

Coin finds of Høre stave church, Oppland Norway: Reflections of regulation and conflict in the Middle Ages

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Abstract

Thanks to an archaeological excavation in 1979, Høre Stave church is one of the most well-documented medieval churches in Norway. Situated in the Valdres Valley, running east-west from the central highlands of south-eastern Norway to the Sognefjord in the west, the church has been dated to 1179 both by dendrochronology and a runic inscription. Both an older and smaller wooden church and an older Christian burial site have been identified under the stave church.

The excavation produced 365 coins and the level of documentation allows for several analytical possibilities. The finds form three distinct patterns or clusters, namely the Choir, the southern and the western parts of the Nave, which are used as the basis for discussions of the church interior and liturgical fixtures and fittings. Two-thirds of the coin finds stem from the Choir, a starting point for a discussion of the admittance of laypeople to the chancel in terms of ritual practice. The possible locations of a side-altar, an offering box and a south entrance are the primary features that can be identified.

Introduction

Scholars have long been drawn to the Valdres valley and to the Høre stave church¹ (Vang, Oppland, Norway), which sits on a plateau on its northern slope. The valley is the westernmost of the large valleys of south-east Norway and ends at the Filefjell mountain pass in the north-west, which leads to the inner parts of the Sognefjord. Filefjell is the lowermost and least harsh of the mountain passes, and the Valdres-Filefjell route was the shortest and most widely used passage between the eastern and western parts of Norway during the Iron Age and the Middle Ages.² Yet, Høre was still physically far from the most important centres of Norway, even though the members of the upper echelons of the area maintained close relations with the royal elite of Norway. It is this remoteness, combined with the fact that the excavations at the site are amongst the best documented in Norway³, and the number of coins found there form a solid statistical basis for analysis, that makes Høre such an interesting site.

[Figure 1 about here]

Both the building history and the interior of Høre have been published and discussed by a number of scholars since the nineteenth century.⁴ In the 1980s and 1990s, the archaeologists Berg and Fehr and historian Baklid took important steps in discussing the coin finds with a focus on using coins in churches as a means of dating and determining whether coins were accidentally lost or purposely deposited.⁵ Fehr also discussed the coins as a tool for identifying baptismal fonts or offering boxes. While highly indebted to their findings, this study seeks to go further. In the first part, the general outline of the building history of Høre

¹ Høre was referred to as *Hurum* for a number of years prior to the 1970s.

² Yngvar Nielsen, *Det norske Veivæsens Udvikling før 1814* (Christiania: Det Mallingske Bogtrykkeri, 1876), 3–4; Sverre Steen, *Ferd og fest. Reiseliv i norsk sagatid og middelalder* (Oslo: Frydenlunds bryggeri, 1929), 211–216.

³ In addition to coins, other kinds of finds were recorded, e.g. textiles, rope, nails, wooden sticks, window glass, nuts, shells and animal bones (*MA-arkiv*). All non-numismatic objects are given the inventory number C 35005 and additional sub-numbers 1–1408. Each sub-number may include one or several fragments (*MA-arkiv*).

⁴ Some of the most significant studies being: Lorenz Dietrichson, *De norske Stavkirker: Studier over deres System, Oprindelse og historiske Udvikling: et Bidrag til Norges middelalderske Bygningskunsts Historie* (Kristiania: A.B. Calmeyers Forlag, 1892); Anders Bugge, “Kirkene i Valdres,” in *Valdres. 900-årskrift 1923*, ed. Gudbrand O. Hovi et al., (Gjøvik: M.O. Mariendals boktrykkeri, 1923); Aslak Liestøl, “564. Hurum kirke VI,” in *Norges innskrifter med de yngre runer*, Bd. 5, ed. Magnus Olsen (Oslo: Kjeldskriftfondet, 1960), 169–175; Roar Hauglid, *Norske stavkirker: dekor og utstyr* (Oslo: Dreyer, 1973); *Norske stavkirker. Bygningshistorisk bakgrunn og utvikling* (Oslo: Dreyer, 1976); Jørgen Jensenius, Nils Marstein and Eivind Bratlie, “Sikring av en stavkirke. Arbeidene i Høre i 1979,” *Vern og virke. Årsberening fra Riksantikvaren* (1979): 1–10; James E. Knirk, “The runic inscriptions in Høre stave church. Høre, Vang (Valdres) Oppland,” (archaeological report, unpublished, Oslo, 1990); Erla Bergendahl Hohler, *Norwegian Stave Church Sculpture*, vol. I-II (Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1999); Jørgen Jensenius, “Trekirkene før stavkirkene. En undersøkelse av planlegging og design av kirker for ca. år 1100,” (PhD diss., The Oslo School of Architecture and Design, 2001); Claus Ahrens, *Die frühen Holzkirchen Europas* (Stuttgart: Theiss, 2001); Leif Anker, *De norske stavkirkene* (Oslo: Arfo, 2005); Sigrid Christie, Ola Storsletten and Anne Marta Hoff, “Høre kirke,” *Norges Kirker*, accessed 28 November 2014, http://www.norgeskirker.no/wiki/H%C3%B8re_kirke.

⁵Karin Berg, “Myntfunn fra Høre kirke i Valdres,” *Fortidsminneforeningen Årbok* 135 (1981); Marie von der Fehr, “Løsfunn fra Høre kirke,” *Universitetets Oldsakssamlings Årbok 1984–1985* (1985).

stave church will be presented according to the finds of archaeological excavations. Subsequently, coins will be mapped within the church in order to discuss the possible relationship between the coins and religious and liturgical practice — Offertory and votive offerings — preferably in Pre-Reformation times. Parallel to the work of Fehr, distribution patterns will be used to discuss church interiors, i.e. possible locations of side altars, pews and alms boxes. On a macro level, some of the coin finds will also be used in a discussion on national and international affairs, i.e. crusades and the collection of tithes in relation to these. As this study will demonstrate, even though shifts can be detected in the way coins were used in some parts of the church, and in one case specifically reflects the Church–State conflicts of the thirteenth century, most coins of Høre fall neatly into the general and regulated pattern of the Offertory.

The history of Høre and the data from the excavations

The church of Høre is mentioned eight times in written sources between 1327 and 1355⁶, and over its life was subject to several changes of status, use and jurisdiction. As a parish, Høre was originally subject to the diocese of Stavanger, but it was transferred to the diocese of Oslo sometime before 1400.⁷ In 1586 the cathedral of Stavanger demanded, to no avail, that the income from Valdres and Hallingdal be restored to Stavanger.⁸ Sometime after the Reformation, Høre was reduced to being an annex-church subject to the Vang church and parish. In 1720, Høre was sold to local farmers, but in 1790 it was again mentioned as ‘the eastern annex’ of Vang church.⁹ Høre has belonged to the parish of Vang, and has been subject to the diocese of Hamar, since 1864. The church has undergone several repairs and modifications.

The majority of the data used in this article stems from the archaeological excavations undertaken by the architects Håkon Christie and Jørgen Jensenius, working under the auspices of *Riksantikvaren*¹⁰, in May–September 1979.¹¹ The excavation covered all of the floors

⁶ 1327: *ecclesia de Ordun* (PN, 24), 1343: *a Horðini* (DN II, no. 257); 1355: *j Haurdins kirkiu sokn a Valdresi* (DN XVI, no. 16); 1389: *a Hordini j Hordins kirkiu sokn* (DN IX, no. 182); c. 1400: *Horðini sokn, á Valdresi* (BEJ, p. 235); 1424: *Hordins kirkiu sokn italics* (DN II, no. 679); 1477: *Hordenne sokn* (DN II, no. 902); 1538: *i hardh[en] kirke sokn* DN XXI, no. 835). The only priest mentioned is *sirra Alfver* Brønderson in 1355 (DN XVI, no. 16).

⁷ Mentioned for the first time as part of the diocese of Oslo in *Biskop Eysteins Jordebog*, written sometime around AD 1400.

⁸ Ivar Aars, “Ut av 1500-talet. Valdresdiplom 32. 1598–1600,” *Årbok for Valdres* (2009): 197–199.

⁹ Christie, Storsletten and Hoff, “Høre kirke.”

¹⁰ The Norwegian Directorate for Cultural Heritage Management.

¹¹ All excavated objects were handled by *Universitetets Oldsaksamling* (now the Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo). Other participating institutions were *Treteknisk institutt* (Norwegian Institute of Wood

inside the existing exterior walls since the beam layer in the chancel seemed to be failing. In addition, the northern corner post had sagged by 15 cm, suggesting the possibility that rot had set in. Severe cracks were also uncovered in the southern masonry and parts were being pushed out. It was thus deemed necessary to remove the soil and stones putting pressure on the walls, stabilise the posts and establish sufficient ventilation beneath the floors. Thus, the interior was removed and all floorboards were taken out.¹²

Until the late 1970s, excavators of churches focused mainly on the history of the building being investigated, providing only limited detailed contextual documentation of stray finds. However, the excavators of Høre stave church employed a more refined approach to archaeological finds, albeit one that still raises some challenges. Finds of coins and other artefacts were documented in different ways, from exact XY-positioning (e.g. 2.5X/11.5Y) via wider XY-positioning (e.g. 5-8X/14-17Y) to a simple record of the part of the building structure and type of layer. The varying quality of documentation has made it necessary to plot the finds in GIS into polygons of varying sizes. Apart from coins with exact positioning, the coins form clusters within certain areas of the church. Unless otherwise noted, distribution maps are thus to be understood as representing the general distribution of coins within certain areas and not as providing the exact positioning of each specimen.¹³ **[Figure 2 about here]**

The excavation produced 359 coins; the oldest is a cut fragment of a Danish penny issued by Magnus the Good (1042–1047) in Viborg, the most recent is a Swedish 25 öre from 1881. Two of the coins found are at present unaccounted for. Only thirty of the total number

Technology), *Norges Tekniske Høyskole* (now the Norwegian University of Science and Technology [NTNU] and the Municipality of Vang, Jørgen Jensenius, “Innberetning om de bygningsarkeologiske undersøkelser i Høre Stavkirke 1979. 1.4.84,” (archaeological report, unpublished, Nesbru, 1984), 7–9. Prior to the excavation, Christie and Jensenius had also made preliminary surveys of the church, Håkon Christie, “Hurum stavkirke, 3.1.1977,” (archaeological report, unpublished, Oslo, 1977; Jørgen Jensenius, “Innberetning om Hurum stavkirke etter opphold sept. – okt. 1975,” (archaeological report, unpublished, Oslo, 1975). Additional reports on the coin finds were made by Berg and Skaare, Karin Berg, “Funnliste mynter – Høre stavkirke,” (archaeological report, unpublished, Oslo, 1979; Karin Berg, “Mynter fra Høre stavkirke. 21. november 1980,” (archaeological report, unpublished, Oslo, 1980); Karin Berg and Kolbjørn Skaare, “Høre stavkirke, Hurum sogn, Vang prestegjeld, Oppland fylke,” (archaeological report, unpublished, Oslo 1980).

¹² Jensenius, “Innberetning,” 1–2. All joints were drawn in 1:5. The four phases of the church were drawn in 1:20 and some details in 1:1. The main phases and details were photographed during the ongoing excavations, Jensenius, “Innberetning,” 14.

¹³ The rebuilding and enhancing of the church and the removal of floors on several occasions were important factors that needed to be taken into consideration in constructing the distribution maps. Apart from organising the coins into polygons, a decision had to be made whether the coins in the nave’s aisle were to be presented as belonging to the pre- or post-1822 aisle, i.e. all placed inside the medieval exterior walls, omitting the medieval pentice, or inside the present exterior walls, including the pentice. The documentation from the excavations did not suggest one or the other. Hence, based upon the assumption that the coins were offered or lost inside the church, the coins have been placed inside the medieval walls, omitting the pentice. As a consequence, the maps presented here will differ somewhat from the ones presented in Fehr, “Løsfunn,” 135–143, and the tendencies in the material will not be as pronounced as in Fehr.

of coins are post-medieval (8.35%). Of the remaining coins that can be dated with certainty, 232 date from before 1320 (64.6%) and fifty from 1320–1510 (13.9%). Of the remaining forty-four (12.26%) indeterminate medieval coins, the lion's share could reasonably be deemed to be thirteenth-century bracteates, thus boosting the numbers for the earliest period.

[Table 1 about here]

The physical framework for archaeological finds at Høre changed several times between c. 1100 and 1822, and Christie and Jensenius recorded the changing sequence of buildings with extraordinary care. Their work provides important information on the structural remains and boundaries for the artefactual finds from different periods. Based on the 1979 excavations, the history of the site of the church can be divided into four chronological phases¹⁴, which will form the basis for the discussions of coin finds below:

1. *Eleventh-century Christian burial site*

Consisting of a total of twenty-two burials, nine of which can be attributed with certainty to the phase. The remaining thirteen all have the same orientation, suggesting they belong to the same phase.¹⁵ No building or structure has been identified in the vicinity.

2. *c. 1100 Posthole church*

Consisting of eighteen postholes that outline two rooms, one larger than the other, oriented east–west, measuring 3.6 x 3.6 m (nave) and 1.9 x 2.1 m (chancel). The building was set on top of the existing Christian burial site.

3. *c. 1180 Stave church*

Consisting of a rectangular nave and a chancel. Both nave and chancel had raised roofs. The church was divided into nave, chancel with apsis and porch, and pentices on three sides: north, south and west. The interior was richly decorated in what is often referred to as ‘Sogn-Valdres style’.

4. *1822 demolition of stave church walls and expansion to current shape*

Maintained the inner structure, but expanded the length of the church by c. 4.5 m. The north and south walls were positioned along the outer perimeters of the former pentices, making the church more than two metres wider. Only one coin has been found in connection with the phase, and the phase itself is not included in the general discussion.

¹⁴ Jensenius, Marstein and Bratlie, “Sikring,” 2–3.

¹⁵ Jensenius, “Innberetning,” 74.

[Figure 3 about here]

The Christian burial site

Only one coin find can be related to this earliest phase: an eleventh-century fragment of a Danish penny found in a grave. The archaeological evidence from this first phase consists solely of graves, a common feature in Norwegian stave churches. The burial site was situated on the *Kvie* farm. Based on the evidence of placenames, several of the farms of Høre can be dated from the fifth century to the seventh century, and the *vin* farm *Kvie* was apparently the most prominent.¹⁶ However, so far, no building or structure in the vicinity has been identified as belonging to the burial site. The site was, as Jensenius puts it, ‘with or without a building’.¹⁷ Nine graves most certainly belong to the phase, while another thirteen graves have the same orientation, and are thus considered as possibly belonging to the same phase.¹⁸ The phase should be viewed in the context of the forced Christianisation of Valdres by St Olav in 1023¹⁹, when the area became, apart from the northernmost parts of Norway, the last area of Norway to be Christianised.²⁰ *Kvie*’s apparent prominence seems to have made it the chosen place for a burial site, and maybe a church, for the new religion, although we do not know whether the burial site was in use only for the farm or for a wider populace. The absence of a church may be explained by one of two factors: either a church was built near the cemetery and has yet to be found and archaeologically examined, or the cemetery was in place well in advance of the church.

In the south side of what is today called the chancel, a coin was found in or underneath a cranium in grave 2: a cut fragment of a Danish penny issued by Magnus the Good (1042–1047) in Viborg.²¹ Taking a broader view of the Norwegian material, there is significant evidence showing that a custom of placing coins in graves existed both in Christian and non-Christian graves until the end of the eleventh century.²² This may well be

¹⁶ *Vin*: natural pasture. For an introduction to Norwegian placenames see Berit Sandnes, “Linguistic patterns in the place-names of Norway and the Northern Isles,” in *Northern Lights, Northern Words. Selected Papers from the FRLSU Conference, Kirkwall 2009*, ed. Robert McColl Millar (Aberdeen: Forum for Research on the Languages of Scotland and Ireland, 2010), 3–14.

¹⁷ Jensenius, “Trekirkene,” 153.

¹⁸ Jensenius, “Innberetning,” 74–80.

¹⁹ Ólaf’s, no. 121; Oluf Kolsrud, “Då Valdres vart kristna,” in *Valdres. 900-årsskrift 1923* ed. Gudbrand O. Hovi et al., (Gjøvik: M.O. Mariendal, 1923), 223.

²⁰ Kolsrud, “kristna,” 209.

²¹ Berg, “Myntfunn,” 77; Jensenius, “Innberetning,” 48; Jensenius, “Trekirkene,” 153.

²² Kolbjørn Skaare, *Coins and coinage in Viking-age Norway: the establishment of a national coinage in Norway in the XI century, with a survey of the preceding currency history* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1976), 171; “Myntene fra Lom kirke,” *Foreningen til norske Fortidsminnesmerkers Bevaring. Årbok* (1978): 120–124; Karin Berg, “Myntene fra Ringeby stavkirke,” *Heimgrenda* (1983): 51; Inger Helene Vibe Müller, “Coins in churches:

interpreted as a form of cult continuation in a time of religious transition. The fragment is in a poor state of conservation, and this may even have been the case before being put in the ground. Theoretically it might have been in circulation for a considerable time, maybe several decades, as similar coins have been found in several Norwegian hoards buried in the period c. 1065–1080.²³ The fact that the coin has been cut certainly suggests that it arrived in Norway at a time when there was a predominant silver economy, before the establishment and consolidation of the Norwegian coinage by Harald Hardrada (1047–1066) and Olav Kyrre (1067–1093).

The posthole church

Apart from the building structure, little is known of the earliest church building at Høre. Eighteen postholes were uncovered in the course of the 1979 excavations, constituting a small wooden building, possibly constructed at the end of the eleventh century, with two rooms, one larger than the other. The structure was oriented east–west, and was built on top of the burial place.²⁴ The nave measures 3.6 x 3.6 m, and in both the north and south walls of the nave there were traces of two middle posts. The chancel measures 1.9 x 2.1 m. The posts were circular with a diameter of 30–40 cm, and these were burned at the end and placed in holes at a depth of 1 m and with a diameter up to 1.5 m. A flat rock was placed at the bottom of each hole and the posts were surrounded by tilted stones.²⁵

[Figure 4 about here]

As for the burial site, only one coin find can be related to the posthole church: a fragment of a Danish penny from the second half of the eleventh century found at the bottom of a posthole.²⁶ The fragment was found in a sand layer underneath the stone²⁷ at the bottom

A means of payment?" in *Coins and archaeology: proceedings of the first meeting at Isegran, Norway 1988*, ed. Helen Clarke and Erik Schia (Oxford: BAR, 1989), 85.

²³ Stange Churchyard, Hedmark (Skaare, *Coins and coinage*, no. 19); Stavenesodden, Krødsherad, Buskerud (Skaare, *Coins and coinage*, no. 31); Nordrum, Hedrum, Buskerud (Skaare, *Coins and coinage*, no. 49); Nomeland [II], Valle, Aust-Agder (Skaare, *Coins and coinage*, no. 70); Måge, Ullensvang, Hordaland (Skaare, *Coins and coinage*, no. 102); Gresli, Tydal, Sør-Trøndelag (Skaare, *Coins and coinage*, no. 143).

²⁴Jensenius, "Innberetning," 48–50; Jensenius, "Trekirkene," 153. A fourteenth-century sample was taken from one of the postholes, which was given a calibrated date AD 935 ± 85 (Sample ref: T-3775). However, it was not specified which posthole the sample was taken from, nor which part of the posthole.

²⁵ Jensenius, Marstein and Bratlie, "Sikring," 2.

²⁶ The fragment is in a poor state of preservation and cannot be identified more precisely. Berg, "Myntfunn," 76–77; Karin Berg, "Rapport om myntfunnet," in Jensenius, "Innberetning," 19–20, attachment 3; Berg, 1981; e-mail from Frédéric Elfver, 6 May 2015.

²⁷Jensenius, "Innberetning," 68.

of posthole no. 15²⁸, which is presumed to belong to the lower part of the roof construction.²⁹ Two possibilities arise from this find: (i) the coin was deliberately placed in the posthole during the erection of the church³⁰ or (ii) the coin was originally lost or placed in a grave at the burial site predating the church, and accidentally fell into the posthole during construction works. The absence of any grave in close proximity could point towards the coin having been deliberately placed in the posthole. This is strengthened by the fact that the coin was recovered from underneath the bottom stone, and not from the sides or filling. A parallel find has been registered in Uvdal stave church in Buskerud, where two coins c. 1100–1130 were found under two stones in the stabilising filling for a posthole belonging to an older posthole church. The coins could not have fallen into the fill and must have been placed there prior to the erection of the post. That particular posthole was considered to be one of the best preserved and has been seen by several as providing a reliable date for the construction of the posthole church of Uvdal.³¹ Despite its poor conservation, the attribution to Denmark and minting in the second half of the eleventh century of the coin from the Høre posthole, together with considerations on the history of circulation, provides an indication that the coin could hardly have been in use later than the mid-twelfth century, and more likely ended up in the posthole shortly after c. 1100. However, the coin's contextual relationship to the building structure tells us that a clear purpose was at play when it was deposited. Like the previously mentioned coin from the grave, this may be perceived as a form of cult continuation or a reminiscence of earlier belief systems. Still, it may also be regarded in a Christian context as an offering to God or to a patron saint made at the foundation of the building.

The stave church

The stave church at Høre is a long building divided into a rectangular nave, chancel with apsis and porch, with pentices to the north, south and west. Above the central nave is a raised roof supported by four corner posts and the chancel also had a raised roof. The current structure has only a west entrance, however 'two doors in the south wall' were mentioned in 1740.³²

²⁸ Jensenius, "Trekirkene," 151–153.

²⁹ Jensenius, "Trekirkene," 152.

³⁰ Berg, "Rapport."

³¹ Herleik Baklid, "... nær folkje kallar på Gud..." Myntfunn under kirkegolv i sosialhistorisk perspektiv," (MA-thesis, unpublished, University of Oslo, 1993), 58–59; Sigrid Christie and Håkon Christie, *Norges kirker, Buskerud*, Bd, III (Oslo: Gyldendal, 1993), 22; Jensenius, "Trekirkene," 147.

³² Knut Hermundstad, *Høre stavkyrkje* (Fagernes: Valdres Trykkeri, 1968), 34. After the rebuilding the two south portals were included in the building, but were not in use as doors. One portal (Hurum II) is positioned on

The church is closely related to the stave churches of Lomen, Hegge and Hemsedal.³³ The original ridge turret, now serving as part of the entrance to the cemetery, is similar to the turret of Borgund, Sogn, c. 80 km west of Høre, at the end of the Valdres-Filefjell route. Apart from the richly decorated portals and corner posts none of the original medieval interior has survived.³⁴

[Figure 5 about here]

The stave church is dated to 1179 both by dendrochronology and by a runic inscription on the pulpit, which reads: ‘It was that summer the brothers Ellingr and Auðun had (trees) cut for this church, when Jarl Erlingr fell in Nidaros/Niðarós.’³⁵

Elling was known as *lendmann* (*lendr maðr*) at the time, and had his seat at the Kvie farm.³⁶ Jarl Erling, who was King Sverre’s main opponent and father to the king sanctioned by the Church, Magnus (1161–1184), was killed at the battle of Kalvskinnet in Nidaros (Trondheim) on 19 June 1179.³⁷ The inscription is corroborated by dendrochronology, which shows that the trees for the church were actually cut in 1178/1179, and that the church must have been built that year or shortly after.³⁸ **[Figure 6 about here]**

The chancel

the south wall of the porch, the other (Hurum III) in the chancel screen (Hohler, *Norwegian*, 174–177; cat. no. 107 and no. 108).

³³ Roar Hauglid, *Norske stavkirker. Bygningshistorisk bakgrunn og utvikling* (Oslo: Dreyer, 1976), 328; Hohler, *Norwegian*, 15; Ahrens, *Die frühen*, 283.

³⁴ Stylistically, the decorations belong to the so-called ‘Sogn-Valdres style’, a term first coined by Dietrichson, *De norske Stavkirker*, 62; Roar Hauglid, *Norske stavkirker. Dekor og utstyr* (Oslo: Dreyer, 1973); Hohler, *Norwegian*; Ahrens, *Die frühen*, and Anker, *De norske*, has written extensively on the topic more recently.

³⁵ Translation James E. Knirk: *Þá, um þat su[mar létu] þeir bræðr Erlingr ok Auðun hoggva till kirkju þessar, er Erlingr j[arl fell] í Niðarósi*, Liestøl, “564. Hurum kirke,” 174; James E. Knirk, “Befaringsrapport: Høre stavkirke. 12.11.1989,” (archaeological report, unpublished, Oslo, 1989b), 2. According to Knirk, a more literal English translation would be: ‘Then, that summer, the brothers Elling and Audun had (trees) cut for this church, when Jarl Erling fell in Nidaros’ (email from James E. Knirk, 4 May 2015).

³⁶ *Lendmann* (pl. *lendmenn*) refers to men receiving income from royal lands in order to uphold peace and conduct certain administrative tasks. The title *lendmann* was replaced by *baron* in 1277. In 1308 the title ceased to exist, SNL, accessed 4 May 2015, <https://snl.no/lendmann>.

³⁷ The title *jarl* is the highest ranking chieftain next to the king, equivalent to the Anglo-Saxon *eorl*. Jarl is found translated as *comes* in Latin inscriptions on early thirteenth-century Norwegian coins.

³⁸ Ola Storsletten, “Høre kirke. Vang kommune. Dendrokronologiske prøver, rapport. 28.7.2000,” (archaeological report, unpublished, 2000); Terje Thun, “Dendrokronologi Høre stavkirke, Vang kommune, Oppland, notat 29.8.2000,” (archaeological report, unpublished, Trondheim, 2000). Terje Thun, the foremost Norwegian expert on dendrochronology, is of the opinion that the timber was in use the very same year as the trees were cut. The trees were cut during the winter and spring to be used the following summer. To his knowledge this was the case in churches where the year of construction is certain. Major constructions like stave churches would have taken approximately two years to build and the timber was cut over two winters, as is the case at Urnes. Drying of the wood would make it more impractical and harder to use as a building material (email from Terje Thun, 13 March 2015).

One issue raised by the numerous coins found in the chancel area in Høre stave church, and in many other medieval churches, is that of lay people's access to the choir. The altar, the holiest space in the church, both at Høre and in other churches, was situated in the chancel. How this affected the way the room itself was regarded is not clear, although there are clues in some provisions by Norwegian archbishops. In the 1320s Archbishop Eiliv Arnesson Korte (1309–1331) issued a statute forbidding laymen, except for those participating in the reading or song, from entering the choir during mass.³⁹ We do not know whether this was a confirmation of a general practice or an attempt to reinstate the general rule of barring the laity from the choir. Later in the statute Eiliv makes a very distinct exception to the rule, allowing access to the choir on Easter Sunday and on other days when the priest should offer the sacrament of the Body of God (*guds likama*). All receiving the sacrament should fall to their knees at the altar.⁴⁰ This would be in line with, and was clearly inspired by, the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, which highlighted Easter Sunday as a day for confessions and receiving the sacrament of the Eucharist.⁴¹ Later Archbishop Aslak Bolt (1428–1450) stated that offerings at the main altar should be undertaken on seventeen Sundays per year.⁴² Laypeople were given access to the choir on these particular occasions but all these provisions suggest that laypeople were restricted, if not forbidden, from partaking in devotional practice in the chancel at most other times. Yet, the fact remains that the majority of the coins discovered at Høre were found in the chancel (approximately 66%, 238 coins). At first glance, this might appear to contradict the injunctions of the archbishops prohibiting the laity access to the choir. But, the appearance of so many coins in the chancel could, in fact, prove to be perfectly by the book considering the number of occasions offerings at the altar were to be performed.

It cannot be dismissed, however, that offerings may have been given to the priest who subsequently brought the offerings to the altar, but still the provisions of the archbishops, Eiliv and Aslak, that specifically mention offerings at the altar point in another direction. In the 1946 excavations of S:t Jörgens, Åhus, Scania, an interesting observation was made concerning the role of the altar in connection with coin offerings. Of the 176 coins found

³⁹ NgL III, 266–267. *Leikmonnum skal æigi þolas at standa i sognhusi hia klerum medan þeir flyktia tidir. utan þeim einum sem lesa edr syngiaþ med þeim.*

⁴⁰ NgL III, 267. *Prestar skolo telia fyrir soknarfolki sinnu á pascha dag edr þa daga adra. er þeir skolo þeim guds likama gefa. at menn gangi med allri spekt ok virdingu till þess heilags embættis. ok falli huerr a kne fyrir alltari [sa er kal skal. ok standi eigi upp fyrr. edr gangi i brott en hann hafí alþingis neytt guds likama ok skolad uel munn finn i uini edr uatni.*

⁴¹ Concilium Lateranense IV, Constitutiones 1.21, Norman P. Tanner, *Decrees of the ecumenical councils*, vol. 1 Nicaea I to Lateran V (London: Sheed and Ward, 1990), 245.

⁴² Olav Tveito, "Mynter i messen - Kirkefunnene som bidrag til kunnskap om offerpraksis og kirkeskikker (11.-17. årh.)," *Historisk Tidsskrift* 3 (2015): 395; NgL 2. r. I, 552.

inside the church, sixty-nine were found in the chancel, which makes a total of 36.9%. Apart from one, the coins were retrieved from different parts of the nave with a majority in the eastern parts. Interestingly, the number of coins in the chancel drops radically c. 1360, from sixty-five coins before to four after. Admittedly there is a significant drop in the finds from the nave, but it is not as marked as in the chancel. The explanation seems to be closely connected to the whereabouts of the altar. In 1361 the original altar was removed from the chancel, and a new altar was erected at the centre of the nave. Concurrently, there is an increase in the number of coins in the area of the new altar.⁴³

It is not unusual to find high proportions of coins in chancels in Norway, Sweden and Denmark; the churches of Lom, Eidskog, Bjärka, Dverstorps, Nedre Ullersrud, Hamneda and Aggersborg are some examples.⁴⁴ At Høre, the proportion of coins in the chancel was already high shortly after the church was built (over 50% at the time of Sverre), and rose significantly in the Late Middle Ages. Coins are found spread from the middle to the eastern part of the chancel. Two clusters of thirteen, and a remarkable one hundred coins were retrieved close to each other in the apsis. **[Figure 7 about here]**

Nearly 90% of the coins from the chancel were found in the eastern two-thirds of the structure. The areas on both sides of the chancel arch, both in the nave and the chancel, were heavily disturbed, and notably a large section of the western part of the chancel, bordering up to the screen, produced very few finds.⁴⁵ The disturbances of the archaeological context in this area indicate that soil and coins had been moved or removed. Another remarkable feature must be noted: apart from two coins from Håkon Håkonsson (1217–1263), all medieval coins found in the western side of the chancel arch area — in the nave — stem from the time of Magnus the Law-mender (1263–1280). The concentration of coins from Magnus the Law-mender will be discussed below when dealing with the nave.

The most extraordinary feature of the chancel coin finds is the group of one hundred coins found in a stone-lined pit in the apse (coordinates 5x/17y). The pit is described as a semicircle, resembling some sort of ‘mini tomb’ that sliced through parts of the older postholes nos. 1 and 14.⁴⁶ The coins found there represent the whole Medieval period from

⁴³ Mats Petersson, “S:t Jörgen i Åhus,” *Meddelanden från Lunds Universitets Historiska Museum* (1948): 238–240.

⁴⁴ Henrik Klackenborg, *Moneta nostra: monetarisering i medeltidens Sverige* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1992), 202, 204, 229–230 and 241–242; Roland, Håkon. 2016. Eidskog church. Coin Use, Church Chronology, and Pilgrimage In: S.H. Gullbekk, C. Kilger and H. Roland, eds. *Towards an Archaeology of Salvation in the Middle Ages*. Oxford: Routledge, pp .

⁴⁵ Jensenius, “Innberetning,” 42–45.

⁴⁶ Jensenius, “Innberetning,” 47–48.

King Sverre to Archbishop Gaute Ivarsson (1474–1510) and no post-Reformation coins were discovered. The coins were found in a brownish soil and seemingly deposited ‘in a way that they are presumed swept down over time’.⁴⁷ Alongside the coins in the pit were a wide variety of fragmentary artefacts, such as personal belongings, remains of foodstuff and building material (C 35005: 264–203).⁴⁸ No matter what the intended use of the pit may have been, it seems to have developed quite rapidly after the construction of the church into a place into which dust and debris were swept. This may also account for the nearby cluster of thirteen coins in the fillings of the apse (4–5.5x/16–17y), which, apart from one Norwegian skilling from 1694, display the same pattern as the ones from the pit. **[Figure 8 about here]**

During the 1979 excavations, a large stone, measuring c. 60 cm at its widest point, was found in the centre of the chancel between postholes 2 and 13. The top of the stone was flat and level and the base ended in a prong. All signs indicate the stone having been deliberately placed in this position, leading Jensenius to suggest that it was the base of an altar. The possible identification of the foundations of the altar may prove to be the very key to explaining the high proportion of coins in the chancel. The coins from the chancel could conceivably have spilled from the communion offering on the altar and subsequently been swept with other debris into pits, fillings and crevices. This interpretation would fit nicely with the archbishops’ provisions for offerings being left on the altar up to seventeen times per year, which would on average allow laypeople into the chancel nearly every third week throughout the year. These offerings are thus to be regarded as a standard element of the liturgy proper, as part of the Offertory. The coins found in the chancel therefore reflect the laity’s part in this official liturgical practice, sanctioned by Mother Church and authorised by Canon Law. Antedating the Lateran Council, the coins clearly show the longstanding importance of the high altar as a place for offering and how a universal practice even extended into a remote Norwegian valley as early as the late twelfth century.⁴⁹ Furthermore, the absence of post-Reformation coins may indicate both a shift in offering practices and the fact that the Høre church seems to have more or less fallen out of use for a time in the sixteenth century.

⁴⁷ Jensenius, “Innberetning,” 54.

⁴⁸ The fragments are as follows: pin (1); stud (2); rivet (1); copper (2); leather (2); textile (7); paper (17); thread (15); mussels (17); nuts (1); bone (2); mortar/shell filling (1); iron (7); wooden stick (1); unidentified wooden object (1); window shard (46); unidentified glass (2); knife? (1); bottle? (1) (*MA-Arkiv*).

⁴⁹ Tveito, “Mynter i messen,” 391–396.

The nave

The fact that only roughly 44% of the coins at Høre were found in the much larger nave, where the laity were free to enter, would suggest that the majority of coin offerings took place in the chancel on the designated occasions, namely the Offertory. However, clearly coins were used and lost in the nave. In the following, the distribution and chronological development of the coin finds will be discussed in the light of possible side altars, alms boxes or pews, even though no traces of these, aside from the possible main altar base, were found during the excavations.⁵⁰

In total, twenty-eight coins were found in the central nave. Apart from two seventeenth-century coins found in the eastern part near the chancel arch, the coins were evenly distributed throughout the area: thirty-one coins were found in the west aisle, thirty-seven in the south aisle and seven in the north aisle. An analysis of the coins and disturbances of the soil in the church reached the conclusion that the coins in the south aisle should be regarded as found *in situ*.⁵¹ In addition, three coins were found in the porch. Ten of the coins found in the south and west aisles can with some certainty be placed in the south-west corner where the aisles meet, and seven in the south-east corner. Ideally, one would have hoped for a clearer pattern for the coins in the aisles. As noted before, the choice was made when constructing the maps, however problematic, to allocate all coins found in the existing aisles to the pre-1822 aisles, thus leaving the medieval pentice virtually bereft of coins.⁵²

[Figure 9 about here]

There is a noticeable difference in the frequency of finds between the northern and southern parts of the nave. This raises the question of gender separation in the church. As a general rule, the nave would be divided into male and female sides, south and north respectively.⁵³ However, this explanation for the distribution of coins in the nave does not explain why the finds were distinctly concentrated in the aisle and not more evenly spread

⁵⁰ According to the excavation report there was generally much disturbance of the soil due to rebuilding, repairs and graves. Jensenius, "Innberetning," 29–42.

⁵¹ Baklid, "nær folkje kallar på Gud," 208–217.

⁵² Three coins with an accurate positioning in the south pentice are visible in the maps.

⁵³ Alternate divisions have been discussed by Margaret Aston, "Segregation in the Church," in *Women in the Church*, ed. William J. Sheils and Diana Wood (London: Basil Blackwell, 1999); Katherine L. French, "The Seat under Our Lady: Gender and Seating in the Late Medieval English Parish Churches," in *Women's space: patronage, place and gender in the medieval church*, ed. Virginia Chieffo Raguin and Sarah Stanbury (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2005); Corine Schleif, "Men on the Right-Women on the Left. (A)Symmetrical Spaces and Gendered Places," in *Women's space: patronage, place and gender in the medieval church*, ed. Virginia Chieffo Raguin and Sarah Stanbury (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2005) and Martin Wangsgaard Jürgensen, "Syddør, norddør og det kønsopdelte kirkerum," *Hikuin* 36 (2009). East–west divisions are known, but divisions other than north–south seem to be exceptional.

across the whole southern part of the church. Another factor was clearly at play in the south aisle of Høre church.⁵⁴

A distinct pattern can be seen among the coins of Sverre Sigurdsson (1177–1202) and Håkon Håkonsson (1217–1263), which are concentrated in the south and west aisles.

[Figure 10 about here] [Figure 11 about here]

The south aisle might be related to a side altar, and the concentrations in the west aisle to a baptismal font or an alms box.⁵⁵ Concerning a possible side altar, it is presumed that most parish churches had at least two side altars, preferably one on each side of the chancel arch.⁵⁶ The Virgin facing the congregation on the Gospel side⁵⁷, i.e. north side, and the patron saint on the south side (Epistle side). Still, there are no indications to the identity of the patron saint of Høre, neither in the written evidence nor in the physical remains from the church. In contrast to the offerings made at the main altar, which are to be regarded as part of the liturgy proper, and the official act of receiving the sacrament, the offerings made at the side altar are better seen as votive offerings to the saint,⁵⁸ thus reflecting the personal beliefs or relationship to the divine of the individual.

The possibility that a baptismal font may once have been placed in the western part cannot be completely ruled out, but its likelihood seems remote and evidence for it is hard to find. As the floor has been replaced, there are no traces of water spilling during baptisms over time, nor have traces of water deposits or rot underneath the floor been registered. The latter might be due to the simple fact that this was not investigated during the excavation. Rot identified in 1979 was concentrated in the northern part of the nave; specifically, in the raft beam and in both of the two north corner posts.⁵⁹ Relating a baptismal font to the rot in the north-west post appears to be a long-shot as the rot was a problem for the north side in general, and the issue appears to have had structural causes.

⁵⁴ In the following, the medieval coin finds of Høre have been divided into four maps according to chronology and one map displaying late medieval German coins. The division is based on the fact that all coins found, apart from the German coins, are regarded as domestic. This is valid for all Swedish coins 1319–1355 due to the union between Sweden and Norway, and Danish coins post-1380 due to the union between Denmark and Norway (1380–1814). As the bulk of the coins were found in the chancel and have been dealt with earlier, the following focuses mainly on the results from the nave.

⁵⁵ Fehr, “Løsfunn.”

⁵⁶ Bernt C. Lange, “Altare, Norge,” in *Kulturhistorisk leksikon for nordisk middelalder*, Bd I, Abbed-Bilde, ed. Finn Hødnebo (Oslo: Gyldendal, 1956), cols. 113–114.

⁵⁷ Cath. Enc, accessed 3 September 2016, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01356e.htm>. The order of the Gospel and Epistle sides altered in 1488 (ibid.).

⁵⁸ Cath. Enc, accessed 3 September 2016, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15509a.htm>.

⁵⁹ Nils Marstein, “Rapport om reparasjon av stavene. 2. oktober 1979,” in Jensenius, “Innberetning,” attachment 1, (archaeological report, unpublished Oslo, 1979); Eivind Bratlie, “Sikring av råtesvekket tre med plastmaterialer i Høre kirke sommeren 1979,” in Jensenius, “Innberetning,” attachment 2, (archaeological report, unpublished, Oslo, 1979).

Yet, there are other possibilities left to explore. Given the existence of a south entrance to the church in Medieval times, one may have to view as a whole the coins in the west and south aisles. Even though the ten coins placed with certainty in the south-west corner, where the aisles meet, are by rights too few to be considered a cluster or concentration, one might still cautiously suggest that they could point to something having been placed in this corner, just between the west and south entrances. This ‘something’ might have been an alms box. Whether the alms box was primarily used as the congregation entered through the south door or left the church through the west door (or both) is not clear. The intended purpose for the income from this possible alms box is not clear either. One suggestion may be a connection with the *fabrica ecclesiae*.⁶⁰ This, however, is purely speculative.

Thus, in summary, I would suggest that the explanation for the concentration of coins in the south and west aisles was that there was an alms box to the left (the south-west corner) of the south entrance and a side altar in the south-east corner of the nave. The coins dating from the period 1263–1319 display tendencies that are similar to those of the coins of Sverre and Håkon. The forty-four indeterminate medieval coins show some of the same tendencies, with twenty-four coins in the chancel and the rest in the nave: seven spread in the middle of the space, five in the west aisle, four in the south aisle and two in the north aisle. Although not shown on the maps, most of these can reasonably be regarded as thirteenth-century Norwegian bracteates, thus enhancing the picture already seen.

In the complex spatial and chronological distribution of coin finds within the nave and the chancel there is a notable difference in the distribution presented by a number of coins from the reign of Magnus the Law-mender (1263–1280) in the chancel arch area (i.e. on both sides bordering the chancel arch).⁶¹ Being limited to the coins of one king and a time span of less than twenty years, this phenomenon stands out as an oddity. One possible answer might be that an alms box was temporarily located by the crucifix, as has been identified in Svinnegarns church, Uppland, Sweden.⁶² Some rudimentary evidence suggests the introduction of some sort of layman’s altar in Scandinavia during the High Middle Ages, which might also provide an explanation.⁶³ However, as the offering and spillage in the chancel arch area seem to have occurred over just a few years, another explanation presents

⁶⁰ Cath. Enc, accessed 3 September 2016, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05744b.htm>.

⁶¹ Eighteen coins were spread in the easternmost part of the nave and westernmost part of the chancel. No other coin types have been found in relation to these.

⁶² Klackenborg, *Moneta nostra*, 293.

⁶³ Tveito, “Mynter i messen,” 397–398.

itself; importantly, this explanation echoes events in the Mother Church. **[Figure 12 about here]**

Upon becoming pope in 1271, Gregory X conceived an ambitious plan, which he hoped would bring political and religious stability to Europe, unite the Eastern and Western Churches by a treaty with Michael VIII Palaeologus (Nicaean emperor, 1259–1261; Byzantine emperor, 1261–1282) and resolve the problem of the Holy Land. Three themes were outlined for discussion at the Church council in Lyons in 1274: union with the Greeks, the reform of the Church and the crusade.⁶⁴ It was this last theme that is likely to have been reflected in the Høre church, and which could explain the concentration of Magnus' coins. As a direct consequence of the first constitution of the Lyons council, a six-year tithe for a crusade to the Holy Land was instigated in 1276.⁶⁵ The pope allowed the Church in Norway to delay the start of the collection, in part because of Archbishop Jon Raude's shipwreck on his return from Lyons, but also because of the number of officials needed to carry out the collection in each vast Norwegian diocese.⁶⁶ In addition, instructions were issued for tithes to be given in milk produce, fish or poor Norwegian coins to be changed into silver or gold.⁶⁷ The accounts of the papal nuncios show that a total of 9,900 marks of Norwegian coins were collected in Norway in 1285.⁶⁸ The concentration of coins solely from the reign of Magnus the Law Mender found at Høre suggests that, for a limited time, an offering box dedicated to the collection for the crusade was placed in the vicinity of the chancel arch. As far as we can establish from coin finds in churches all over Scandinavia, concentrations of coins typically are not limited to a short period like this, but rather encompass finds of coins from considerably longer stretches. When a concentration of coins of one specific coin type from a very limited period of time presents itself within a cluster, it strongly suggests special measures and considerations. Assuming this is correct, it would be the only evidence left in a Norwegian church of a large-scale operation running in the Archdiocese of Nidaros.⁶⁹

Considering the fact that the collection period ran from 1276 to 1282, one would expect some coins belonging to Eirik Magnusson (1280–1299) to appear in the finds. Admittedly, we do not know with certainty when Magnus' bracteates disappeared from circulation. A large part of the coins in circulation in the earliest years of Eirik's reign would

⁶⁴ Tanner, *Decrees*, 303–307.

⁶⁵ Concilium Lugdunense II, Constitutiones (1b) (Tanner, *Decrees*, 310–311).

⁶⁶ DN VI, no. 37; DN VI, no. 38; DN VI, no. 40; RN, no. (154).

⁶⁷ DN VI, no. 39.

⁶⁸ PNRD, 12–14; Svein H. Gullbekk, *Pengevesenets fremvekst og fall i Norge i middelalderen* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum, 2009), 79.

⁶⁹ I wish to express my gratitude to Svein H. Gullbekk for pointing out this possibility.

almost certainly have been issued by his predecessor, and it is not unreasonable to argue that bracteates would continue to be used for taxes and offerings some years into the new reign.⁷⁰ However, it is not clear that the collection was carried out in full during the reign of Eirik. Beginning just a couple of months into the new reign, as a consequence of a bitter conflict between Archbishop Jon Raude and some of the most influential members of the regency government of the twelve-year-old Eirik, the Church suffered several political and economic blows. In 1280 the regency issued an amendment to the law (*rettarbot*) rejecting, among other things, the clerics' claims to tithes from trade and income and forbidding the sale of silver to the Church.⁷¹ The latter was a direct blow to the Norwegian church's ability to export the six-year tithe in accordance with the papal provisions mentioned above. The conflict culminated in the revocation of the Norwegian concordat of 1277 *Sættargjorden* and Archbishop Jon's escape to Skara, Sweden in 1281, where he died the following year.⁷² Concerns for the collection must have reached the Holy See as, in a letter dated 4 March 1282, Pope Martin IV (1281–1285) reminded the king of the sad situation in the Holy Land and urged him not to hinder the export of the tithe.⁷³ There are indications of local resistance to the collection of the six-year tithe during the reign of Magnus, and the Church seems to have been dependent on pressure from the king on his local subjects in order to carry out the collection.⁷⁴ During the conflict between the Archbishop and the regency government of Eirik the focus was on creating obstacles for the Church, not helping it. However farfetched it may seem, it is not unlikely that the explanation for the absence of Erik's coins at Høre may be a reflection of the ongoing conflict between the Church and State in which the local powers at Kvie apparently sided with their close relative, the king, and abandoned the collection altogether at an early stage.

Looking at the Scandinavian coins from the period 1355–1513 and the German coins from c. 1300–1500, one particular tendency stands out: apart from one coin struck for Erik of Pomerania (King of Norway 1389–1442, Denmark and Sweden 1396–1439) sometime between 1400 and 1420, all coins disappear from the south and west aisles. Of a total of forty-

⁷⁰ The example of Peter's Pence being collected from Bergen diocese in the years 1294–1300 is telling: a sum of 5 marks 6 ores *subtilis monete* was part of this (PNRD, 12–14; Gullbekk, *Pengevesenets*, 79–83).

⁷¹ NgL III, 1–12.

⁷² Jon Anders Risvaag, "Ikke-kongelig utmynting i Norge frem til reformasjonen," *Nordisk Numismatisk Årsskrift 1994-96* (2000): 143–144. The only written evidence of the revocation is Archbishop Jørund's (1287–1309) complaint, dated 9 March 1291, concerning the unjust treatment of the Church by the regency government (DN III, no. 30).

⁷³ DN I, no. 71.

⁷⁴ Pål Berg Svenungsen, *Norge og korstogene: en studie av forbindelsene mellom det norske riket og den europeiske korstogsbevegelsen, ca. 1050-1380* (Bergen: University of Bergen 2016), 236–237.

seven coins, only seven were found in the nave, placing 85% of the coins of this period in the chancel. In fact, this tendency seems to have started with the coins of Håkon V Magnusson (1299–1319), with only one coin in the south aisle and none in the west aisle. This clearly indicates some changes in the religious practice and the way money was being used. The most obvious conclusion seems to be that the original offering box had gone out of use by the early 1300s. The overall number of coins found also dropped significantly in the period. This could be explained by a recession in the fourteenth century, which reduced output of Norwegian coins and limited the amount of coin in circulation.⁷⁵ Valdres was also hit by the Black Death in October 1349, a time recorded in written evidence from the area as ‘the autumn of the (great) mortality’,⁷⁶ and in general it took both the population and the economy of Norway several generations to recover. **[Figure 13 about here] [Figure 14 about here]**

Of the twenty-seven post-Reformation coins identified, thirteen coins were found in the nave and thirteen in the chancel, while one was found in the porch. Six of the coins from the nave were spread evenly across the mid-room, and five across the south aisle. Still, the number of coins is so low that they are best left out of the analyses on distribution. The significant drop in the number of coins in Høre sometime after the Reformation can be explained by two factors. Firstly, there was the altered status of the church as it went from being a parish church to being merely an annex of the new parish church at Vang.⁷⁷ As there is no written evidence for a priest assigned to Høre in the Post-Reformation period, the church probably went without one, and was served by the priest of the main church. In contrast, the names and *vitae* of all priests since 1537 in the parish of Vang are known and have been published.⁷⁸ Secondly, this coincides with the introduction of offering plates carried around the congregation for the collection, which helped reduce the number of coins lost through spillage.⁷⁹

Conclusions

⁷⁵ Jon Anders Risvaag, *Mynt og by: myntens rolle i Trondheim by i perioden ca. 1000-1630, belyst gjennom myntfunn og utmynting* (Trondheim: Norwegian University of Science and Technology, 2006), 308–311; Gullbekk, *Pengevesenets*, 162–185.

⁷⁶ Ole Jørgen Benedictow, *Plague in the Late Medieval Nordic Countries. Epidemiological Studies* (Oslo: Middelalderforlaget, 1992), 94–97; Ole Jørgen Benedictow, *The Black Death, 1346-1353: the complete history* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006), 157.

⁷⁷ The last time Høre is mentioned as a parish is 15 May 1538 (DN XXI, no. 835).

⁷⁸ Kjell T. Lund, *Han far: prestehistorie og bygdeliv, Vang i Valdres* (Vang: Valdres historielag, 1997).

⁷⁹ Tveito, “Mynter i messen,” 413–414. The Scandinavian term is *offertavle*.

Despite its position in a rather remote Norwegian valley far from the centres of the Mother Church, the coin finds of Høre distinctly reflect some of the central policies and decisions around liturgy and the collection of tithes throughout the Middle Ages. Ultimately, the changing practices brought about by the Reformation are also mirrored in the shifting patterns of the coin finds.

There were three major concentrations of medieval coins in the stave church — in the chancel, the south and west aisles of the nave and in the chancel arch area — with the chancel being the only area in use throughout the time from the foundation of the stave church to the early sixteenth century. The fact that the largest body of coins was found in the chancel suggests that the majority of offerings throughout the Middle Ages took place on the main altar on Easter Sunday and other days intended for offerings, which allowed the laity to enter the otherwise off-limits chancel on these occasions. The two other concentrations have more limited time frames. The finds from the south and west aisles of the nave suggest that an offering box was placed in the south-west corner by the south entrance to the church, and a side altar was positioned in the south-east corner. These seem to have already been in place from the late twelfth century, but must have fallen out of use sometime at the beginning of the fourteenth century. The reason for this abandonment is difficult to assess, but stands out in sharp contrast to the continuous offerings made at the altar in the chancel throughout Medieval times. The last concentration of coins, at the chancel arch, seems to reflect an offering box put up to collect the six-year tithe for the coming crusade to the Holy Land during the reign of Magnus the Law-mender (1263–1280). This offering box seems to have fallen out of use at the very beginning of Eirik Magnusson's reign due to the bitter conflict between the king and the Norwegian Church. Furthermore, the lack of post-Reformation coins reflects the reduced status of the church as it shifted from being a parish church to an annex under the parish of Vang, apparently without a priest assigned to the church. Offerings may also have shifted from fixed locations to offering plates carried around the congregation.

The eleventh-century coin found in the grave of the early Christian burial site may be regarded as a transitional element or cult continuation at a time when the new religion was in its initial stages. Whether this was also the case for the coin in the posthole of the first church is more open to question.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Steinar Kristensen for creating the distribution maps for this article and for patient guidance and inspiring discussions during their creation. Thanks also go to Harald Bentz Høgseth and Terje Thun for their assessment on the time of construction of the stave church; to James E. Knirk for advice on runes and for the English translation of the inscription on the pulpit; and to Kay Celtel for copy-editing. I also wish to thank Axel Christophersen, Svein H. Gullbekk and fellow participants in the *Religion and Money* project for commenting on this article at various stages. All errors and misunderstandings are completely the fault of the author.

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Fig. 1. Høre stave church. Between the 1660s and 1680s the church is believed to have been subjected to extensive repairs. Plans for major repairs were also presented in 1724 and 1740. The church was given its current shape in 1822, when it was expanded and the exterior walls of the stave church were replaced. Additional repairs were undertaken in 1857, 1888–1889 and 1952. Photo: Jiri Havran.

Fig. 2. Høre church divided into polygons according to find descriptions. Map: Steinar Kristensen, UiO: Museum of Cultural History.

Fig. 3. Map of building stages and burials. Drawing: Jørgen Jensenius, Riksantikvaren.

Fig 4. First drawing of the posthole church. Posthole 15 containing a coin marked with ‘M’ (Jensenius’ excavation cards/log 2 September 1979). Drawing: Jørgen Jensenius, Riksantikvaren.

Fig. 5. Drawing of Høre stave church prior to the rebuilding in 1822. Unknown artist.

Fig. 6. All coin finds. Map: Steinar Kristensen, UiO: Museum of Cultural History.

Fig. 7. Coin finds in the chancel. Posthole 15, with the Danish eleventh-century coin marked with number. Map: Steinar Kristensen, UiO: Museum of Cultural History.

Fig. 8. Stone-lined pit in the apse. Photo: Anne Sidsel Herdlevær, Riksantikvaren.

Fig. 9. All coin finds in the nave. Map: Steinar Kristensen, UiO: Museum of Cultural History.

Fig. 10. Norwegian coins c. 1177–1202. Map: Steinar Kristensen, UiO: Museum of Cultural History.

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