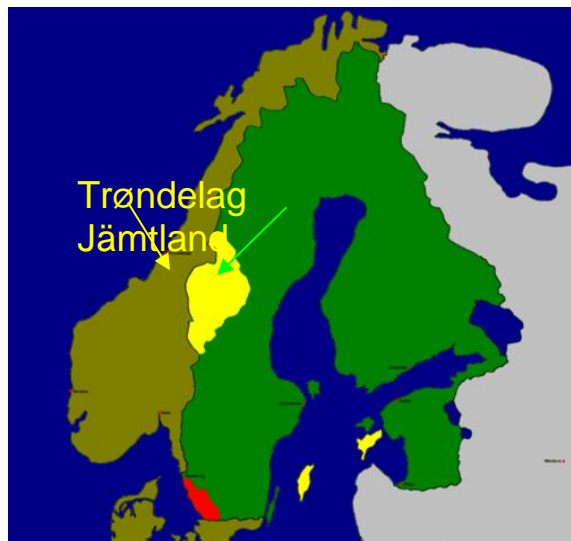


## Moving the border



The region of Jämtland was conquered by Denmark–Norway in 1178. Despite several Swedish attempts to reclaim this border region, Jämtland remained under Norwegian rule until it was occupied during the Hannibal War (1643–1645). Initially, the Jamts, the inhabitants of Jämtland, resisted the occupation, and with the help of the Norwegians, they quickly drove out the Swedish troops. However, Sweden eventually emerged victorious in the war, and as a result, Jämtland became a part of Sweden under the Treaty of Brömsebro in 1645.

*The Treaty of Brömsebro in 1645 (illustration by Kasper Holl): brown: Denmark–Norway; green: Sweden; yellow: the provinces of Jämtland, Härjedalen, Idre and Särna (and the Baltic Sea islands of Gotland and Ösel), which were ceded to Sweden. Red: the province of Halland, ceded for 30 years.*

The Jamts' strong sense of belonging to the Norwegian–Danish kingdom led them to repeatedly support the Norwegian army's marches into Jämtland and resist the Swedish ones. During the time around the Hannibal War, a significant portion of the population in Jämtland considered themselves Norwegian.

Following the conquest, the Swedish integration process began immediately, and on 24 December 1645, Queen Kristina II of Sweden issued a resolution aimed at Jämtland's inhabitants. The Swedish regent was determined to establish a good relationship with the new compatriots and incorporate them into the Swedish state system.

Despite Sweden's efforts, Denmark–Norway made several attempts to reclaim Jämtland after the Treaty of Brömsebro, including during the Dano–Swedish war of 1657, where the Jamts welcomed the Norwegians as liberators. Another period of conflict occurred in 1677, but the conquest failed, and a process of Swedification began to steer the Jamts away from Trøndelag.

Sweden's intentions in the province focused on defence which had a significant impact on the Jamtish farmers, who were burdened by the responsibility. However, as part of a negotiation process, the Jamts managed to enforce a treaty in 1688, stating that they were only obligated to defend their own province. Finally, in 1699, the Jamts received

Swedish citizenship, making them the last people from an acquired territory to become Swedish.<sup>12</sup>

## Reconquering East-Trøndelag once again

It's possible that agricultural students hailing from Trøndelag are among the few who still harbor hopes of Jämtland rejoining Norway. Despite the humorous undertone, they are currently engaged in an ongoing attempt to reconquer the region, even going as far as calling it "East-Trøndelag." These students belong to the "Trønders Union" (TF), a student union at the Agricultural College in Ås, and have been fighting for their cause since the union's establishment in 1903. During holidays, they gather to move the border stone cairn towards the east, one stone at a time, in an effort to reclaim "their land."



Norwegian border stone cairn

## Resilience

TF offers permanent membership, also for former students, which means that the border movers have numbered several hundred some of the years. At points, they have managed to move the border cairn several kilometres into what is Sweden on the map, but not without resilience. Act of 14 July 1950 provides rules on various measures for marking and monitoring the national border. An agreement between Norway and Sweden ensures border clearance every 25 years.<sup>3</sup>

In 1995, Swedish authorities fined the TF members for cutting trees and making a new border through the forest, and for moving the national symbol.

*"The police didn't like it. But you have to make sacrifices in the fight for what matters."*  
- TF member Erik Strickert -

They stopped cutting trees in the forest but continued to move the stones.

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<sup>1</sup> SNL (2023) "Bromsebro". Retrieved from: <https://snl.no/Br%C3%B6msebro> (26.04.23).

<sup>2</sup> Undheim, Håvard (2019): *Jemtlands forsvenskning Svensk integrasjon av Jemtland cirka 1645-1700*

<sup>3</sup> SNL (2023). "Riksgrensen". Online. Retrieved from: <https://snl.no/riksgrensen> (26.04.23)

The TF's articles of association state that: "TF has been struggling to include East Trøndelag in Norway again for years. The goal is to claim back "East Trøndelag!" We never approved the peace in Brömsebro in 1645. But we won't be unreasonable; we offer the Swedes to take Bergen<sup>4</sup> in exchange."<sup>5</sup>

### The fight continues

In connection with the border move, the county sign "East-Trøndelag" once appeared on what most people thought was the national border with Sweden. A road manager was accused of being behind the action, but no one but agricultural conquerors held on to the claim of the former Norwegian territory.



### TRØNDERNES FAGFORENING



TF's logo

The Øst-Trøndelag county sign on the border to Åre county in Jämtland, with a county symbol very similar to the student unions logo. (Photos: TF)



In 2006, the most-read online newspaper in Norway, VG, wrote about the TF border activities. TF member Anja Gotvasli then stated the following: "We don't give up until we reach the goal. But it can take take time." (Photo: Thomas Andreassen, VG)

<sup>4</sup> Bergen is the second-largest city in Norway, located on the south-west coast, 761 kilometers from the Norwegian border with Jemtland.

<sup>5</sup> Trøndernes Fagforening(1903) "Vårres kampsaka" *Articles of association*. Retrieved from: <https://www.karsken.no/Kampsakan> (26.04.23).

Pictures on the student union's current webpage reveal that these students still gather on the Trøndelag-Sweden border, but they maintain a certain level of confidentiality when it comes to discussing the specifics of their activities. In an email response to Åpenhet, dated April 28th, 2023, an anonymous representative from TF clarified that information regarding their border project was confidential. It can be surmised that they still aim to achieve the goals outlined in the union's constitution. However, their underlying motivation for the reconquest of Jämtland, other than a desire to "take back what was once ours," remains unclear, albeit with a clear sense of humor underlying their actions.



Screenshots from TF's current webpage, showing recent gatherings at the border between Trøndelag and Jämtland (Photos: TF).