

**Finn-Einar Eliassen**

**“Urban freedom” in the Nordic countries  
(middle ages and early modern period)**

**Synopsis**

This short paper will demonstrate that there was no “urban freedom” in the Nordic towns in any period, medieval or modern. “Freedom” meant “privilege”, and urban privileges were always severely circumscribed and defined by the state, i.e. the monarch in pre-modern period and the parliaments in the modern age. Town government was an integral part of royal or state administration, even in the feudal or private towns which existed, particularly in the early modern period.