Fig. 8.1: The Dagmar Cross, front. National Museum of Denmark.

Lukas Raupp

Chapter 8

Importing Jerusalem: Relics of the True Cross as Political Legitimation in Early Twelfth-Century Denmark and Norway

“Among the many outstanding deeds which King Sigurðr performed, one thing in particular is remembered with words of praise: that he voyaged to Jerusalem with his fleet in the seventh year after that city had been freed from the tyranny of the Persians by the grace of God. [...] He performed many bold deeds, and was honoured by King Baldwin with numerous gifts, the foremost of which, and the one rightly to be placed before all the rest, was a piece of wood from the Lord’s cross.”¹

This is how Theodoricus the Monk in his *Historia de antiquitate regum Norwagiensium* (c.1177–1188) explicates the importance of the relic of the True Cross that King Sigurd “Jerusalem-traveller” [*jórsalafari*], co-ruler of Norway, acquired in Jerusalem a few generations earlier. King Sigurd and his contemporary King Erik the Good [Ejegod] of Denmark in fact appear to have been the very first Scandinavians to import relics of the True Cross to their home countries shortly after the First Crusade.² This chapter discusses the impact these relics had as material visualizations of Jerusalem in early twelfth-century Denmark and Norway, focusing on their legitimizing quality with regard to rulership.

The cult of relics was prominent during the Middle Ages, as many local and trans-regional saints and their relics were venerated as intermediaries between man and God. Relics of the True Cross received extraordinary veneration, as they were

¹ Theodoricus Monachus, *Historia de Antiquitate Regum Norwagiensium*, ed. Gustav Storm, Monumenta Historica Norvegiae. Latinske kildeskrifter til Norges historie i middelalderen, Kristiania: A.W. Brøgger, 1880 (trans. *An Account of the Ancient History of the Norwegian Kings*, in *Text Series 11*, trans. David McDougall and Ian McDougall, London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 1998): “Inter multa, quæ Siwardus rex egregie gessit, illius præcipue laudibus celebratur, quos Hierosolymam cum classe profectus est septimo, posteaquam illa civitas a tyrannide Persarum Dei misericordia erepta est, anno. [. . .] Multis igitur strenue gestis plurimisque a rege Balduwino honoratus donariis, inter quæ præcipuum et merito ceteris anteponendum fuit portio ligni crucis dominicæ [. . .].”

² Cf. Lukas Raupp, “Das Wahre Kreuz in den nordischen Königreichen zu Beginn des 12. Jhs. – Zu Herrschaftsbegründung und Machtanspruch durch Reliquienbesitz” (Master Thesis, Ruhr-Universität Bochum, 2014), 28f. 47, 63, 68.

closely connected to the Passion of Christ.³ They also served various different purposes: not only were they used during liturgy or carried into battle, but they could also be employed as a means to legitimize rightful rulership by the grace of God.⁴ Among the other *arma Christi* (“weapons of Christ”) was the Crown of Thorns – a powerful object closely connected to Christ triumphant, the protection of the realm, the maintenance of order and justice, and hence to the ruler’s legitimacy.⁵ The Holy Lance was a supreme symbol of victory and legitimate rulership, and the Holy Blood, whose healing powers were evoked during veneration in the High and Later Middle Ages, made the passion relics what they were, because it had touched them when it was spilled during the crucifixion of Christ.⁶

Of all the associations briefly mentioned here, the legitimizing quality – especially that of the True Cross – was certainly not the least important one. Scholars who have discussed this issue have focused mainly on Byzantium as well as the Holy Roman Empire, and more recently on the Kingdom of Jerusalem. Though relics have been the focus of scholarly discourse on numerous occasions, the history of

3 Cf. for instance Anton Legner, *Reliquien in Kunst und Kult: Zwischen Antike und Aufklärung* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft (WGB), 1995), 55, 343; Angenendt, Arnold. *Heilige und Reliquien. Die Geschichte ihres Kultes vom frühen Christentum bis zur Gegenwart*. Munich: Verlag C. H. Beck, 1994, 149–166, 214–217; Arnold Angenendt, “Der Heilige. Auf Erden – im Himmel,” in *Politik und Heiligenverehrung im Hochmittelalter*, ed. Jürgen Petersohn, Vorträge und Forschungen (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1994), 33f., 41–44; Berent Schwineköper, “Christus-Reliquien – Verehrung und Politik. Studien über die Mentalität der Menschen des früheren Mittelalters, insbesondere über die religiöse Haltung und sakrale Stellung der früh- und hochmittelalterlichen deutschen Kaiser und Könige,” *Blätter für deutsche Landesgeschichte* 117 (1981): 189–91, 93f.; František Graus, “Mittelalterliche Heiligenverehrung als sozialgeschichtliches Phänomen,” in *Heiligenverehrung in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, ed. Peter Dinzelsbacher and Dieter Bauer (Ostfildern: Schwabenverlag, 1990), 86f.

4 Since the various qualities and meanings attached to the relics as well as different periods of intensified worship cannot be presented here in detail cf. for instance Nikolas Jaspert, “The True Cross of Jerusalem in the Latin West. Mediterranean Connections and Institutional Agency,” in *Visual Constructs of Jerusalem*, ed. Bianca Kühnel, *et al.*, Cultural Encounters in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), 208–13; Nikolas Jaspert, “Vergegenwärtigungen Jerusalems in Architektur und Reliquienkult,” in *Jerusalem im Hoch- und Spätmittelalter. Konflikte und Konfliktbewältigung, Vorstellungen und Vergegenwärtigungen*, ed. Nikolas Jaspert, *et al.*, Campus Historische Studien (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2001), 252; Schwineköper, “Christus-Reliquien,” 221–24, 47–81.

5 For Crown of Thorn relics in Scandinavia, see Chapter 9 (Lena Liepe), 166–87.

6 Cf. for example Caroline Walker Bynum, “The Blood of Christ in the Later Middle Ages,” *Church History* 71 (2002): 693; Peter Dinzelsbacher, “Das Blut Christi in der Religiosität des Mittelalters,” in *900 Jahre Heilig-Blut-Verehrung in Weingarten 1094–1994. Festschrift*, ed. Robert Kruse and Hans Ulrich Rudolf (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1994), 417f.; Gia Toussaint, “Blut im Flakon. Orientalische Fläschchen zur Präsentation des Blutes Christi im Mittelalter,” in *Blut: die Kraft des ganz besonderen Saftes in Medizin, Literatur, Geschichte und Kultur*, ed. Christine Knust and Dominik Groß, Studien des Aachener Kompetenzzentrums für Wissenschaftsgeschichte (Kassel: University Press, 2010), 192, 203f.

relics in Scandinavia in general and passion relics in particular have attracted comparatively little attention so far.⁷

The True Cross: History, Legitimation of Rulership, and Material Visualization of Jerusalem

A brief historical overview of the history of the cross relic inevitably includes the legend of its rediscovery according to which Empress Helena (c.246–c.330), mother of Constantine the Great, discovered it together with the Holy Nails and the crosses of the two thieves who were crucified alongside Christ. One part of the relic was sent to Constantinople, where it remained until the city was sacked by crusaders in 1204. Another part was deposited at Jerusalem, until it was lost when the Persians conquered the city. It was recovered by Emperor Heraclius (610–641), returned to the city for a short period, and was finally sent to Byzantium for protection before Jerusalem was sacked again in 637 – only to be miraculously rediscovered during the First Crusade.⁸ In its aftermath, the True Cross served as a sign of victory and

7 Among the more recent examples are: Lena Liepe, “Kyrkans sanna skatter: Relikerna i Oslo Mariakyrka och kungliga relikdonationer i det senmedeltida Norden,” in *En aktivist for Middelalderbyen Oslo: Festschrift til Petter B. Molaug i anledning hans 70-årsdag 19. desember 2014*, ed. Lisa-Marie Bye Johansen (Oslo: Novus Forlag, 2015); Jón Viðar Sigurdsson, “Distribution of Reliquaries and Relics in the Bishopric of Hólar, c.1320,” in *Paint and Piety: Collected Essays on Medieval Painting and Polychrome Sculpture*, ed. Noëlle L.W. Streeton and Kaja Kollandsrud (London: Archetype Publications, 2014); Raupp, “Das Wahre Kreuz in den nordischen Königreichen” Pia Sentkowski et al., “Das Wahre Kreuz in Skandinavien – Herrschaftslegitimation und transmediterrane Diplomatie am Beispiel der Palästinafahrt Sigurðr Jórslafaris,” *Zentrum für Mittelmeerstudien Working Paper* 6 (2013); Reidar Astås, “Kristus-relikvier i norske middelalderkirker,” <http://www-bib.hive.no/tekster/Astaas-2011-Kristus-relikvier-i-norske-middelalderkirker.pdf> (2011); Haki Antonsson, “Saints and Relics in Early Christian Scandinavia,” *Mediaeval Scandinavia* 15 (2005); Margrete Syrstad Andås, “A Royal Chapel for a Royal Relic?,” in *The Nidaros Office of the Holy Blood: Liturgical Music in Medieval Norway*, ed. Gisela Attinger and Andreas Haug, Senter for middelalderstudier skrifter (Trondheim: Tapir, 2004).

8 The different versions of the rediscovery and the development of the legend or the question of whether Heraklios transferred the relic completely or partially cannot be discussed in detail here. Cf. Holger A. Klein, *Byzanz, der Westen und das “wahre Kreuz.” Die Geschichte einer Reliquie und ihrer künstlerischen Fassung in Byzanz und im Abendland*, Spätantike, frühes Christentum, Byzanz. Kunst im ersten Jahrtausend, Reihe B: Studien und Perspektiven (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2004), 21–7, 35–43; Holger A. Klein, “Eastern Objects and Western Desire Relics and Reliquaries between Byzantium and the West,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 58 (2004): 300f.; Holger A. Klein, “Sacred Relics and Imperial Ceremonies at the Great Palace of Constantinople,” in *Visualisierungen von Herrschaft. Frühmittelalterliche Residenzen, Gestalt und Zeremoniell*, ed. Franz Alto Bauer (Istanbul: Ege Yayınları, 2006), 79–81, 88f.; Legner 1995, *Reliquien in Kunst und Kult*: 73–6; Kelly Holbert, “Relics and Reliquaries of the True Cross,” in *Art and Architecture of Late Medieval Pilgrimage in Northern Europe and England*, ed. Sarah Blick and Rita Tekippe, Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 337–9, 48f., 57f.; Karin

became the central relic and focal point of the newly founded Kingdom of Jerusalem. According to Nikolas Jaspert, relics of the True Cross, as well as their containers (cruciform reliquaries called *staurothekai*), were “material visualizations of Jerusalem.” When transferred to other areas, they translocated a sacred place in the sense that Jerusalem itself was transferred and knowledge about the meaning of the relic was furthered in the regions in question.⁹ The Jerusalem relic of the True Cross remained in the kingdom of Jerusalem until it was lost at the battle of Hattin in 1187, which precipitated the Third Crusade.¹⁰ The cross as a sign of victory was also associated with legitimate power in Byzantium, referring to the Constantinian tradition and the victory in the sign of the cross at Milvian Bridge. Hence, the relic was carried into battle and paraded in processions as a symbol of legitimate rulership. Likewise, small pieces of the relic were given to foreign dignitaries, and oaths had to be sworn on it.¹¹

Krause, “Konstantins Kreuze. Legendenbildung und Artefakte im Mittelalter,” in *Hybride Kulturen im mittelalterlichen Europa. Vorträge und Workshops einer Frühlingsschule*, ed. Michael Borgolte and Bernd Schneidmüller, Abhandlungen und Beiträge zur historischen Komparatistik (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2010), 172f., 80f.; Jürgen Krüger, “Die Grabeskirche zu Jerusalem,” in *Sehnsucht nach Jerusalem. Wege zum Heiligen Grab*, ed. Ursula Röper (Berlin: Lukas Verlag, 2009), 34; Schwineköper, “Christus-Reliquien,” 195; Gia Toussaint, “Die Kreuzzüge und die Erfindung des Wahren Kreuze,” in *Hybride Kulturen im mittelalterlichen Europa. Vorträge und Workshops einer Frühlingsschule*, ed. Michael Borgolte and Bernd Schneidmüller, Abhandlungen und Beiträge zur historischen Komparatistik (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2009), 151; Gia Toussaint, *Kreuz und Knochen. Reliquien zur Zeit der Kreuzzüge* (Berlin: Reimer, 2011), 50f.; Jaspert, “Vergegenwärtigungen Jerusalems,” 251f.; Nikolas Jaspert “Das Heilige Grab, das Wahre Kreuz, Jerusalem und das Heilige Land. Wirkung, Wandel und Vermittler hochmittelalterlicher Attraktoren,” in *Konflikt und Bewältigung. Die Zerstörung der Grabeskirche zu Jerusalem im Jahr 1009*, ed. Thomas Pratsch, Millenium-Studien zur Kultur und Geschichte des ersten Jahrtausend n. Chr. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2011), 69, 87.

9 Cf. Jaspert, “Das Heilige Grab, das Wahre Kreuz,” and Jaspert, “The True Cross of Jerusalem in the Latin West,” n.10.

10 Jaspert, “The True Cross of Jerusalem in the Latin West,” 213–5, 20f.; Jaspert, “Das Heilige Grab, das Wahre Kreuz” 69, 86–89; Jaspert 2001, “Vergegenwärtigungen Jerusalems,” 245–7, 53; Nikolas Jaspert, “‘Wo seine Füße standen (Ubi steterunt pedes eius)’. Jerusalemsehnsucht und andere Motivationen mittelalterlicher Kreuzfahrer,” in *Die Kreuzzüge. Kein Krieg ist heilig*, ed. Hans-Jürgen Kotzur (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 2004), 183; Giuseppe Ligato, “The Political Meanings of the Relic of the Holy Cross among the Crusaders and in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. An Example of 1185,” in *Autour de la première croisade. Actes du colloque de la Society for the Study of the Crusades and the Latin East*, ed. Michel Balard, Publications de la Sorbonne, Série Byzantina Sorbonensia (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1996), 319; Alan V. Murray, “‘Mighty Against the Enemies of Christ’. The Relic of the True Cross in the Armies of the Kingdom of Jerusalem,” in *The Crusades and Their Source Essays Presented to Bernard Hamilton*, ed. John France and William Zajac (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), 218, 22, 28, 31; Holbert, “Relics and Reliquaries,” 342; Toussaint, *Kreuz und Knochen*, 50f.

11 Klein, *Byzanz, der Westen und das “wahre Kreuz”*, 79, 90f., 171, 76; Klein, “Eastern Objects and Western Desire,” 284; Klein, “Sacred Relics and Imperial Ceremonies,” 80, 89, 94–6; Anatole Frolow, *La relique de la Vraie Croix. Recherches sur le développement d’un culte*, Archives de l’Orient Chrétien (Paris: Institut Français d’Études Byzantines, 1961), 286–352; Jaspert, “Vergegenwärtigungen Jerusalems,” 252f.,

Some of these functions were fulfilled by the Holy Lance in the Holy Roman Empire – nonetheless, the Lance apparently needed legitimation itself, as one or several of the Holy Nails were worked into its blade shortly thereafter. The Holy Lance gradually lost importance as soon as a rather impressive piece of the True Cross was available at the beginning of the eleventh century.¹² Similar observations can be made with regard to

55; Peter Schreiner, “Diplomatische Geschenke zwischen Byzanz und dem Westen ca. 800–1200. Eine Analyse der Texte mit Quellenanhang,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 58 (2004): 268–82; Klaus Schreiner, “Signa Victricia. Heilige Zeichen in kriegerischen Konflikten des Mittelalter,” in *Zeichen – Rituale – Werte. Internationales Kolloquium des Sonderforschungsbereichs 496 an der Westfälischen Wilhelms-Universität Münster*, ed. Gerd Althoff, Symbolische Kommunikation und gesellschaftliche Wertesysteme (Münster: Rhema, 2004), 262–65, 84, 86; Alexander Pierre Bronisch, *Reconquista und Heiliger Krieg. Die Deutung des Krieges im christlichen Spanien von den Westgoten bis ins frühe 12. Jahrhundert*, Spanische Forschungen der Görresgesellschaft (Münster: Aschendorff, 1998), 291; Krause, “Konstantins Kreuze,” 171–7, 81; Schweineköper, “Christus-Reliquien,” 195–9, 202, 18, 29; Ligato, “The Political Meanings of the Relic of the Holy Cross,” 317; Toussaint, “Die Kreuzzüge und die Erfindung des Wahren Kreuze,” 152; Alexandru Ștefan Anca, *Herrschaftliche Repräsentation und kaiserliches Selbstverständnis: Berührung der westlichen mit der byzantinischen Welt in der Zeit der ersten Kreuzzüge*, Symbolische Kommunikation und gesellschaftliche Wertesysteme (Münster: Rhema, 2010), 101; Apostolos Spanos and Nektarios Zarras, “Representations of Emperors as Saints in Byzantine Textual and Visual Source,” in *Hybride Kulturen im mittelalterlichen Europa. Vorträge und Workshops einer Frühlingsschule*, ed. Michael Borgolte and Bernd Schneidmüller, Abhandlungen und Beiträge zur historischen Komparatistik (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2009), 63–66, 77; cf. also note 48.

12 Schweineköper, “Christus-Reliquien,” 190–3, 208–15, 220f., 226–33., 242, 245, 270f.; 276–81; Luca Burkart, *Das Blut der Märtyrer. Genese, Bedeutung und Funktion mittelalterlicher Schätze*, Norm und Struktur (Cologne: Böhlau, 2009), 231–33; Peter Worm, “Die Heilige Lanze. Bedeutungswandel und Verehrung eines Herrschaftszeichens,” in *Arbeiten aus dem Marburger Hilfswissenschaftlichen Institut*, ed. Peter Worm and Eisenlohr, Elementa diplomatica (Marburg: Universitäts Bibliothek, 2000), 179, 82f., 88, 90, 94–204, 10; Jörg Rogge, *Die deutschen Könige im Mittelalter. Wahl und Krönung*, second ed. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft (WBG), 2010), 97; János Bak, “Holy Lance, Holy Crown, Holy Dexter: Sanctity of Insignia in Medieval East Central Europe,” in *Anfologion. Vlast', obshchestvo, kultura v slavianskom mire v srednie veka k 70-letiiu Borisa Nikolaevicha Florii*, ed. Gennadij Litavrin, Slaviane i ikh sosedi (Moscow: Indrik, 2008), 56f.; Percy Ernst Schramm, “Die ‘Heilige Lanze’: Reliquie und Herrschaftszeichen des Reiches und ihre Replik in Krakau. Ein Überblick über die Geschichte der Königslanze,” in *Herrschaftszeichen und Staatssymbolik. Beiträge zu ihrer Geschichte vom 3. bis zum 16. Jahrhundert*, ed. Percy Ernst Schramm, MGH Schriften (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1955), 526; Klein, *Byzanz, der Westen und das ‘wahre Kreuz’*, 38, 91; Stefan Weinfurter, *Herrschaft und Reich der Salier. Grundlinien einer Umbruchzeit*, third ed. (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1992), 56f.; Mechthild Schulze-Dörlamm, “Heilige Nägel und heilige Lanzen,” in *Byzanz. Das Römerreich im Mittelalter*, ed. Falko Daim and Jörg Drauschke, Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum. Monographien (Mainz: Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum, 2010), 133–49; Jaspert, “Vergegenwärtigungen Jerusalems,” 264; Bronisch, *Reconquista und Heiliger Krieg*, 317; Franz Kirchweger, “‘Crux plena ligno dominico et lancea sancti Mauriti’.” Das Reichskreuz in der Wiener Schatzkammer und seine Reliquien,” in *Im Zeichen des Kreuzes: Die Limburger Staurothek und ihre Geschichte*, ed. August Heuser and Mathias Theodor Kloft (Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner, 2009), 47; Franz-Reiner Erkens, *Herrschersakralität im Mittelalter. Von den Anfängen bis zum Investiturstreit* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2006), 27–33, 156–89.

the Iberian Peninsula¹³ and the Kingdom of Jerusalem. These areas have been studied quite frequently with respect to passion relics, but Scandinavia has usually only played a marginal role or has even been omitted entirely.¹⁴

There is, however, reason to believe that the legitimizing quality of the relic of the True Cross was not limited to the aforementioned areas. According to the surviving sources, two Scandinavian kings, Erik the Good (r. 1095–1103) and Sigurd the Crusader [*jórsalafari*] (r. 1103–1130), were granted gifts of the relic in Byzantium/Jerusalem in the first decade of the twelfth century. Therefore, this chapter now turn to the relics of the True Cross in Norway and Denmark during the period in question by using Nikolas Jaspert's concept of "material visualization of Jerusalem" as a frame of reference.

Scandinavian Kingship

Before turning to the case studies, a few very general characteristics of medieval Scandinavian kingship need to be outlined. In comparison to other regions, Scandinavian kingship was characterized by a relatively weak position with rather limited dynastic claims and access to resources and jurisdiction. As well, an election was necessary, and for a long period martial prowess and success, especially on the battlefield, were crucial for legitimizing power. Royal blood was mandatory, but neither being born in wedlock nor primogeniture were requirements – which allowed for many pretenders. The rather late development of royal insignia in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries is also worth mentioning. Furthermore, the introduction of the Christian faith provided a new ideological basis for legitimate rulership, but also increased pressure to adhere to it.¹⁵

13 Schreiner, "Signa Victricia. Heilige Zeichen in kriegerischen Konflikten des Mittelalter," 265; Klein, *Byzanz, der Westen und das „wahre Kreuz*, 79, 171; Bronisch, *Reconquista und Heiliger Krieg*, 290f, 315f.; Jaspert, "Vergegenwärtigungen Jerusalems," 252f.; Ligato, "The Political Meanings of the Relic of the Holy Cross," 317; Schweineköper, "Christus-Reliquien," 201; Alexander Pierre Bronisch, "Krönungsritus und Kronenbrauch im Westgotenreich von Toledo," *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte/Germanistische Abteilung* 116 (1999): 41; Bronisch, "Krönungsritus und Kronenbrauch im Reich von Asturien und León," *Studi medievali Ser. 3*, no. 39 (1998): 332f.; Worm, "Die Heilige Lanze," 109; Deborah Gerish, "The True Cross and the Kings of Jerusalem," *The Haskins Society Journal* 8 (1996): 140.

14 An example is the works of Anatole Frolov, who attempted to record as many mentions of cross relics and reliquaries as possible in the 1960s. These works substantially still form the basis of almost any publication concerning the cross, but he mentions only very few Scandinavian examples (the majority of which are part of late medieval/early modern relic lists). cf. Frolov, Anatole. *La relique de la Vraie Croix. Recherches sur le développement d'un culte*. Archives de l'Orient Chrétien. Paris: Institut Français d'Études Byzantines, 1961, 300f., No. 278, 282; 309f., No. 297; 544, No. 826; 597–99., No. 959, 960; 611–15, No. 992, 994; Anatole Frolov, *Les reliquaires de la Vraie Croix*, Archives de l'Orient Chrétien (Paris: Institut Français d'Études Byzantines, 1965).

15 For a summary cf. Raupp, "Das Wahre Kreuz in den nordischen Königreichen," 12–15, cf. also Sentkowski et al., "Das Wahre Kreuz in Skandinavien," 14; Erich Hoffmann, "Coronation and Coronation

Relics of the True Cross in Denmark and their Relation to Erik the Good

The first passion relic to reach Scandinavia appears to have been the piece of the True Cross which, according to the Danish chronicler Saxo Grammaticus (c.1160–c.1220), was sent to Slangerup from Byzantium by King Erik the Good of Denmark (c.1056–1103), one of Svend Estridsen's numerous sons who were to succeed their father and successively each other, at the beginning of the twelfth century. Cooperation with the church to make up for the family's weak claim to the throne had already been essential to Svend

Ordines in Medieval Scandinavia," in *Coronation Medieval and Early Modern Monarchic Ritual*, ed. János Bak (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 125–43; Michael Gelting, "The Kingdom of Denmark," in *Christianization and the Rise of Christian Monarchy. Scandinavia, Central Europe and Rus', c. 900–1200*, ed. Nora Berend (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 87–89; Birgit Sawyer and Peter Sawyer, *Medieval Scandinavia: From Conversion to Reformation, circa 800–1500* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 39, 62, 84, 89f., 92f., 216; Else Roesdahl, "The Scandinavian Kingdom," in *From Viking to Crusader. The Scandinavians and Europe, 800–1200*, ed. Else Roesdahl and David Mackenzie Wilson (New York: Rizzoli, 1992), 32, 39f.; Dieter Strauch, *Mittelalterliches nordisches Recht bis 1500. Eine Quellenkunde*, Ergänzungsbände RGA (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2011), 21, 48–50, 63; Alastair Carroll, "The Role of the Varangian Guard in Byzantine Rebellions and Usurpations, 988–1204" (PhD Thesis, Queens University of Belfast, 2005), 154, 56, 60; Elisabeth Vestergaard, "A Note on Viking Age Inauguration," in *Coronation Medieval and Early Modern Monarchic Ritual*, ed. János Bak (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 122; Birgit Sawyer and Peter Sawyer, "Scandinavia Enters Christian Europe," in *The Cambridge History of Scandinavia*, ed. Knut Helle, The Nordic Series (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 158f.; Philip Line, *Kingship and State Formation in Sweden 1130–1290*, The Northern World (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 33; Jón Viðar Sigurdsson, "The Norse Community," in *The Norwegian Domination and the Norse World c.1100–1400*, ed. Steinar Imsen (Trondheim: Tapir Academic Press, 2010), 65f.; Thomas Lindkvist, "Early Political Organisation. Introductory Survey," in *Cambridge History of Scandinavia*, ed. Knut Helle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 166; Thomas Lindkvist, "Kings and Provinces in Sweden," in *The Cambridge History of Scandinavia*, ed. Knut Helle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 225–9; Knut Helle, "Towards Nationally Organised Systems of Government. Introductory Survey," in *The Cambridge History of Scandinavia*, ed. Knut Helle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 347; Thomas Lindkvist, "Legitimation of Power and Crusades as Europeanisation in Medieval Sweden," in *The Reception of Medieval Europe in the Baltic Sea Region. Papers of the XIIth Visby Symposium Held at Gotland University Visby*, ed. Jörn Staecker, Acta Visbyensia (Visby: Gotland University Press, 2009), 33; Sverre Bagge, "Ideologies and Mentalities," in *The Cambridge History of Scandinavia*, ed. Knut Helle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 469–73; Sverre Bagge, *Cross and Scepter: The Rise of the Scandinavian Kingdoms From the Vikings to the Reformation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 37f., 66f.; Sverre Bagge, *From Viking Stronghold to Christian Kingdom. State Formation in Norway, c.900–1350* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2010), 160, 66, 75, 77f.; Sverre Bagge, "Kingship in Medieval Norway. Ideal and Reality," in *European Monarchy. Its Evolution and Practice from Roman Antiquity to Modern Times*, ed. Heinz Durchhardt, et al. (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1992), 41f.; Klaus von See, *Königtum und Staat im skandinavischen Mittelalter*, Skandinavistische Arbeiten (Heidelberg: Winter, 2002), 15f. Cf. also Chapter 4 (Bjørn Bandlien) in the present volume, 59–85.

Estridsen's politics.¹⁶ The same is true for Erik, who, for example, played a role in the canonization of his brother Knud and the establishment of the archbishopric of Lund.¹⁷ Erik died on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, during which he is reported to have been granted the relic in Constantinople by Emperor Alexios Komnenos, after having asked for relics:

Reluctant to let such a distinguished guest go without a gift, he told Erik to demand whatever suited his fancy. But as the other spurned any riches, the emperor realized he longed more than anything for sacred remains and presented him with the hallowed relics of saints' bones. Erik warmly accepted the holy gift and when it had been endorsed with the imperial seal, made sure that these treasures were conveyed to Lund and Roskilde. As he would not allow his place of origin without any objects of veneration, he had transported to Slangstrup a fragment of the Holy Cross together with the sanctified bones of St Nicholas. He erected a church in that town and the spot where we now see the altar is reported to be where his mother gave birth to him.¹⁸

The gift of the "divine torture wood/crossbeam" [*patibulum*], as Saxo calls it, as part of the emperor's display of legitimate power corresponds with Byzantine custom of the time – and asking for relics elegantly avoided humiliation as well.¹⁹

¹⁶ Raupp, "Das Wahre Kreuz in den nordischen Königreichen," 22; Henning Dehn-Nielsen, *Kings and Queens of Denmark* (Copenhagen: Rosenborg Castle, 2007), 16f.; Erich Hoffmann, *Königserhebung und Thronfolgeordnung in Dänemark bis zum Ausgang des Mittelalters*, Beiträge zur Geschichte und Quellenkunde des Mittelalters (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1976), 23–28; Dominik Waßenhoven, *Skandinavien unterwegs in Europa (1000–1250). Untersuchungen zu Mobilität und Kulturtransfer auf prosopographischer Grundlage*, Europa im Mittelalter (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2006), 185, 278, 80f.

¹⁷ Raupp, "Das Wahre Kreuz in den nordischen Königreichen," 22; Dehn-Nielsen, *Kings and Queens of Denmark*, 22; Gelting, "The Kingdom of Denmark," 89, 95f.; Hoffmann, *Königserhebung und Thronfolgeordnung*, 61, 64; Thomas Foerster, *Vergleich und Identität. Selbst- und Fremddeutung im Norden des hochmittelalterlichen Europas* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2009), 80f., 83f., 94; Thomas Riis, *Les institutions politiques centrales du Danemark 1100–1332*, Odense University Studies in History and Social Sciences (Odense: Odense University Press, 1977), 105f.; Sawyer and Sawyer, *Medieval Scandinavia*, 215; Lindkvist, "Legitimation of Power and Crusades," 34.

¹⁸ *Gesta Danorum* Book 12, ch. 7 (trans. Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum: The History of the Danes*, 2 vols, ed. and trans. Karsten Friis-Jensen and Peter Fisher, Oxford Medieval Texts, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2015): "Et ne tantum hospitem in donatum dimitteret, complacita postulare precepit. Quem quum facto opum contemptu sacros potissimum cineres exoptare cognosceret, honorandis ossium reliquiis donat. Ille religiosum munus cupide amplexatus, id ipsum imperatoria bulla assignatum Lundiam Roskyldiamque deportandum curavit. Et ne ortus sui locum ueneratione uacuum sineret, Slangathorpiam cum Nicolai sacratissimis ossibus diuini patibuli particulam transtulit. Quippe et oppidi illius templum molitus et eo loci, ubi nunc aram uidemus, matre editus proditur." Cf. also Raupp, "Das Wahre Kreuz in den nordischen Königreichen," 4, 18, 25f.; Waßenhoven, *Skandinavien unterwegs in Europa*, 177f.; Krijna N. Ciggaar, "Denmark and Byzantium from 1184 to 1212. Queen Dagmar's Cross, a Chrysobull of Alexius II and an 'Ultramarine' Connection," *Mediaeval Scandinavia* 13 (2000): 124; Krijna N. Ciggaar, *Western Travellers to Constantinople: The West and Byzantium, 962–1204*, The Medieval Mediterranean (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 111.

¹⁹ Raupp, "Das Wahre Kreuz in den nordischen Königreichen," 25–7; Ciggaar, "Denmark and Byzantium from 1184 to 1212," 119; Schreiner, "Diplomatische Geschenke zwischen Byzanz und dem

Furthermore, it seems likely that Erik, via his father Svend Estridsen, was acquainted with Harald the Hardruler (d. 1066) – the most famous Varangian of all times and indeed important enough to be mentioned in a contemporary Byzantine source.²⁰ Danish coins imitating Byzantine models²¹ and twelfth-century relic-finds in Denmark²² also contribute to the overall picture of well-established connections to Byzantium.²³ Three existing cross relics and reliquaries are fairly well-known and of interest in this context: the so-called Dagmar Cross, the Roskilde Cross, and the Orø Cross (Figs. 8.1–8.4).

Westen,” 253–5, 64–8; Klein, “Eastern Objects and Western Desire Relics,” 288f., 91f.; Édina Bozóky, *La politique des reliques de Constantin à Saint Louis: Protection collective et légitimation du pouvoir* (Paris: Beauchesne, 2006), 21; Anca, *Herrschaftliche Repräsentation*, 97–108.

20 *Vademecum des byzantinischen Aristokraten. Das sogenannte Strategikon des Kekaumenos*, In *Byzantinische Geschichtsschreiber* 5, ed. Hans-Georg Beck, Graz: Verlag Styria, 1956.; Raupp, “Das Wahre Kreuz in den nordischen Königreichen,” 27; Daniel Föller, “. . . der den König selbst davon erzählen hörte.” Die Jerusalemreise Haralds ‘des Harten’ und das konstruktive Potenzial gedächtniskritischer Historie,” in *Fluchtpunkt Geschichte: Archäologie und Geschichtswissenschaft im Dialog; aus einer Veranstaltung der Arbeitsgemeinschaft “Theorie in der Archäologie” . . . am 8. Oktober 2007 im Rahmen der 78. Jahrestagung des Nordwestdeutschen Verbands für Altertumskunde in Schleswig*, ed. Stefan Burmeister (Münster: Waxman, 2011), 293; Waßenhoven, *Skandinavien unterwegs in Europa*, 202, 78. It is interesting to note that Harald himself is somehow connected to the cross in Jerusalem as *Heimskringla* mentions him as paying homage to the relic by giving money to the church of the Holy Sepulchre, although Daniel Föller has deconstructed this account of Harald’s journey to Jerusalem and his establishment as crusader “avant la lettre”, Föller, “. . . der den König selbst davon erzählen hörte.” See also Daniel Föller, “Wikinger als Pilger. Drei norwegische Könige, zwei Runensteine und der Wiederaufbau der Grabeskirche,” in *Konflikt und Bewältigung. Die Zerstörung der Grabeskirche zu Jerusalem im Jahr 1009*, ed. Thomas Pratsch, Millennium-Studien zur Kultur und Geschichte des ersten Jahrtausend n. Chr. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2011), for parallel sources to the account in *Heimskringla*. However, it is not unlikely that Harald was given this aura after his great-grandson Sigurd had brought the cross relic to Norway in order to establish a harbinger of a “Sigurdian” Jerusalem tradition on a literary level. Cf. also Christopher Norton, “Archbishop Eystein, King Magnus and the Copenhagen Psalter – A New Hypothesis,” in *Eystein Erlendsson – erkebiskop, politiker og kirkebygger*, ed. Kristin Bjørlykke (Trondheim: Nidaros Domkirkes restaureringsarbeider, 2013), 205 with regard to Magnus Erlingsson and this tradition.

21 Raupp, “Das Wahre Kreuz in den nordischen Königreichen,” 27; Hans Hildebrand, “Sveriges medeltid. Kulturhistorisk skildring,” in *Kyrkan* (Stockholm: P.A. Norstedt & Söners Förlag, 1898–1903), 795–7; Gelting, “The Kingdom of Denmark,” 90f.; Dehn-Nielsen, *Kings and Queens of Denmark*, 17; Søren Kaspersen, “Majestas Domini – Regum et Sacerdotium (II). Das Leben des Motivs in Skandinavien während der Kirchenkämpfe unter besonderer Berücksichtigung Dänemarks im 12. Jahrhundert,” *Hafnia: Copenhagen Papers in the History of Art* 10 (1985): 58f.; Roland Scheel, *Skandinavien Und Byzanz: Bedingungen Und Konsequenzen Mittelalterlicher Kulturbeziehungen*, 2 vols., Historische Semantik (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck Ruprecht, 2015).

22 Raupp, “Das Wahre Kreuz in den nordischen Königreichen,” 28; cf. Ciggaar, “Denmark and Byzantium from 1184 to 1212,” 118, 20–4, 40–2; Fritze Lindahl, *Dagmarkorset, Orø- og Roskildekorsset* (Copenhagen: Nationalmuseet, 1980), 3–15; Dehn-Nielsen 2007, *Kings and Queens of Denmark*: 18; note 25.

23 For the latest, most detailed, and extensive publication on Scandinavia and Byzantium cf. Scheel, *Skandinavien und Byzanz*, however only a few pages are devoted to relics (374–81).

Fig. 8.2: The Dagmar Cross, reverse. National Museum of Denmark.

The Dagmar Cross

The Dagmar Cross measures 4.3×2.9 cm, is made of gold and enamel, and is a Byzantine work from around 1100 (though scholars have also proposed a date of around 1200). Today it is kept in the National Museum of Denmark (Figs. 8.1 and 8.2). It is supposed to have reached Scandinavia around 1200 and was presumably rediscovered at the end of the seventeenth century in the royal burial place of St. Bendt's church in Ringsted. The discovery was made when a new grave was being made in the same place, and the relic has usually been associated with the first spouse of King Valdemar II, Queen Dagmar (also known as Margrethe, c.1186–1212). It may, however, also have been found in one of the nearby graves and belonged to Richiza, queen of Sweden (1210–1216) and sister to King Valdemar II (r. 1202–1241). Since all three of the mentioned royals had family connections in the east – Minsk and Novgorod – the relic may have come this way from Bohemia or, after the fall of Constantinople, from the Holy Land. There have been different hypotheses by, for example, Susanne Bangert, Fritze Lindahl, or Roland Scheel, yet the information

available is too nebulous for the drawing of definitive conclusions.²⁴ Krijnie Ciggaar suggests that, besides the possibility that the cross may have reached Denmark in the course of Byzantine delegations/embassies in 1184 or 1195, a connection to Dagmar and the possible use of the cross as insignia are likely. Still, she mentions, as does Fritze Lindahl, that the x-ray of the reliquary cross did not reveal a cross splinter.²⁵ Nevertheless, the Dagmar Cross is universally regarded as a *staurotheka*. Roland Scheel goes so far as to suggest that it is likely to be identical with the cross relic sent to Denmark by Erik the Good.²⁶ The Dagmar Cross gained a lot of public attention when a copy of it was given to Princess Alexandra as a wedding gift by her father Frederik VII of Denmark in 1863, containing a cross splinter from the Ranvaik-shrine (which is now in Copenhagen). It has been well known in popular culture and as a national heirloom, as the many reproductions available as souvenirs still bear witness.²⁷

The Roskilde Cross

In 1806, the Roskilde Cross was found hidden in a wooden crucifix dating to the second half of the thirteenth century and sold during an auction. In this case, the cross splinter is still extant and contained within the reliquary, which is of gold and measures 6 × 3.7 cm (Fig. 8.3). Apparently, it had been made more than 100 years before it was placed in the crucifix, and was perhaps kept in Roskilde significantly earlier in the twelfth century. Svend, bisop of Roskilde (1074–1088), is known to have sent numerous relics from Byzantium to Denmark in 1087. Whether the Roskilde Cross may have been among those, or among the ones ascribed to Erik the Good, is impossible to determine, since there are no written records that may provide detailed information to support either option.²⁸

²⁴ Susanne Bangert, “Dagmarkorset – Danmarks nationalsmykke,” in *Arven fra Byzans*, ed. Øystein Hjort (Aarhus: Tidsskriftet Sfinx, 2010), 267–71; Lindahl, *Dagmarkorset, Orø- og Roskildekorset*, 4–7; Ciggaar, “Denmark and Byzantium from 1184 to 1212,” 118, 20–4, 40–2; Jörn Staecker, *Rex regum et dominus dominorum. Die wikingzeitlichen Kreuz- und Kruzifixanhänger als Ausdruck der Mission in Altdänemark und Schweden*, Lund Studies in Medieval Archaeology (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1999), 177–80, 433f.; Scheel, *Skandinavien Und Byzanz*, 378–80.

²⁵ Ciggaar, “Denmark and Byzantium from 1184 to 1212,” 124, 40–2; Lindahl, *Dagmarkorset, Orø- og Roskildekorset*, 6.

²⁶ Scheel, *Skandinavien Und Byzanz*, 375–81. Though Scheel himself admits there are numerous other possibilities. Cf. especially 379.

²⁷ Bangert, “Dagmarkorset,” 267, 73–81; Lindahl 1980, *Dagmarkorset, Orø- og Roskildekorset*: 4f.; Scheel, *Skandinavien Und Byzanz*, 375.

²⁸ Lindahl, *Dagmarkorset, Orø- og Roskildekorset*, 12–15; Staecker, *Rex regum et dominus dominorum*, 153, 429f.; Waßenhoven, *Skandinavien unterwegs in Europa*, 279.

Fig. 8.3: The Roskilde Cross. National Museum of Denmark.

The Orø Cross

The Orø Cross (c.1100) is a golden pectoral cross made in the north but inspired by Byzantine work (Fig. 8.4). It was found in 1849 by Bodil Margrethe Hansdatter at Orø in Zealand. This cross has also survived lacking its former contents. There are, however, traces of a fastening for holding a cross splinter. The inscription reads OLAF C VN VN CE (King Olav). Therefore, the cross reliquary has been associated with St Olav of Norway.²⁹

Connections to the Mediterranean and Dynastic Legitimation

Even though none of these three reliquary crosses can be directly related to King Erik without considerable caution, objects of this kind appear to have been present in

²⁹ Lindahl, *Dagmarkorset, Orø- og Roskildekorsset*, 8–11; Staecker, *Rex regum et dominus domino-rum*, 164–72, 431f.

Fig. 8.4: The Orø Cross, National Museum of Denmark.

Denmark during roughly the same period of time when he is reported to have acquired the relic of the True Cross. Therefore, it is not unlikely that Erik may well have been familiar with the meaning of the relic and Byzantine concepts of rulership. His family's rather weak claim to the Danish throne would definitely have been supported by the relic,³⁰ and placing it at his birthplace would certainly not have been unintentional.³¹ As well, Saxo credits Erik with the same miracle as the one ascribed to Empress Helena, mother of Constantine, who allegedly made it possible to bury bodies on Cyprus with the help of the cross relic.³² This seems to be an imported legitimation strategy from the

30 Raupp, "Das Wahre Kreuz in den nordischen Königreichen," 27f.

31 *Gesta Danorum* (as above) – it appears the cross relic (or at least a cross relic) may still have been there in Saxo's own time in the early thirteenth century, hence the reference to the church and altar.

32 Lukas Raupp, "Inde et Cyprius dictus est. Zum Tod Erik Ejegods auf Zypern im Jahr 1103," in *Das Mittelmeer und der Tod. Mediterrane Mobilität und Sepulchralkultur*, ed. Alexander Berner, et al. (Paderborn: Fink Schöningh, 2016), 524–7; Scheel, *Skandinavien Und Byzanz*, 390; Poul Jørgen Riis, "Where Was Erik the Good Buried?," *Mediaeval Scandinavia* 13 (2000): 148–53; Paul Riant, *Expéditions et pèlerinages des Scandinaves en Terre Sainte au temps des croisades*, 2 vols. (Paris: impr. de A. Lainé et J. Havard, 1865–1869), 161f.; Sigfús Blöndal, *The Varangians of Byzantium: An*

Mediterranean.³³ Thus, at least on a literary level, the cross relic appears to have had a legitimizing quality, perhaps also prompted by strained relations and competition with the Holy Roman Empire.³⁴ The shock caused by the battle of Hattin – where the king of Jerusalem had lost the relic – may also have played a role.³⁵ Yet another factor may be found in Valdemarian dynastic politics, which successfully aimed at establishing Knud Lavard (1096–1131) as a new dynastic saint, in the course of which his parents King Erik and Queen Bodil were apparently also given a saintly aura, by presenting them as Mediterranean dynastic saints. Both had died on their pilgrimage to the Holy Land – Erik on Cyprus and Bodil in Jerusalem where she was buried in the valley of Jehoshaphat.³⁶ The reference to St Helena as mother of Constantine and finder of the True Cross seems to fit this pattern – a material visualization of Jerusalem would certainly have supported these associations.

Erik was indeed associated with the cross relic throughout the Middle Ages and even up to early modern times, for example in the so-called Danish Rhymed Chronicle (ca. 1460).³⁷ He is reported to have sent back the relic to his birthplace,

Aspect of Byzantine Military History, ed. Benedikt S. Benedikz, trans. Benedikt S. Benedikz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 133.

33 Raupp, “Inde et Cyprius dictus est,” 522, 26f.

34 Foerster, *Vergleich und Identität*, 179f. The way the relic was used in the Holy Roman Empire (see above) may also have been a source of inspiration, cf. also Raupp, “Das Wahre Kreuz in den nordischen Königreichen,” 29.

35 Cf. for instance Jaspert, “The True Cross of Jerusalem in the Latin West”; Murray, “‘Mighty Against the Enemies of Christ’,” 2017f.

36 See Chapter 11 (Denys Pringle), 200. Moreover, see Raupp, “Inde et Cyprius dictus est,” 517–28; Scheel, *Skandinavien Und Byzanz*, 382–392; Karsten Friis-Jensen, “In the Presence of the Dead. Saint Canute the Duke in Saxo Grammaticus’s *Gesta Danorum*,” in *The Making of Christian Myths in the Periphery of Latin Christendom (c.1000–1300)*, ed. Lars Boje Mortensen, 195–216. Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2006, 196; 213f.; Hoffmann, *Königserhebung und Thronfolgeordnung*, 93–108, 20–5, 70; Hoffmann, “Coronation and Coronation Ordines,” 132; Hoffmann, “Politische Heilige in Skandinavien und die Entwicklung der drei nordischen Reiche und Völker,” in *Politik und Heiligenverehrung im Hochmittelalter*, ed. Jürgen Petersohn, Vorträge und Forschungen (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1994), 288–90.

37 *Den danske Rimkrønike*, ed. Helge Toldberg, Universitets-Jubilæets danske Samfunds Skriftserie 402, 1, Copenhagen: J.H. Schultz Forlag, 1961 (the relic is also mentioned in the Low German version):

“Saa gaff han meg syn gaffue from/helly mentz been som ieg bad om/Och aff thz helly korss en parth/thz sende ieg hiem tijl slangdorp ful snarth/Forthi ieg ther fødher waar/som høwe alther i kyrken stor. And so he [the emperor] gave me his gift from holy men’s bones which I asked for and a part of the Holy Cross, which I sent home to Slangerup at once, for I was born there where the high altar stands in the church [translation by author].” Saxo is by no means the only source to refer to the cross, as it is usually suggested, although the later mentions are likely to be influenced by his *Gesta*. Cf. for instance *Compendium Saxonis*, ed. M.C. Geertz, *Scriptores Minores Historiæ Danicæ Medii Ævi*, 1, Copenhagen: Selskabet for Udgivelse af Kilder til dansk Historie, 1917–1918, 195–439, Book 12; Albert Krantz, *Dennmaerckische, Swedische vnd Norwaegische Chronica*, trans. Heinrich Eppendorf, Straßburg 1545, Book 5, ch. 5 (also mentioned in the German version).

but since Erik died on his way to Jerusalem³⁸ no actual usage of the relic is mentioned in the sources. This leaves the manner in which it may have been employed by his successors as an open question. However, it seems possible that the cross relic played a role in legitimizing the dynasty. Recent Danish scholarship has stressed the importance of crusading ideology for Danish kingship.³⁹ In this light, a material visualization of Jerusalem could have been all the more important – yet, the sources provide no concrete evidence to support this hypothesis.⁴⁰ The opposite is true of Erik's Norwegian contemporary King Sigurd Magnusson, for whom Erik's journey may well have been an inspiration.⁴¹

38 Whether he died on his way to or from Jerusalem is difficult to determine since both variants are mentioned in the sources. Nevertheless, scholars generally seem to assume he did not reach the city. Cf. Raupp, “Inde et Cyprius dictus est,” 512; Waßenhoven 2006, *Skandinavien unterwegs in Europa*, 177f.; *The Works of Sven Aggesen, Twelfth-Century Danish Historian*, trans. Eric Christiansen, Viking Society for Northern Research, London: University College London, 1992.

39 Cf. for instance Janus Møller Jensen, “King Erik Emune (1134–1137) and the Crusades. The Impact of Crusading Ideology on Early Twelfth-Century Denmark,” in *Cultural Encounters During the Crusades*, ed. Kurt Villads Jensen, et al., University of Southern Denmark Studies in History and Social Sciences (Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2013), 93–101; Ane Bysted et al., eds., *Jerusalem in the North: Denmark and the Baltic Crusades, 1100–1522* (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2012), 21.

40 Though Møller Jensen suggests a possible connection of Erik's son Erik Emune and Erik's brother Niels to the piece of the True Cross Sigurd the Crusader had placed in Konghelle, cf. Jensen, “King Erik Emune (1134–1137) and the Crusades,” 95, 99.

41 Though *Heimskringla* only mentions survivors of the expedition led by Skofte Ogmundsson in 1102 as inspiration, it is not unlikely that the participants of Erik's expedition had also been heard of in Norway before Sigurd put to sea. An explicit comparison of the two kings' reputations with regard to their expeditions can be found in *Knýtlinga saga*. See Raupp, “Das Wahre Kreuz in den nordischen Königreichen,” 35, 43, 56–8; cf. also Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla*, 3 vols, trans. Alison Finlay and Anthony Faulkes, London: Viking Society for Northern Research, University College London, 2016, vol. 3, *Magnússona saga; Knýtlinga saga – Danakonunga sogur*, ed. Bjarni Guðnason, Íslenzk Fornrit 35, Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1982, 9–321; Waßenhoven, *Skandinavien unterwegs in Europa*, 178, 86, 241, 70f., 90; Dominik Waßenhoven, “Rómavegr. Skandinavische Pilgerwege nach Rom,” in *Pellegrinaggio e Kulturtransfer nel Medioevo eu-ropo. Atti del 1. Seminario di studio dei Dottorati di Ricerca di Ambito Medievistico delle Università di Lecce e di Erlangen*, ed. Hubert Houben, Pubblicazioni del Dottorato in Storia dei Centri delle Vie e delle Culture dei Pellegrinaggi nel Medioevo Euromediterraneo (Galatina: Congedo, 2006), 116; Gary B. Doxey, “Norwegian Crusaders and the Balearic Islands,” *Scandinavian Studies* 68 (1996): 144f.

Relics of the True Cross in Norway and their Relation to King Sigurd the Crusader

Before addressing the case of King Sigurd, it is important to note that most of the accounts dealt with in this section belong to the genre of saga, more precisely the Kings' Sagas. These have often been dismissed as historical sources due to a lack of differentiation. However, sagas cover the whole range from fiction to contemporary historiography and should therefore be treated accordingly. Employing all the same necessary caution as would be applied to any other medieval narrative source – due to oral tradition, the survival of the sources is in later copies and variations, etc. – they are the most important narrative sources for the history of Norway and Iceland in the Middle Ages.⁴²

Sigurd Magnusson (c.1090–1130), co-ruler of Norway and sole king from 1122/23 until his death, gained fame by leading an expedition to Jerusalem (1107/08–1110/11), during which he aided the crusaders in the siege of Sidon (Lebanon) and was granted a relic of the True Cross by King Baldwin [*Baldvini*] of Jerusalem:

King Baldvini gave a fine banquet to King Sigurðr and many of his men with him. Then King Baldvini gave King Sigurðr many holy relics, and now a piece of the Holy Cross was taken with the consent of King Baldvini and the Patriarch, and they both swore oaths on a holy relic that

⁴² For fairly recent overviews cf. Shami Ghosh, *Kings' Sagas and Norwegian History. Problems and Perspective* The Northern World (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 1–23, 95–112, 78–201; Knut Helle, “Hvor står den historiske sagakritikken i dag?,” *Collegium Medievale. Interdisciplinary Journal of Medieval Research* 24 (2011): 52–86; Ármann Jakobsson, “Inventing a Saga Form: The Development of the Kings' Sagas,” *Filologia germanica* 4 (2012); cf. also Lars Lönnroth, Vésteinn Ólason, and Anders Piltz, “Literature,” in *The Cambridge History of Scandinavia*, ed. Knut Helle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 498–503; Ármann Jakobsson, “Royal Biography,” in *A Companion to Old Norse-Icelandic Literature and Culture*, ed. Rory McTurk, Blackwell Companions to Literature and Culture (Malden: Blackwell, 2005), 388–90; Sawyer and Sawyer, *Medieval Scandinavia*, 16–26; Gudrun Lange, *Die Anfänge der isländisch-norwegischen Geschichtsschreibung*, *Studia Islandica* (Reykjavík: Bókaútgáfa Menningarsjóðs, 1989), 9; Sverre Bagge and Sæbjørg Walaker Noreide, “The Kingdom of Norway,” in *Christianization and the Rise of Christian Monarchy. Scandinavia, Central Europe and Rus', c.900–1200*, ed. Nora Berend (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 159f.; Sverre Bagge, “From Sagas to Society. The Case of Heimskringla,” in *From Sagas to Society. Comparative Approaches to Early Iceland*, ed. Gisli Pálsson (Enfield Lock: Hisarlik, 1992), 61, 68–70, 74f.; Diana Whaley, “Scaldic Poetry,” in *A Companion to Old Norse-Icelandic Literature and Culture*, ed. Rory McTurk, Blackwell Companions to Literature and Culture (Malden: Blackwell, 2005), 481, 88f.; Sverre Bagge, “Die Spielregeln ändern. Norwegische Politik im 12. und 13. Jahrhundert,” in *Die Spielregeln der Mächtigen. Mittelalterliche Politik zwischen Gewohnheit und Konvention*, ed. Claudia Garnier and Hermann Kamp (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft (WBG), 2010), 146; Sverre Bagge, “From Fist to Scepter: Authority in Norway in the Middle Ages,” in *Authorities in the Middle Age Influence, Legitimacy and Power in Medieval Society*, ed. Sini Kangas, et al., *Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2013), 178f.; Waßenhoven, *Skandinavien unterwegs in Europa*, 40f., 50–4.

this piece of wood was of the holy cross that God Himself was tormented on. After that this holy relic was given to King Sigurðr, on condition that he and twelve other men with him first swore that he would promote Christianity with all his might and establish in his country an archbishop's see, if he could, and that the cross should be kept there where the blessed King Óláfr lay, and that he should introduce tithes and pay them himself.⁴³

43 Snorri Sturluson 2016, *Heimskringla*, vol. 3, *Magnússona saga*, ch. 11: “Baldvini konungr gerði veizlu fagra Sigurði konungi ok liði miklu með honum. Þá gaf Baldvini konungr Sigurði konungi marga helga dóma, ok þá var tekinn spánn af krossinum helga at ráði Baldvina konungs ok pátriarka, ok sóru þeir báðir at helgum dómi, at þetta tré var af inum helga krossi, er guð sjálf var píndr á. Síðan var sá heilagr dómr gefinn Sigurði konungi, með því at hann sór áðr ok tólf menn aðrir með honum, at hann skyldi fremja kristni með öllum mætti sínum ok koma í land erkibyskupsstóli, ef hann mætti, ok at krossinn skyldi þar vera, sem inn helgi Óláfr konungr hvíldi, ok hann skyldi tíund fremja ok sjálf gera.” Another rendering of the event is found in *Morkinskinna*. *Knytlinga saga* chs 53/54 (trans. Ágrip af Noregskonungasögum, In *Text Series*, ed. Matthew James Driscoll, second ed, A Twelfth-Century Synoptic History of the Kings of Norway, 10, London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 2008): “[. . .] en síðan ferðaðisk Sigurðr konungr ór landi til Jørsala með sex tǫgu skipa fjórum vetrum eftir fráfall Mognúss föður síns, ok hafði með sér fjölmennt ok góðmennt – ok þó þá eina er fara vildu – sat á Englandi enn fyrsta vetrinn, en annan út til Jørsala, ok sætti þar mikilli tǫgn, ok þá þar dýrlligar gørsimar. eiddisk konungrinn af krossinum helga ok ǫðlaðisk, en eigi þó fyrr en tólf menn ok sjálf hann enn þrettándi svǫru at hann skyldi fremja kristni með öllum mætti sínum, ok erkibyskupsstól koma í land ef hann mætti, ok at krossinn skyldi þar vera sem inn helgi Óláfr hvíldi, ok at hann skyldi tíund fremja ok sjálf gera.” (Translation: “King Sigurðr travelled abroad to Jerusalem with sixty ships. He had with him a large and goodly company, though only those who wanted to go. He stayed in England the first winter and spent the next on the journey to Jerusalem, where he was received with great honour and given splendid treasures. The king asked for a fragment of the True Cross and was given one, but not until twelve men, and he himself the thirteenth, had sworn that he would advance Christianity with all his might and establish an archbishop's see in his country if he could, and furthermore that the Cross would be kept where St Óláfr lay, and that a tithe, which he himself was to pay as well, would be levied.”) The description in *Morkinskinna* is not dissimilar to the one in *Heimskringla*, albeit it includes a detailed dialogue between King Sigurd and King Baldwin, explicitly stating that Sigurd was well aware of the importance of the relic, since he knew it would add to his fame in both the short and the long run: “Sigurðr konungr hugsaði optliga hvat hann skal þess kjósa er honum sé mest til frama, ok hugsaðisk honum svá til at þat mætti honum verða mest höfuðgæfa, bæði í bráð ok lengðar, ef hann fengi at þiggja af krossinum helga er várr Dróttinn var píndr á, því at engi maðr hafði fyrr nátt norðr higat í lönd at þiggja af þeim helgum dómi krossins er at Jørsolum er varðveittr; en af þeim var miðlat, sem í Miklagarði var.”, cf. *Morkinskinna: The Earliest Icelandic Chronicle of the Norwegian Kings (1030–1157)*, trans. Theodore Andersson and Kari Ellen Gade, Ithaca – London: Cornell University Press, 2000, (*Morkinskinna*, 2 vols, ed. Ármann Jakobsson and Þórður Ingi Guðjónsson, Íslenzk Fornrit 23/24, Reykjavík: Hið íslenska fornritafélag, 2011); *Hulda-Hrokinskinna*, 2 vols, ed. Kongelige nordiske Oldskriftselskab, Formanna sögur 6/7, Copenhagen, 1831–1832; *Saga Sigurðar Jørsalafara*; *Ágrip af Noregskonunga sögum*. *Fagrskinna – Noregs konunga tal*, ed. Bjarni Einarsson, Íslenzk Fornrit 29, Reykjavík: Hið íslenska fornritafélag, 1985 (trans. *Fagrskinna, A Catalogue of the Kings of Norway*, In *The Northern World*, trans. Alison Finlay, 7, Leiden: Brill, 2004): “Gaf Baldvini konungr með ráði Patriarkans af krossinum helga nokkurn hlut ok marga aðra helga dóma.”; “King Baldvini, with the agreement of the Patriarch, gave king Sigurðr a piece of the Holy Cross and many other holy relics.” For Theodoricus' account cf. Theodoricus Monachus 1880, *Historia de Antiquitate Regum Norwagiensum*: ch. 33 (trans. Theodoricus Monachus 1998, *An Account of the Ancient History of the Norwegian Kings*: 52.

Baldwin (r.1100–1118) was the very first king to actually bear this title in the newly founded Kingdom of Jerusalem, although his brother had ruled before him.⁴⁴ The crusader state met its need for legitimation by using the cross, as has been demonstrated in detail by Giuseppe Ligato and especially by Nikolas Jaspert.⁴⁵ It is most likely that the crusaders were exposed to the Byzantine emperor's way of using the relic to demonstrate his power when they travelled to Jerusalem via Byzantium – all but one of their leaders had to swear an oath to him on the relic.⁴⁶ This may have served as a model for the relics' subsequent usage by Baldwin and in the kingdom of Jerusalem.⁴⁷ Sigurd visited both places.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Nikolas Jaspert, *Die Kreuzzüge*, sixth ed. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft (WBG), 2013), 38, 42; Nikolas Jaspert, "Jerusalem und sein Königshaus," in *Saladin und die Kreuzfahrer*, ed. Alfried Wiczorek, et al., Publikationen der Reiss-Engelhorn-Museen/ Schriftenreihe des Landesmuseums für Natur und Mensch Oldenburg (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 2005), 61; Giuseppe Ligato, "Baldovino I. Re di Gerusalemme, 'Dominici Sepulcri vexillifer'," in *Militia Sancti Sepulchri. Idea e istituzioni. Atti del Colloquio Internazionale tenuto presso la Pontificia Università del Laterano 10–12 aprile 1996*, ed. Kaspar Elm and Cosimo Damiano Fonseca (Città del Vaticano: n.p., 1998), 365–73.

⁴⁵ Ligato, "The Political Meanings of the Relic of the Holy Cross," 327; Ligato, "Baldovino I. Re di Gerusalemme," 361, 74, 80; Jaspert, "The True Cross of Jerusalem in the Latin West," 213f.; Jaspert, "Das Heilige Grab, das Wahre Kreuz," 87; Jaspert, "Vergegenwärtigungen Jerusalems," 253.

⁴⁶ Except Raimund of Toulouse, cf. Jaspert, *Die Kreuzzüge*, 39f.; Michael Grünbart, *Das Byzantinische Reich* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft (WBG), 2014), 97; Anca 2010, *Herrschaftliche Repräsentation*, 104; Anca, "Konfliktbewältigung und Konsensfindung in Byzanz während der ersten Kreuzzüge," in *Konfliktbewältigung und Friedensstiftung im Mittelalter*, ed. Roman Czaja, et al. (Torún: Deutsches Historisches Institut Warschau, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2012), 203–6; Frolow 1961, *La relique de la Vraie Croix*: 286, No 56.

⁴⁷ Raupp, "Das Wahre Kreuz in den nordischen Königreichen," 42.

⁴⁸ Cf. for example Waßenhoven, *Skandinavien unterwegs in Europa*, 265f.; Doxey, "Norwegian Crusaders and the Balearic Islands," 150, 56; Jaime Ferreiro Alemparte, *Arribadas de normandos y cruzados a las costas de la Península Ibérica* (Madrid: Soc. Española de Estudios Medievales, 1999), 62–5; Richard W. Unger, "The Northern Crusaders: The Logistics of English and Other Northern Crusader Fleets," in *Logistics of Warfare in the Age of the Crusades. Proceedings of a Workshop held at the Centre for Medieval Studies, University of Sydney, 30 September to 4 October 2002*, ed. John H. Pryor (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 251–3; Schreiner, "Diplomatische Geschenke zwischen Byzanz und dem Westen," 264–7, 79; Blöndal, *The Varangians of Byzantium*, 136–40; Richard MacGillivray Dawkins, "The Visit of the King Sigurd the Pilgrim to Constantinople," in *EIE MNHMHN Σ. ΛΑΜΠΡΟΥ*, ed. Amilkas Alivizatos and et al. (Athens: 1935), 55. That knowledge about the meaning of the cross was present in pre-crusading Scandinavia is indicated by two surviving homily books, which have been dated to around 1200, though they are apparently based on late eleventh-/early twelfth-century collections. Cf. for *The Icelandic Homily Book*, Perg. 15 4^o in the Royal Library, Stockholm, in *Íslensk Handrit 3*, ed. Andrea de Leeuw van Weenen, Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar á Íslandi, 1993; Kristin B. Aavitsland, "Visualisert didaktikk? Det talte og det malte ord i norsk middelalder," in *Vår eldste bok. Skrift, miljø og biletbuk i den norske homilieboka*, ed. Odd Einar Haugen and Åslaug Ommundsen, Bibliotheca Nordica (Oslo: Novus, 2010), 226–34; David McDougall, "Homilies (West Norse)," in *Medieval Scandinavia. An*

As in the case of Denmark, there is an extant cross relic in Norway roughly dated (c.1050–1150) to the period in question. The so-called Tønsberg Cross was found by a worker close to St Mary's Church near the centre of the medieval town of Tønsberg, during the digging of ditches in the late nineteenth century. It was handed in by a certain Mr Rask of Vallø oil refinery. It is apparently a double pendant cross (7.1cm/2.2cm (4.1cm)) of a similar type as the Roskilde cross, with a cruciform slit in which the relic is still visible (Fig. 8.5).⁴⁹ Yet, a direct connection to Sigurd cannot be established, and the circumstances of the discovery remain somewhat hazy.

Contrary to his promise made in Jerusalem, Sigurd did not bring the relic to Nidaros (Trondheim). Rather, he placed it in his residence at Konghelle, where he had a church erected to house it.⁵⁰ This apparently is an unambiguous statement respecting who was entitled to it,⁵¹ especially if one takes into account that the area around Konghelle was borderland and by no means undisputed.⁵² Securing the place by using the relic as a “shield” against non-Christians, as it is later described in the sources, and sacralising it at the same time are both important functions of the Jerusalem relic, mirroring the way it was used in the kingdom of Jerusalem.⁵³ Sigurd seems to have been eager to legitimize his rule, especially since he and his two brothers Olav and Eystein ruled the kingdom of Norway

Encyclopedia, ed. Phillip Pulsiano and Kirsten Wolf, Garland Encyclopedias of the Middle Ages (New York – London: Garland, 1993), 290.

49 Staecker, *Rex regum et dominus minorum*, 153f.; Frolow, *La relique de la Vraie Croix*, 301, No 282; Thor Kielland, *Norsk guldsmedkunst i middelalderen* (Oslo: Steenske Forlag, 1927), 59f., 165, 293, No 24; J.J.A. Worsaae, *Nordiske Oldsager i Det Kongelige Museum i Kjöbenhavn* (Copenhagen: Kittendorff & Aagaards Forlag, 1859), 185, No. 608a.

50 Ágrip, ch. 53; Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla*, vol. 3, *Magnússona saga*, ch. 19; *Morkinskinna*, ch. 82. Cf. Raupp, “Das Wahre Kreuz in den nordischen Königreichen,” 48f.; Astås, “Kristus-relikvier,” 8; Waßenhoven, *Skandinavien unterwegs in Europa*, 266; Lars Hermanson, “The Town of Kungahälla as a Power Base. Norway's Baltic Sea Policies, 1123–1135,” in *The Reception of Medieval Europe in the Baltic Sea Region. Papers of the XIIIth Visby Symposium Held at Gotland University Visby*, ed. Jörn Staecker, Acta Visbyensia (Visby: Gotland University Press, 2009), 45; Axel Christophersen, “Konghelle i middelalderen. Momenter til diskusjon,” in *Kungahälla. Problem och forskning kring stadens äldsta historia*, ed. Hans Andersson, et al., Lund Studies in Medieval Archaeology (Uddevalla: Bohusläns Museums Förlag, 2001), 206–10; Andås, “A Royal Chapel for a Royal Relic?,” 188.

51 Raupp, “Das Wahre Kreuz in den nordischen Königreichen zu Beginn des 12. Jhs,” 49; Christophersen, “Konghelle i middelalderen,” 202, 09.

52 Raupp, “Das Wahre Kreuz in den nordischen Königreichen,” 49; Hermanson, “The Town of Kungahälla as a Power Base,” 43; Christophersen, “Konghelle i middelalderen,” 201–4, 209.

53 Sentkowski et al., “Das Wahre Kreuz in Skandinavien,” 17,18; Hermanson, “The Town of Kungahälla as a Power Base,” 46; Raupp, “Das Wahre Kreuz in den nordischen Königreichen,” 49;

Fig. 8.5: The Tønsberg Cross, Oslo University Museum of Cultural History.

jointly.⁵⁴ Stressing his status as a crusader king, who had imported this “material visualisation of Jerusalem” and thus had brought Jerusalem itself to Norway, while at the same time not yielding it to St Olav (whom any of the members of the royal family could claim as their patron)⁵⁵ suggests that the placing of the relic was by no means unintentional.⁵⁶ Furthermore, the cross relic is (possibly) indirectly referred to in the so-called contest of the kings – a game that seems to have been

Jaspert, “The True Cross of Jerusalem in the Latin West,” 214–216, 20f. Cf. also Jensen, “King Erik Emune (1134–1137) and the Crusades,” 95 and note 69.

⁵⁴ Raupp, “Das Wahre Kreuz in den nordischen Königreichen,” 44–46; Sentkowski et al., “Das Wahre Kreuz in Skandinavien,” 14–17.

⁵⁵ For an overview on St. Olav cf. Øystein Ekroll, “The Cult of St. Olav in the Norse Cultural Sphere – and Outside It,” in *‘Ecclesia Nidrosiensis’ and ‘Noregs veldi’. The Role of the Church in the Making of Norwegian Domination in the Norse World*, ed. Steinar Imsen, ‘Norgesveldet’ Occasional Papers (Trondheim: Tapir Academic Press, 2012) and the same author’s contribution to this volume: Chapter 14 (Øystein Ekroll), 270–98.

⁵⁶ Raupp, “Das Wahre Kreuz in den nordischen Königreichen,” 4f.; Hermanson, “The Town of Kungahälla as a Power Base,” 46; Astås, “Kristus-relikvier,” 8; Jensen, “King Erik Emune (1134–1137) and the Crusades,” 95.

common at drinking bouts in medieval Scandinavia⁵⁷ – but is of course highly unlikely to have happened in the exact fashion described in Snorri Sturluson's *Heimskringla*, particularly because there is a slightly different account of the event in *Morkinskinna*.⁵⁸ In addressing his brother and co-ruler Eystein, Sigurd states his accomplishments and exploits abroad:

You must have heard that I fought very many battles in Serkland that you must have heard tell about, and that I won the victory in all of them and many kinds of treasure such that none like them have ever come into this country. I was considered the more highly where I met noblest people, but I think you have not yet ceased to be a stay-at-home.⁵⁹

The general tension between the two kings, their slightly strained relationship, and the placing of the two brothers in different spheres – Sigurd the warrior and adventurer, Eystein the politician and lawgiver – is present in all the sources even in the contemporary non-Scandinavian ones. After all, Sigurd really did go to Jerusalem and Eystein remained in Norway. The reference to the Mediterranean – the traditional “Reputationsraum” for Scandinavians – is certainly worth noting. Thus, the relic both visualized and granted legitimacy and was able to connect both old (success, the king as “best man”) and new (Christian, kingship as divine office) ideologies of kingship in an age of transition. Consequently, Sigurd's rule remained unchallenged after his brothers' deaths.

Furthermore, the relic of the True Cross also played an important role in the wars of succession (c.1130–1240) precipitated by Sigurd's attempt to establish his only son Magnus as his sole successor. Harald, an alleged son of Sigurd's father King Magnus Barefoot (r. 1093–1103), travelled to Sigurd's court and was accepted as a relative under the condition that he must not claim the throne during Sigurd's or his son's lifetime – which he swore. However, the oath was broken immediately after Sigurd's death in 1130 – both Magnus and Harald had themselves elected and pronounced

57 Sentkowski *et al*, “Das Wahre Kreuz in Skandinavien,” 14–17. Cf. also Marianne Kalinke, “Sigurðar saga Jónsalafara. The Fictionalization of Fact in Morkinskinna,” *Scandinavian Studies* 56, no. 1 (1984): 162 for the drinking bouts.

58 *Morkinskinna* ch. 78: 131–134. Cf. also Sentkowski *et al*, “Das Wahre Kreuz in Skandinavien:” 14–17; Raupp, “Das Wahre Kreuz in den nordischen Königreichen,” 44–6; Kalinke, “Sigurðar saga Jónsalafara,” 163f.; Foerster, *Vergleich und Identität*, 152–4; Heinz Klingenberg, “Das Herrscherportrait in Heimskringla. ± gross – ± schön,” in *Snorri Sturluson. Kolloquium anlässlich der 750. Wiederkehr seines Todestages*, ed. Alois Wolf, ScriptOralia (Tübingen: Narr, 1993), 121–6; Halvdan Koht, “Kong Sigurd på Jorsal-ferd,” *Historisk Tidsskrift* 5 (1924): 167.

59 Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla*, vol. 3, *Magnússona saga*, ch. 21: “Heyrt muntu þat hafa, at ek átta orrostur mjök margar í Serklandi, er þú munt heyrt hafa getit, ok fekk ek í qllum sigr ok margs konar górsimar, þær er eigi hafa slíkar komit hingat í land. Þóttu ek þar mest verðr, er ek fann gófgasta menn, en ek hygga, at eigi hafir þú enn hleypt heimdraganum.” Cf. also *Hulda-Hrokinskinna*: ch. 26, *Saga Sigurðar Jónsalafara*.

king by different Things.⁶⁰ After a short period of uneasy coregency, the two kings clashed at Färlöv [*Fyrileif*], where “King Magnús had the Holy Cross carried before him in battle”⁶¹ – a usage similar to the way it was used as a sign of victory in Jerusalem – but certainly also as a visual representation of legitimacy and divine approval directed at friend and foe alike.⁶² When Magnus was later defeated at Bergen, Harald tried to gain possession of the relic that Magnus had arguably also used as insignia, as a personal talisman or for protection: “Magnús had had the Holy Cross with him since the battle of Fyrileif had taken place, and he would not tell where it had got to now.”⁶³ The importance of the relic is stressed by the fact that Bishop Rainald, one of Magnus’s supporters, was hanged for not revealing its hiding place.⁶⁴ Taking the relic from Magnus would also have meant both a form of denunciation of the legitimacy of his rule as well as a legitimation of Harald’s claim in this context.⁶⁵ The cross (or perhaps several cross relics) is mentioned on several occasions during the subsequent civil war period,⁶⁶ also with respect to Sigurd:

And he kept to some of this, for he imposed a tithe, but the rest he disregarded, and this would have caused great harm had not God intervened miraculously. Sigurðr built a church on the frontier, and put the Cross there, almost in the heathen’s hands – as later happened – thinking this would act to protect the country, but this proved ill-advised, for the heathens came, burned the church and captured the Cross and the priest and took both away.

60 Sentkowski *et al*, “Das Wahre Kreuz in Skandinavien,” 8, 10, 21.

61 Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla*, vol. 3, *Magnúss saga blinda ok Haralds gilla*, ch. 3: “Magnús konungr lét bera fyrir sér krossinn helga í orrostu.” Cf. also *Morkinskinna* ch. 89: 155. “Magnús konungr lét bera fyrir sér krossinn helga í orrostu þessi.”; *Hulda-Hrokkinskinna* 1831–1832: ch. 4, *Saga Haralds Gilla*. This is not mentioned in *Fagrskinna*, and whether *Ágrip* originally contained the passage remains an open question, since there is a lacuna in the manuscript (AM 325 II 4to). Theodoricus ends his account after Sigurd’s demise, thus omitting further information on the relic.

62 Raupp, “Das Wahre Kreuz in den nordischen Königreichen,” 53f.; Sentkowski *et al*, “Das Wahre Kreuz in Skandinavien,” 17f.; Norton, “Archbishop Eystein, King Magnus and the Copenhagen Psalter,” 207; Astås, “Kristus-relikvier,” 9. For the use in Jerusalem cf. especially Murray, “Mighty Against the Enemies of Christ”.

63 Snorri Sturluson 2016, *Heimskringla*, vol. 3, *Magnúss saga blinda ok Haralds gilla*, ch. 8: “Krossinn helga hafði Magnús haft með sér, síðan er Fyrileifarorrosta hafði verit, ok vildi hann ekki til segja, hvar þá var kominn”; Raupp 2014, “Das Wahre Kreuz in den nordischen Königreichen zu Beginn des 12. Jhs.” 55; Sentkowski *et al*. 2013, “Das Wahre Kreuz in Skandinavien,” 17f.; Hermanson, “The Town of Kungahälla as a Power Base,” 46; Norton, “Archbishop Eystein, King Magnus and the Copenhagen Psalter,” 207; Hege Roaldset, *Mariakirken i Oslo. De religiøse funksjonene* (Oslo: Unipub forlag, 2000), 78–90. For the use as phylactery as such cf. for example Ligato 1996, “The Political Meanings of the Relic of the Holy Cross,” 326; Schreiner, “Signa Victricia,” 290f.; Staecker, *Rex regum et dominus dominorum*, 64.

64 Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla*, vol. 3, *Magnúss saga blinda ok Haralds gilla*, ch. 8; Raupp, “Das Wahre Kreuz in den nordischen Königreichen,” 54.

65 Raupp, “Das Wahre Kreuz in den nordischen Königreichen,” 55.

66 Raupp, “Das Wahre Kreuz in den nordischen Königreichen,” 63; Astås, “Kristus-relikvier,” 9–14; Norton, “Archbishop Eystein, King Magnus and the Copenhagen Psalter,” 194–7.

Thereafter such a great heat came upon the heathens that they thought themselves almost burning and this terrified them as a bad omen, and the priest told them that this fire came from God's might and the power of the Holy Cross, so they put out a dinghy and put both the Cross and the priest ashore. The priest thought it unwise to subject the Cross a second time to such danger and moved it in secrecy north to the place where it had been sworn on oath that it would be kept, to the shrine of St Óláfr, and there it has remained ever since.⁶⁷

The consequences of Sigurd's choice of not keeping his promises made in Jerusalem is thus related in the so-called summary of the King's Sagas [*Ágrip af Noregs konungasögum*], written around 1190 by an anonymous author with probable connections to the archbishop's see in Nidaros.⁶⁸ With the Battle of Hattin and the victory of Sverre Sigurdsson in mind – the wrong king from the church's point of view – the author of *Ágrip* seems to make it clear that neither the king is entitled to what belongs to St Olav. This appears to be very much in line with Archbishop Eystein Erlendsson's (ca. 1120–1188) policies of championing the kings of Norway as vassals of St Olav, who, as Bjørn Bandlien has recently argued, also acquired traits of a crusader saint.⁶⁹ The Birchlegs (Sverre's faction) proved to be successful⁷⁰ – I will only suggest here that this may have brought about a possible conflict with regard to the relic. However, the legitimizing quality does not appear to have been limited to the True Cross, but was possibly attributed to other relics of the Passion, for instance parts of the crown of thorns and the Holy Blood.⁷¹

⁶⁷ *Ágrip* 2008: chs 53/54: “Ok helt hann þessu sumu, þvíat tíund framði hann, en hinu brá hann, er til mikils geigs myndi standa, ef eigi hefði guð þann geig með jartegnum leyst; reisti kirkju við land-senda ok setti þar krossinn nálga undir vald heiðinna manna – sem síðan gafsk – hugði þar til lands gæzlu ok varð at misræðum. Kómu þar heiðnir menn ok brenndu kirkjuna, tóku krossinn ok kennimanninn ok fluttu hvártveggja braut. Kom síðan at inum heiðnum hiti svá mikill at þeir þóttusk nálga brenna, ok óttuðusk þann atburð sem skyssi, en prestrinn segir þeim at sá bruni kóm af guðs megni ok af kraft ens [he]lga kross, ok þeir skutu þá báti ok settu bæði til lands, krossinn ok prestinn. Ok með því at prestinum þótti eigi heilt at setja hann annat sinni undir sama vâða, þá flutti hann krossinn á launungu norðr til staðarins til ins helga Óláfs, sem hann var svarinn, ok nú er hann síðan.”; Snorri Sturluson 2016, *Heimskringla*, vol. 3, *Magnúss saga blinda ok Haralds gilla*, ch. 11. It is worth noting that *Heimskringla* does not state that the cross was brought to Trondheim.

⁶⁸ Cf. for instance *Ágrip* 2008: xii.

⁶⁹ Cf. Chapter 4 (Bjørn Bandlien), 77–85. For Eystein cf. Chapter 14 (Øystein Ekroll), 281–83, and Erik Gunnes, *Erkebiskop Øystein – Statsmann og kirkebygger* (Oslo: Aschehoug, 1996), 99–129.

⁷⁰ Norton, “Archbishop Eystein, King Magnus and the Copenhagen Psalter,” 207f.

⁷¹ This has rarely been brought up or been discussed in detail thus far, though royal contexts have been suggested (e.g. Liepe, “Kyrkans sanna skatter,” 81, 92; Astås, “Kristus-relikvier,” 14, 21f.; Andås, “A Royal Chapel for a Royal Relic?”; Norton, “Archbishop Eystein, King Magnus and the Copenhagen Psalter,” 196f., 201–5; Roaldset, *Mariakirken i Oslo*, 77–94; Arne Odd Johnsen, “Ad Filip IV's relikviegaver til Håkon V (1303–1304),” *Historisk tidsskrift* 44 (1965); Arne Odd Johnsen, “Ad Filip IV's relikviegaver til Håkon V,” *Historisk Tidsskrift* 47 (1968); Adam Oberlin, “Vita Sancti, Vita Regi The Saintly King in Håkonar saga Hákonarsonar,” *Neophilologus* 95, no. 2 (2011): 321f.; Ciggaar, “Denmark and Byzantium,” 142. They form an essential part of my work-in-progress dissertation project, as well as the relation of passion relics to other relics.

Conclusions

The relic of the True Cross which Erik the Good is said to have sent home from Byzantium may have had an impact with regard to legitimizing his dynasty – particularly because it is not unlikely that Erik was familiar with Byzantine concepts of rulership. The material visualization of Jerusalem may also have been used in order to strengthen the position of Knud Lavard as a dynastic saint by stressing the connection his father Erik had to the relic. Moreover, it may have played a role for Erik's successors as well, since crusading became important to Danish royalty. The perception of the relic of the True Cross as being both a “symbol of dynastic lordship and interreligious strife” appears to have been transferred to Scandinavia in an even more pronounced manner in the case of King Sigurd: its usage by Sigurd and his immediate successors in Konghelle and on the battlefield, reported in various sources, even suggests it may have undergone (or at least have been intended to) a similar development as a “focal point” of legitimate rulership in early twelfth-century Norway as it did in the kingdom of Jerusalem.

In conclusion, it is likely that passion relics, especially the True Cross, played an important role in medieval Scandinavian politics: the Northern kingdoms' need for legitimation caused by their late Christianization and weak dynastic claims could in some cases partially be compensated for by employing relics.⁷² Since the relics imported by both Sigurd the Crusader and Erik the Good may well have been the first of their kind to reach Denmark and Norway, the impact they had could certainly have been even more far-reaching. Though many references to the relics derive from non-contemporary sources, it is highly plausible that they were essential to Scandinavian, especially Norwegian, politics of succession and legitimation.⁷³ To guarantee either, importing Jerusalem to Scandinavia via these “material visualizations” appears to have been a means worth resorting to, as in the two cases of early⁷⁴ relic translation briefly addressed here. This was achieved by copying and

⁷² Particularly because numerous pretenders claimed the throne and the various succession laws in Norway were rarely adhered to, cf. Raupp, “Das Wahre Kreuz in den nordischen Königreichen,” 65–8; Ulrike Sprenger, *Sturla Þórðarsons Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar*, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Germanistik und Skandinavistik (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 2000), 27, 40; Bagge 2010, *From Viking Stronghold to Christian Kingdom*, 41, 63; Bagge, “From Fist to Scepter,” 167f.; Bagge, *Cross and Scepter*, 55; Strauch, *Mittelalterliches nordisches Recht bis 1500*, 26–9; Sawyer and Sawyer, *Medieval Scandinavia*, 171; Hoffmann, “Coronation and Coronation Ordines,” 125–7.

⁷³ Raupp, “Das Wahre Kreuz in den nordischen Königreichen,” 67f., both actually and on a literary level.

⁷⁴ Raupp, “Das Wahre Kreuz in den nordischen Königreichen,” 28f. 47, 63, 68; Astås, “Kristus-relikvier,” 11.

mirroring the way the relic of the True Cross was used in Byzantium and Jerusalem. In the case of King Sigurd, Jerusalem even became part of his very name – *Sigurðr Jórsalafari* – as he is referred to in many medieval sources or in an even more pronounced manner in the common variant *Jorsala Sigurðr*.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ Cf. for example: *Morkinskinna*, ch. 73: 106, 82: 141, 103: 215; *Heimskringla: Magnússona saga* ch. 30: 271; *Haraldssona saga*, ch. 17: 324; *Ágrip*, ch. 29: 42f.; *Groenlendinga Þáttr*: 273; *Hulda-Hrokkinskinna. Saga Sigurðar Jórsalafara* ch. 43: 159, 53: 174, *Saga Inga Haraldssonar* ch. 17: 231, *Saga Hákonar Herðibreiðs* ch. 21: 280; *Sverris saga* ch. 3: 7, 85: 130, 95: 147, 98: 151. *Boglunga saga*: 146, *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar* ch. 343: 183, 352: 197; *Knýtlinga saga* ch. 81: 237, 88: 246; 93: 256, 100: 264, 124: 308; *Ágrip af sögu Danakonunga*: 332f.; *Hungurvaka* ch. 6: 26f.; *Orkneyinga saga*, ch. 88/89. For the second variant cf. for instance *Morkinskinna* II: 114, *Fagrskinna*: 371; *Hemings Þáttr Áslákssonar*: 44; *Þorgils saga ok Hafliða*, ch. 7: 9.