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Concerning the project "Genetic Replacement, Drift and Selection in an 11th to 17th Century Population"

The project includes taking DNA and mtDNA samples of human remains from the collection of the NTNU Museum of Natural History and Archaeology. The destructive sampling, of two teeth from 251 individuals in all, is claimed to be minimal.

The committee found it difficult to identify a clear-cut research question on the basis of the submitted material. Rather, the project seems like the beginnings of something similar to a biobank. This raises the research ethical question of whether issues of ownership and rights of use of the results have been settled. If these legal and ethical issues have not been decided upon, the committee advises that this be done. One relevant consideration is that even with the strictest routines, there may always be a risk of contamination of the material in connection with sampling; this consideration weighs in favour of concluding that the institution should ensure that the resulting analyses remain available to the benefit of the wider research community.

As we are aware that at least two different research projects are to be carried out on the same material during the same time period, the committee also assumes that the different projects are coordinated in such a way as to minimize possible damage to the material.

On these conditions, the committee advises that the project be carried out.

On behalf of the National Committee for Ethical Evaluation of Research on Human Remains –


for Oddbjørn Sørmoen, Chair


Halvard J. Fossheim, Director

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