



Posta Stamps

Faroe Islands

No. **24**
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New Stamp Issues:

- Religion in the Viking Era
- SEPAC 2015: Knitted Art
- H. N. Jacobsen's Bookstore - 150th Anniversary
- The Christmas Gospel 3
- Franking labels 2015

Posta 
FAROE ISLANDS



FO 814-816

Test proof

Religion in the Viking Era

In its heyday the Roman Empire stretched to England but never came to include the north of Scotland, the Scottish islands nor the continental regions north and east of the Rhine and Danube, and thus not Scandinavia.

Around the year 400 AD the Empire was divided by the Adriatic Sea. In the fifth century the western part was fragmented into several kingdoms, the Merovingian kingdom being the most prominent. The Roman Catholic Church in its continental form had already reached England shortly before 600 and expanded further on the Continent. Around the year 800, at the beginning of the Viking Age, the Carolingian Empire was formed, becoming the central power on the Continent. Archaeological and historical sources testify to the Carolingian Empire's expansion in settlements, production and trade, as well as in political, military and ecclesiastical organization. During the 10th

century Christianity made its inroads in Denmark.

By the late 4th century Christianity had already taken root in the Celtic West. This branch of Christianity had its roots in early Christian communities in Eastern Mediterranean regions. Here Christians sought solitude in remote places in order to devote themselves to the worship of God. Christian culture in Ireland was not significantly affected by events on the Continent and was therefore able to maintain its tradition and structure based on monasteries. Christians from Ireland had probably set foot in the Faroe Islands before the Viking Age.

At the end of the 8th century the Scandinavian communities established routes through the Baltic Sea to Northwestern Russia and further south, thus connecting Northern Europe with the rich Islamic World. In the 9th



Niðri á Toft in Kvívík.
Photo: Ólavur Frederiksen

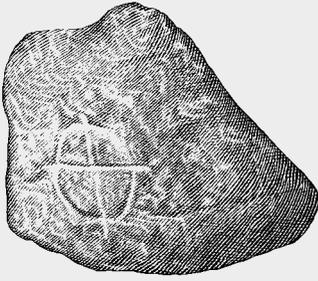
century the Scandinavians expanded up into the North Atlantic.

Thus, it happened that in the early Viking Era an almost global exchange system came into being. News, ideas, cultural currents, traditions, literature and music could now spread faster than ever before. In a sense, the world had become smaller giving rise to broader individual outlook.

In the Viking Era the Faroe Islands, along with the other North Atlantic communities, most of Norway and the Celtic West, were peripheral to the European stage whereas the Scandinavian Viking engagement in the British Isles created a mixed culture, which also came to characterize the North Atlantic emigrant societies. In this mixed culture Christianity played a prominent role, whether in its Irish or continental form.

Thus, according to the narrative of the Saga, the formal acceptance of Christianity around the year 1000 should be seen as evidence of the Faroe Islands - like Scandinavia - wanting to be a part of continental Christianity which, however, was integrated into royal governance not yet present in the Faroe Islands. Irish Christianity was a monastery-based Christianity "from the bottom up", while Christianity in its continental form was closely linked to kings and rulers.

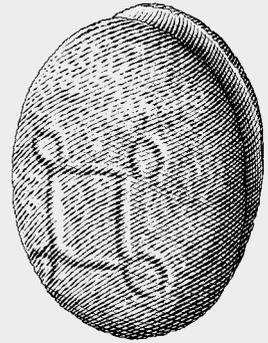
In contrast to Iceland, for instance, traditional pagan burial sites are for the most part unknown in Viking Era Faroe Islands, which may indicate that the settlers of the period were predominantly Christians. The numerous places of worship that can be found in the Faroe Islands, should probably be seen as private churches, built by the early Christian inhabitants of the Faroes. Still, none of



Early Middle Ages
Crucifix stone from Ólansgarður in Skúvoy.



Viking Age
"Bottom of a barrel or a bucket of wood".
Found (on site) Niðri á Toft in Kvívík.



Viking Age
Fishing sinkers of stone inscribed with a St. Hans crucifix.
Found (on site) Við Gjóvará in Fuglafjørður.

Source: Fornminnissavnið

these places of worship has been the subject of archaeological investigations while experience from other North Atlantic emigrant societies suggests that they go back to Viking times and may be modelled on the small monasteries in Irish Christianity. Two wooden crucifixes of the Irish type found in Viking Age Tontines in Leirtrim can be dated to the time before the official conversion to Christianity, thus supporting the view we have expressed here.

Christian crucifixes of different types inscribed on tombstones and stone tools or carved in wood are found at several locations dating back to the Viking and early Middle Ages in the Faroe Islands, constituting fascinating material evidence of early Christianity in the islands.

*Steffen Stummann Hansen,
mag. Art. in Prehistoric Archaeology*



FO 817

Test proof

Sepac 2015: Knitted Art

Nobody really knows when people started knitting, or where knitting originally comes from but it is known that Faroese wool has been a vital product for the Faroese since the Viking Age. The Faroe Islands even take their name from the sheep from which the wool is harvested. "Fár" means "sheep" in Old Norse and thus "Føroyar" in the native language translates directly into "Sheep Islands".

Wool is Faroe Gold

An ancient Faroese proverb says: "Ull er Føroya gull", i.e. "Wool is the Gold of the Faroe Islands". This truly reflects the way of life in the days of old. Wool, woven fabric and knitted garments such as socks and sweaters were the main export for centuries and for many the only source of income.

People lived off the land and the land sustained thousands of sheep. The meat was used for consumption and the wool for trading. Around 1880 approximately 80% of the

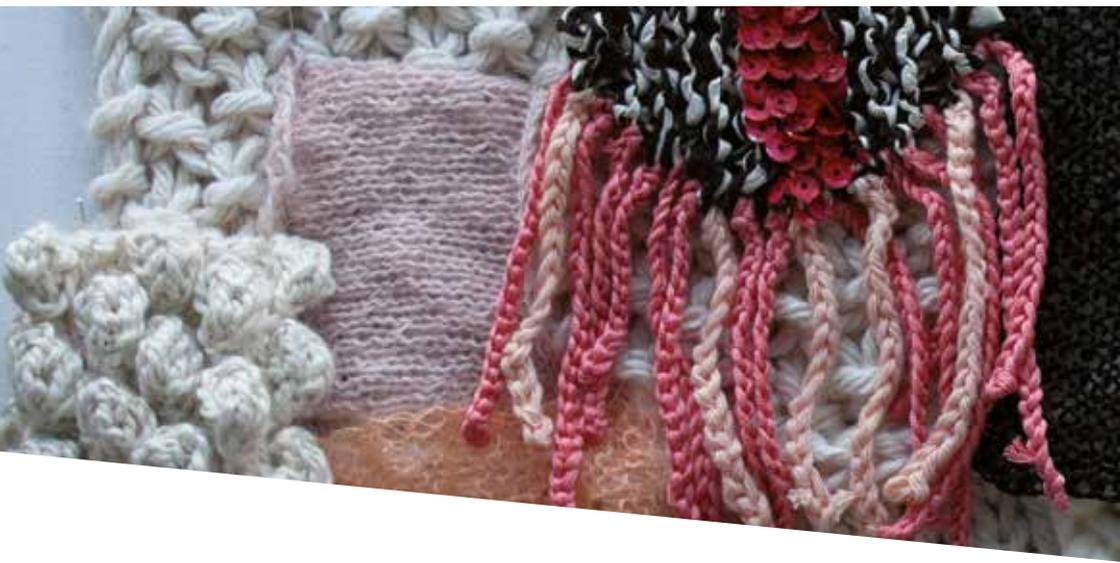
Faroese population earned their livelihood by sheep farming.

Both men and women spent their evenings producing these woollen garments. Entire families would sit in the sparsely furnished living rooms, knitting and spinning whilst telling tales of trolls and magic creatures and singing ancient Faroese ballads.

Indeed, storytelling, singing and the production of wool are closely linked. Some claim that these traditional ballads and stories, which constitute the cornerstones of Faroese culture, would not have survived without wool production.

The Phenomenon of the Knitting Club

In the Faroe Islands many women, young teenage girls and elderly women, have been known to form their very own social circles which go by the name of knitting clubs. The club setting is the living room of one of its



members – they take turns in hosting the sessions once a week or so. Knitting clubs are platforms where friends come together to knit. They share their knitting skills and the various patterns, each member proudly displaying the final product.

At the music festivals during summer in the Faroe Islands, thousands of people meet to listen to local and international music bands. The common attire for this festival is some form of “skipstroyggja”, a knitted jumper. Looking down at the crowd from the stage, you can see a veritable sea of patterned jumpers inspired by the ancient knitting traditions.

Knitted Art

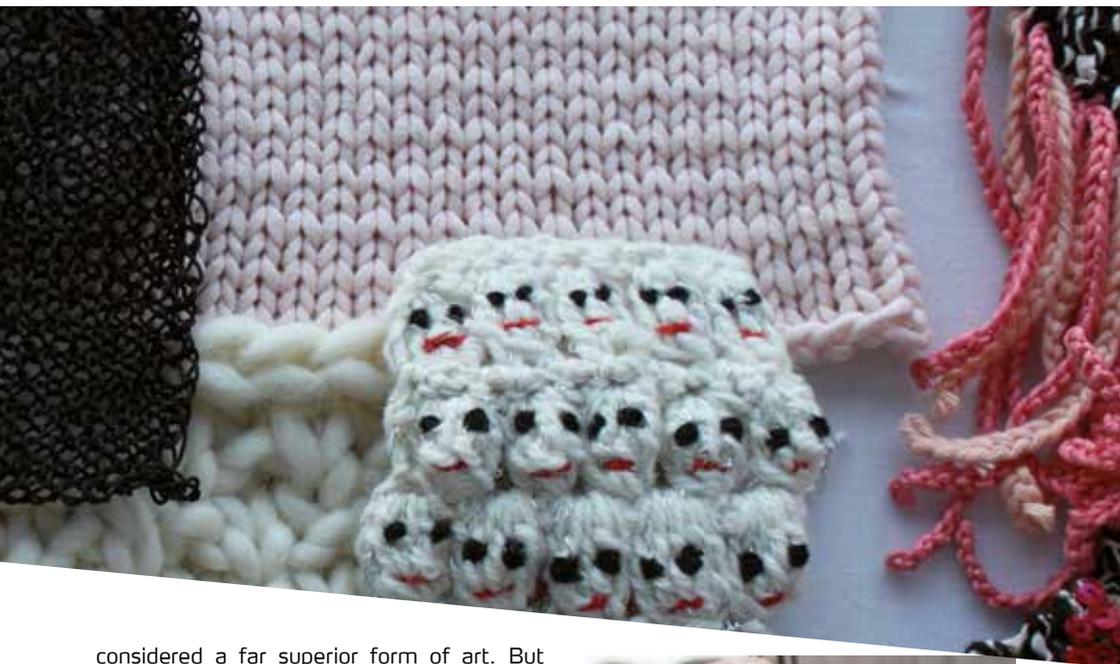
Until recently knitting for purposes other than clothing production was highly unusual in the Faroe Islands. Knitting has always been used for functional purposes and practical uses, very rarely in an artful way for purely aesthetic purposes.

But there are exceptions. Randi Samsonsen has showed that knitting can be used to create art as well as clothes. One of the most recent examples of knitted art was created by Randi. She concluded her degree as Master of Textile Design from Kolding Design School, Denmark, in 2012. She approaches knitting as an art form in order to overcome the limited possibilities posed by the craft. Randi feels that this ancient handcraft, having been passed down for generations, offers possibilities of discovering old signs and traces and opportunities to tell the stories for a second time albeit in a different way.

Knitting Festival in the Faroe Islands

A Knitting Festival has been held for the first time in the Faroe Islands. Knitting workshops, cafés and lectures were held for a period of three days in April 2015, the venue being homes of the people of Fuglafjørður.

For many years handicrafts such as knitting were held in some disdain while design was



considered a far superior form of art. But actually these two are inseparable; you cannot have one without the other. There is now a rapid and growing appreciation of handicrafts which is a delightful turn of events.

In times like these when many of us spend our days in front of computers, some feel compelled to create something, to touch, to produce something organic, raw and beautiful. Most people have a strong need to be appreciated as individuals, and knitting allows us to respond to that need. Even garments made in strict conformity with knitting instructions will always turn out to be unique because they have been crafted by hand. Knitting can be recommended to women of all ages and in all walks of life.

Source: "HNJ's Indispensable Guide to the Faroe Islands, Knitting in the Faroe Islands" 2011.



Design: Jóhanna av Steinum



FO 818-819



Test proof

H.N. Jacobsen's Bookstore - 150th Anniversary

H.N. Jacobsen's Bookstore is among the most distinctive places in the Faroe Islands. Outside the building there are old trees dating back to the 1870s giving their special character to this important institution of Faroese literature, printing and publishing. This was the site of the old secondary school until H. N. Jacobsen's bookstore moved here in 1918 from the old premises in Gongin which accommodated the bookstore from 1865 to 1918. This year marks 150 years since the founding of the company.

H. N. Jacobsen stands for Hans Nicolai Jacobsen (1832-1919), colloquially known as Hans Nikláí. After he passed away his daughter Sigrid Jacobsen Niclasen (1854-1927) assumed control of the business. In the late 20th century, the entire business and enterprise was reorganized into a fund which it still is today.

From Bindery to Bookstore

Hans Nikláí was a very skilled individual. As a young man he became a Jeker. This was in 1849 - and Jekers were soldiers at Skansin, the historic fortress located on a steep

hill by the Tórshavn harbour. He was soon to master other subjects. The Governor Carl Emil Dahlerup (1813-1890) wished to lend his support to Hans Nikláí when he initiated his bookbinding business. The Governor wanted him to go to Copenhagen to learn more about bookbinding because, in the Governor's view, the Faroes lacked this kind of specialists. "A perceptible evil here in these islands consists in the great shortage of reasonably able professionals." In 1854 Hans Nikláí made his way to Denmark.

A Growing Literary Public

In the years leading up to his trip to Denmark a socio-cultural milieu was taking shape in the Faroe Islands in support of initiatives based both on enlightenment and business endeavours. Individuals such as Jens David- sen and others started a reading society. A library was founded in Tórshavn in 1828 - with the initial help of friends of the Faroes and Nordic literary scholars such as Rasmus Rask and Carl Christian Rafn. These individuals also founded libraries in Iceland and Greenland. In this way Faroese literature was put on the map, perhaps mostly by travel-



H. N. Jacobsen's Bookstore.
Photo: Ólavur Frederiksen.

ling scientists and people interested in Faroese ballads, fairy tales and oral traditions. The publication of the ballads of Sigurd the Dragon Slayer (1822) and the Norse Saga of the Faroese (1832) attracted attention both in the Faroe Islands and around Europe. Jakob Grimm, the renowned German scholar wrote, among other things, a review of the former publication.

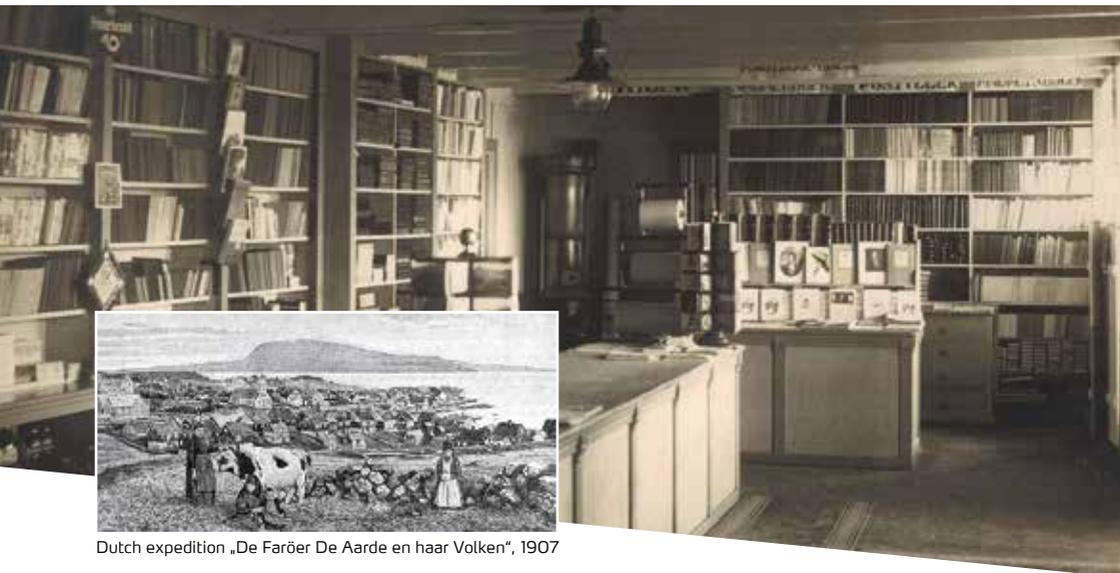
At this particular point in time the population of Torshavn and the Faroe Islands, as a whole, was starting to grow. The introduction of obligatory school attendance increased demand for books and similar reading materials. People therefore turned to the bookbinder requesting that he should provide them with books. Hans Niklái joined the Danish Booksellers Association in 1864 and in November of the same year he received official permission to conduct business. He himself states that the bookshop was founded on Ólavsøka (the Wake of St. Olav)

in Tórshavn on July 29th 1865. For more than 40 years, from 1864-1906, he was a board member of the Faroe County Library.



The First Store in Gongin

Hans Niklái began operating his business of selling and producing books in Gongin which is one of the oldest streets in Tórshavn. In his book "Torshavn the Wonderful" William Heinesen writes about the old shop, "So this was the bookbinder's shop. Steep steps lead up to this red fairytale house where one could buy "pictorial reproductions" and large



Dutch expedition „De Faröer De Aarde en haar Volken“, 1907

sheets of paper soldiers ... it was like looking into one of the Thousand-and-One-Night adventures from the East". The house soon became too cramped, and the couple moved into a nearby house. Hans Nikláí began working as editor and publisher.

In 1918 the business and the whole enterprise moved to its present premises.

The Old Bookstore

It is interesting to see what things and paraphernalia were sold by a bookstore in those times. Ordinary bookstores in Danish provincial towns sold everything from paper to fine wallpaper and soon some of them also started photographing people. This was also true for H. N. Jacobsen's bookstore, which eventually got its own photo studio and printing.

An article about the company which was printed in "The Danish Book Market" in the 1950s about the company states that H.N. Jacobsen's Bookstore employed 30 people. The store sold books (Danish, Faroese and

foreign), paper, fountain pens, photos. They had a photographic studio, gramophone records, porcelain, glass, leather goods, toys - and of course the company also owned an important printing shop and publishing company which had released several remarkable books. One fine example was the later publication of "Faroese Folk Legends and Fairy Tales" by Dr. Jakobsen, the son of the House.

Both provisional stamps and banknotes were printed by H.N. Jacobsen printing shop.

H. N. Jacobsen's bookstore is one of the oldest companies in the Faroe Islands. The activities of this institution have helped shape and influence Faroese culture. It is therefore highly significant that Posta commemorates H.N. Jacobsen's Bookstore and Hans Nikláí for their unique importance in developing and strengthening Faroese awareness of their own cultural heritage and the very groundwork of a growing culture of writing.

*Kim Simonsen,
Ph.d and Mag. Art*



Test proof

Franking Labels 2015: The Provisional Stamps 1940-41

On April 1st 2016 the Faroese Post Office will celebrate its 40th Jubilee Year. On this occasion Posta will issue a stamp featuring the rare Provisional Stamps which were in usage during the Second World War.

These overprinted stamps were introduced during the autumn of 1940. As a consequence of the British occupation the Faroe Islands were separated from the Danish Kingdom and the only connections abroad were through Britain and partly Iceland.

When the decision of overprinting the first stamps was taken in the autumn of 1940 the printer H.N.J Bókahandil became an active partner.

Two sheets of postage stamps, the red 15 øre "Karavel" were used as sample prints

where the figure 20 was printed over the figure 15. These sample prints, however, were not successful as the overprinting was not sufficiently visible. Consequently a bar was placed beneath the figure 20 when the 1.399 sheets were printed. These were first released on November 2nd 1940.

A more comprehensive article on this most interesting chapter in Faroese philatelic history will be published in our next issue.

New Issue:	Franking labels 2015: Provisional stamps 1940-41
Date of issue:	01.10.2015
Value:	4 x 8,50 DKK
Size:	22,5 x 55,0 mm
Printing method:	Flexography
Printer:	Ganket, Denmark



The Christmas Gospel III

Searching for Meaning and Security

The Magi - three wise men - are looking for Messiah, the King of Peace. Mary and Joseph are fleeing Herod, the Warlord. **The images are powerful, symbolic depictions of people looking for meaning and security while at the same time making their escape from evil and conflict.**

The first stamp shows the three wise men on their long desert journey from the East to the small town of Bethlehem. They are tired, come to a halt, descend from the camels and take a rest. They observe the star - the wisdom on High guiding their way. They are wise men which is why they travel on camels. Camels were essential for transport. They provide milk, wool for spinning, meat for consumption, hides for shoes and wineskins, clothes, free transport over long distances and power to pull the plow. They provide shade from the sun and protection in war. Camels can carry their own weight of 600 kg. If necessary, camels drink brine and can manage without water for 40 days. They

can also drink 130 liters of water in 15 minutes. **The Magi also possessed spiritual wisdom, therefore they ask, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him."**

The image gives us double empathy – a persistent quest into the future and a deep concentration in the present. The Magi are like you and I - journeying towards the goal. Life is not going around in circles. Some say that the ultimate goal is irrelevant, it's the journey itself that counts. Not so with the Magi. **The journey is exciting precisely because it has a purpose. It is not an absurd journey without any goal. No, the goal provides the Magi with strength and inspiration for other travels.**

At this juncture in time, humanity was waiting for a King of peace, a Messiah who could lift the people out of despair and suffering. The evangelist Matthew emphasizes that the



Magi were not Jews, but came from a foreign country; they were searching for a King of peace who would not limit Himself to serving a small local Jewish minority. **The Magi represent humanity, their significance is universal.**

The fact that they saw the star in the East indicates that they were sincere, inquiring star researchers, looking for the truth. They came either from Persia or Southern Arabia. Scientists have determined that the astronomical phenomenon witnessed by the Magi happened at the time when Jesus was born. The Magi came first to Jerusalem and met King Herod the Great (37-4 BC). The Roman Senate had installed him as king of Judea. Herod is representative of political violence. He killed his wife, his three sons, his mother-in-law, uncle and many others. He also killed all the boys in Bethlehem. At the same time, he was a great builder. He built theat-

ers, amphitheaters and large castles, among them Massada and the Temple in Jerusalem. Herod and all Jerusalem were struck with fear when they heard about Messiah, the King of Peace. **History shows that in the message of Christ there is a genuine alternative to any other might and power. The alternative is Christ's power of peace and love. This power and this kingdom commands the hearts of men. Therefore, Jesus said: "The kingdom of God is within you."** A kingdom that no political power can bring to naught. This was the kingdom that the Magi were looking for.

Herod's deceitful words reveal how egoistical and selfish politics can be. He pretends to support the Magi. To see the star in the East is not enough. Herod calls together the high priests and the scribes to investigate the matter. They confirm that according to the words of prophets a King of Peace is born

in Bethlehem. The Magi listen to this guidance, travel immediately to Bethlehem and suddenly they see the star again. Then a miracle happens on life's journey for all people to experience – they rejoice, wonder, worship and sacrifice. We read: **"When they saw the star, they rejoiced. And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto Him gifts: gold and frankincense and myrrh."** Matthew emphasizes that life's purpose does not only consist in solving scientific questions, but also learning to live by faith in the King of Peace, respecting the small and weak.

The Magi are courageous enough not to obey the orders of the dictator Herod and they choose a different route home. Therefore, they are our role models.

The image of Mary and Joseph and the Baby depicts man in his essential innate condition. We are fascinated by the unity and security of the Holy Family, even when fleeing from evil. All three hold together, Mary with the Baby in her arms, Joseph leaning on his cane, leading the donkey. Fear of death does not cause them to betray each other. They are also guided by a higher wisdom. They flee to Egypt. The challenge was being obedient, industrious and brave as a family with the aim of establishing a new home in Nazareth. **Jesus's flight as a small child symbolizes Israel's exile as a young nation in Egypt and at the same time it signifies all the refugees in the world today. This is why**



the flight has such immense symbolic value - the King of Peace makes Himself one with refugees.

Together the images clearly elucidate fundamental elements in existence: the search for purpose, meaning and love, along with unity and faithfulness. Existence is not without meaning and hope because with faith in God, the Creator, and Messiah, the King of Peace, life always retains its value and purpose. Therefore, in spite of evil and suffering, we can join the Magi and Mary and Joseph in rejoicing, wondering, sacrificing ourselves for others, helping, giving and living in humility, faithfulness and love.

*Róland í Skorini,
MA. in Religion and French*

TRAVEL WITH POST DANMARK TO THE MIDDLE KINGDOM

In cooperation with the travel agency Sinex Rejser, Post Danmark is now opening the doors to China Post. In the past five years, we have worked closely with China Post on the sale of philately products and stamp design as well as training Chinese stamp engravers and providing consultancy services at China Post's printing facilities. This cooperation has resulted in lots of valuable contacts, and now we can therefore offer you a unique 22-day trip to China.

WHAT'S IN STORE?

The trip is scheduled for 23 September to 14 October 2015. Upon arrival, we will participate in the China International Collection Expo in Beijing together with 100,000 other collectors. A couple of VIP philatelist days are then planned. We will be visiting the Chinese printing facility

where we will meet their engravers etc. followed by a guided tour of the Post Museum in Beijing and a special visit to China Post's philatelic department. By all means bring a friend or partner on the trip; we have already planned a special programme for any companions who are not interested in stamps.

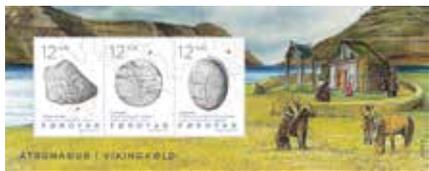
The remaining 15 days have been reserved for an exciting trip around China, including excursions to all the major sights in Beijing, from Tiananmen Square to the Great Wall of China, the Terracotta Warriors in Xi'an and finally fantastic Shanghai. A unique travel experience awaits you!

READ MORE ABOUT THE TRIP AT www.postdanmark.dk/filateli, where you can see the full programme and read about registering for the trip through Sinex Rejser.

READ MORE AT WWW.POSTDANMARK.DK/FILATELI



New Stamp Issues 28 September 2015



Test proof

New stamp issue:

Date of issue:

Value:

Numbers:

Stamp size:

Mini-sheet size:

Design/Engraving:

Printing method:

Printer:

Postal use:

Religion in the Viking Era

28.09.2015

3 x 12,00 DKK

FO 814-816

34 x 25 mm

156 x 60 mm

Martin Mörck

Offset / Engraving

Sweden Post Stamps

Large inland letters, 0-50 g.



Test proof

New stamp issue:

Date of issue:

Value:

Numbers:

Stamp size:

Design:

Printing method:

Printer:

Postal use:

Sepac 2015: Knitted Art

28.09.2015

17,00 DKK

FO 817

42 x 33 mm

Randi Samsøsen

Offset

LM Group, Canada

Small letters to Europe, 0-50 g



Test proof

New stamp issue:

Date of issue:

Value:

Numbers:

Stamp size:

Preparation:

Design:

Photos:

Printing method:

Printer:

Postal use:

H.N.J. Bookstore - 150th Anniversary

28.09.2015

17,00 and 26,00 DKK

FO 818-819

40 x 31 mm

Kim Simonsen

Anker Eli Petersen

Jógvan á Dul / H.N.J. Bookstore

Offset

LM Group, Canada

Small letters to Europe, 0-50 g and large letters to Europe, 51-100 g



Test proof

* also available as stamps in a booklet of eight (4 x 8,50 KR and 4 x 17 KR)

New stamp issue:

Date of issue:

Value:

Numbers:

Stamp size:

Drawings:

Printing method:

Printer:

Postal use:

The Christmas Gospel 3

28.09.2015

8,50 and 17,00 DKK

FO 820-821

30 x 40 mm

Edward Fuglø

Offset

LM Group, Canada

Small letters inland, and to Europe, 0-50 g

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