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Concerning the project "Health and Disease in an 11th-17th Century  
Population: the Effects of Cold on Disease Maintenance"

The project is the PhD project of Allison Drake, a student at the Australian National University. She wishes to study skeletal material from 235 individuals collected from the "Bibliotekstomta" and 12 individuals from the West Front of Nidarosdomen. The material forms part of the collections of the NTNU Museum of Natural History and Archaeology in Trondheim.

The study does not involve sampling or intrusive actions, with the exception of possible cleansing of some of the teeth. The planned work consists of three phases, of which the current letter to the committee concerns the first phase, going through October, 2011. During this phase, Drake wishes to study the selected material and register data in situ. The aim is to investigate whether there are correspondences between disease patterns and climate changes which took place during the Little Ice Age.

The study has been approved by the Australian National University and by the NTNU Museum of Natural History and Archaeology. The material in question is not of questionable origin, and the study does not involve excavations or handling of Sami material. It is therefore not necessary to apply to the Sami Parliament or to the Directorate of Cultural Heritage.

Although it is not easy from the submitted documentation to tell how specific diagnoses might be established, the proposal does articulate a series of concrete questions. The researcher appears to have adequate experience in her field, and the research seems sound. Drake also has biological anthropology among her subjects, indicating competence in osteology. She also seems to have highly experienced supervisors.

The committee advises that the project be carried out.

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

  
Oddbjørn Sørmoen, Chair

  
Hallvard J. Fossheim, Director

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