

Fama and Public Opinion in Kirkekampen/ The Church Struggle (1245-1302)

As the title suggests, the chosen subject for my PhD project is the Danish Church Struggle, 1245-1302. This name is a collective term for a series of conflicts between prominent Danish prelates and the Danish royal power. These conflicts were a central part of the Danish political landscape in the second half of the 13th century and as a field of study they reveal a great number of things about medieval Denmark. The following three disputes were the most prominent of the period: the conflict between Niels Stigsen and Erik Plovpenning, c. 1245-1250, the conflict between archbishop Jakob Erlandsen and king Christoffer I along with king Erik Klipping, c. 1253-1274, and the conflict between archbishop Jens Grand and king Erik Menved, c. 1290's-1302. The aim of this project is to explore these conflicts through a new lens than what has previously been done in the research tradition. When looking at the sources from the conflicts, it is clear that the concepts of public opinion and fama (a Latin term which covers concepts such as rumors, reputation etc.) were a centrale feature of the disputes and the project therefor aims at exploring how these concepts were activated and used during the Church Struggle. The project will in this connection primarily focus on the arguments in favor of the prelates fighting the Danish royal power though the arguments in favor of the royal power can of course not be ignored. The project can be divided into three main sections; (1) an exploration of how public opinion and fama is be understood and how we can use them in the context of medieval Denmark, (2) an analysis of how the concepts concretely were used in the conflicts, and (3) a discussion of how this study contributes to our broader understanding of the Church Struggle.