

Sensorveiledning for eksamen i HIS2128 (høst 2018)

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Exam question:

Select excerpts from one of the following primary sources studied in this course: Ohthere's and Wulfstan's accounts in the Old English Orosius, the Life of Ansgar, or the burial of a Rus' chieftain in Ibn Fadlan's travelogue. What do you think the selected text(s) tell us about Viking Age ethnicities, religion, and/or social organization? Take into account relevant secondary literature assigned for this course.

The course has been conducted in the form of lectures and seminars: the former overviewed specific topics and relevant secondary literature; the latter were dedicated to group discussions of selected primary sources, including those selected for the exam. There are different ways to proceed with this assignment, which will test students' ability to critically analyze a primary source in order to answer basic questions of Viking Age history. The discussion of the *Old English Orosius* should be linked to the problem of Viking Age ethnicities, and that of the *Life of Ansgar* to religion and social organization, whereas Ibn Fadlan's text can be evoked in connected to all three topics.

The discussion of the first primary source should debate the question of Viking Age ethnicities either with reference to the entire narrative or with focus on specific peoples such as the Danes, *Nordmenn* or *Finni*. This critical assessment should also relate to relevant literature from the syllabus.

The discussion of the second primary source should evolve around the question of early Christianization and its connection to ninth-century Hamburg-Bremen and/or the social organization of Viking Age society. The critical assessment should also relate to relevant literature from syllabus.

The discussion of Ibn Fadlan's text can bring in all three topics or focus on some of them. The discussion of ethnicity should emphasize the ethnic fluidity of the Rus; that of religion should focus on various ways of interpreting the burial of a Rus chieftain; that of social organization should center on the social hierarchies within the Rus group observed by Ibn Fadlan. This critical assessment should also relate to relevant literature from syllabus.

A very good exam essay will have a good structure and writing style; it will also consequently use a proper reference style in its list of bibliography and references. It will show a good knowledge and a nuanced understanding of the chosen topic, and will present an independent argument combining the discussion of a chosen primary source with that of relevant literature. A good exam essay will show a correct discussion of a chosen primary source, to a certain degree place it in its historical context, and give a reasonably orderly narrative. It will to a lesser degree place its discussion of the source in the context of relevant academic literature. A satisfactory essay will demonstrate some important and relevant facts deriving from a primary source, but will to a small degree place them into a historical context. It will not show an independent discussion or the knowledge of a broader historiographic context. A sufficient essay will show some relevant knowledge which will demonstrate a minimum of what may be expected based on

the reading list for this course. It will lack insight into important connections within a primary source and its various contexts.