

CHAPTER 7

CLERICAL ADMINISTRATION

7.1 A PARISH SYSTEM IN GREENLAND?

7.1.1 The problem:

In order to properly understand Norse Greenland it is imperative to find out what kind of church-organization existed there, as this has important bearings on other aspects of the society.

To illustrate this topic, we must utilize both the archaeological and historical sources. Below, I have listed a number of questions I wish to answer.

1. How was the church in Greenland organized? Was it based on a proprietary church system, like in Iceland, or was it more in line with, for instance, the Norwegian Church?
2. What do we know about the Church as a landowner in Greenland? Did it own a considerable part of the productive areas, as in contemporary Norway, where the church owned more land than elsewhere in Europe (Bagge 79:212)?
3. Did Greenland have a parish system? If so, is it possible to reconstruct the parishes? If so, is it possible to identify the church ruins?

Attempts to link the place-names in the written sources with the archaeological material has been tried for more than 100 years, with few reliable results other than a basic topography. In the following, I have tried to analyze the material from other angles.

First, I will discuss the church lists, especially the Description of Greenland by Ivar Baardson, which proves to be a central source.

Second, the question of the church as a landowner will be raised in connection with the analyses of Baardson's text.

Third, I will attempt to reconstruct a parish system, by applying geographical methods to the archaeological material.

7.1.2 Church and parish:

The community is one of the central concepts within the Christian faith. When not taken in a general sense, this refers to any social unit sharing belief and sermon.

The parish, on the other hand, was also an administrative unit, closely connected with collection of the annual tithe.

According to Canon Law, only bishops could organize parishes and define their borders. This explains why clerical and secular administrative units often differ geographically (KLMN XVI:374, XVIII:280).

In most countries, the parish represented a fixed geographical unit, but this was not the case in Early Medieval Iceland, where the parish was essentially an economic concept. Although usually of some local extent, it was without physical borders (Smedberg 73:17, also Section 6.3.2 above). Still, it probably had some kind of a core area (Magnús Stefánsson pers. comm.). It has been argued that this may reflect the early organization of parishes in Scandinavia. Peter Sawyer writes:

"The payment of tithe is reflected in the word used throughout Scandinavia for a parish, *sokn*. It is commonly asserted that this word, related to the word 'seek', refers to the choice of a church by its parishioners and defines the district whose inhabitants all 'sought' to the same church (KLMN XVI:374). A more likely explanation is that it refers to the church as the centre of a district within which tithe was collected, or 'sought' (cf. German *suchen* 'look for, gather')." (Sawyer 88:41).

A parish church is more easily defined. It is a church with a priest, and a cemetery, to which tithe from the parish is paid. It may or may not be privately owned (Smedberg 73:17).

Cathedrals and monastery churches were often outside the parish system, but there were exceptions. In Iceland the cathedrals and the monastic churches positively served as parish churches (Magnús Stefánsson pers. comm.).

In Iceland there were also proprietary churches that received "heimatiunt" (literally translated 'home-tithe'), i.e. tithe paid only from the farm to which the church belonged. Examples are the so-called "half-churches", which did not have a resident priest. Some of these churches even had funeral rights (Smedberg 73:18).

When discussing the possibilities for a parish system in Greenland, it is important to be aware that parishes in Iceland varied considerably in size. Unlike most parishes in for instance Norway, parishes could comprise as little as 9 - 10 farms (Vikingur 70:206). In such cases, even very small churches could serve as parish churches.

There is little written evidence of a parish- and tithe system in Greenland, although both terms are employed in Ivar Baardson's text (GHM III:257, Jónsson 30a:26,27).

In Iceland and Norway the introduction of a parish system seems to have followed the introduction of the annual tithe, both important tenements within the Roman Catholic Church.

As Greenland got its first resident bishop in 1126, it is likely that one of his first tasks was to introduce annual tithe and a parish system.

In the other European countries, this evidently was a slow and often painful process (Sawyer 88:40). This seems not to have been the case in Iceland, where the proprietary church system prevailed. It is therefore possible that the introduction of a parish system in Greenland was similarly uncomplicated.

This is not to say that the church in Greenland was particularly poor. On the contrary, church buildings were generally larger than their Icelandic counterparts, and well in line with Norwegian churches of the same period (Krogh 82a:121). (Magnús Stefánsson has, incidentally, suggested that the lack of stone churches in Iceland first of all reflects the scarcity of suitable building stone on this volcanic island (Magnús Stefánsson pers. comm.).

As argued later, the big churches in Greenland are not necessarily an indication of clerical power.

Furthermore, Ivar Baardson's Description of Greenland may be interpreted as describing a parish system, as Nørlund evidently maintained (Nørlund 67:29). I will argue for this interpretation below.

In this perspective, it is highly liable that a parish system was introduced in Greenland, perhaps as early as the 12th century.

Nørlund assumed that the parish system in Greenland was based on the districts claimed by the "landnám"-chiefs, and later partitions of these (Nørlund 67:29).

It is hard to argue for or against this, although attempts to reconstruct a parish system demonstrate certain dissimilarities to the pattern described in Landnámabók (see Section 6.5 above).

7.1.3 The church lists:

As previously mentioned, there has been a prevailing idea that the reconstruction of the place-name topography of Norse Greenland was to be based on a framework of identified church ruins.

This approach may seem a little remote from a modern archaeological point of view. It has, however, been one of the main issues in Norse Greenland archaeology, and has been given much priority in earlier literature (see Langer Andersen 82:164-175 for a review).

In the following, I will have a look at the two church lists usually referred to in the above-mentioned discussion. This will not be done with the purpose of suggesting a new name-topography, but to discuss the parish system.

The Flateyjarbók was written in Iceland around 1380, on the initiative of Jón Hákonarson who died before 1416. Some pages were added about a century later (KLNIV:412, Jansen 72:135-138). The book contains a list of fjord- and church-names from the Eastern Settlement in Greenland, apparently counted roughly from the south east to the north west.

As such, the list is a direct parallel to the so-called "Kirknaskrá" of Bishop Pál Jónsson from around 1200, which describes the fjords and churches in the Skálholt diocese in Iceland (Dipl. Isl. vol. 12 doc. 1:1-20).

Some writers believe the Flateyjar list to be older than the Description of Greenland by Ivar Baardson (Krogh 82a:131, Langer Andersen 82:168).

This stems from the idea that a lost description of fjord- and church-names formed the basis for this part of the Flateyjarbók.

This certainly was the case for two 17th century compilations: Arngrimur Jónsson's "Grønlandia", possibly written around 1600, and "Grænlands annál", probably written around 1623, both evidently based on the same earlier source (Jansen 72:69. Olafur Halldórsson 78:449, see Section 2.2.7 above).

And it is also possible that the same (common) source was used when the Flateyjarbók was compiled (Halldórsson 78:447).

The "Description of Greenland" by Ivar Baardson was not written by Baardson himself. The text says that

"...all this was told to us by Ivar Baardson the Greenlander, who was steward at the Bishop's see at Gardar in Greenland..." (Jónsson 30a:29-30).

It is, in other words, not known whether Baardson himself was present, or even alive, at the time of writing. Personally, I find it likely that the "Description" was narrated from documents of some official nature, authored by Ivar Baardson or brought home by him.

(A closer discussion of the nature of Ivar Baardson's assignment is presented in Sections 8.2.2 to 8.2.5 below.)

His stay is supposed to have lasted from 1341 and "many years" thereafter, i.e. probably some 20 - 27 years (Reg. Norv. V doc. 476, Jónsson 30a:8, ad 67:156-160, 172-174, Jansen 72:70, Halldórsson 78:445, Ingstad 85:367-383).

Steinnes suggests, by the way, that Baardson was "the priest with the astrolabe", described by an English monk, possibly Nicholas of Lynn, who visited Greenland at this time (Steinnes 58:415, see also Ingstad 85:373 - 383).

(The nature of Ivar Baardson's visit is discussed in more detail below, Section 8.2.3)

Baardson's text is known only from copies, which are probably at least 3rd generation, the oldest being from the 16th century.

The text seems to have been completed with certain "additions" from other sources, such as the sailing directions which were taken from the longer saga of Olav Trygvason, chapter 112 (Hogg 89:10).

The topographical description of the Eastern Settlement has, however, the appearance of being untouched. As we shall see, this does not necessarily mean that it has survived unabridged, or that it is fully reliable. Information may have been lost, misunderstood and even deliberately altered during the copying and translation, as the numerous varieties of the names indicate.

Henrik M. Jansen (72:70) has, somewhat categorically, observed that

"None of these (16th century versions) has retained the original form of the account, which doubtless can be blamed on a complete lack of stylistic sense."

(This may even be maintained for the Icelandic church lists, but they nevertheless contain valuable information (Magnús Stefánsson pers. comm.). Jansen's observation can therefore not be reason enough to dismiss the sources altogether.)

The interpretation of Ivar Baardson's text is by no means as straightforward as Finnur Jónsson makes it appear in his book from 1930 (Jónsson 30a, see Jansen 72:71, Langer Andersen 82:173-174 for comments). The main problem is perhaps that the underlying purpose

of Baardson's Description has never been seriously discussed.

Arriving at an exact interpretation of the two church lists is a complex task, and would probably require a more critical analysis of the texts than available at present (Jansen loc: cit.). Olafur Halldórsson has loyally followed Finnur Jónsson's version, and offers no critical discussion of the source (Halldórsson 78:445).

Very briefly, the two lists can be presented in the following schema, with corresponding names marked with an asterisk, and possible identities with a question mark:

Flateyjarbók		Baardson
Herjolfsnes	?	Herjolfsnes (no church mentioned)
Vatnsdal		Aros (Auroos)
Vík	?	Petersvig
Vagar	*	Vagar
----		"Costly" church at Foss
Undir Höfði		----
Gardar	*	Gardar
Hvalsey	*	Hvalsey
Brattahlid	?	Leyder at Brattahlid
Undir Solarfjöllum	*	Solarfjöll
A tenth church?		----
Gardanes		----
Hardsteinaberg		----
----		Dyrnes

Both lists seem to present the churches from roughly the south east towards the north west.

Most of the authors concerned with Norse Greenland have, at one time or another, tried to present a church list, linking the written sources with the archaeological sites (Jónsson 1898 and 30a, Nørlund 28, Roussell 41:97, Knuth 44, Vebæk 66 & 68, Krogh 82a).

However, Ibsen's remark that the majority are always right does not necessarily apply here. And since attempting a reconstruction of placenames is outside my aim, I will only present the latest example:

Knud J.Krogh has tentatively arrived at an identification of names, presented in the list below (taken from Krogh 82a:125-131).

In his identification Krogh bases 6 names on the Description from Ivar Baardson, and 2 on the Flateyjar list.

The 2 from the Flateyjar list are: Ø-66, which he calls Undir Höfði, and Ø-111 which he calls Herjolfsnes. Baardson mentions Herjolfsnes but, rather surprisingly, does not specify a church there.

Thus there are 4 church names in the Baardson list which Krogh does not identify:

Aros and Petersvig Churches, both in Ketilsfjord (Tasermiut?), Vagar Church close to or at Uunatoq fjord, and "a costly church consecrated to St. Nicholas" for which "the king has the advowson" near a farm called Foss, owned by the king. Krogh points to the possibility that church Undir Höfði (Ø-66) might be one and the same.

(Finnur Jónsson has argued that there must be a mistake in Baardson's text here. It is known from "Gripla", a collection of texts copied by Björn Jónsson a Skardsá, that the Cathedral at Gardar was consecrated to St. Nicholas. Finnur Jónsson suggests that the "costly church" described by Baardson at Foss actually refers to the Cathedral at Gardar (Jónsson 30a:44)).

Ruin-group number	Norse name	Modern name
Ø-18	Dyrnes in Midfjord	Narsaq
Ø-23	Undir Solarfjöllum	Sillisit
Ø-29	Leyder at Brattahlid	Qassiarsuk
Ø-33	----	Qorlortoq
Ø-35	----	Qorlortup Itinnera
Ø-1	----	Nunataq
Ø-83	Hvalsey	Qaqortukulook
Ø-47	Cathedral, Gardar	Igaliku
Ø-48	----	Igaliku
Ø-64	----	Inoquassat
Ø-66	Undir Höfdi	Igaliku Kujalleq
Ø-78	----	Egaluit
Ø-149	----	Narsarsuaq in Uunatoq
Ø-162	----	Narsaq in Uunatoq
Ø-105	Monastery	Tasermiutsiaat
Ø-111	Herjolfsnes	Ikigaat

7.2 DOES BAARDSON DESCRIBE A PARISH SYSTEM ?

7.2.1 The Description of Greenland:

The interpretation of Baardson's "Description of Greenland" raises certain problems:

First of all, the present text was apparently not written by Ivar Baardson himself.

Second, the purpose of the "Description" is somewhat unclear: Langer Andersen suggests that little was known about the Greenland Church in Norway, and that the "Description" was meant to update the information, especially concerning the properties of the church and the king (Langer Andersen 82:169).

More precisely, such descriptions were occasionally made by the archbishop or his representative in connection with official inspections of the dioceses ('visitatio').

The purpose of the Description will be discussed later (Section 8.2.3), but certain elements are rather obvious:

Baardson clearly describes the properties of the bishop's see. Further, I will contend that he describes the extent of each parish. This will later be discussed in more detail (Section 7.2.2).

Finally, he describes the desertion of the Western Settlement

which, in other words, means the decline had already begun.

This was vital information at the time, necessary for stipulating and adjusting the tithe, the crusade tax, and even taxes to be calculated per capita ('capitatio'), such as the Peter's Pence (KLN M XII:278, XIII:249, and Section 8.3 below).

The number of functioning parish churches would affect these calculations, as would the desertion of a whole settlement with 3 (?) churches. However, the preserved version of Ivar Baardson's text is obviously not of sufficient detail to serve such purposes. This may indicate that the present version is incomplete, or that the original text was made for some other purpose.

The purpose of copying Baardson's text 150 years later can also be queried. Certain additions found in some of the copies refer to Erik Valkendorf, Archbishop of Nidaros from 1510 - 1522. He tried to launch an expedition to "rediscover" Greenland in 1513 or -14, after having collected written material on the subject (above, Section 2.2.3, GHM III:482-491, Hamre 43, Gad 67:223, see also Rey 76:151).

His instructions for the expedition are documented (Torfæus 1706:197-199, see GHM III:490-498). It is therefore generally accepted that copies of Baardson's "Description" were collected by Valkendorf, perhaps even translated and compiled on his order.

The third and the most complex question is how to reconstruct and understand Baardson's text. So far, no complete analysis has been made since Finnur Jónsson published his work in 1930 (Jónsson 30a on the basis of AM nr. 777 a, b, c, 4^o), even if his work has been subject to criticism later on (Solberg 31, Jansen 72:71, Langer Andersen 82:173-174).

Especially, an analysis of the different words and their orthographic forms and their place in linguistic history would be useful to evaluate the authenticity of the various sections. This would undoubtedly prove fruitful, as the Norwegian literary language and spelling underwent severe changes between 1350 and 1500, i. e. in the very time between the writing of the original manuscript and the copies (see for instance Nyquist Grøtvedt 54).

Jette Arneborg has thrown new light on the interpretation of Baardson's text (Arneborg 84 and 88). This will be discussed later on.

In this and the following section, I will pursue one single aspect of the Description; the question of parishes. But first, we must ask what Baardson actually means when he presents the name of a church? The name may have several meanings.

1. It may refer to the name of the church itself.
2. It may refer to the name of the church site, such as the farm with the church, a settlement or a topographical name.
3. It may refer to the name of the parish.

In some instances, the name may be the same for all three cases. This may even be the rule, as is usual in Norway, but it is no must. In Iceland, most churches are named after their farms. The three may also have three different names.

Baardson's remark about "a costly church" near the king's farm Foss bear, in my opinion, all the signs of either a forgetful author, a blurred original, or a sloppy transcription (see Section 7.3.1).

It is therefore not surprising that it is difficult at times to know when a name is to be understood as the name of a church, a location or a parish. Some of the discrepancies between the Baardson list and the Flateyjar list may just arise from just this kind of confusion.

Further, it often appears that the subjects property, tithe and parish are mixed up (discussed later).

Statements that a church owns property does not necessarily imply that the holdings lie within the parish, or even nearby. Medieval churches, and especially monasteries often owned property in other parishes. An example of this is Baardson's own statement about the island Langøe: There were eight farms there, and the Cathedral (of Gardar) owned it all except the tithe, which belonged to Hvalsey Church (GHM III:257, Jónsson 30a:26). This must, by the way, indicate that Hvalsey was a parish church, and that Langøe was part of its parish.

While on the subject of ownership, we must keep in mind the old Norse concept of Law, which was based on rights rather than real estate. This was in conflict with Roman (and hence Canon) Law from the start, and caused considerable confusion (see Fenger 77:105, Vilberg 77:8-31). Such rights could be the exploitation of specified resources, like fishing, whaling, hunting, driftwood collecting and even shipwreck looting. The individual had no right to sell inherited land, this belonged to the family.

Baardson's statements about public access to whaling in Berrefjord, to polar bear hunting at Kaarsøe, and to reindeer hunting at Renøøe

"...but with the Bishop's permission, as the areas belong to the cathedral..."

may refer to such rights (GHM III:253, 256, Jónsson 30:20,22,26, my translation).

As regards Kaarsøe, the word 'almenning' (allmenningh, alminningh) is used in two transcripts, indicating common land, while two other transcripts use the word "almindelig" (literally translated "usual"), which may be presented in English as "public" or "for everybody" (Jónsson op.cit.:22 notes).

Is it possible that, at some point in time, the bishop had claimed ownership to the 'allmenning', i.e. unsettled common land, either in part or in principle, as the king did in Norway (KLNMI:100-102)?

If so, this may have been in conflict with the 'iura regalia' (The Rights of the Crown), and may have been difficult to establish after 1261, when Greenland promised to obey laws and pay taxes to the Norwegian king (KLNMI:698, Fenger 77:78).

Still, the agreement between Greenland and Norway may have been limited to the 'regalia maiora', i.e. the right to rule the country, claim taxes and execute law and order. We do not have any evidence that the 'regalia minora' (i.e. rights more of an economic nature, including the king's right to the "almenning") was part of the deal (see KLNMI:698-699).

7.2.2 To "own a parish":

Actually, the question of "owning" property is perhaps the most interesting in the whole text. Let us take a practical example.

Baardson's Description reads

"West of Herjolfsnes lies Ketilsfjord and it is fully settled, and on the right hand, when sailing up the fjord, lies a large outlet (fall), into which big rivers run; and by that outlet (fall) stands a church, named Auroos Church which is consecrated to the Holy Cross, she owns everything out to Herjolfsnes; islands, islets, shipwrecks, and all (everything?) in to Petersvig." (GHM III:254, Jónsson 1898:325, Jónsson 30a:22-23, Krogh 82a:125-126, my translation).

The central question is of course whether this text describes ownership in the true sense of the word, or if some other meaning is implied. Let us start by looking at the areas mentioned to be owned.

If the text is to be taken literally, Auroos Church owns practically the whole area, not much is left for the Herjolfsnes and Petersvig churches.

(Baardson does not specify a church at Herjolfsnes, although it probably existed at the time (according to Nørlund 24), nor does he mention the Herjolfsfjord, which is mentioned in four other sources (see Langer Andersen 82:176)).

The chance is, however, that the meaning of territory is not "to the church building", but "to the parish border, area, or settlement" of Petersvig and Herjolfsnes.

Further, the text names subjects on the fjord itself, which ordinarily may have been considered to be 'almenning' or common (public) land (discussed below).

It is therefore virtually impossible to ascertain whether all private property on land was actually owned by the Auroos Church, or if the meaning of "all land to the X Church" is something else.

As the text progresses, Baardson may actually describe three parishes in the Ketilsfjord area.

"There by Petersvig lies a large settlement* (or farm, see comments below) called Vatnsdal. Near this settlement (or farm) is a big lake, two "miles" wide, full of fish. Petersvig Church owns all of the Vatnsdal settlement (or farm)." (op. cit., my translation).

* (As previously discussed, in Section 3.2.2, the term used in the most reliable version of the text is "bij". There is a chance that this term should actually be interpreted as "farm" rather than "settlement".)

Finally, the Monastery of St. Augustin is described as "owning" everything to the inner end of the fjord and "out on the other side", i.e. possibly the northern side of the fjord to the border of the Petersvig parish (GHM, Jónsson, Krogh *ibid.*).

The text continues along the same lines until all of the Eastern

Settlement is described. If Baardson's Description is to be taken literally, it implies that the church owned practically all land in the Eastern Settlement, except what little was owned by the king.

It would also imply the curious situation that the majority of land was owned by the parish churches; the Cathedral owning only its immediate surroundings, and certain specified, partly unsettled, areas.

This is definitely unusual if compared, for instance, to Norway, where the church owned single farms, or just as commonly, parts of farms. This has its background in the very unique system of ownership to land in Norway.

(The historian Andreas Holmsen has named the Norwegian type of ownership "skyldsystemet" ('the skyld-owning system'). "Skyld" (literally 'debt') was the value of the land-rent of a farm. Several persons could own parts of this "skyld", almost like share holders in a company. And like shares, the "skyld" could be bought, sold, divided and inherited. But the ownership of this "skyld" did not extend to the land of the farm - it was restrained to the right to collect land-rent. The right to inhabit and work the farm bore a different designation, which equally could be owned or sold; the "bygsel". Ownership to land was, in other words, quite a complex affair, and different from that of most European countries. The system seems, however, to have been common even in Iceland (Magnús Stefánsson pers. comm.), and thus most probably existed even in Greenland.)

It is therefore necessary to have a closer look at Ivar Baardson's use of the terms for "ownership". My reason for presenting this is of course the idea that the distinction in usage may also reflect a distinction in meaning, although this is no absolute rule in medieval texts.

In Baardson's "Description", three expressions for ownership are used:

1. "Hører til" (hører till), which can be translated as "belongs to".
2. "Ligger til" (ligger thill), which literally translated reads "lies to", a much used medieval term for the owning of real estate. (In the Icelandic "Máldager" i.e. documents describing the property of each church (for instance Dipl. Isl. vol. 4, doc.s 1 - 240), it often means that the object sorts under the church, i.e. an administrative designation (Magnús Stefánsson pers. comm.)).
3. "Eyer, eger, eyger, æger", are different spellings of the same word, which can be translated as "owns" or "possesses" (see Nyquist Grøtvedt 54:62,67,83,84,113,190).

One version of the "Description" (Finnur Jónsson's var. D) almost consistently uses the word "tilhører", which to me appears to be a Danified form.

All the other versions that Finnur Jónsson uses (var. A, B and

C), as well as the GHM compilation, adhere to the schema which is set up below, with one exception: Var. A states that Leijder Church "lies" (ligger) all in the (inner) end of the fjord and out on the other side..., where "ligger" (lies) is clearly a misspelling for "owns" (eiger) (Jónsson 30a:28 notes).

What catches the attention in Ivar Baardson's text is the fact that the three ways of expressing ownership also pertain to different kinds of objects. To demonstrate the different ways the expressions are used, I have listed parts of Baardson's text below.

1. "Belongs to":

- a. Kaarsøø(e) - this island belongs to the Cathedral
- b. Farm named Foss - belongs to the King
- c. Farm named Daler - belongs to the Cathedral
- d. Forest in Einarsfjord - belongs to the Cathedral
- e. Farm named Thjødhijldestad - belongs to the King
- f. Island named Henø (Eriksøe) - half belongs to the Cathedral, and half belongs to Dijvrenes (Dyrnes) Church
- g. Four islands named Lambøør - belongs to the Cathedral

In summary, this term is used 3 times concerning islands, 3 times concerning farms, and 1 time concerning a forest.

2. "Lies to":

- e. The fjord named Bærefjord (Berrefjord) - lies to the Cathedral
- f. The tithe from the island named Langhøø (Langøe)-lies to Hualtzør (Hvalsøe) Church (this is part of the "Langø-combination", see point 3 n, below)

3. "Owns":

- g. Aurooss (Auroos) Church - owns everything out to Heriolsnes (Herrioldtznes), islands, islets, wrecks and in to Petthersvigh (Peiters Viigh)
- h. Petthersvigh (Peitersvig) Church owns all (the entire) Verdzdals (Vatnsdal) settlement (or farm)
- i. The Monastery owns everything to the end (of a fjord) and out on the other side

- j. The Nunnery owns everything to the end (of the fjord) and out from Vage (Vaage) Church
- k. Voge church owns all land on the fjord outside
- l. Islets (in the same fjord) - the Nunnery owns it all half and half with the Cathedral
- m. The Cathedral owns all Eijnersfiord (Einerfjord) and an island named Renøe (Renøøe)
- n. The Cathedral owns an island named Langhøø (Langøe) except the tithe (the "Langø-combination", see point 2 f, above)
- o. Hualsøør fiord (Hvalsøefjords) Church owns a fjord named Hualtzøer (Hvalsøefjord) and all Ramstadefiord (Rambstadefjord)
- p. Dijvrenes (Dyurennes) Church owns everything to Mitfiord (Mittfjord)
- q. Solefielz (Solefjellds) Church owns all Mitfiord
- r. Leijder (Leyder) Church owns all to the end (of the fjord) and out on the other side to Burfeldtz (Burfjell) (a mountain)

(From GHM III:252-258, Jónsson 30a:21-30, my translation and narration. The translations are quite literal, but this is necessary in order not to disturb the original text. Thus the ambiguity of the text is retained in the translation).

In all, 10 descriptions are related to land, fjords and settlements, usually with the preceding "all", meaning "all of...". One case concerns a specific island.

It seems to me that the expressions "belongs to" and "lies to" are synonyms, and are used in connection with clearly specified objects; a farm, an island, a forest, or a single (uninhabited) fjord.

On the other hand, the term "owns" is used in connection with wide areas, "everything" or "all" land... on a fjord, a settlement, an unspecified number of islands, etc. There is one exception; the Langøe combination.

Even with this exception, the difference in use is apparent, and we may indeed question whether the term "to own" really is synonymous with the two other terms.

The Old Norse word for owning is "á" (pres.), or "eiga" (inf.). It is, however, a word of many meanings (Smedberg 73:130):

The most usual meaning is "to own" or "possess", which of course concords with the usual translation.

It may also mean "to be married to", "to have a claim on someone", like a loan, and "to sue" i.e. in court.

There is, however, one direct parallel to our text, where the expression "to own a parish" is used. It is found in the "Frostating Law", i.e. the law for the Trøndelag District (around Trondheim/Nidaros) in Norway (NGL vol. II).

The text exists in several copies, of which the most important was a version written around 1260, unfortunately destroyed in the University Library during the fire of Copenhagen 1728 (Robberstad 76:160, KLNIV:657).

The law as such is of older origin (KLNIV:656), and the part called "Gullfjær" (The Golden Feather), concerning church matters, is usually believed to have been written between 1164 and 1180, but with some later additions. The purpose of Gullfjær was evidently to bring Norwegian Law in line with Canon Law, as codified in Gratianus' Decretum around 1140 (KLNIV:593).

The paragraph of interest to our subject runs:

1. "Ef madr tarf olean oc ma eigi fylkis prestur uidr koma, tha ole sa hann er kirkiu soknena a...". "If a man needs the (extreme) unction, and the fylkes (county) priest cannot come, then he shall anoint him who owns the church-parish..." (Ældre Frostathing's Lov II:17 in NGL vol. I:136, and Smedberg 73:35 note 8, my translation).

According to Smedberg, the last sentence clearly refers to the parish priest, who is described as "the one who owns the parish" (Smedberg loc. cit.).

Laurence M. Larson, however, gives this (less literal) translation:

"If a man is in need of unction and the shire priest is unable to come, let the patron of the parish anoint the sick man...". (Larson 35:232).

Larson introduces the word "patron", i.e. caretaker. This term was introduced between 1153 and 1170 (Johnsen, A.O. 51, KLNIV XIII:140). Without going deeper into this discussion, we may conclude that Larson interprets "the one who owns the parish" as the **owner or patron** of the church, i.e. a layman. He does, in other words, understand the term "owns" as referring to ownership in the true sense. This interpretation is unlikely.

Smedberg, on the other hand, thinks it refers to the parish priest, i.e. a clerical man, the man who "owns" the office (Smedberg 73:35, and below, point 2). This is probably correct, as it is fully in line with the use of this expression in other Icelandic documents, where the priest is denoted the man "who owns the benefice" (Magnús Stefánsson pers. comm.).

There are a few other examples that may serve to demonstrate the use of this verb (all in my translation):

2. eiga kirkju - to have a church i.e. the priest in office (Heggstad et. al. 75:87). The direct meaning is probably "to own a benefice". This is a direct parallel to Smedberg's understanding of the text in the Frostating Law (above).
3. eiga godord - to have (own) the position as "gode" (originally a pagan "priest") i.e. a headman or a chief (in Iceland) (Fritzner 1886:296, KLNIV 5:363)). "Godord" in Iceland denoted the legal unit (ting) as well as the position as headman of such a unit.

4. eiga hogg ok høfn i skoginum - to have the rights of woodcutting and pasturing in the forest (Fritzner 1886:298).
5. eiga finnkaup - to have the right or privilege of collecting taxes from the "Finns", i.e. the Sami (KLN M XV:424).
6. "...gaf hann them ok halfa Olafs kirkiu, sua at their eighu nu alla meth allre prest tekiu,... - He (the Archbishop of Nidaros) also gave them (the canons) half of Olav's Church, so that they now own all of it, with all the income of the priest,...) (Reg. Norv. II, doc. 876, Dipl. Norv. III, doc. 39, of June 23. 1279).

The last document is a particularly interesting parallel to our case. The canons are given the remaining half of the church to own, and it is clearly specified that this means that they shall have the entire income from this church.

A similar usage of the word is described by Gudmund Sandvik:

"Behind this expression lies a differentiation which appears towards the end of the Middle Ages: One church owned certain properties, while the priest's table ("Mensa", 'prestebord') of another church owned the rest." (Sandvik 65:90, my translation).

He further discusses the term as it is used when pertaining to the church as landowner, which is the most common use of the word. But he also stresses the great variation in meaning. In another context he refers to a different usage of "to own".

...In this context, "the meaning was that these patches of land or these privileges belonged to that which the farm-owner or -user had the right to exploit....

Here "owning" was a useful expression, but nobody misunderstood the verb if it was used in such a special connection." (Sandvik op. cit.:93, my translation and underlining).

In conclusion the term "to own" was used not only to describe ownership, but it was also widely used to describe rights to, or privileges over something. This use of the verb was more in line with Germanic Law than with Roman Law.

The different types of ownership referred to above were described in the 18th century, with the development of what was called Natural Law. Being of much later origin, these descriptions have no source value whatsoever, but they may be used as a help to illustrate the different types of ownership:

1. Ownership in the true sense, i.e. to be master over the object in all conditions.

2. Right of use, i.e. the right to employ the object for whatever use it was designed.
3. "Harvest rights", i.e. the right to use and exploit the produce yielded by the object, without reducing or destroying the object. (Lauritz Nørregaard (1745-1804), cited from Lid 59:275, my translation).

Seen in the light of the examples discussed above, it is likely that the term "to own" covered all these three definitions.

Thus, Baardson's use of the term does not automatically give reason to presume that the church owned all the areas described in the true sense, like many authors have believed (Gad 67:160, McGovern 85a:280, McGovern et. al. 85:30, Berglund 86:118).

On the contrary, we might argue that if he wanted to describe areas from which the different churches collected their income, the term "to own" would be a handy expression.

My interpretations of the terms in question are as follows:

- A. Baardson's terms "belongs to" and "lies to" are synonyms, and indicate that the specific estate or area was owned by the party mentioned.
- B. Baardson's term "owns" indicates an area over which a specific church had some kind of "harvest right". This right could for instance be the privilege to collect tithe. Thus his description of what was "owned" by a church most probably defined the extension of its parish. (This view was, as already mentioned, also held by Nørlund, 67:29).

If this is correct, Baardson describes 10 parishes (in the Icelandic or Norwegian meaning of the term?), including the monasteries, Gardar and Leyder (at or near Brattahlid).

One entry in Baardson's text seems to support this theory:

"Divreiness (Dyurenes) Church is the biggest parish situated in Greenland."

And later: "Divreiness (Dyurenes) Church owns everything in to (i.e. as far as) Mitfjord (Mittfjord)".

Besides mentioning the word parish in an off hand way (the only time in the text, and thus suspicious), there is one curious aspect:

There is no limitation of the "property" to the north and west, only to the south and east, where it borders on other churches. Such unlimited ownership is unusual for a parish church, it would have been more in the king's line. But it is not an unlikely description of a parish.

Further, it is interesting to note that no church is listed at Herjolfsnes, although the location is mentioned several times. And accordingly, there is no church at Herjolfsnes to "own" the surrounding settlements, like Skagafjord. On the contrary, Auroos Church seems to "own" everything to the west, while the fjords to the east "lies to" the Cathedral.

In the Flateyjarbók, however, Herjolfsnes Church is mentioned.

And the church ruin at Ikigaat is generally accepted as that of the Herjolfsnes Church (Nørlund 67:42, Krogh 82a:125, Gad 84:76). Three possible solutions are available:

1. That Baardson was forgetful again, or the information was lost in translations.
2. That the identification to Ikigaat is faulty.
3. That Herjolfsnes had a special status, different from the other churches in the list.

It would have been logical for Herjolfsnes, as the bridge-head of trans-Atlantic trade, to be subject to the 'Bjarkøyrett', the Trading Laws. These Laws seems to have been common in all Nordic countries during the Viking Period, and was to be followed in all places where trade took place. (The expression later changed meaning and became a general name denoting medieval Town Laws (KLNMI:655)).

In any case, the church at Herjolfsnes may have held a special economic and administrative position, connected to the overseas trade, already from the start. Perhaps it held some kind of control over Sandhavn (Máukarneq?), the nearby harbor (Bak 70c:40-43).

It may have received some kind of landing tax, and payments for putting up merchants over the winter. In Early Medieval Iceland, a trading-tax was paid to the local land-owner, but Norwegians were excepted (KLNMI VI:127-129). In the 14th century, tithe on Greenlandic goods were paid in Norway (GHM III:103-108), and it is possible that a similar payment was laid on foreign goods in Greenland.

However, if the Herjolfsnes Church held a special status, the Auroos Church could be suggested as a parish church for the Herjolfsnes area.

Whether the Herjolfsnes Church was owned by the Norwegian king, the bishop, or some secular authority is not known. As Baardson reports the areas to the east, i.e. next to Herjolfsnes, to "lie to" the Cathedral, it is possible that the Herjolfsnes Church was directly under the control of the bishop (see Berglund 82a:277).

In any case, it is curious indeed if Baardson originally omitted this church. As the otherwise well-known Herjolfsfjord also is omitted in the Description, there is a fair chance there is a lacuna in the text at this point.

Another church that is not reported to "own" anything is the "costly church" near the king's farm Foss. As previously pointed out, Baardsson states that the "costly church" near Foss was consecrated to St. Nicholas (as was the Cathedral). Finnur Jónsson has suggested that there may be a confusion in the text at this point, and that "the costly church" really refers to the Cathedral (Jónsson 30a:44).

Finally, we have the church Undir Høfdi, mentioned in the Flateyjar list but lacking in Ivar Baardson's list.

Again, this may be a case of name-confusion, as mentioned previously, or it may be a chronological case.

The church is listed next to Gardar. It is possible that, at the time when the original used for the Flateyjar list was written, this was the parish church for the Gardar area. In that case, it may

have lost its status by the time of Ivar Baardson. Finnur Jónsson has presented thoughts along this line (Jónsson 30a:65).

The fact that one church apparently "disappears" must not be dramatized. Similar cases are found in Icelandic documents.

Comparing the two lists as such, without knowing why they were written, is at best a tricky task. Hopefully, this problem will be acquitted for Baardson's list later (Section 8.2.3 below).

7.3 RECONSTRUCTION OF PARISHES

7.3.1 The problem:

From the discussion above, I find reason to presume that a parish system existed at the time of Ivar Baardson.

Whether these parishes were in fact geographical units, like in Scandinavia, or just economic concepts with a core area, like in Iceland, is an open question. It will appear from my argumentation later on, however, that the Icelandic type of parish is the more liable.

Under any circumstances, we must assume that the parish church was not located at random, but that some kind of spatial order prevailed. In other words that

there was some geographical connection between the location of the church and the community it was to serve.

The analyses below are based on this assumption. I must emphasize, however, that when I speak of parishes in these models, they are merely theoretical concepts.

In the following, I will attempt to reconstruct a parish system. This will be done by means of a spatial analysis of the relation between the churches and the ruin-groups. This is done from the simple (perhaps oversimplified) assumption that there should be a relationship between the size of a church and the size of its community.

I will not engage in the task of reconstructing the names of the different churches. First of all because it is a dubious task altogether. Second, because it would mean setting the interpretation of the written sources as the basis for the spatial analysis. Instead, I will try to make the archaeological material speak for itself.

Having tried several approaches, the most interesting will be presented below.

7.3.2 Church location and settlement distribution:

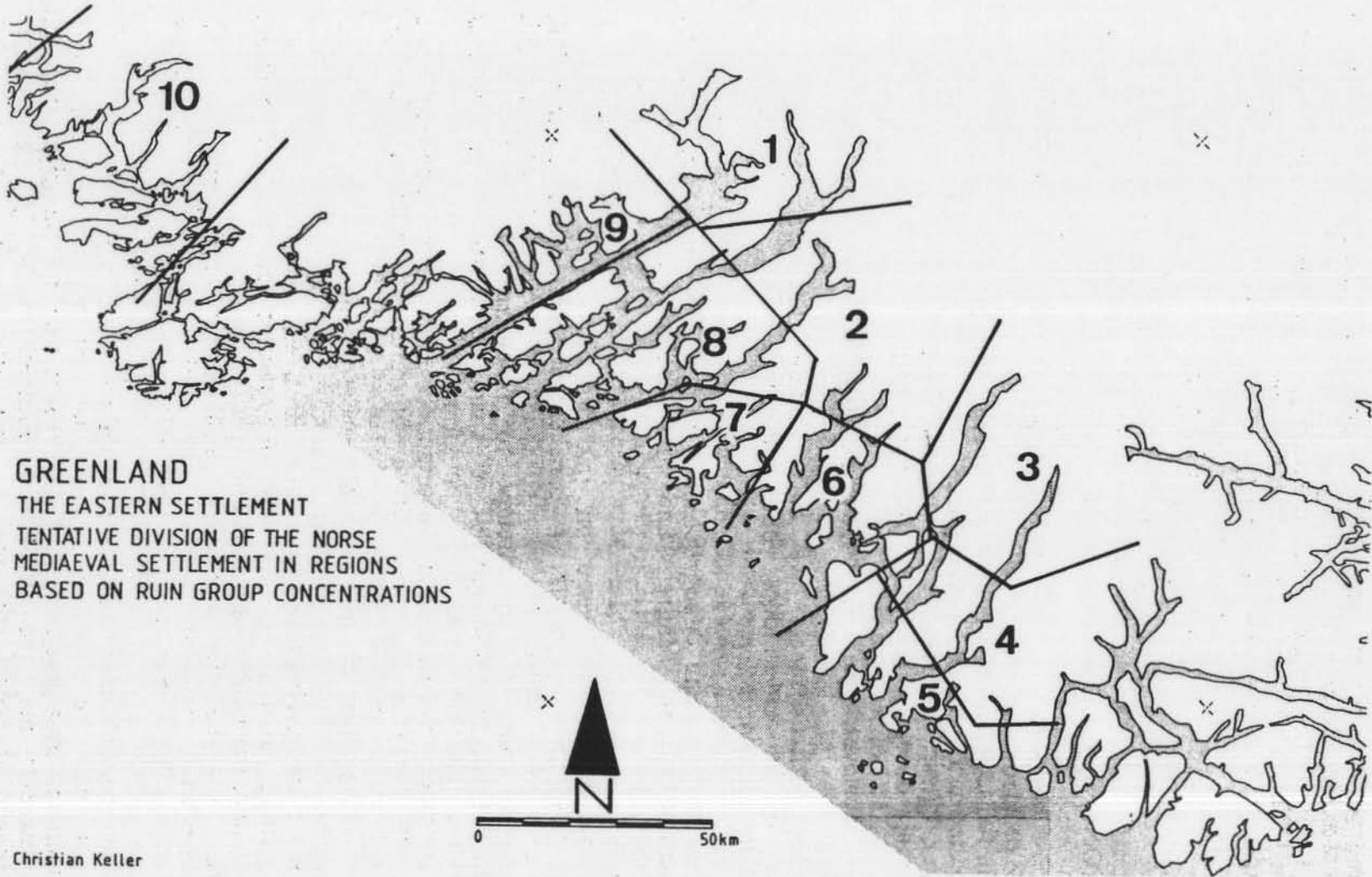
If we compare the location of churches in PLATE 23 with the isoline map of ruin-group density in PLATE 6, we observe that all churches except one, the Ø-18, are located within the two classes of hatching showing the highest density.

As the Ø-18 is surrounded by water on three sides, the settlement density around this site must necessarily be lower.

Thus there is at least a visual coherence between the ruin-group density and the church locations. And the ruin-group pattern

PLATE 33

GREENLAND
THE EASTERN SETTLEMENT
TENTATIVE DIVISION OF THE NORSE
MEDIAEVAL SETTLEMENT IN REGIONS
BASED ON RUIN GROUP CONCENTRATIONS



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confirms the occupation of different zones indicated by the church locations (Section 6.1.3 above).

It also shows that the church locations, with the exception of Ø-111 Ikigaat (Herjolfsnes), are by no means marginal within the settlement. On the contrary, most churches are located in areas with a high concentration of ruin-groups.

This also leads to the question of missing churches. This question has been raised by previous authors in connection with the church lists, in order to get the archaeological material to "match" the written material. But the question may be differently put:

Are there areas on the map that have a high ruin-group density, but no church ruin? And in that case, what is the reason?

I can see three possibilities:

1. The area was served by another church
2. The church ruin is not yet found
3. The church site is lost due to erosion, sinking land, or willful destruction (see Roussell 41:97)

As all churches except one (Ø-18) lie in dense ruin-group areas, and all except one (Ø-35) lie close to the shore, we may assume this as the most probable type of location even for lost churches.

I find it hard to accept that some of the settlement concentrations, like for instance the outer Tasermiut and the area west of Lichtenau fjord were without a church.

Anyway, the church lists of Ivar Baardson and the Flateyjarbók present 10 and 12 church names respectively, but without full correlation between them.

If we are to put some confidence in these lists, more churches remain to be found.

This must either lead to a reconsideration of the status of some of the small churches, or, as done here, to the advertising for lost churches. This will be dealt with later (Sections 7.4.3 & 7.4.4).

7.3.3 The Region Model:

In PLATE 33 (above) I have drawn some tentative lines between ruin-group concentrations.

I have kept the two zones of settlement (inner fjord and mid-fjord) apart, and have otherwise kept to the principle of fjords as communication lines, and mountains as barriers.

The exact position of the "borders" may of course be discussed, but I feel that the emerging picture has a general relevance.

This is not to say that the different areas were true administration units. But they show settlement concentrations in which roughly the same natural conditions were shared.

This model is important because, contrary to the parish models below, it has not been made on the basis of church locations, but on the background of settlement concentrations.

7.3.4 Parish Model I:

In the following, I have tried to create a parish model, based on the existing, "ordinary" churches, i.e. churches believed to have had some official status (Krogh 82a:122, 134-137). See PLATE 34 below.

This may be an oversimplification, considering the very small parishes being found in Iceland (above, Section 7.1.2). Still, I have followed the principle for classification of "ordinary" and "small" churches previously indicated (Section 6.1.2).

The construction of the model was very simple:

A net of Thiessen-polygons was established between the churches, thus creating 9 theoretical parishes (the Middle Settlement was omitted).

The ruin-group Ø-47 Igaliku (Gardar) was not counted as a parish church in this try. In some cases, for instance in Iceland, cathedrals served as parish churches, but usually they were outside the parish system. It is therefore possible that another church, for instance that of Ø-66, served the Gardar parish, at least for a time.

On the other side of the Tunulliarfik fjord, the situation is much the same:

The church at Ø-23 lies strangely in the outskirts of the ruin-group concentration around Qassiarsuk (Brattahlid). And unless this concentration is somehow split in the middle, there will be no settlements left to create a parish for Ø-23.

As Brattahlid (Qassiarsuk) seems to have been of some official status, possibly a center for secular administration, it is fully possible that this big church held a special status, belonging to the "law-man" at Brattahlid, or the Norwegian king at that.

The question concerning the monastery churches is related.

Some authors want to identify the ruin-group Ø-105 Tasermiutsiaat with a monastery of the Augustine order, and the ruin-group Ø-149 in Uunatoq with a convent of the Benedictine order (Roussell 41:97, 107, Vebæk 53c, Krogh 82a:139, Gad 84:48).

Both ruin-groups have churches.

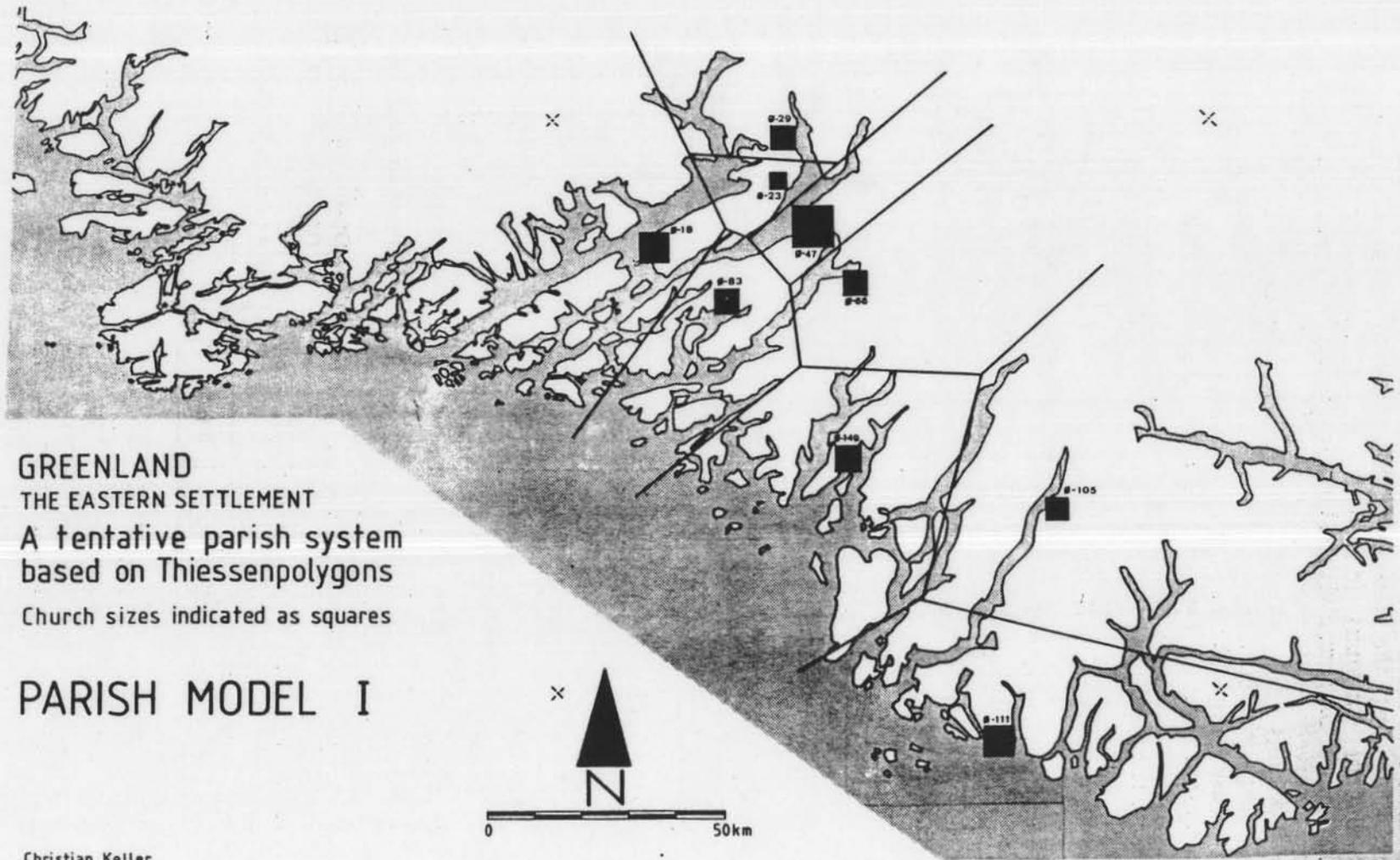
(The suggested location of the St. Augustine monastery in faraway Tasermiut raises some problems. The Augustines were not ordinary monks, but priests, and their monasteries served as educational centers for clerical men. Thus their monasteries were often located near a clerical center (KLNMI:281).)

If these churches were excepted from the parish system, the southern half of the settlement would be left virtually without churches (see Roussell 41:97).

Consequently, three alternatives are available:

1. The identification of the ruins as monasteries is faulty,
2. The monastery churches in Greenland did serve as parish churches, as they did in Iceland (Magnús Stefánsson pers. comm.).
3. There are missing churches to be found.

PLATE 34



GREENLAND
THE EASTERN SETTLEMENT
A tentative parish system
based on Thiessenpolygons
Church sizes indicated as squares

PARISH MODEL I

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7.3.5 A test of Model I:

In order to test the reliability of model I, I applied a method used by Sven-Olof Lindquist in his studies of medieval church- and parish relationships in Gotland, Sweden (Lindquist 81):

He observed that there was a close correlation between the true parish borders and a net of Thiessen-polygons that he constructed around the parish churches.

The basic premise was that there should be a certain relationship between the size of the church and the number of medieval farms in each parish.

The relationships between the size of the churches of the Eastern Settlement and the number of ruin-groups within their polygons are like this

CHURCH FLOOR PER "FARM" IN SUGGESTED PARISHES, MODEL I:				
Ruin-group no.	Square meters church area	"Farms" (without saeters)	Church area per "farm"	Type of church building
Ø- 47	344	11	31,3	Cruciform with open west wall.
Ø- 18	165 ?	55	3	Possibly cruciform.
Ø-111	147	47	3,7	Open west wall & narrow chancel.
Ø-149	135	57	2,4	Rectangular with open west wall.
Ø- 83	128	53	2,4	Rectangular.
Ø- 66	117	54	2,2	Rectangular with open west wall.
Ø- 29	112	46	2,4	Rectangular.
Ø-105	99	41	2,4	Open west wall & narrow chancel.
Ø- 23	54	12	4,5	Rectangular.
TOTAL	1328	376	mean 2,9	

What first catches the eye in this table, is the fact that the suggested parishes contain a number of theoretical "farms" which by far exceeds the average number of farms per parish in medieval Iceland (see Vikingur 70). This may have two different explanations:

One, the number of ruin-groups is higher than the number of real farm units, even if the 'saeters' are subtracted. This may indicate chronological differences or a developed tenantry. This

does of course not corrupt the relative comparison between the suggested "parishes" in this analysis.

Two, the small churches, which are omitted in this try, also served as parish churches. This would create some problems, as most of the small churches lie very close to the ordinary churches used in this analysis. The idea is, however, not totally unlikely, and cannot be omitted. The test was made like this:

1. First, the number of ruin-groups within each suggested parish was counted, giving an initial total of 444. Minus the 25 ruin-groups of the Middle Settlement (which is omitted in this test because it lacks church ruins altogether), the figure is down to 419 ruin-groups. The 43 'saeters' (as suggested by Albrethsen, see Section 4.2) were also subtracted, giving a total of 376 ruin-groups to be counted as theoretical "farms". (As previously stated, this figure is probably too high).

2. Then the size of each church ruin was measured to estimate the floor area. Only external measurements were used, mainly from drawings in Krogh 76:300-301, and from figures in Roussel 41. Full accuracy was not obtained, as the quality of the drawings vary, but the estimated figures should be sufficient for a rough test. The church sizes are indicated as black squares on the map, PLATE 34.

3. Finally, the number of square meters was divided by the number of theoretical "farms" in each suggested parish. The figures obtained thus represent a theoretical "church floor per farm", as demonstrated in the table. The figures are shown as bar-graphs, PLATE 35.

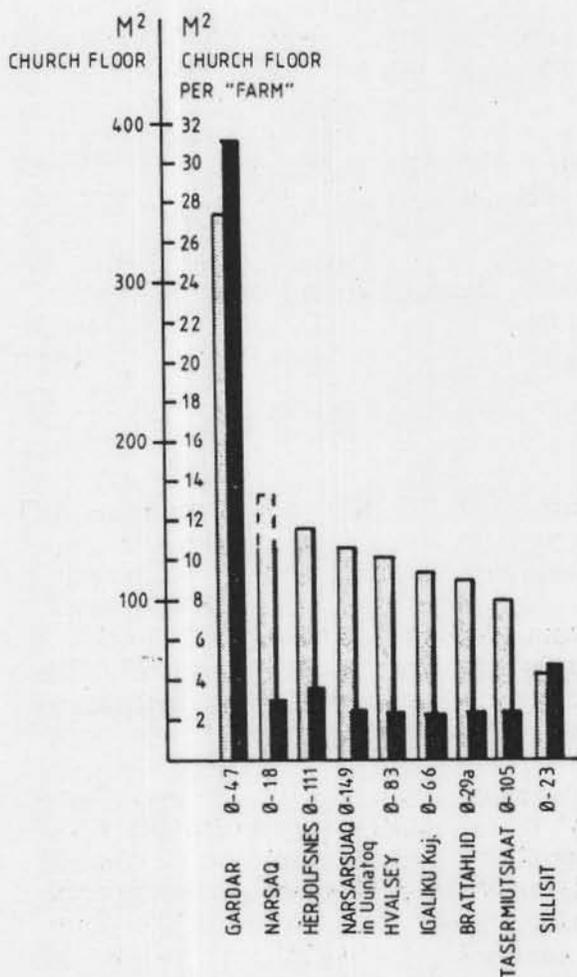


PLATE 35

Estimated floor area per "farm" in the suggested parishes in model I. The lighter bars show the actual size of each church, while the darker bars show the church area per "farm".

Ø-47 the Cathedral at Gardar is in a class by itself. Covering 344 square meters, it represents nearly 1 square meter per theoretical "farm" in the total settlement.

This is roughly 25 % of the total church area in the Eastern Settlement. As argued elsewhere in this section, the Cathedral may not originally have been part of the parish system, though this situation may have been changed at a later date.

Ø-23 at Sillisit is the "ordinary" church with the largest church area per "farm", of 4,5 square meters.

It is the smallest of the "ordinary" churches, with only 12 "farms" in its suggested parish. This is, by the way, not smaller than certain parishes in Iceland (Vikingur 70:206). Its size would hardly have been sufficient to serve people of the neighboring parishes, i.e. Gardar or Brattahlid.

Another possibility is that it was never built as a parish church, but was erected for some other purpose, such as a shrine, for seasonal gatherings, or as the farm church of a wealthy owner. Two facts make it exceptional:

1. It is located within the area with vegetational dominance around Gardar (see Plate 19), and thus may be assumed to lie within the area of influence around the bishop's farm.
2. The church is of the rectangular type, probably built as late as around 1300, although it lies in a thinly populated area.

It may be suggested that the economic output spent in the building of this church did not come from the 12 "farms" in its suggested parish alone.

Whether it was the result by a private undertaking from a wealthy church-owner, or was based on income from other parts of the settlement is difficult to determine. The church (or its owner) may even have had extensive property in other parts of the settlement.

It also even have been built as an annex to one of the churches in the vicinity.

Ø-111 at Ikigaat (Herjolfsnes) also turns out to be large, even if its suggested parish does include the settlement concentration in the outer Tasermiut. The most probable explanation to this is the special status Herjolfsnes supposedly had as the official port for the trans-Atlantic trade, thus taking its income from additional sources.

But if this is the case, can we presume that it also served as a parish church? If not, a church to serve the surrounding settlement still remains to be found. Routes of communication from the settlement around the outer Tasermiut to Ikigaat are awkward, and I find it unlikely that Herjolfsnes served as their regular church.

The church at Ikigaat (Herjolfsnes) is of the type with an open west wall and narrow chancel, probably built some time around 1200. There is, supposedly, signs of an earlier church beneath the east wall (Roussell 41:118).

Ø-18 near the Narsaq point is larger than most, with a church area of 165 square meters. This is the church Krogh suggested might have been a cruciform church (Krogh 76:301).

If we stick to Krogh's interpretation, it is possible that the church held some special status within the settlement, for instance a monastery church.

The church ruin is, however, totally collapsed, and the original shape as well as the estimated floor area is indeed uncertain. If the walls of a rectangular church collapsed outward, the ruins may achieve an appearance of being cruciform. If the floor area is reduced to say 130 square meters, it would be more in line with the other churches.

The rest of the churches came through the test with surprisingly even figures. These churches are:

- Ø-149 Narsarsuaq in Uunartoq
- Ø- 83 Qaqortukulook (Hvalsey)
- Ø- 66 Igaliku Kujalleq
- Ø- 29 Qassiarsuk (Brattahlid III)
- Ø-105 Tasermiutsiaat

All of these had a church area of 2,4 square meters per "farm", except Ø-66 at Igaliku Kujalleq, which had 2,2.

As previously mentioned, there may be 'saeters' among the ruin-groups in this area. If so, the number of "farms" should be somewhat reduced. Ø-66 may therefore be in line with the other churches in this group.

It seems like the churches in this group were surprisingly well attuned to the size of their respective parishes.

Actually, the figures are almost too good to be true, considering that the churches must have been built at different times during the settlement period. Let us therefore turn to the matter of chronology.

7.4 PARISH MODELS AND DEMOGRAPHIC INCREASE

7.4.1 The problem:

The situation emerging from the analysis above is obviously from the time after the last churches were built, i.e. from some time after 1300.

This is very close to the time of the assumed population maximum, which most probably fell some time in the 14th century.

In the (speculative) demographic model presented in Section 5.2.4, a population doubling rate of about 100 years was employed.

However, in the adjusted model for the development of farms discussed in Section 5.2.5, it was assumed that the number of farms should increase at a somewhat slower than the number of holdings, at least until ca. 1300.

These models must of course be taken with all possible reservations, as they have not yet been tested against dated ruin-groups. Still, some kind of population increase must have occurred, even if we cannot at the present stage present a demographic curve based on dated material.

Let us therefore just keep the demographic increase in mind, and have a look at the churches.

It is a logical assumption (although not always the case) that the size of a church roughly corresponded with the number of farms in its parish at the time of building.

As the population increased, the churches would eventually become too small. This would leave the community with three options.

1. To continue to function with a small church, if it was not economically possible to erect a larger one.
2. To tear down the church and build a larger one.
3. To split the parish, and build a new church in the new parish.

(A 4th possibility would be to maintain the original church, and to build annex churches within the parish. In this analysis, This possibility will be omitted.)

A note of warning should be introduced at this stage: The Norwegian medieval stave churches were, in most cases, not replaced with bigger churches until the 19th century.

Let us, however, have a look at the five churches which have an average floor area per "farm" at approximately 2,4 square meters:

Ø-29 Qassiarsuk (Brattahlid III) is of the latest type, a rectangular church. As there were two preceding churches at Brattahlid, the churches could easily have been rebuilt in pace with the increasing population.

And as Qassiarsuk is among the best areas in Greenland as far as the vegetational resources are concerned, this area could (and evidently did) support a considerable increase in population. But Brattahlid III is only slightly larger than its predecessor Brattahlid II, a fact that does not particularly agree with the idea that demographic growth leads to the construction of larger churches.

Ø- 83 at Qaqortukulook (Hvalsey) is the other rectangular church in this group. There have, however, been no extensive excavations to look for an earlier church there. The church should be among the latest, and thus theoretically reflects the population size (or rather, the number of farms) in its parish at around 1300.

Ø- 66 at Igaliku Kujalleq is somewhat longer than the rectangular churches. It has an open west wall, and hence should belong to the wooden type with protective walls, according to Krogh's classification (Krogh 76:307). It does not have a narrow chancel, however, which makes it a kind of hybrid between the "real" wooden churches and the rectangular ones. This should indicate that it was built around the middle of the 13th century, and thus somewhat earlier than the ones mentioned above. In the parish model I this church is assumed to have served the Vatnahverfi area. This area probably offered possibilities for expansion and increased settlement density. As we know little about how many of the ruin-groups were actually 'saeters', it is at present difficult to

say whether the church area per "farm" is above or below the average for this group.

Ø-149 at Narsarsuaq in Uunatoq is of the same type as above, and should have been built around the same time. If an increase in the number of farms took place here after let us say 1250, we would expect the church area per "farm" to be somewhat lower than for the later churches. Is there a missing church within this parish, or are the suggested parish borders wrong? Or, was there no population increase in this area after 1250? These questions must remain open.

Ø-105 at Tasermiutsiaat represents the oldest church type in this group. As it lies in the wild inner part of the Tasermiut fjord, one may ask if there were possibilities for settlement expansion in this area. It is, however, a chance that outer Tasermiut was served by another, missing church. If so, one could expect it to be of a younger type, with dimensions big enough to serve the late-stage population in the area. Unless, of course, the church at Ø-111 Ikigaat (Herjolfsnes) served this parish, an idea I find rather unlikely.

7.4.2 Uneven population growth ?

The size of the 5 churches described above seems to match the number of theoretical "farms" in their suggested parishes. It may, in other words, seem as if the size of these churches reflects the size of the population in their respective parishes.

As there may be as much as 200 years separating the building dates of the earliest and latest of these churches, this creates a problem.

If the population increased during this period, as we have all reason to believe, the older churches should have eventually become too small to accommodate the population of their parishes. While the later churches in fact should have been built for a larger population. The later churches should, in other words, be larger than the older. This does not, however, seem to be the case.

As far as I can see, the following explanations are possible:

1. That the population increased in some areas, but not in others. This would imply that the areas with the latest churches also had the greatest population growth.
2. That some areas had the economic sources to build bigger churches, while other areas did not. A gradual accumulation of wealth in certain districts would have had a similar effect.
3. That the demand for more church space was met by building new churches in nearby areas, i.e. annex churches.
4. That the church size was not affected by later population increase. The church size may in fact have been determined by the number of independent (i.e. tax-paying) farms in the parish. It is possible that later population growth led to increased

tenantry rather than to an increase in the number of independent farms. If so, the size of the church may have been fixed at a certain level, unaffected by later demographic fluctuations.

If we consider **Option 1**, the implications are obvious:

There are three rectangular churches in the Eastern Settlement, all of which are located near the Cathedral. One of them, Ø-23 Sillisit, has an extremely small suggested parish.

The two others are Ø-29 Qassiarsuk (Brattahlid III), and Ø-83 Qaqortukulook (Hvalsey).

Consequently, this should be an area in which the population increased sufficiently enough to demand new church buildings around 1300.

(The same should be the case in V-7 Anavik in the Western settlement, which features a similar church).

Maybe this model is too simple. Local climatic conditions, the manner in which the original churches were constructed, etc. may have caused some churches to deteriorate faster than others. These factors of course would have precipitated the building of new churches.

Option 2 implied that certain districts gained on the others what economic development was concerned, thus favoring the building of new (and costly) churches. This may have an ecological explanation, but it may also be due to socio-political factors.

The possibilities for population growth are better in optimal areas than in marginal areas. It is also possible that the colder climate that gradually set in from the late 1200s impeded further expansion in certain areas. Note for instance the erosion of the aeolian sands in the vicinity of Ø-147, discussed in Section 4.3.3.

This is just to emphasize that the different districts were not equally vulnerable to ecological stress. This in turn would have affected the economic basis of the different districts.

The other possibility is, as mentioned, socio-political. Certain aristocratic families may have acquired a high social and economic status, and demonstrated their wealth and power by building new churches.

Option 3 implied that the demand for more church space was met by increasing the number of churches, rather than increasing the size of the existing ones. This will be discussed closer in connection with Parish Model II, Sections 7.4.3 and 7.4.4.

Option 4 implied that the church size was not a direct function of the population size. Instead, it was suggested that the size of the church reflected the number of organizational units, such as the number of independent farms. This is not at all unlikely, recalling the fact that many Early- and High Medieval churches in Norway were not replaced until the 19th century.

7.4.3 Parish Model II:

The Parish Model I based on Thiessen-polygons revealed a number of areas with an evident imbalance between church and parish, which again raises the question of missing churches.

In order to be able to adjust the parish borders and test the possibilities for missing churches, a second parish model was constructed, PLATE 36 below.

In this model, the existing ruins of the "ordinary" churches are marked with black squares and their ruin-group numbers (again, the "small" churches are omitted). In addition, probable locations for missing churches are marked with an open square and a letter.

The parish borders were constructed as Thiessen-polygons.

Finally, the number of ruin-groups within each suggested parish were counted. Suggested 'saeters' were omitted.

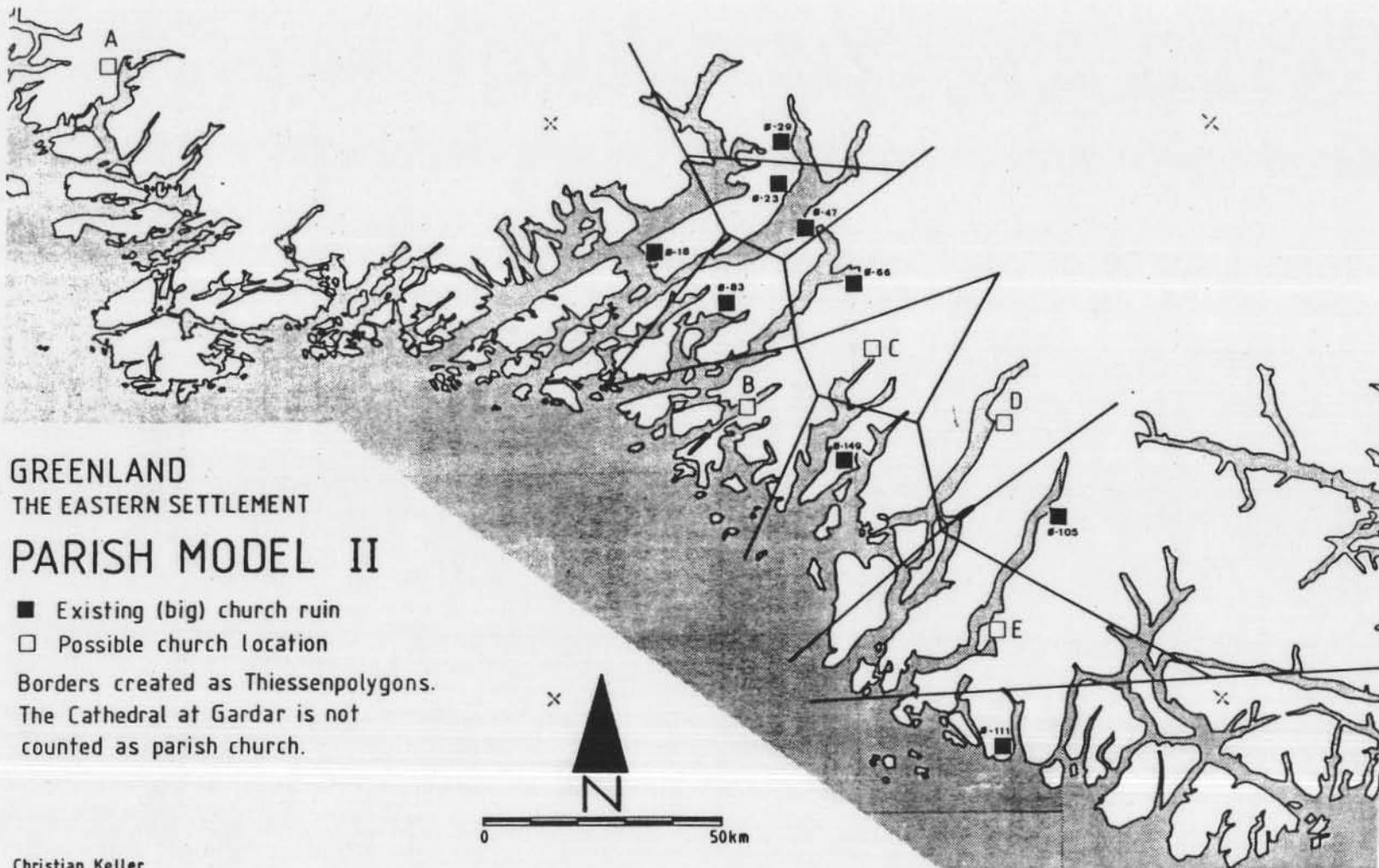
The number of "farms" within each suggested parish is presented in this table.

NUMBER OF "FARMS" WITHIN EACH SUGGESTED PARISH, MODEL II:			
Location of parish church	Number of "farms"	Number of saeters	Total number of ruin-groups
Ø- 18	55	1	56
Ø- 29	46	11	57
E	40	5	45
Ø- 66	36	4	40
Ø- 83	34	6	40
B	33	-	33
C	30	1	31
Ø-149	28	2	30
Ø-111	26	4	30
A	25	-	25
Ø- 23	19	6	25
Ø-105	19	3	22
D	10	-	10
Ø- 47	-	-	-
TOTAL	401	43	444

Although the suggested number of parishes in this try has been increased from 9 to 14, the number of theoretical "farms" per suggested parish exceeds the average for medieval Iceland (see Vikingur 70).

Ø-18 at Narsaq point is the church with the largest suggested parish, with 55 "farms". It is not much different from the previous model in size.

Ø-29 at Qassiarsuk is the second biggest suggested parish as far as the number of "farms" is concerned. The inhabited area is, however, rather concentrated.



E in outer Tasermiut is a postulated church. The location would be near Tasersuaq or Tasiusaq. Of all the suggested areas for missing churches, this is the most probable. Even if Herjolfsnes is counted as a parish church, 36 "farms" remain for a parish in outer Tasermiut. Considering the communications, it is highly unlikely that the people in this area went all the way to Tasermiutsiaat or Ikigaat for their weekly sermon. Still, no church ruin has been found in the area, in spite of numerous efforts. It is tempting to suggest that a church ruin may have been destroyed by natural forces, such as changing of river beds or sinking of land.

Ø-83 at Qaqortukulook (Hvalsey). This suggested parish is of a relatively small extent, but includes 34 "farms". This would place it near the average parish size in this model.

B between the outer Igaliku- and Lichtenau fjords is a suggested parish, with a proposed church location near Kangerluarsorujuk. The parish would have 33 "farms".

C at the southern half of the Vatnahverfi area is a suggested parish with a proposed church location near Amitsuarsuk. Considering the communications, the most likely location for a church would be in Daniel Bruun's Valley. The parish would have had 30 "farms". (Jónsson believed Vagar church to lie in this vicinity (Jónsson 30a:44)).

Ø-149 Narsarsuaq in Uunatoq would have had 28 "farms" in its suggested parish. It has been suggested as a convent church (Roussell 41:107).

Ø-111 at Ikigaat (Herjolfsnes) would be left with 26 "farms", even if a church is postulated in the outer Tasermiut. This is a parish size which is fully in line with the medieval parishes in Iceland. The question is, however, if Herjolfsnes served as a parish church at all. If not, this either means that the postulated church E served 66 "farms", which would make it the biggest parish in this model or, we must introduce the possibility that there was an additional church in the area.

A in the Ivittuut area is a suggested parish. This should hardly be controversial, as there "must" have been a church in this area, unless

1. it was populated by pagans or outlaws
2. it was settled after the church building had ceased, i.e. some time during the decline.

Ø-23 at Sillisit is suggested in this model as a parish church for the Gardar area. This would constitute a parish of 19 "farms", one of which being the Bishop's farm, which housed quite a number of people. The

situation suggested by the model is not impossible, neither is it particularly probable.

Ø-105 at Tasermiutsiaat is an early type of church, with a hexagonal dike around its churchyard, and it has been suggested that this was a monastery church.

D in the inner part of Southern Sermilik is a suggested parish. It would have been a parish of 10 "farms", which is rather on the small side, but not unlikely compared to Iceland. It is possible that the church at Ø-105 at some time was a monastic church that did not serve a parish.

Ø-47 at Igaliku (Gardar) has been left without a parish in this model. Normally, cathedrals did not serve as parish churches, but there were numerous exceptions, as in Iceland.

7.4.4 A test of model II:

One would expect this adjusted model to result in a better correlation between church size and number of "farms" in each suggested parish.

To test this, I have made a table where each church ruin is listed together with the church area per "farm" for both Parish Models I and II.

The churches are listed according to their chronological groups.

CHURCH AREA PER "FARM", BOTH PARISH MODELS Undatable churches omitted			
Ruin-group number	Type of church building	Model I church area per "farm"	Model II church area per "farm"
Ø-105	Narrow chancel	2,4	5,3
Ø-111	-----"-----	3,7	6,7
Ø-149	Rectangular with open west wall	2,4	4,8
Ø- 66	-----"-----	2,2	3,3
Ø- 83	True rectangular	2,4	3,8
Ø- 29	-----"-----	2,4	2,5
Ø- 23	-----"-----	4,5	2,8
		Mean 2,9 Slope 0,132	4,17 -0,604

The result of the test is thought provoking.

Model I (based on Thiessen-polygons and existing church ruins) gave very even figures for church area per "farm", as demonstrated in the bar graph, PLATE 35.

Model II gave highly uneven figures for church area per "farm". This result is not presented in a bar graph, but can easily be observed by comparing the figures of Parish Model I and II in the two right-hand columns above.

The introduction of hypothetical churches was evidently no improvement in this respect.

Further, there was a tendency that the early churches had more church area per "farm" than the later churches.

In short, this indicates that the correlation between church size and the number of "farms" was not bettered by the introduction of possible churches, with the exception of the outer Tasermiut (location E) and the area around Ivittuut (location A).

(According to the models, the church at location E in outer Tasermiut should have been some 110-120 square meters in size, i.e. roughly the same size as Ø-29 Brattahlid III and Ø-66 Igaliku Kujalleq.)

A temporary conclusion on the results of the test of the two parish models is that the distribution of the existing church ruins matches reasonably well with the distribution of ruin-groups.

On this basis, I find it reasonable to assume that Parish Model I, with addition of two churches at locations A and E, is the one which mostly resembles the church administration system at some time around 1300.

This must not, however, be given undo weight. It is possible that the small churches, which were omitted from these tests, served as parish churches or "half-churches". The high number of "farms" per parish compared to Iceland may be an indication in this direction.

Under any circumstances, we must assume that the historic reality was far more complex than we are able to reveal through analyses like these.

Also, there are other reservations. As mentioned above, we do not know whether parishes existed at all, and in case they did, whether they were geographical units, or just economic entities. The test offers no clues to helping solve this problem.

Still, it may be assumed that the adjusted Parish Model I at least reflects the rough extent of the communities served by the different churches.

7.4.5 Conclusions:

There should be little reason to doubt that Ivar Baardson's Description is a description of the diocese. As previously mentioned, the Description is in many respects comparable to a similar document in Iceland (Bishop Pál Jónsson's Kirknaskrá from ca. 1200, Dipl. Isl. vol. 12:1 -15).

From the discussion of the terms for "owning", the previous concept that the text describes what land belonged to the church has received serious competition. The idea that the text describes areas from which the different churches collected their income, such as the tithe, is an alternative explanation which is more in line with

contemporary Iceland.

Personally, I am inclined to believe that Baardson simply describes parishes or tithing-areas. This is more in line with the Icelandic *Máldag*-documents, which served as an inventory of the churches.

This is not to say that all the churches and all church property were mentioned by Baardson. We know that the church at Herjolfsnes was omitted (or lost in the transcription), and the description of "the costly church" for which the king had the advowson is curiously brief. It is also more than likely that the parish churches (or their owners) possessed considerable property which was not mentioned in the Description, for instance farms or parts of farms.

It is, in other words, difficult to give a fair interpretation of the text without first establishing its intent. This will be discussed in more detail in Section 8.2.3.

The parish models indicate the likelihood of two lost churches, but otherwise there is a fair correlation between church size and ruin-group population, even though the churches were built over a period of nearly 200 years.

It is quite possible that this signifies a socio-juridical structure that remained basically unaltered from perhaps the 12th to the 14th century. In other words, that the number of farms which came to influence the church building was unaltered for a better part of the settlement period. The number of "free" (taxpaying) farms may for instance have been fixed after the first century of settlement or so.

Still, we must keep in mind the possibility that even the small churches may have served as parish churches or "half-churches".

There is also a possibility that areas in which older churches were not rebuilt in later times had a stable population, while areas with late churches experienced increases in population or wealth. This may, in fact, reflect a concentration of economic power around Igaliku / Tunulliarfik (the Gardar / Brattahlid area).

The slight difference in size between the churches Brattahlid II and III, however, argues against this hypothesis, indicating that the later churches were not enlarged to accommodate a larger congregation. This supports the idea that the size of the churches reflected a socio-juridical structure that was laid out at an early stage.

The analysis of vegetation and ruin-group correlation (Section 4.3.3 above) created the picture of a settlement in which the bishop's farm at Igaliku (Gardar) formed a geographic and socio-economic center, surrounded by an abundance of vegetational resources.

It may seem as if the population and/or wealth increased around this area, creating a consolidation of economic power.

The possibilities for demographic and/or economic development in the areas outside this central "ring" seem to have been limited.

This picture is not an unlikely one. In an area as large as the Eastern Settlement, the different districts would obviously have different carrying capacities, different ecological reactions to grazing, and different responses to climatic change. It is likely that the best areas also had the greatest margins to stress.

From the investigations of the changes in the settlement pattern in Norway after the Black Death in 1349, we know that people abandoned the marginal areas, to settle at the best farms. A similar

response to ecological stress or population decline in the Eastern Settlement is possible.

It is not unthinkable that the settlement pattern gradually changed from a wide spread and relatively even distribution, to a concentration in the best areas, encircling the clerical center. In this case, the ruin-groups may actually represent a "double image" of some sort, creating the deceptive impression that the population was greater than actually was the case. The relatively large number of theoretical "farms" in each parish may be an indication of this.

But there may be a simple, sociological explanation to what we have observed, namely that the more well-to-do people lived around the clerical center, and used their wealth and executed their influence on church building in this area.

This will be further discussed in Section 9.4.3.