysso attractis scapham cum piscibus impleverunt.*[41]

The fact that there was already extensive cooperation between the Sámi and the Norwegians by the end of the twelfth century regarding the commercial sale of fish is also covered in a contemporaneous work, *Passio Olavi*. Håvard Dahl Bratrein’s article (1989) directs attention to information that appears in the report about one of these wonders: the story “Concerning a youth cleansed of leprosy”.[42] This was an account of regular seasonal fishing – probably fishing in the spring, off west Finnmark – in which both Sámi and Norwegians participated as visiting fishermen. But since the purpose of the report is to illustrate what luck with fishing the Christian Norwegians had, since they were helped by St. Ólafr and addressed their prayers to God, the Sámi were consequently portrayed as pagan.

> … He had recently come from pagan parts, where a great many Christians had gathered to fish, now that Lent was over […] The pagan Lapps[43] who had also gathered there to fish, hearing the vow of the faithful, asked to be permitted as fellows to this plan, but in such a way that their godlings should be no less honoured with the fruits of their vow than the blessed Óláfr with the offerings of the faithful. But since there is no concord between Christ

[38] Fisher (transl.), 2003, p. 63.
[39] Storm (ed.), 1880, s.85.
[40] Fisher (transl.), 2003, p. 63.
[41] Storm (ed.), 1880, pp. 86–87.
[42] *Passio Olavi*, Devra Kunin’s translation (ed. 2001) , p. 70ff.
[43] The Latin originals of H.N. and *Passio Olavi* render the old Norse designation “*Finn*” for the Sámi, and Peter Fisher’s translation of H.N. in Ekrem & Mortensen (2003) follows this. However, the translation of both works by Devra Kunin in Phelpstead (ed. 2001) uses the term “*Lapp*”, widely used in international scholarly literature. The term “Lapp” has probably its origin in the Ladoga region, and has been borrowed into Russian language (“*lop’*”) and into the Nordic languages. – Cf. Uibopuu, 1988, p. 115; Ekrem & Mortensen, 2003, p. 181; Hansen & Olsen, 2014, pp. 37-38.

and Belial, the wretches in their error were spurned.[44]

In H.N. we also find that the author is meticulous about characterizing the inhabitants of Hálogaland as Christians and believers (*fideles*), whereas the word primarily used to characterize the Sámi is *profani*, that is, "sacrilegious", "ungodly" or "un-hallowed". They are also referred to as "this ungodly flock" (*profana secta* [45]) and are accused of exercising a "devilish superstition in the magic arts" (*diabolica superstitio in magica arte*). They further possess an *intolerabilis perfidia* and perform countless magic tricks (*innumerae praestigiae*). A more detailed description is given of these magic tricks:

> … There are some who are worshipped by the ignorant masses as though they were prophets, since, whenever questioned, they will give many predictions to many folk through the medium of a foul spirit which they call gand, and these auguries come true. Furthermore they attract to themselves desirable objects from distant parts in an astounding fashion and miraculously reveal hidden treasures, even though they are situated a vast distance away.[46]

The oppositions or dichotomies that the author of H.N. used to capture and characterize the relationship between Hálogaland's Norwegian inhabitants and the Sámi may thus be summarized as follows:

Farmers	hunters, trackers
Fixed settlement	mobile, (semi-)nomadic settlement
Hálogaland's inhabitants	Sámi
Norway	neighbouring wasteland (with Sámi settlement, still being subject to [*subjecti*] the King of Norway, in having to pay tribute to him)
Christians, believers	sacrilegious, ungodly [*profani*]

This last opposition was clearly the most fundamental and central for H.N.'s clerically-educated author. The theme can be heard from the start, in the section where the author provides a general geographical introduction and figuratively "places Norway on the map". Concerning the countries and peoples surrounding Norway to the south and east (Denmark, as well as Svitjod, Götaland, Ångermanland og Jemtland (all parts of present-day Sweden), he has this to say:

> The peoples who live in these regions, thanks be to God, are now Christians. However, towards the north there are, alas, a great many tribes who have spread across Norway from the east and who are in thrall to paganism, that is, the Kirjarlers and Kvens, the Horned Finns and two kinds of Bjarms.[47]
>
> *Quas nunc partes (deo gratia) gentes colunt christianae. Versus vero septentrionem gentes*

[44] *Passio Olavi*, Kunin (transl.), 2001, pp. 70–71.
[45] Storm (ed.), 1880, p. 87.
[46] Fisher (transl.), 2003, p. 61.
[47] Fisher (transl.), 2003, pp. 53–55

> *perplures paganismo (proh dolor) inservientes trans Norwegiam ab oriente extenduntur, scilicet Kiriali* et *Kwæni*, *cornuti Finni* ac *utrique Biarmones*.[48]

The general perspective thus seems to have been as follows: the further north and east one travelled, the stronger the heathendom. Similarly, the view that the northern regions formed a centre and a bastion for paganism is found both in the introduction to *Passio Olavi* and in Adam of Bremen's writings:

> … Living in a region close to the north, it was the same north, from which comes every evil over the whole face of earth, that had possessed them all the more inwardly and gripped them all more firmly on the ice of unbelief.[49]

> All, indeed, who live in Norway are thoroughly Christian, except those who are removed beyond the arctic tract along the ocean. These people, it is said, are to this day so superior in the magic arts or incantations that they profess to know what every one is doing the world over. Then they also draw great sea monsters to shore with a powerful mumbling of words and do much else of which one reads in the scriptures about magicians.[50]

The formulation of the oppositions or dichotomies used to describe the relationship with the Sámi might seem complicated and ambiguous if one were expecting a clear correlation between ethnic and cultural divisions and national boundaries. On the one hand, the Sámi inhabit the innermost, wooded belt of land that constitutes Norway, and in Hálogaland Norwegians and Sámi lived together – clearly in a way that provided for extensive social interaction. On the other hand, the Sámi were *not* considered to be inhabitants (*incolae*) of Hálogaland, and the "vast wasteland" that bordered it separated Norway as a state from the "heathens". And even though the opposition of the "heathen Sámi" is emphasized to a great extent, this evidently does not prevent Norwegians and Sámi from sitting down to eat a meal together! It is also worth noting that linguistic differences are not mentioned at all, nor perceived as a problem, neither in H.N. nor the Norse sources.

Thus, in part, the ambiguities make it clear that the author was operating on several levels in his description. On the one hand, he was seeking to provide the most accurate geographical and ethnographical description of the extent of individual people's settlement and the characteristics of their habitat and forms of adaptation. On the other hand, he was also thinking in legal and institutional terms with regard to who could be considered subjects of the Christian Kingdom of Norway as this was manifested in the jurisdiction, secular administration, system of defence and Church organization. And discrepancies in relation to Norse sources dating from about this time become understandable when it is taken into account that a process was underway at exactly this time by which nationwide Norwegian social power – based on national kingship and the Church – was becoming ever more influential in Hálogaland. Important institutions such as the *lagting* (provincial court

[48] Storm (ed.), 1880, p. 74
[49] Kunin (transl.), 2001, p. 26.
[50] Adam, book 4, ch. xxxii, Tschan, *Adam of Bremen*, p. 212.

assembly), conscription for naval defences (*leidang*) and a centralized regional management system organized through administrative districts called *sysler*, were being established at a local level, at the same time as Christianity was gaining a stronger foothold. In the course of such a process, there must have been a tension between how people's affiliation was defined and how social power over the same people was perceived: was such affiliation and power mainly linked to population characteristics or to those of individuals, through their affiliation in ethnic and religious terms, and might this have been linked to what type of livelihood they pursued? Or were affiliation and social power defined from a particular, well-defined and delineated territory?

It may be further noted that the picture created in H.N. of Sámi settlement has, to an overwhelming extent, shown itself to be confirmed through settlement history studies in Northern Norway. By means of a series of surveys from northern Nordland and up into northern Troms, it has been shown how the fjord areas and the coastal valleys during the early part of the Middle Ages constituted areas of purely Sámi use and settlement, which can thus be identified as the author's "innermost, wooded belt". In addition, however, there are also many places designated as Coastal Sámi settlements further out, side by side with those of the Norwegians.[51] As far as the King of Norway's right to collect a tribute from the Sámi who lived beyond the kingdom itself is concerned, the information provided by the author also appears to equate to what we can glean from later sources. The King of Norway's taxation assertions led to, amongst other things, confrontation with Russian taxation interests, which in turn led to agreements in both 1250 (between *Hákon Hákonarson* and Alexander Nevsky) and in 1326. In the latter agreement a common Norwegian-Russian area of taxation was defined, from Lyngstuva to the south-eastern coast of the Kola Peninsula, whereby both sides would have the right to tax the Sámi.[52]

Although the duality of statements in H.N. about the Sámi can mostly be explained by the concrete historical situation in Hálogaland, there is nonetheless a question of whether this ambiguity and duality might also reflect more fundamental and general problems in characterizing "the Other", i.e. people who presented with a different cultural and social profile to that of the author himself.

In his book *Postmodern Ethics*, sociologist Zygmunt Bauman analyses the issue of relating to "the Other" when the person concerned lives next door, i.e. when what is "socially distant" and different is not separated by corresponding physical, geographical distance, but is intrusively close.[53] On a scale, or within a space whose boundaries are marked by intimacy on the one hand and anonymity on the other, "it" or "the Other" may be located at varying distances, according to how much and how complementary the knowledge is that "we ourselves" possess of the person concerned. Depending on how comprehensive our familiarity is, and the number of situations in which we have

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[51] Bertelsen, 1985; Guttormsen, 1985; Schanche, 1986; Bratrein, 1989; Hansen, 1990; Nielssen, 1990; Andersen, 1992.
[52] Cf. Hansen, 1996, pp. 68–69, 76–79.
[53] Bauman, *Postmodern Ethics* (Blackwell: Oxford, 1993).

experienced “the Other”, the person concerned may appear as “the intimate Other”, “the alien Other”, or “the completely anonymous Other” who exists beyond our social horizon or outside our social space. “Classes” and “categories” of person come into existence in precisely this space, this tension between the extremes of intimacy and anonymity. According to Bauman, it is our varying and partially flawed knowledge of the behavioural norms followed by “the Other” that attracts our attention and reflection. We react to the fact that in various situations, “the Other” does not behave normally and “naturally”, based on our own norms and values.

Disturbing behaviour occurs, however, when the coordination between physical and social (cognitive) proximity is broken; when “the stranger” is made physically manifest within the boundaries of everyday life; when the person concerned lives in the house or on the farm next door. Not only does “the stranger” pose the threat of incorrect classification: what is even more frightening is that the person concerned poses a threat to the classification itself.

Thus, in trying to maintain a unity of physical and social proximity, a “stranger” may be treated in – broadly speaking – three different ways, according to Bauman:

> 1) The person concerned may be perceived as an *enemy*, to be fought and chased away.
>
> 2) The person concerned may be defined as a casual *guest*, to be received in accordance with the rules of civilization and hospitality, implying the expression of a set of rituals that isolate the person concerned and place him or her in a very distinct position.
>
> 3) Alternatively, the person concerned may be defined as a *prospective neighbour*, and then one must ensure as soon as possible that the person concerned is acting like a proper neighbour.

I think this perspective may serve as an approach to understanding the discussion of the Sámi in H.N. Since Sámi and Norwegians lived mostly side by side in Hálogaland, and had extensive interaction with each other, the Sámi could not be treated as complete “strangers”, let alone as “enemies” or “casual guests”. They were within the social space, so to speak. Yet they were not “proper neighbours”, either, given that they appeared distinctive in a cultural and cognitive sense. The solution was to treat them according to the third alternative, as “prospective neighbours” who, in the long run, would be won over to Christianity and thus incorporated fully into the community. There is an essential difference, in my opinion, between the way the Sámi are presented in H.N. and the depiction of the “other heathens”, who extended themselves towards Norway from the east. The depiction of the Sámi settlement area in the “wasteland” to the east of Norway may also be understood in the sense that the author perceives this as a buffer zone between the Norwegian kingdom and these truly “foreign” peoples. Unlike the Sámi, these peoples may

be said to be located beyond the social horizon.

4) Other, "foreign" peoples depicted in H.N.

In his geographical introduction, the author of H.N. also enumerates these heathen peoples in the north: There are "Karelians and Kvens, Horned Finns and two kinds of Bjarmians." (*scilicet Kiriali et Kwaeni, cornuti Finni ac utrique Biarmones)* (Storm (ed.), 1880, pp. 73–75) In the final part of this discussion I shall take a closer look at the presumable location of these different groups, who go by different "people's names", and their distinguishing characteristics in general.

The Kvens

The location of this group's area of origin and habitat and their functional relations with the Sámi appear to be relatively well clarified. However, the *etymological background* to the designated names they have been allocated and the question of their *ethnic status* have undergone a thorough discussion.

The oldest written sources from the West agree that Kvenland is located east of the Norwegians' land – especially along the northern part of it – and is more specifically located in the coastal regions around the northernmost parts of the Gulf of Bothnia. In Ohthere's account, the Kvens and the Norwegians are depicted as opponents, who sometimes carry out raids on one another. The Kvens are said to prefer small, light boats, which they pull overland and use in the lakes in the interior of northern Fennoscandia. From the end of the twelfth century onwards, Norse texts depict Kvenland regularly as an area on a par with Finland and Karelia, placing it between Hälsingland and Finland. The description in *Egils saga Skallagrímssonar*, dating from the first half of the thirteenth century, gives a general impression of Norwegians and the Kvens as competing collectors of Sámi furs, but it also relates that these two groups collaborated and sometimes entered into alliances against other stakeholders, such as the Karelians. Regarding their economy, the Kvens stand out during this period as a group that had specialized in trade and bartering with the inland Sámi, but who also carried out raids and plundering against them. The more exact geographical location of Kven settlement, in the coastal lands around the upper and innermost part of the Gulf of Bothnia, has been demonstrated by the investigations of Finnish scholar Kyösti Julku (1986).

Despite certain phonological issues, most researchers now seem to concur with an interpretation that links the Nordic term 'kven' to a Norse word rendered as *hvein* in Old Norse and as *hven*/*hvene* in Swedish and Danish dialects. This word must have signified "low-lying, marshy area" and, to some extent, "thin grass"/"area with thin grass". Thus, it must have been a terrain-descriptive word applicable to the topography of the coastal region. On the Finnish side, the Kvens are termed *kainulaiset* and the area around the upper part of the Gulf of Bothnia was called *Kainu* or *Kainuunmaa* in ancient times. This term is also found in Russian in the form of *kajani*, and in the name *Kaiano more* (the Kajan Sea),

applied to the innermost part of the Gulf of Bothnia.[54] Linguistically, the Norse and Finnish terms are so far apart that there can be no question of direct borrowing or synchronous influence. It has, however, been suggested that the Finnish *kainu* was borrowed earlier, from Old German, to signify "low-lying land". The Finnish historian Jouko Vahtola (1980) has suggested that the low-lying coastal regions along the inner part of the Gulf of Bothnia have been named independently from two sides – from two separate linguistic naming environments. On one hand, the Norse *hvein* may have been taken up by the Norwegians, who undertook trade and hunting expeditions in the interior of northern Fennoscandia and down to the Gulf of Bothnia. At the same time, the Finnish term may have been used as a place-name by Finnish ethnic groups who came from the south-eastern areas of Finland – Karelians and Savonians, who were following the same pursuits.[55]

In his doctoral dissertation of 1995, Swedish archaeologist Thomas Wallerström has turned sharply towards the view that the Kvens must have formed an ethnic group in their own right. In a detailed discussion of the corresponding Russian term *kajani*, Wallerström's perception is that both this and the equivalent Finnish and Nordic terms relate to population elements that played a key role within a widespread economic system built around the fur trade with the Sámi and hunters. This system extended from Norrbotten and eastwards to the Onega and Dvina regions. "Kvens" is thus conceived as a general term linked to economic functions within this trading system, and as such may comprise elements from several different peoples.

Regardless of how this may relate to the etymological basis for the naming of the Kvens, it seems to be most fruitful to emphasize their regional associations and economic functions throughout the early part of the Middle Ages. What can certainly be concluded from medieval sources is that "the Kvens" is used as a term for the inhabitants of a specific area around the northern Gulf of Bothnia coastal regions, an area that demonstrated certain territorial and topographical peculiarities in relation to the surrounding areas. These inhabitants further seem to have practised a special economic adaptation in which hunting and trade with the Sámi and other neighbouring peoples played a major role, running concurrently with a partial basis in agriculture and livestock. It is also worth noting that the last mention of the Kvens (*kvenene*) in a medieval context was in 1271,[56] while the *Birkarler* group, which preserved exactly corresponding economic functions throughout the Late Middle Ages and modern period, was mentioned for the first time in 1328, in the context of the Swedish Crown undertaking an affirmation and appraisal of their rights in relation to the people of Hälsingland.[57] This raises the question of whether one is to do with a continuity of the actual economic functions, while the terms themselves changed. During the sixteenth century, Finnish-speaking population groups from the inland river valleys – which included

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[54] Cf. the Russian language version of the Swedish-Russian border treaty of 1323 (see Gallén & Lind, 1991).
[55] Vahtola, *Tornedalens historia*, 1991, p. 209ff; cf. Niemi, 1999.
[56] It is related that in this year, Kvens and Karelians laid waste in Hålogaland: "Þa gorþu Kereliar ok Kvénir mikit hervirki á Hálogalanndi" (cf. *Islandske annaler*, pub. Gustav Storm, Christiania, 1888, p. 138.)
[57] The so-called "Täljestadgan" of September 5, 1328, published in, amongst others, *Fellman* III, p. 336.

some of the Birkarler – were also referred to as Kvens in Norwegian material ("*hwener*" or "*øst*(eastern)-*hvener*). There is nothing to suggest that the Kvens, during *later* historical processes, could not have formed a separate ethnic identity for themselves in such a way that it becomes reasonable to characterize them as an ethnic group. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the term "Kvens" became established as the term for Finnish-speaking immigrants from the river valleys who settled down along the coast in the north and west, not least along the coast of Finnmark.

The Karelians

These people, likewise, do not seem to offer any significant problems with regard to identification and location during the period in question. From an original heartland north and west of Ladoga (cf. the expression "the Karelian Isthmus"), Karelian settlement seems to have expanded to the north-west, north and north-east as early as the twelfth century. In the north-west they approached Savolax, and in 1143 there were reports of clashes with the Finnish population group *Häme* or *Hämäläiset*.[58] Elsewhere, Karelian expansion continued northwards, penetrating what had originally been Sámi settlement areas. Throughout this expansion, these areas were transformed into what would later become East Karelia, and during the fifteenth century the west coast of the White Sea was referred to as the "Karelian shore" (*Korel'skij bereg*). But as late as the second half of the sixteenth century there was still considerable Sámi settlement in this region.[59]

By the beginning of the fourteenth century, Karelian expansion seems to have reached so far north as to offer contact with the Sámi on the Kola Peninsula. Regarding the treaty of 1326 between Norway and Novgorod regarding joint taxation of Sámi in the area stretching from Lyngen to Kola, this seems to have confirmed an older agreement, according to which the King of Norway had the right to collect taxes from the eastern end of Kola "where there are half-Karelians or half-Sámi, who have had a Sámi mother" (*huar sem halfkarelar æða halfinnær ero, þeir sem finska moðor hafua aat*).[60] This seems to indicate that contact between the Karelians and the Sámi had already been so extensive that it provided a basis for marriage between these ethnic groups.

A peace treaty between Sweden and Novgorod three years earlier (in 1323) delineated at the same time a common Swedish-Russian taxation area covering most of the Sámi settlement in present-day northern Finland.[61] Both along the northern coast and in the interior of the northern Fennoscandia, the Sámi settlements could thus be integrated into Novgorod's economic system, based on trade and taxation. And both Karelian and Russian merchants had an important role to play in this traffic from the eastern side. The eastern Karelians, in particular, who came under the rule of Novogorod following a military settlement at the end of the High Middle Ages, came to play a key role in increasing Novgorod's influence among the Sámi, linking them more closely to Novgorod's system of

[58] The first Novgorod chronicle, trans. K. Rahbæk Schmidt, 1964, p. 43.
[59] Lukjančenko, 1979.
[60] *NgL* III, pp. 151–152.
[61] Gallén & Lind, 1991.

trade.

Throughout the Late Middle Ages and the sixteenth century, both Norse and Russian sources dating from that time portray Karelians and Norwegians as the main opponents and rivals in trade and taxation in the north. Norwegian pillaging raids to the White Sea are known from the years prior to 1326, as well those of 1419 and 1445. Conversely, the Karelians, especially, pursued their interests along the coasts of Troms and Finnmark, and Norwegian sources reveal eleven Karelian incursions along the northern Norwegian coast during the period 1250–1444.[62] The clashes are depicted as purely warring expeditions in these sources, but it is most likely that they were expressions of rival trade interests.

The 'Horned Finns'

This term should probably be viewed in the context of ethnic differentiation processes that took place in prehistoric times in the present-day Finnish region. As far as the complex ethnic situation on the North Calotte is concerned, archaeologists, historians and language researchers maintain increasingly that the various ethnic identities have arisen through long-term differentiation and "ethnification processes" among original heterogeneous groups of hunters and gatherers in northern Fennoscandia. According to this dynamic view of the emergence and maintenance of ethnic affiliation, these processes must have been reciprocal, in the sense that Sámi ethnic affiliation has been developed in interaction and contemporaneous with the establishment and generalization of a corresponding Finnish and North German ("Nordic") ethnic identity in other parts of Fennoscandia. Regarding the much-discussed question of the relationship between the ancestors of those who became the Sámi and the people of Finland, most researchers today reckon that an original population which existed in the present-day area of southern Finland – who may be regarded as the ancestors of both the Sámi and the people of Finland – initiated a process of linguistic and cultural differentiation during the course of the last two millennia before Christ. Encouraged by increased contact with Baltic and Germanic groups, some of this population adopted agricultural and livestock techniques, eventually becoming the precursors ("Proto-Finns") of the latter-day people of Finland, while the others continued with their old hunter/gatherer adaptation and were the ancestors of the Sámi ("Proto-Sámi").[63] In tandem with this, the original common Finnish-Sámi source language split during the period 1500–1000 B.C. into Proto-Sámi and Proto-Finnish language forms.[64]

It may seem as if there is still a linguistic memory of this originally common origin in the self-referential terms with which the Sámi and a Finnish people operate. Both the Sámi's own self-referential *sámi*/*sápmi*/*sápmelaš* and the old term for the Finnish group, *hämäläiset*, date back to a common original form *šämä*, which must have existed in the Sámi-Finnish language of origin. *Hämäläiset* – known in English as *Tavastians* – maintained close and institutionalized trading relations with the Sámi during the Iron Age.[65]

[62] Bratrein, 1989, p. 235; cf. Hansen, 1996, p. 57, p. 61.
[63] Hansen & Olsen, 2014, pp. 22–31; cf. Odner, 1983.
[64] Hansen & Olsen, 2014, pp. 133–139; cf. Uibopuu, 1988, pp. 92–97; Strade, 1992, p. 575.
[65] Hansen & Olsen, 2014, p. 36; Uibopuu, 1988, p. 115.

This perception of a cultural and linguistic differentiation between the ancestors of the people of Finland and the Sámi generates a certain reverberation when we look at the exonyms used in Nordic languages to denote the Sámi and the people of Finland. A characteristic ambiguity is known to exist here regarding the expression "Finn" (*finn(e)*). This ambiguity created difficulties as early as the Middle Ages, e.g. in Snorri's *Heimskringla*, whose *Óláfs saga helga* cites a lay (a short lyric poem) by Sigvatr skáld in which the term *finnlender* is used to distinguish the inhabitants of Finland. It is also worth noting that European, continental writers describing geographical conditions and the peoples of the Nordic region seem, from the sixth century onwards, to need to distinguish the Sámi from "the other Finns". For this purpose they adopt a new term, "*skriðfinner*".[66]

In my opinion, it is through such an interaction and differentiation perspective that the term *hornfinner* (Horn Finns) in H.N. should be viewed.[67] The participle *cornuti* or "equipped with horns" should be perceived as a distinguishing characteristic that is applied in order to distinguish this group from other "Finns". Two primary possibilities exist here: it may either have served to distinguish the ancestors of the people of Finland, delimiting them from the Sámi, who were consequently called "Finns" (*finni*). In this interpretation it is telling that neither Finland nor its inhabitants, in the modern sense of *finnlendere* (people of Finland), are mentioned anywhere else in H.N. This may also match the order of the geographical listing. But the term could also have served to specify one of the Proto-Finnish peoples in relation to others. This leads us to consider as an option the *hämäläiset* or *Tavastians*, who had close and well-organized trading connections with the Sámi in Finland as early as the Iron Age. The term may have been used to distinguish this group, amongst other things in the delimitation of *suomalaiset*, which were settled longer to the south-west, in the region later known as "real Finland". It is interesting to note that Gustav Storm, too, in the notes system of his 1880 edition, tentatively identified *cornuti Finni* with precisely *Hæmmerne*, or *hämäläiset*.[68]

'Two kinds of Biarmians'

According to the oldest Western sources (Ohthere, *Heimskringla*, *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar* the "Biarmian" settlement area appears to extend to the south coast of White Sea, as well as the northern parts of the Dvina river valley. But in the same way as for the Kvens, the potential status of the "Biarmians" as an ethnic group in their own right, and the etymology behind this term, are widely discussed.

Based on Ohthere's remark that "he thought the Finns and the Biarmians spoke almost the same language", the following alternatives have been posited concerning

[66] Cf. Hansen & Olsen, 2014, pp. 35–37, 126.

[67] As Gustav Storm (1880, p. 74) observed, the term was also used in a piece in "*Nökkur blöð úr Hauksbók*". There, this group is mentioned in connection with "Kvenland" and an explanation is provided which is also linked to a discussion on satyrs: *Heitir enn Quennland, þar ero oft orrostr miclar oc eigo þar sialfar iafnan bardaga ... Er su þioð er Hornfinnar heita, þeim er horn niðrbiugt i enni oc ero mannetor.*

[68] Storm (ed.), 1880, p. 74.

identification with earlier and later known peoples:[69]

> 1) The Permyak-speaking ancestors of the Komi people of our time.
>
> 2) Identification with a Baltic Finnish-speaking people: either the Votes, the Vepsians or the Karelians.

Etymologically, the name "Biarmian" has been associated with both the Baltic-Finnish word *perä-maa*, which denotes a "faraway, remote country",[70] and the Komi-Zyrian word *parma* meaning "wilderness", "wasteland".[71]

Through the works of Finnish researcher Matti Haavio (1965) and Norwegian historian Håkon Stang (1977), it now seems probable that the Biarmians should be largely identified with the Baltic-Finnish people the Vepsians, referred to in ancient Russian sources as *ves'* and in Arabic as *Wīsū*. The Vepsians' original settlement area seems to have been the areas of land between Lake Ladoga, Lake Onega and the Beloozero region. From this heartland they shall, however, have moved northwards and eastwards, establishing themselves in the River Dvina's fluvial basin – possibly as early as the tenth century, but certainly during the course of the eleventh century. In Russian this area was called *Zavoločje*, i.e. "the country beyond the isthmus or the watershed".

From the Russian side, the Vepsians might be referred to as *Čud'* or "Chud".[72] This term, however, was not only applied to the Vepsians but also to a series of Baltic-Finnish peoples with whom the Russians associated, including the *Votes* and the *Estonians* in the west. Indications of direction or area names – like *Zavoločje* – were therefore used to distinguish between the various groups of people.

The Russian term "Chud" was thus an overall term and did not provide any precise ethnic identification in itself. Perhaps we might venture to consider the Norse "Biarmians" as an equivalent "sack category"? In that case, we should renounce the linking of "the Biarmians" unilaterally to some later-known people, and rather view the term in line with "Birkarler" and "the Kvens": as an amalgamation of traders who served distinct economic functions with regard to the Sámi, the Norwegians and the Russians, playing a role as intermediaries within a trading network that would eventually be dominated by Novgorod.[73] If "Biarmian" should be perceived as such a functional term, deriving from a distinct

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[69] Bergsland, 1975, p. 8; Stang, 1977, p. 97.
[70] Sjögren, 1861, p. 295; Stang, 1977, pp.106–109, 120.
[71] Carpelan, 1993, p. 231.
[72] Etymologically, the term *Čud'* may itself be derived from an assumed pre-Slavic form **tjudjo* (foreign), which may in turn have been borrowed from the Gothic *þiuða*, or the Germanic **þeuðo* (Melnikova & Petrukhin, 1990–1991, pp. 223–225). Cf. the Old Norse term *þjóð* (people; nation). Although this may have been the original etymology, new and distinct connotations have nonetheless been attached as a result of the interaction between Slavic and Finno-Ugrian peoples.
[73] Christian Carpelan, 1993.

economic adaptation, then this group may well have included several population elements of various ethnic origins. Aside from the Vepsians, the group may also have included Karelians and Permyak-speaking people who comprised the ancestors of the present-day *Komi*.

Such an approach also raises the possibility that the concrete ethnic composition of the “Biarmian” group may have changed over time: the Vepsian population element may have been very strong in the Early Middle Ages, whereas the Karelians grew during the course of the High Middle Ages and became dominant during the Late Middle Ages – in line with Karelian expansion towards the White Sea region. Such a course of development would chime with later source statements. A Russian source dating from 1419 takes it for granted that Karelians are present in “the Zavoločje country”,[74] and an English ambassador to Russia in 1618-1620 reports knowledgeably that “the people around Kholmogory were in times gone by called the Chud, and spoke a different language from the Samoyeds and the Sámi, but now they are not there anymore.”[75]

Such a course of development may also lie behind the reference made by the author of H.N. to the “two kinds of Biarmians”, or *utrique Biarmones*. A similar distinction relates back to Saxo Grammaticus (ca. 1200), which refers to *Biarmia ulterior* (farther Biarmia/Biarmaland), and thus also requires a *Biarmia citerior* (nearer Biarmia/Biarmaland).[76] And this distinction is later referred to by Olaus Magnus (*Historia de Gentibus Septentrionalibus...*, 1555, book I, chapter 1). The “one Biarmaland” is thus identifiable with the lower areas of the Dvina river valley, where Norse expeditions encountered the Biarmians during the Early Middle Ages, but where Karelian settlement established itself more strongly during the High Middle Ages. The “second Biarmaland” may refer to other areas where Karelian settlement gained a foothold during the High Middle Ages, e.g. along the west coast of the White Sea, or along the south coast of the Kola Peninsula. If the Norse term “Biarmians” is to be perceived as being in tandem with the Russian term “Chud”, it may also be the case that the differentiation between the “two kinds of Biarmians” followed on from an original Russian distinction between various types of “Chud”: either between the western and the northern “Chud”, or between the Vepsians (“the Chud”), who were still living in their heartland, and those who in the Early Middle Ages had moved to the Dvina river valley.

5) Conclusion.

If, finally, we return to the question of the instigator of H.N., this review should enable us to draw the following conclusions about the author’s knowledge and background. He seems to be very well informed about the geographical and ethnographical conditions in the north, presenting an overview that seems to match both the facts and the knowledge status within the best-informed circles of that

[74] Gejman, 1941.
[75] Simoni, 1929, p. 126.
[76] Cf. Gustav Storm in the notes system to his edition of *Historia Norwegiae*, 1880, p. 75.

time – as far as it is possible to attest to this from contemporaneous and subsequent sources. He nonetheless adapts this information to the prevailing "paradigmatic" views as to how an organized and well-ruled "kingdom" should be territorially defined, according to Old Germanic thinking. In his depiction of the peoples who stand outside the Norse cultural community, he draws a relatively clear distinction between the Sámi, who are still "within the social horizon" and live largely side by side with the Norwegians in Hálogaland, and the other peoples who extend themselves towards the kingdom from the north and the east, and who are partly separated from the kingdom because of the buffer zone created by the "wasteland" to the east. These peoples appear more distant, while the Sámi are, as it were, defined as "prospective neighbours" who should be won over to Christian religion and the cultural community. The well organized and Christian Kingdom of Norway is thus assigned a clear missionary task, primarily as far as the Sámi are concerned, but subsequently also vis-à-vis the "other heathen peoples" in the north.

Since the author also reproduces eyewitness descriptions of situations interacting with the Sámi, it is reasonable to assume that he has – at least for periods of time – resided in reasonable proximity to the Sámi settlement areas. We are thus close to being able to guess that we are dealing with a cleric who has served in central or northern Norway, possibly in Nidaros.

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Map caption text:

Ethnic groups in northern Fennoscandia and Northwest Russia during the Middle Ages.