Originally, the provincial courts (landsting) were the equivalent of the local courts (herredsting), at least as they were described by the provincial laws. As such, they could be first-instance courts for most kinds of legal disputes. That the provincial court carried a different weight in terms of power-politics is indicated by the fact that it was this provincial court that was the first court of instance in cases of killing in which the legal consequence in the final analysis could be outlawry. The landsting had a geographically more extensive authority backing up its legal decisions than the local herredsting. For this reason, royal power must have been more interested in influencing the provincial courts, which seem also to have been able to accept or reject a claimant to the throne through most of the Middle Ages.

The division of a kingdom into provinces or regions that had their own jurisdiction and underlying local jurisdictions was a common phenomenon in medieval Europe. There were varying reasons for such developments, but typically their origins are lost in the mists of time (and thus they gain a touch of something ancient and popular).\(^1\) Alternatively the developments were the result of a royal administrative policy such as that found in twelfth-century Sicily.\(^2\) In the Danish case, we do not know the historical background of the regions—the lande—but from the time of the provincial laws we begin to have examples of how their ting functioned and developed. This is the development that I shall investigate more closely to see whether these ting, which the king must have been interested in controlling, bear the imprint of the development of procedural law that we know from other parts of

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1 For a discussion of this, see Lupoi, _The Origins of the European Legal Order_, pp. 173–223.
2 Dilcher, _Die Sizilische Gesetzgebung Kaiser Friedrichs II._, p. 59. Regional courts, provincial courts with sentencing functions, are also known in other Scandinavian countries; however their activities were severely curtailed in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries as a consequence of royal policy, see Sunde, _Speculum legale_, pp. 81–85, and Gösta Åqvist, _Kungen och rätten. Studier till uppkomsten och den tidigare utvecklingen av kunagstiftningsmakt och domsrätt under medeltiden_ (Stockholm, 1989).
Europe where central powers demonstrated an influence over similar courts and assemblies.

**The Procedure and Running of the Landsting**

According to the provincial laws the *landsting* met every fortnight, and this tradition remained unchanged for many centuries. The day of the week on which *ting* were held could vary from province to province and it was not until 1643 that Wednesday was designated as *ting* day across the country. Prior to the sixteenth century we do not even know which time of day the *ting* met, but it was apparently not always in the morning because it was emphasised by the central administration in 1593 that the *ting* must start early because if it did not there was a risk that too many of those attending the *ting* would be intoxicated before the *ting* started its business.

However, we see in Christian II’s Land Law of 1522 that this problem was not a new one because it stipulated that a judge did not need to listen to an intoxicated person. In other words, if taken to its final conclusion, the intoxicated man risked losing his case. The stipulations of the provincial laws and later statutes and recesses concerning transgressions against the peace of the *ting* do not distinguish between the *ting* in which they took place. However, a few statutes from the end of the sixteenth century intimate that the central administration paid particular attention to stamping out such transgressions at the *landsting*—for example when the parties “pulled each other by the beard, hair; attacking each other with hits in the mouth or with knives drawn, daggers and other weapons.”

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1 See for example DRL 3:13, § 37 (1522).
2 See CCD 5:143, 2:6, § 4 (1643).
3 See CCD 2:605/KB 1593–96, p. 18 (1593). The problem was so severe that the following year the provincial courts on the island of Langeland had to be relocated because too many participants were drunk, see CCD 2:641/KB 1593–96, p. 301 (1594). 1643 saw the final prohibition against the construction close to the courts of “inns or huts that dispense beer or other kinds of drink”, see CCD 5:143, 2:6, § 6 (1643). Subsequently the relocation of a provincial court could also be caused by a temporary risk of contagious disease or a temporary union of individual courts because of a lack of competent judges or for practical reasons, see Andersen, *Studier i dansk proceshistorie*, pp. 206–207.
4 DRL 3:13, § 55 (1522).
5 CCD 2:300 (1582); for the quotation, see CCD 2:538/KB 1588–92, p. 448 (1590).