Book Reviews

Temporal Dimensions of Climate Change

Marit Ruge Bjærke & Kyrre Kverndokk: Fremtiden er nå. Klimaendringenes tider. Scandinavian Academic Press, Oslo 2022. 203 pp. Ill.

The rapid changes that we are now experiencing in our environment require that we all pay attention. Even scholars in culture studies have begun to discover that things are no longer as they should be on this earth that we share, and so they too have begun to take a serious interest in these issues as researchers. The environmental conference in Stockholm in 1972 set the alarm bells ringing, but the sound soon faded away. Forty years ago, circumstances led this reviewer to study the living conditions of people in Soviet Central Asia and to visit most of the areas that would soon become independent states. That was still in the days of *glasnost*. Flying over what was once the Aral Sea, known in school textbooks as "the world's fourth largest lake", was a horrific eye-opener, and then hearing the testimonies of Central Asians about the ecological disaster that people were facing only strengthened the image of an impending environmental catastrophe. Entire ecosystems were affected, with acute water shortages, salinization of huge tracts of agricultural land, pastures destroyed by desertification, acute ill health threatening generations to come, and the growing poverty of people who were still trapped in a social system that turned a blind eye to the problems. Around the same time, discussions began about the threat to biodiversity, a concept that gained traction thanks to a UN conference in Rio in 1991. Slowly but surely, the level of consciousness has increased. Climate change and ecosystem collapse threaten not only biodiversity but also human existence. More and more people, even in our part of the world, now have tangible experience of how climate change is affecting our living conditions. We have learned that we are living in an age called the Anthropocene – a term coined by the Nobel laureate Paul Crutzen at a conference in Mexico in 2000 – and although scientists disagree about when this geological age began, it is now widely accepted that we have left the Holocene behind. The difference from previous ages is that in this era humankind is exerting a crucial influence on what happens on earth. The effects of human activities are particularly evident in the loss of biodiversity – some scientists speak of the sixth mass extinction (most recently today, at the time of writing, there was a report on the large number of vertebrates that are disappearing in the Amazon) – and the climate changes that come in the wake of global warming, something that we now feel we are reminded of in every season, as the weather is no longer recognizable.

This book, written by the environmental historian Marit Ruge Bjærke and the folklorist Kyrre Kverndokk in Bergen, problematizes the way in which the understanding of time affects how we relate to climate change. In Europe too, we are aware of melting glaciers and the devastation caused by recurrent droughts and violent autumn storms. We are reminded of this all too often, not least

through the flow of news from different parts of the world. The ongoing global warming of the Earth's atmosphere and surface is probably a consequence of human activities. This is the fault of the increased emissions of greenhouse gases. But it is not just the climate that is changing before our eyes as a result of these emissions. Our understanding of time is changing too, according to the authors. When climate scientists use knowledge from the geological past to tell us about the future climate, when politicians decide to reduce emissions in order to secure our grandchildren's future, and when climate activists from different organizations demand immediate action by staging various spectacular protests, it becomes clear that different perceptions of time are involved in the way we talk about, relate to, and try to deal with climate change, the authors explain. This is a complicated book to read, and even more so to sum it up in a way that makes sense. But it will be suitable as a basis for seminar discussions and should be able to function as a textbook.

The book is one outcome of a major research project, "The Future is Now", in which researchers from different countries have studied different time dimensions of climate change. It is worthy of appreciation that an afterword lists a large number of other publications from the project.

Ingvar Svanberg
Uppsala, Sweden

Grandmothers and Their Lives
Katarina Ek-Nilsson, Birgitta Meurling, Marianne Liliequist, Annika Nordström: Min Mormor. Kvinnoliv i en annan tid. Bokförlaget h:ström, serie Lumen, Umeå 2023. 316 pp. Ill.

Four ethnologists have written biographies of their maternal grandmothers, relating their destinies to the living conditions of this female generation. They were born between 1892 and 1901 in different social environments in big Swedish cities and in the countryside. The stories mainly follow a chronological structure and end with the death of the women, which took place in the 1980s, with one exception. Three of the researchers remember when their grandmothers were in upper middle age and older, but all of them were looking for answers to many different questions when the project started. What were the conditions in which these women grew up, what were their family relationships, and what experiences did they have in the early years of the twentieth century before they were married and when they were young housewives? The sources used are interviews with relatives, collections of letters, diaries, photo albums, physical objects, and information in parish registers.

Detective work commenced, based on the ethnological methodology that these senior researchers are thoroughly familiar with, two of them being professors of ethnology, Birgitta Meurling and Marianne Liliequist, and two who have been managers in the cultural heritage sector, Katarina Ek-Nilsson and Annika Nordström. At the same time, it is emphasized that the way in which they write the biography proceeds from themselves, their own interpretations of the collected empirical data and their own memories. Thus, the narratives are neither those of the grandmothers nor those of other relatives. The texts are thus characterized by an autoethnographic approach.

Regardless of whether the researchers have personal memories of their grandmothers or not, they have been astonished by the silences associated with the lives of the older women. Why didn't the grandmothers themselves talk about these experiences, or why haven't subsequent generations mentioned anything about them? Did the grandmothers not want to be reminded of painful

memories or was it mainly a matter of protecting children and grandchildren from this knowledge? Perhaps it was a combination of both, the researchers suggest. For example, two of the women lost their husband/fiancé during the First World War. These were men they had got to know while working in New York and Berlin, respectively, facts that only emerged through research.

The book presents sensitive portraits of the grandmothers, appreciating what they managed to achieve in their socio-economic circumstances and in relation to their granddaughters. It turns out that these four ethnologists often think about their grandmothers. Objects and places still remind them of these women who passed away long ago. The things they left behind, which can be found in today's summer cottages, bring many memories to life. Heirlooms such as aprons and songbooks are just as important as photographs and painted portraits for the experience of close family ties. I recognize myself in this, because when I open the drawers in my grandmother's secretaire I can feel her smell, just as one of the ethnologists does when she takes out the mangle-pressed pillowcases she inherited.

This book is specifically about four grandmothers who belonged to the working or upper middle classes in Gothenburg and Norrköping or were born in agrarian households in Småland and Jämtland. Although it provides many clues in its biographical presentations, it lacks examples of the life destinies of females in this generation. Many were single mothers, and from the gender perspective that is central to the book it would have been appropriate to mention other household constellations in the discussion. For example, my maternal grandmother, born in 1902, ran a small business in a small town with her sister, while their mother took care of the household and the children. It should also be emphasized that women like my grandmother did not distinguish themselves from the workers' and farmers' wives described in this book. They were all hardworking, very careful about how they dressed in public, and they were always busy with handwork when other duties were done.

The book gives various examples of how old parents or parents-in-law shared a home with younger generations or lived close by in their own apartment or cottage. It is not clear how this was experienced, only that the older relatives could look after grandchildren and it was mainly younger women who assisted the elderly when their health was failing. One of the ethnologists writes about how her own grandmother had the opportunity to move to an old-people's home "back in the days when they still employed occupational therapists" and she was very happy there. The same was true for my grandmother in 1987–1992. This was certainly not only because these women could continue to do handwork, always having something to do, but also because of the social conditions. They did not have to compromise with the younger generation, which is inevitably a consequence of living together with them. In the light of today's debate about the deficiencies of elderly care in Sweden, it is conceivable that the grandmothers' generation of women experienced the highest-quality activity programmes ever provided to the elderly in this country.

This book, "My Grandmother: Women's Lives in Another Time", arouses many thoughts, not only about grandmother-granddaughter relationships, methods of biographical portrayal, and gender perspectives, but also about the conditions in which different generations have lived, in different phases of life. It is well written and can be recommended to target groups in academia, to genealogists and others with an interest in autoethnographic writing.

Kerstin Gunnemark
Göteborg, Sweden

Religious Revival Movements and Modernity

Ostädade väckelser. Modernitetens förtrupper. Sune Fahlgren, Joel Halldorf, Erik Sidenvall & Cecilia Wejryd (eds.). Makadam förlag, Göteborg/ Stockholm 2023. 328 pp. Ill.

In the northern countries an interdisciplinary network called Nordveck, focusing on the study of religious revival movements, has been working since 1999. Conferences have been arranged every second year resulting in a number of publications. In 2023 the edited volume *Ostädade väckelser* ("Messy religious revivals") was published with the subtitle *Modernitetens förtrupper* ("The vanguard of modernity"). The authors are fourteen scholars from different historic disciplines. The time covered by the contributions spans from the eighteenth century up until the twentieth century. A basic idea in the book is that earlier research did not take into account the significance of religious revival movements for the development of modernity regarding democracy, social engagement, openness for the role of females in leading positions, freedom of thought, individualism, political liberalism, transnational networks and the belief in new technology.

The word "messy", recurring in all the contributions in the book, refers, on the one hand, to the fact that religious revival movements were disorganized early on, and on the other hand that they were perceived as inappropriate to the surrounding culture because they broke accepted norms, for example by having women engaged as preachers. The religious revival movements became appropriate later on when they gradually adjusted to prevalent social norms. Then women could be disregarded. Since the title of the book highlights the messiness of the religious revival movements, it is the earlier phase that gets the most space in the author presentations. In Swedish, the word *ostädad*, "messy, untidy", has a somewhat negative sound to it and should be perceived as something that the researchers have attributed to the religious revival movements from outside. I have not found any examples where this term has been used in the present day to categorize or criticize the religious revival movements in their initial stage.

The first main section of the book, "In the room of possibilities" (pp. 22–118) contains examples of how women were given an opportunity to be preachers and leaders. This was the case among Quakers and Methodists in the USA and in England, where they also worked to abolish slavery. In Norway, female followers of the lay minister Hans Nielsen Hauge were given active roles as preachers in an initial phase when participants gathered in the homes. Later when meeting houses were built, men took over the leadership. The female influence decreased and the women gradually disappeared as preachers. In the 1880s the Salvation Army came to Sweden and brought with it several radical new habits such as female preachers, social engagement, officers who could be ranking higher than the men, and so on. Domestic religious revival movements that gave women new possibilities were Helgelseförbundet and Örebromissionen. These were established in the late nineteenth century and dispatched an equal number of male and female evangelists. Time was considered short to get the Christian message out due to the belief that Jesus was to return soon. Thus, both women and men had to be involved.

Echoing the subtitle of the book, the second main section is entitled "The vanguard of modernity" (pp. 120–211). The question is whether the religious revival movements spearheaded democracy. The requirement of freedom of conscience was important in the movements. The emotional life was emphasized. An individual could have direct contact with God without a detour via the church with its dogmas and rituals. Social care such as welfare work

was developed. Examples in the book are taken from Herrnhutism, which came from the German Herrnhut. The religious message was distributed by travelling diaspora workers. The individualism was demonstrated by the fact that each one of the followers was asked to record their life history. The lay minister Jakob Otto Hoof (1768–1839) in Västergötland is also mentioned as someone who paved the way for modernity.

The third main section, "Clean and Messy" (pp. 214–309), points out that messy and tidy things could exist side by side. One example of this is the missionaries who were sent to China in the 1890s by the religious revival minister Fredrik Fransson. They were committed to their mission but poorly educated, something that draw criticism in the other Swedish non-conformist communities. Another example is the farmers from Nås, Dalarna, who moved to Jerusalem in 1896. They were also poorly prepared and did something that, in the eyes of others, was unexpected or, in the terminology of this book, messy. The basic idea that the farmers of Nås nourished seems to have been that they would live in a property collective like the first Christians in the Holy Land. Modern indicators were the colony's philanthropically directed entrepreneurship, called deaconry, a belief in change and openness to new technology such as electricity and telephony.

In the Baptist movement in the 1890s, the preacher Emil Sibiakoffsky from the USA was provocative, bordering on being a rebel, because of his behaviour in the pulpit with his extravagant gestures, his hairstyle and his message. He was a socialist and joined with freethinkers in the fight against the Swedish Church and for freedom of religion. The preacher Säs Per Persson (1828–1894) became controversial within Baptism because of his declaration that the converted individual became free of sin. Both Sibiakoffsky and Per Persson are marginalized in the Baptist narrative.

The fourth main part of the book, "Tidied away" (pp. 312–323), discusses why messy religious revival movements have been cleaned away or manoeuvred out by posterity. The significance of eighteenth-century pietism for the Enlightenment has been ignored, since the movement did not fit into the clerico-political national agenda in the 1900s, when liberal theology and social democracy were tied together in a community based on values. It was the tidy aspects of the revival movements in their later stage that were highlighted both in historical research and by the movements themselves. The latter seem to have been ashamed of inconvenient individuals and the way they behaved in the early days; it is therefore important that the authors in the present book have brought this previously obscured phase to the surface.

The authors have been at pains to adhere to the initial thesis of the book, focusing on messy and tidy elements within the revival movements. I cannot see that the thesis has been questioned, but it seems to be the same in all chapters. A lot of things could be interpreted as messy. This is also true for the initial hypothesis that the revival movements point the way forward to modernity in various forms. As a reader I wonder if the authors sometimes may have overinterpreted the material to make it fit the overriding thesis. All the revival movements in the book are seen as pointing towards traits of modernity. The authors, however, have problems themselves with conservative phenomena within some revival movements. In several cases these problems seem to have increased over time. This is obvious regarding Methodism, Haugianism and others.

These critical thoughts do not detract from the impression that the book is of significant value for the study of folk religion. It is highly comprehensive regarding both the number of different revival movements and the time span over more than two hundred years. The perspective

of *process* is prominent due to the fact that the studies run from the initial phase of the revival movements up to their subsequent development. The editors have done an excellent job making the different chapters come together in a logical way, and the illustrations make the historical presentations come to life.

Anders Gustavsson
Oslo University, Norway/
Henån, Sweden

Folk Song as Identity among the Swedes of Estonia

Sofia Joons Gylling: "Det var främlingar och dock fränder." Estlandssvenska identitetsformeringar med visor som verktyg. Åbo Akademi 2024. 89 pp. Ill. Diss.

It has been a long time since anyone published any scholarship, at least in Swedish, about the Swedes of Estonia. The genre flourished in the 1930s when Estonia was independent and there were many contacts between Sweden and the Estonia-Swedish islands. Linguists took the lead, with their interest in the different dialects. When the border with Estonia was closed at the end of the Second World War, it was possible for research to continue thanks to the extensive source material that had been salvaged for the archives in Sweden, primarily the dialect archive (Landsmålsarkivet) in Uppsala. By the 1960s, however, this activity had ebbed away.

In the light of this history of research, there is good reason to welcome Sofia Joons Gylling's doctoral dissertation in musicology, submitted at Åbo Akademi University. She reopens a field of study where her colleagues and their work are at a great distance as regards both time and perspective. Today, the majority of the people most immediately concerned live in Sweden, where most of the Estonia-Swedes fled in 1944. That group included Joons Gylling's parental grandparents, who came from Nargö in the Gulf of Finland. She herself moved to Estonia in 1994 and stayed there for 19 years. Today she lives in Helsinki but she has close contacts with folk musicians in Estonia, and she herself is a fiddler and singer who is now also a PhD. This is a common combination among today's ethnomusicologists.

Her dissertation consists of three peer-reviewed journal articles and a long introduction summarizing the articles. She concentrates on folk singing among Estonia-Swedes, more specifically how folk singing has contributed to the shaping of identity, as she calls it. It is not the songs as such that are at the centre, but the importance of singing for the individual and the collective. The Estonia-Swedes were a linguistic and cultural minority in Estonia; after the flight to Sweden they were no longer a linguistic minority but still had their own distinct cultural heritage. This complex self-image is very much present in the study.

The aim of the work is "to show how music and especially songs have been used to create and express cultural belonging". In connection with this, Joons Gylling also wants to investigate "the ideas that lay behind the formation of a common Estonia-Swedish cultural heritage" (p. 17). Her overarching research question is "how songs have contributed to creating, reflecting, and reinforcing different forms of Estonia-Swedishness from the mid-nineteenth century until the present day" (p. 17). Much more concrete are the subsidiary questions she formulates, although the connection between these and the research questions in the separate studies is unclear.

The first study has a title meaning "A Valuable Heritage for Future Generations of Estonia-Swedes": An Analysis of the Cultural Heritage Processes Surrounding the Publications of Songs by the Singer-Songwriter Mats Ekman". It is about a songwriter from Rickul on Nuckö, Mats

Ekman (1865–1934). His works were intended for a limited audience, but over the years they have been widely distributed among Estonia-Swedes and, above all, they have been re-evaluated. Today, Mats Ekman's songs constitute a unifying repertoire among people with a connection to the Estonia-Swedish population. Joons Gylling follows the various editions that have increasingly made the songs a central part of the common cultural heritage – she herself was asked to participate in recording a selection of the songs. She uses the term "cultural heritage" as a verb to describe how a number of people's active efforts have resulted in the elevation of the songs. There have also been efforts in Sweden since the flight in 1944, when the need to express Estonia-Swedishness became different from that in Estonia.

The second article is about "Estonia-Swedes on Tour in Sweden with Choir-Singing and a Farmers' Wedding in Skansen: An Analysis of a Swedish-Speaking Minority's Musical Self-Images of its Cultural Belongings during the Interwar Period". It examines the Ormsö Choir, which performed in Sweden in 1930. The choir staged a reconstructed peasant wedding and put on church concerts. According to the author, the wedding was a display of Estonia-Swedishness, while the church concerts signalled pan-Swedishness, emphasizing the linguistic community between the inhabitants of Ormsö and the mainland Swedish audiences. Here we see cultural distinctiveness versus cultural similarity (p. 116). The quotation in the title of the dissertation comes from a review of a performance by the choir: "They were strangers and still kinsmen". Above all, the wedding performance contained collected and arranged *laikar* (tunes or dance songs) from Ormsö. A central figure in the production was Tomas Gärdström (1905–1942), who came from Ormsö but studied to become a teacher in Sweden, where he established good contacts with linguists and folklorists.

The third article is titled "Songbooks in Cultural Borderlands: Communities in Estonia-Swedes' Handwritten Songbooks from 1861–1945". To complete this study, the author made a commendable effort to collect no fewer than 26 handwritten songbooks. The books, which were compiled over a fairly long period and in four (!) nation states, constitute the source material for this study. When she investigates the content of the books, she finds that quite a few songs have lyrics in both Swedish and the majority language, Estonian. She adopts the term *cultural borderland* to understand this mixture of languages and songs. Furthermore, she notes that most of the books can be divided into one of two categories: secular songs that were part of the popular music of the time, and spiritual songs. After this insight, she turns to Ruth Finnegan's concept of *musical pathways* – in Joons Gylling's interpretation, the secular pathway and the spiritual pathway of songs (p. 70).

The three studies are based on seemingly different types of source material, dealing with different eras and requiring different theoretical tools to solve the problems. One could say that Joons Gylling has made things unnecessarily difficult for herself. The articles are interesting, telling us a great deal about Estonia-Swedish singing, but they have required more work than a more cohesive study would have involved.

The introduction to the studies is full of the names of well-known theorists and their equally familiar concepts. Ruth Finnegan's *musical pathways* have just been mentioned, and Joons Gylling also introduces Anders Hammarlund's emblematic and catalytic functions, Max Peter Baumann's theory of cultural encounters, Mark Slobin's and Owe Ronström's *domestication* versus *ethnic convergence*, and other scholars who are recognizable in contemporary ethnomusicological literature. It could be said that she is following well-trodden paths. Only one theoretical concept is her own creation: *publicative cultural heritage-*

ing, which is intended to capture how cultural expressions are elevated to cultural heritage by being published in print. But she uses this term sparingly.

The main value of the study lies in the choice of topic, that Sofia Joons Gylling takes up a thread that has long lain dormant. And she has a particularly good knowledge of Estonia-Swedish culture, both the culture that flourished in Estonia until 1944 and the one that has since been cultivated in Sweden. Her dissertation confirms the significance of Estonia-Swedish folk singing and will certainly strengthen the position of folk singing as cultural heritage. Since the dissertation has been published, it may be said that she has devoted herself to publicative cultural heritageing.

Gunnar Ternhag
Falun, Sweden

Pite Saami Tales of Terror

Ignác Halász: Alvos giehto. Förskräckliga berättelser från Arjeplog. Pitesamiska berättelser upptecknade av Ignác Halász. Árråsit ulgusvaddedum bidumsámen: Inger Fjällås ja Peter Steggo. Gåvå: Stina Renberg. Silvermuseet, Árjepluovve/Arjeplog 2023. 39 pp. Ill.

Perhaps no other scholar of Saami is as worthy of the designation "pioneer" as the Hungarian linguist Ignác (or Ignácz) Halász (1855–1901). In the late 1800s, Halász made three journeys to Sweden and Norway, documenting and describing the Western Saami languages in a series of grammars, word lists, and text collections. On his third and final trip in 1891, he stayed almost a month in Norway with the Stomak family from Árjepluovve (Arjeplog) in Sweden, noting down more than one hundred Pite Saami texts. Two years later, in 1893, these texts were published in phonetic transcription and Hungarian translation as the fifth instalment of Halász's magnum opus *Svéd-lapp nyelv* 'The Swedish-Lappish language' (1885–96).

Part of these folklore texts have now been republished under the Pite Saami name *Alvos giehto*, 'Terrifying stories', with the Swedish subtitle *Förskräckliga berättelser från Arjeplog*, 'Terrifying stories from Arjeplog'. Following a brief preface in Swedish introducing Halász's work and the editorial principles of the volume (pp. 6–7), the book contains a selection of 22 texts presented both in the modern Pite Saami orthography, adopted in 2019, and in Swedish translation. The texts chosen for publication represent many common motifs in Saami folklore, including tales about the dangerous but gullible *stállo*-ogre, the subterranean *gidniha*-beings, and the hostile *tjure*-pillagers, as well as less widespread stories, such as a cautionary tale about the dangers of pointing towards the moon. Also included are remedies for toothache and bellyache, and a horrifying tale of the girl who swallowed a frog's egg (with the present edition's tales 1–22 corresponding to the original's 1, 2, 19, 31, 22, 26, 33, 35, 39, 41, 44, 53, 65, 67, 71, 76, 80, 102, 112, 117, 105, and 121). Editors and translators of the volume are the community members Inger Fjällås and Peter Steggo, who have previously translated the first Pite Saami children's books, as well as the first television show for children in the language, and who were also active in the working group designing the Pite Saami orthography. The texts are further accompanied by beautiful – and sometimes gruesome – illustrations by local artist Stina Renberg. Occasionally, facsimiles of Halász's texts are also provided.

Within the field of Saami linguistics, Halász is a controversial scholar, and the use of his texts is not entirely unproblematic. As early as 1893, the linguist K. B. Wiklund criticized Halász's South Saami transcription and translations in a paper titled *Die südlappischen Forschungen des Herrn Dr. Ignácz Halász*; see also Florian Siegl's 2020 paper *Zu den Tex-*

ten von Ignácz Halász aus der Gegend von Arvidsjaur. It is however important to distinguish between Halász's early works and his later publications, to which his Pite Saami text collection belongs. In fact, even Wiklund acknowledged the worth of Halász's Pite Saami texts, stating in a 1924 government report that "The phonetic transcription is very uneven, but the material is nevertheless, with due criticism, reliable and useful and is far superior to the same researcher's other, earlier records." ("Den fonetiska beteckningen är mycket ojämn, men materialet är dock, under förutsättning av vederbörlig kritik, pålitligt och nyttigt och står högt över samme forskares övriga, tidigare uppteckningar.") (SOU 1924:27, p. 196). What is more, Wiklund printed several uncredited adaptations of Halász's texts in his anonymously published Lule Saami text collection *Tålotj suptsasah ja åtå*, 'Old tales and new', from 1916, including one text found in the book under review (*Masste hulli ahte bärdna lä bunndura máddost*, 'Why it is said that the bear is of the farmer's kin', p. 12). Halász's Pite Saami materials are also an important source of data in Juhani Lehtiranta's 1992 thesis *Arjeploginsaamen äänne- ja taivutusopin pääpiirteet*, 'The fundamentals of Arjeplog Saami phonology and inflection'.

That said, Halász's original texts contain a number of linguistic traits that may be alien to modern speakers and learners of Pite Saami. In the present edition, the texts are therefore not only transliterated from the original's broad phonetic transcription into the modern Pite Saami orthography, but also slightly adapted in terms of phonology, morphology, lexicon, and syntax. For instance, the voiced dental fricative *đ* has been replaced with *r* throughout the texts (as in the above-mentioned *tjure*), and the vocalism of many forms has also been altered. First person singular and accusative forms in *-p* have a final *-v* instead, the archaic genitive suffix *-n* of nouns is removed in favour of endingless forms, and inessives in *-sne* are changed to forms in *-n*. The supine form of verbs, rare already in Halász's texts, has been replaced with the infinitive (e.g. *mannat* 'to go' pro *manatjit* 'in order to go', p. 25), and the equally uncommon relation forms of kinship terms have as substitutes their underived counterparts (e.g. *vällja* 'brother' pro *vieljap* 'the brother', p. 38). Some lexical items have also been changed, such as the loanword *släkkti-* 'slaughter' (cf. Swedish *slakta*), which has been replaced with the native synonym *njuovva-* (p. 30). Similarly, conditionals in *lulu-* 'would' and the purposive modal verb *atja-* (cf. South Saami *edtje-* 'shall') have both been replaced with the more common *gallga-* 'shall' (e.g. on p. 38); note also that *gallga-* is subject to consonant gradation in the present edition, unlike in Halász's texts where this verb has a non-gradating stem *galga-*. In a number of clauses referring to two individuals, plural forms of verbs and personal pronouns have been replaced with forms in the dual (see, for instance, p. 20). Similar additions of dual forms are found in new editions of Just Knud Qvigstad's South Saami and Lule Saami folktales (*Aarporten jih Åarjel-smaaregen soptsesh*, 1996; *Subttsasa Nordlándas*, 2009), indicating a difference in the use of the dual number in modern, standardized texts as compared to older, descriptive data for these languages.

Such instances of standardization are of course only to be expected in a book aimed to contribute to the revitalization of a critically endangered language, and the above-mentioned alterations do not change the content of the texts. In other words, folklorists can feel safe in that the present edition represents the original tales in a respectful manner. The same can also be said about the book's Swedish translations, although readers without a knowledge of Saami should be aware that the Swedish texts contain a small number of unexplained Saami terms, such as *stájnak* 'reindeer doe that has never calved' (p. 15), *bárdne* 'boy,

son', and *ájjá* 'grandfather' (p. 34). It can further be noted that several texts are given slightly different titles in the table of contents and in the book itself, e.g. *Stálo bruvdas* 'Bride of the *stállo*' on p. 5, but *Stálo bruvvda* on p. 30; the former title retains the original's old borrowing *bruvdas* 'bride' (cf. Proto-Scandinavian **brūdiz*) while the latter has a newer synonym *bruvvda* (cf. Swedish *brud*). Two minor corrections can also be made as regards the book's preface: Halász's journeys to Sweden and Norway took place in 1884, 1886, and 1891, and not only at the beginning of the 1890s as implied on p. 6; on the same page, the Hungarian title of Halász 1893 is misspelled, with a final *-ről* pro *-ből*.

This book serves as an excellent example of how research data can be returned to the community in which it was originally gathered. While Halász's 1893 publication has been freely available online for some years, its phonetic transcription and Hungarian translations are hardly accessible to the general public. In making these enticing texts readily available for a wider audience, the editors Inger Fjällås and Peter Steggo and the illustrator Stina Renberg have done a service both for the local community and for scholars interested in Saami oral tradition. I warmly recommend this charming book to any folklorist with a reading knowledge of Saami or Swedish.

Olle Kejonen
Uppsala, Sweden

Interplays of Ritual and Play

Spill med magiske sirkler. En utforsking av lek–ritual-kontinuumet. Audun Kjus, Fredrik Skott, Ida Tolgensbakk & Susanne Österlund-Pötzsch (eds.). Kungl. Gustav Adolfs Akademien för svensk folkkultur, Uppsala 2023. 280 pp.

This volume explores the complex theoretical and empirical interplays of ritual and play – two concepts that are sometimes juxtaposed as opposites and other times viewed as synonymous. The book is the result of a symposium organized in 2020, just before the onset of the pandemic, where Nordic ethnologists and folklorists discussed the intersections and differences of play and ritual. Subsequently, the editors have also organized an international conference panel on the topic, which in turn resulted in another edited volume on the same theme, in English and with other contributions. It should be noted that one of these contributions was authored by the undersigned.

In his introductory chapter, Audun Kjus provides both explanatory and exploratory insights into the research histories and challenges associated with these concepts, along with their established and contested definitions. These definitions often overlap yet also diverge significantly. Clarifying either concept definitively proves challenging, and asserting how they should relate to each other is equally complex. Kjus raises the question: Are play and ritual distinct descriptors of related yet separate phenomena, or are they better understood as diverse analytical approaches to interpreting the world?

The strategy of the volume is more aligned with the latter approach, as the essays empirically explore ritual as play, play as ritual, and sometimes situations that are understood as both simultaneously. The thirteen chapters are written in Norwegian, Danish, Swedish, and English, by Nordic and American folklorists, ethnologists, and cultural historians. To avoid thematic categorizations, the authors' contributions are published in alphabetical order. Nonetheless, recurring themes emerge, as noted by the editors, with several contributions addressing various types of annual or life celebrations, events, festivals, and sports contexts.

The first essay is by Barbro Blehr, professor of ethnology at Stockholm University. She investigates changes in the Norwegian public broadcaster NRK's yearly broadcast from the national cel-

ebrations of Constitution Day. Blehr's starting point is one which can be found in several of the essays, where rituals are defined as occasions meant to be taken seriously, whilst play instead is said to presuppose a lack of seriousness, allowing for distancing. Over the decades, the presenters' expressions have evolved from the stern-faced seriousness of the 1960s to more merriment and jocularity. Despite this shift, the playful elements still complement the serious ones, reinforcing persistent ideologies and norms. The broadcast may be more playful now, but it still leaves little room for questioning or irony.

Anne Eriksen, professor of folklore and cultural history at the University of Oslo, also focuses on longer temporal perspectives in her essay. She demonstrates how a Norwegian national park with Viking graves has, over different periods, served as an arena for rituals and/or play, for different purposes. The park was once a setting for the Norwegian nationalist socialist party's ceremonial assemblies. Later, present day neo-nazis have also celebrated their Viking heritage there in (slightly less austere) inauguration rituals for new members. Additionally, the park hosts local Constitution Day festivities, where children engage in traditional games and competitions, cheered on by adults in folk costume. Through these ritual and/or play activities, Eriksen argues, right-wing extremists as well as the celebrating children may use the same site to connect the past with the present, and the national with the local.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Swedish-Americans organized humorous drive-through *lutefisk* dinners, as restrictions made the otherwise traditional communal meal impossible. Lizette Gradén, an ethnologist from Lund University, shows in her essay how diasporic traditions and communities are maintained in Swedish America. Parodies, jokes, and humorous displays expressing a love-hate relationship with the gelatinous fish dish were an already established feature in material culture, celebrations, and parades. Ritualized play is a recurring theme in the book's essays, and Gradén shows that it is a fruitful approach for understanding migratory heritage, conflicts, and perceived threats in society, and the challenges during the pandemic.

On the stands in football stadiums, play offers supporters familiar patterns to express solidarity with their own team, antagonism between supporter groups, and between supporters and the police. In her chapter, the ethnologist Katarzyna Herd from Lund University illustrates how the ritual-like routines, repetitions, and symbols during the game make room for behaviours that would be unacceptable in another setting. The police, too, must participate in the supporters' rule-bound play and adapt to it. The supporters, on the other hand, circumvent the new legislation banning masks in the stands by dressing up in niqabs, as the law makes exceptions for religious purposes. As Herd shows, the combination of serious elements has a comic effect, as supporters and the police navigate rules and regulations, playful conflicts, and real aggression.

Anne-Sofie Hjemdahl, cultural historian from the Telemark Research Institute, studies how the Norwegian *russ* celebration (the period before high-school graduation) was described in older written sources, when the word ritual was still reserved for religious practices. Hjemdahl investigates the older texts looking for descriptions stressing play elements such as improvisation, parody or irony. The sources recurrently present the *russ* period as a necessary free zone for joyful indulgence before the young people transition to adulthood, where play elements have a central role in reproducing feelings of fellowship. Others criticize it as pointless frivolities. These tensions, Hjelmdahl shows, still prevail as the celebrations are cherished and criticized even today.

Audun Kjus, cultural historian and folklorist at Norwegian Ethnological

Research, elaborates on play elements in performative marriage proposals in the past and present. Through questionnaires and other written sources he shows how ideals and norms have both changed and varied. Straightforward or spectacular? Private or public, humorous, or romantic? Unexpected and playful elements such as lavish scenic transformations, trickery, and pranks may help the suitor adapt the ritual to suit the individual preferences of the intended spouse when posing the risky question.

The ethnologists Karin S. Lindelöf and Annie Woube from Uppsala University explore the cultural logics of extreme races in their essay, with a focus on gender and masculinity. The rules of the race are at once complex and bizarre, as participants strive to complete as many laps as possible of the race course. It winds through a hilly winter landscape and is described as a kind of playground for adults, featuring barbed wire obstacles and walls to climb. Both seriousness and playfulness thus characterize the race, where participants – mainly men – stage hypermasculinity through physical uninhibitedness, war play, and extreme physical exertion.

Common to both ritual and play is that they require participants to share knowledge and reference frames with each other. In his essay, the ethnologist Jakob Löfgren from Lund University depicts two different fandom contexts where fans of literary and pop cultural phenomena gather. Here, fandom is understood as a participatory culture created through affective play with intertextual references, including various forms of ceremonies whose solemn rationality is combined with the humour of fandom and its own – seemingly twisted – logics.

John F. Moe, senior lecturer at Ohio State University, shows how historical myths and racial injustices were addressed in the Black Lives Matter protests of 2020, by mimicking successful demonstration techniques from earlier great American protest movements. Songs, chants, and theatrical antagonism help perform political positions and opposition to structural racism and racist violence.

The tradition of newspapers publishing April Fool jokes is discussed in the essay by Caroline Nyvang, historian at the Royal Danish Library. The study spans the time from the 1980s to the present day. The April Fool jokes offer a temporary frame which alters what is possible and expected for the press to print. Here, the press is allowed to play with the truth (or was, before fake news became an issue), to formulate self-criticism and political satire, while simultaneously highlighting contemporary anxieties among readers. These anxieties often turn into laughter when the joke is revealed.

Tora Wall, folklorist at Åbo Akademi University, examines Swedish tourist attractions where forests are turned into ritualized spaces where children can interact with actors dressed as figures and beings from folklore and popular culture and participate in supposedly magical rituals. Wall highlights the proximity between ritual, educational play, and theatre as the boundaries of interactive play become apparent when the actors sometimes ignore the children's improvisations and guide them to the predetermined end, and to convey moral lessons about the importance of respecting nature, others, and oneself.

Susanne Österlund-Pötzsch, folklorist at Åbo Akademi University, applies a performance perspective to the roles of movement and walking in various games and rituals, in order to understand the relationships between the two concepts. Ritualization and playfulness are understood as modes of communication. In marches and parades, carnivals, calendar-based visiting rituals where costumed participants walk from door to door, pilgrimages, GPS-based treasure hunts, and magical rituals, walking and movement allow participants to enter different realms of meaning with widely varying moods and rhythms.

The many inspiring, entertaining and thought-provoking contributions in this

volume clearly demonstrate the benefits of combining the concepts of ritual and play, as they highlight different aspects, behaviours, and modes. Some phenomena appear to become truly comprehensible only when looked at through both lenses simultaneously. This reveals the paradox of the volume: while the introduction focuses on the difficulties of defining the pair of concepts, the authors provide brief and distinct definitions and delineations. These vary, certainly, and while some are close to emic definitions, others are more theoretical. Some essays emphasize the similarities between the two concepts, others treat them more as opposites or as poles on a continuum where the studied phenomena move back and forth.

Yet some sort of consensus is apparent. Throughout the book, ritual is generally used to describe repetitive and regulated events and actions, often depending on participants accepting and confirming expressed or underlying ideologies. Play, on the other hand, is typically used to identify a humorous distancing from events, or to describe spontaneity, excess, and particular attitudes or feelings such as mirth or irony. Therefore, I would have appreciated a concluding and comprehensive discussion to complement the exploratory introduction. Such a discussion could clarify how the concepts of ritual and play are defined and applied in the various essays, and investigate the joint contributions of the authors, to deepen the readers' understandings of the meanings and challenges of the two concepts. This would have further enhanced the volume's contribution to the field, especially for students but also for researchers working with the potentials and complexities of the play-ritual continuum.

Hanna Jansson
Stockholm, Sweden

Cultural Research in the Margin

Sven-Erik Klinkmann: Skatan och pingvinen. Att kulturforska i marginalen. Nostos, Vasa 2023. 154 pp. Ill.

"Doing Cultural Research in the Margin", the subtitle of Sven-Erik Klinkmann's book "The Magpie and the Penguin", illustrates his intention with the texts included in the book. It consists of short essays, most of which have been previously published, although in contexts that are not easily accessible to all readers, and which can therefore be described as having been on the margins of his scholarly production. Now Klinkmann has selected a number of texts that he has published in different contexts and assembled them in a charming little book that is easy to carry around and easy to read thanks to the brevity of the chapters.

The introduction contains the manifesto of the book – an examination of the short comment as a genre. Many of the texts in the book were originally comments that Klinkmann wrote on Peter Englund's blog during the first decade of the twenty-first century. Inspired by the historian Englund's thoughts and reflections on various topics, Klinkmann picked up the thread and put forward his own arguments in Englund's forum, for example in Englund's blog in 2008: "All knowledge begins with a question." Although Klinkmann does not go on to provide the reader with clearly formulated questions, it is obvious that it is his pondering on different problem formulations and his constant curiosity that have led to the texts presented in the book. The objects that have aroused his curiosity include his personal memories, central among which are various pop-culture phenomena and places and experiences from his upbringing in Swedish-speaking Finland. He describes, for example, how his interest in film as a youth led to a desire to own a "gangster Citroën", a car model that often appeared in the genre of gangster films. Here Klinkmann asks himself

about the paths followed by his own associations: was it a matter of idolization, immersion, or identification, and was it perhaps here that he acquired the urge to do research on culture? This passage is typical of the texts in the book. Klinkmann's writing style is associative and explorative, while at the same time sharing with readers his insights from a rich research life where no phenomenon has been too small or too peripheral to serve as a basis for questions to which answers can be formulated in a wide range of different ways.

The texts are sorted according to four themes – *Time*, *Media*, *Film*, and *Music and A Good Many Other Things*. These are framed by a lengthy introduction and conclusion, the latter titled "Marginal Birds". Here we get the key to the two birds in the title of the book, as well as the author's own explanation for the subtitle. The penguin, made of cloth as a gift to Klinkmann from his wife, stands on his desk, like a silent constant in the flow of words that pass through the computer next to it, reminding us that not everything is in motion. The magpie is depicted in a painting by Pieter Brueghel the Elder, *The Hunters in the Snow*, which is the starting point for the first text in the book on the theme of *Time*. In this text, the reader follows Klinkmann's meandering associations, which are based on Brueghel's motif. This associative style of writing could have led off on a winding road towards an unclear goal, but in the conclusion Klinkmann elegantly ties together all the short texts about phenomena large and small. He himself uses the term "word salad" to describe the result of an act of writing that distances itself from the phenomena that actually prompted the text, but the book ends, not with a word salad but with creative conclusions arising from several decades of research and writing.

In this small-format book, Sven-Erik Klinkmann supplies us with many diverse aspects of what cultural research is and can be. In the title of the book he has placed himself on the margins, but at the same time the book contains many discussions of crucial importance for research on culture, not least the observation of the importance of personal experience as a tool steering the work process. It is a defence of the conviction that observing small, seemingly marginal phenomena in everyday life and in popular culture can be of great importance both for the researching individual and for scholarship. A silent cloth penguin beside the computer and a small detail in the shape of a magpie in a painting have contributed to the inventive and creative texts in this book.

Karin Gustavsson
Lund, Sweden

Houses of Prayer in Northern Sweden

Där möten äger rum. Om bönhusen i övre Norrland. Daniel Lindmark (ed.). Artos & Norma bokförlag, Skellefteå 2023. 258 pp. Ill.

Within the Nordic and interdisciplinary scholarly network Nordveck, which investigates religious revival movements in the Nordic countries and was established in 1999, the historian Daniel Lindmark from Umeå holds a prominent place. His research has focused on the northernmost parts of Norrland, Sweden, which have borne the stamp of various revival movements since the late nineteenth century. In the volume reviewed here, edited by Lindmark, the many houses of prayer and their history up until the present day are at the forefront.

In the vast areas of northernmost Norrland that are far away from the churches, the houses of prayer that popped up in basically every village became the places to gather for religious and also secular activities. Many villages had more than one house of prayer representing different religious orien-

tations. "House of prayer" is the most common designation, but sometimes the terms "place of worship" or "mission church" were used. The volume is number five in the series *Religion in Norrland* published by the research network REHN.

The work of the authors in the volume is based on material collected by the county administrative boards and the county museums in Västerbotten and Norrbotten, Sweden. Many records kept during the construction processes are still available. Several answers to the questionnaire on "Ecclesiastical Folklore Research", in the archives of ecclesiastical history at the University of Lund (abbreviated LUKA) have provided valuable information about the religious function of the houses of prayer. The photographer and author Sune Jonsson carried out a comprehensive photo documentation of these houses of prayer while they were still in use.

In the nineteenth century the layman-led gatherings, called village prayers, took place in private homes. Later, school buildings, established in the late nineteenth century and around the turn of the century became not just places for education but were also used for religious and secular gatherings. They were mainly owned by the village community and not by the church congregations. Among other things, the early morning service on Christmas Day was introduced in the new schools. Itinerant lay preachers usually held the services.

The next step was the construction of prayer houses. This activity peaked around the 1920s and 1930s. Then there was a successive decline during the 1940s and 1950s. The West Laestadian prayer houses were built somewhat later and had their heyday in the mid-twentieth century.

In some cases schools built by the village community could be transformed into prayer houses, not least those belonging to the Swedish Evangelical Mission (Evangeliska Fosterlands-Stiftelsen, EFS). This transformation into a religious association could sometimes lead to discussions and conflicts between different ideas as to the real ownership of these houses of prayer. The historian Kjell Söderberg analyses one such conflict in 1947 and 1951 regarding the ownership of the Jävre house of prayer. This was built in 1922 by an association with 58 members. In both 1947 and 1951 the EFS youth chapter, DUF, wanted to assume the ownership of this house of prayer. The story behind this was that a revival movement had emerged in the village, but the house-of-prayer association strongly opposed its takeover by the DUF, so this could not be carried out.

The new houses of prayer, like the schools previously, were used not just for religious but also secular purposes. Lindmark has conducted a special study of this, focusing on the Östanbäck house of prayer where an abundance of source material is preserved. Secular associations were allowed to use the smaller hall while the larger hall mostly was reserved for religious gatherings. In this way there was a sacralization of the larger hall in a manner not previously seen. The new houses of prayer were owned by economic associations where all villagers were able to subscribe to shares and become members.

Lately there has been a liquidation of the houses of prayer as they have largely become private property or been demolished. Stefan Delfgren, a scholar in the history of ideas, has created a digital map, DigiBön, digibon.humlab.umu.se, showing these houses of prayer in the diocese of Luleå, covering Västerbotten, Norrbotten and Lappland. The idea is to make it possible, with the aid of this map, to undertake more in-depth studies of the religious geography of the area. There is a particular concentration of the houses of prayer in the coastal area of upper Norrland, and less so in the vast inner parts of the area. The EFS has its stronghold in the coastal areas, while Laestadian movements are mainly found

in the northern parts of the diocese. The Pentecostalist movement and the Swedish Mission Covenant Church, SMF, are mostly found in the inner areas of Norrland.

To preserve houses of prayer as a cultural heritage, the Västerbotten county board declared the house of prayer in Misenträsk a cultural heritage building in 2016. It was built in 1936 and is located in the parish of Jörn, Skellefteå municipality.

The religious historian Eva Hellman has focused the life in currently used houses of prayer among West Laestadians with their religious centre in the Gällivare house of prayer. Today there are only two houses of prayer still operating in this area: those in Gällivare and Dokkas. The remaining ones have been either demolished or sold. The Sunday meeting among West Laestadians is called prayer. Nowadays, lay preachers also administer the sacraments of baptism and communion, as well as being the key power, which means that they can pronounce forgiveness for the sins of human beings. Hellman has carried out interviews and made observations at the religious gatherings, but does not mention the religious credo of the members of the congregation. The external structure of the organization has been central to her investigation.

The church historian Daniel Strömmer has studied places of worship in Nordmaling, a municipality with several free churches. Many of those were active up until the present century. There has since been a significant decline and many places of worship have been sold. There has been a centralization of the activities and this has caused many places of worship to become superfluous.

The present volume highlights in a comprehensive way the development, during the twentieth and into the twenty-first century, within the many different religious movements in the upper parts of Norrland that were previously only investigated to a minor extent. A particularly interesting aspect is the close relationship between schools and religious associations and the connection between religious and secular gatherings in the same school or house of prayer building. The book reads easily and has a sound empirical base as regards both archival materials and fieldwork. Everyone with an interest in religious life over the last hundred years should enjoy reading this book.

Anders Gustavsson
Oslo University, Norway/
Henån, Sweden

Merrymaking in Nineteenth-Century Stockholm

Christina Mattsson & Bengt af Klintberg: Den hostande muntergöken. Litteratören och litografen Theodor Öberg (1820–1860). Appell förlag, Stockholm 2024. 375 pp.

Theodor Öberg is a scarcely recognized Swedish writer today, but he once was a very productive author and publisher. Now a thorough and very detailed book written by the folklorists Christina Mattsson and Bengt af Klintberg rectifies this lack of knowledge. It is worthwhile asking both why Öberg was so forgotten and why two folklorists should bring him to the fore again.

Theodor Öberg was born in Stockholm in 1820. He received a good education in the printing and publishing of books and several kinds of other printed matter. He also practised in Helsinki. This book, "The Coughing Joker: The Litterateur and Lithographer Theodor Öberg (1820–1860)", provides readers with descriptions of backgrounds and contexts, and, consequently, Stockholm's streets and markets in Öberg's time appear in close-up detail, which is important because this was where he lived, acted and found both his readers and the origins of his texts. In his time,

a man of the letterpress, a typographer, had a respected metier as a middle-class member of society, for typesetting could require a knowledge of many languages and a broad general education. The nowadays more or less forgotten concept of *konstförvant* – the typesetter as practitioner of an art – is the subject of a close analysis at the beginning of the book.

Öberg inherited, owned, bought, and sold printing presses. He was well acquainted with the entire process of publishing printed matter of very different kinds, writing texts, translating them, illustrating them as a lithographer, printing them and distributing them. He also had a big family who needed food and shelter. Moreover, he was extremely well acquainted with homosocial associations around Stockholm, such as the artists' guild Konstnärsgillet and the club Februarigubbarna. Öberg had all the prerequisites to lead a good life. However, these networks were also his fate. In fifteen chapters we see how a person who started off with good prospects died in the deepest misery. This happened in 1860, when he was only forty years old.

The study by Mattsson and af Klintberg presents us with an overview of Öberg's production. At his publishing house he printed forms and advertising fliers, but he is more interesting as a publisher of all kinds of small books. For instance, already in the early nineteenth century he printed children's books. Most of the texts were translations and adaptations from German models and folklore, with illustrations added by Öberg, and today we learn quite a lot about circumstances for young bourgeois Swedes at that time. However, the texts were far from being moral sermons. Rather, they taught their readers, in a humorous way, how to lead a pleasant and useful life. Some of the texts can even be regarded as forerunners of the later girls' book. Mattsson and af Klintberg have traced all the originals and introduce their readers to the content of them. This was one of their main targets.

The structure of most of the remaining chapters is similar. Handbooks on all kinds of topics constituted a large share of Öberg's production. These "indispensable" booklets were compilations of other works, generally German. Here too, Mattsson and af Klintberg have searched for the originals and present them more or less in detail. This chapter makes for amusing reading, as we can see what Öberg found "indispensable", for instance, how to colour drawings, how to farm pigeons, or how to celebrate Christmas in the proper way, among other things, with rhymes and plays, and, most important, handbooks for early-rising bachelors.

Three chapters concern songs, sometimes with musical notation. The same structure with a text and its original occurs again. However, it is worth mentioning that Öberg grouped the songs according to their genres, such as student songs, drinking songs, musical larks, children's songs, and lullabies. And again, there are songs for those poor bachelors. Many of the songs are from Filikromen, a well-known drunken street musician, and one of the chapters is devoted to his repertoire.

The last category to be mentioned is the series of literary and/or comical calendars. Some of them were illustrated and the content consisted of historical reports, anecdotes, comical texts and quite a lot of risqué stories. This genre reflected Öberg's merrymaking life – he was even called the coughing joker – and his humorous character when he looked for material to publish in taverns, in printed collections from Germany and France, and among the people around him. Perhaps, he even made virtue of necessity knowing well that this kind of publication gave a good income.

This book can be read in several ways. Firstly, it introduces a detailed description of Stockholm and the life of bachelors and middle- and low-class inhabitants, i.e., the part of the Swedish population to which most people belong. This is probably the reason why

Öberg was forgotten. He did not belong to those academics and upper-class Swedes who had a romantic, nationalistic view of folk culture. Secondly, Mattsson and af Klintberg succeed in demonstrating that classic folklore was found among this audience. This clashes with the contemporary ideal of folklore that was regarded as something that carried national, bourgeois value. The folklorists Mattsson and af Klintberg are able to see this because of their training. Thirdly, and perhaps the most important reason for the positive quality of this book to non-Stockholmers, is the richly illustrated descriptions of the cultural context and the historical milieu that comes to the fore in every chapter. Certainly, we often encounter guesses when the authors want to explain something but this is quite frequent in folklore studies due to the lack of primary material furnished with names, place names and dates. However, we learn something about the history of printing, about the publication of cheap books, about lithography, about lithographical printers, about colour prints, about caricatures, not to mention the cultural background to different genres of books, such as the ABC-books. Moreover, Mattsson and af Klintberg introduce us to the phenomenon of using pseudonyms. Öberg adopted nineteen different names when he published his books. Only when he worked as a lithographer and illustrated his product did he use his real name.

Öberg died when he was quite young. He died of tuberculosis and alcohol, but he had time enough to plan for his wife and their children although they had not lived together for many years. He arranged for her to start a gingerbread bakery. Perhaps he was a man who led a difficult life of temptations and illness, but he left several kinds of popular culture behind, from "indispensable" advice in important situations to the very popular gingerbread.

Ulrika Wolf-Knuts
Åbo, Finland

Religious Worldview in the Seventeenth Century

Hanne Sanders: En värld med Gud. Religiös världsbild och kyrka i dansk-svenska Lunds stift 1650–1720. Makadam förlag, Göteborg/Stockholm 2024. 336 pp.

The Danish-born historian Hanne Sanders has primarily been working in Sweden and since the 1990s has concentrated on cultural-historical studies of religion and church in early modern time. Special focus has been on the Skåne county that, as part of the Treaty of Roskilde in 1658, went from being part of Denmark to become Swedish territory. Her research was carried out at the University of Lund as part of the Centre for Denmark Studies founded in 1998 and in 2014 renamed Centre for Öresund Studies. The book reviewed here was published as number 43 in the series of this Centre. The translation from Danish to Swedish is by Madeleine Björkegren Bergström.

Sanders has been working on this book over a long period, using some previously published essays to create a coherent unity. Her emphasis is on the diocese of Lund, covering Skåne and Blekinge in 1650–1720. To back up her arguments, Sanders has perused a substantial amount of archival material. Cathedral chapter records and published memoirs of ministers have been important sources.

At the front and centre is the research issue of what happened in Skåne regarding the church after the transition to Sweden in 1658. Earlier historical research has claimed that Sweden immediately started a forceful "Swedification" process. Sanders, however, is of the opinion that this was a slow process. Up until 1681, the diocese of Lund was allowed to keep its Danish laws, privileges, parish registers and church language. Danish ministers stayed in Skåne to a large extent. This was true for 88 out of 94 Danish ministers who were born outside Skåne. It took some time before Swedish ministers moved to Skåne on

any scale. Ministers born in Skåne were instead in the majority, and the percentage of Skåne-born ministers increased after 1658. Considering this background, Sanders talks about a "Skånefication" process as opposed to a "Swedification" process that did not start until 1681. In 1686, Swedish Ecclesiastical Law was also implemented in the diocese of Lund, strengthening the authority of the state over the church.

Sanders pursues the thesis that national belonging was not very important during this period. What was important to the church was that there was a Christian king to whom bishops and ministers were loyal. Thus, it did not matter much if the king was Danish or Swedish. The crucial thing was that, through the grace of God, peace had been established in 1658 after several years of war. This position adopted by the church meant that Skåne's transition to Sweden was not as dramatic as claimed by earlier research.

Sanders distinguishes between times of war and times of peace. In times of war loyalty to the Swedish king was important, but in times of peace it was not so important. Swedish ministers arrived in Skåne during times of war in the 1660s and 1670s. They were mainly chaplains. Danish ministers were only appointed in times of peace. In Skåne in 1675 there were 118 ministers born in Skåne, 59 Danish ministers, and 6 Swedish ministers. Fifteen of the Danish ministers fled to Denmark during the war in Skåne 1676–1679. During the period 1680–1685, when the time of "Swedification" started, 60 per cent of the appointed ministers were born in Skåne, 24 per cent were Swedish and 9 per cent were Danish. Thus, there were still some Danish ministers left in Sweden. The University of Lund, inaugurated in 1668, became important for the recruitment of ministers born in Skåne. They no longer needed to go to the University of Copenhagen to study, as they had previously done. Sanders opposes the previous opinion among historians that the University of Lund was founded because the Swedish government wanted to "Swedify" and suppress Skåne. On the contrary, it was the Skåne-born inhabitants themselves that wanted this university. According to Sanders, this is a clear expression of what she would call "the Skånefication period" after 1658.

Sanders feels that earlier historical research did not pay attention to the religious worldview that she focuses on. The Lutheran doctrine of the trinity was foundational, and so the important relation was to God, not to the nation. Within the trinitarian doctrine, equal importance was ascribed to political status, the spiritual status of the ministers, and the household family status. The worldview bore the stamp of a belief in supernatural entities, "a religious-magic view of the world". This was before secularization when faith, according to Sanders, became individual as opposed to previously being collective.

In a chapter about church buildings, Sanders interprets the demolition of churches in the twentieth century as a result of a pre-modern notion that all inhabitants should fit into the church to be able to achieve a relation to God, who was most important in life. It was not until the present century that a modern, secularized notion emerged where churches were considered cultural heritage. They were supposed to be protected because they bore witness to a bygone time and were not primarily viewed as religious structures.

In cathedral chapter records from Lund, Sanders reviews cases of betrothal, marriage, and divorce, that were handled by the chapters in Sweden up until the constitutional law in 1734. Following the enactment of the Reformation, marriages and betrothals could only be suspended after permission from the chapter. Before a separation could be established, an agreement process between the woman and the man had to take place. In particular, Sanders has studied 82 marriage cases at the Lund chapter in

1719. Of these, 34 were divorce cases, and 20 cases were about the annulment of betrothal. Of the 34 divorce cases, 14 were about women filing have their marriages annulled because they had not heard from their husbands that had been away in the wars for a long time. They wanted permission to remarry. The number of applications for divorce by women and the number granted increased markedly in wartime. Another reason filing for divorce was accusations of infidelity. In Lund there were nine such cases in 1719, and in six of these cases divorce was granted, only one case was dismissed and the two remaining cases were sent for further investigation.

Regarding marital cases, Sanders opposes previous notions among gender scientists that women were oppressed by the chapters. Instead, she claims that the chapters sided with the women in their situation of need when filing for divorce or for suspension of betrothal. She states: "As said, it is hard to see how the chapter repressed women in any way. In cases of abandonment, help is offered for the women to be able to marry once again." The focus on household status caused the chapter in Lund to care about the establishment of sustainable marriages. It would therefore discourage forced marriages, something that could easily happen to women.

Pronounced negative statements about women, on the other hand, are found in the reports from officers when issuing permission for soldiers to marry. Sanders points out that "in all the material that I have gone through, I did not find any such condescending and sexually negative views on women like those in these officers' letters. This is nowhere to be found in the chapters" (p. 257). She goes on to say that "the chapter was supposed to work for the man's and the woman's right to decide, and in particular against misogynistic statements from military leaders" (p. 263).

Finally: Sanders has in a significant way introduced perspectives on church history to the research discipline of history that she represents. She does not cover the popular level about what happened out in the parishes, however. Instead her focus is on what she calls the intermediate level regarding the significance of the cathedral chapters. This is where she has done impressive work. A prominent feature is her diligent work in presenting her theses, contrasting them to previous historical research. She seeks to show that she is presenting novel findings and interpretations, and in doing so she can sometimes be over-explicit.

In conclusion, this investigation has the potential to become a standard work informing about ecclesiastical conditions in Skåne during the decades right after it became part of Sweden in 1658.

Anders Gustavsson
Oslo University, Norway/
Henån, Sweden

Interdisciplinary Approaches to the Viking Age

Daniel Sävborg (ed.): Crossing Disciplinary Boundaries in Studies of the Viking Age. NAW 4. Brepols, Turnhout 2022. 365 pp. Ill.

Crossing Disciplinary Boundaries in Studies of the Viking Age comprises eleven articles, focusing on the use of Old Norse textual sources in conjunction with other disciplines, such as archaeology, history and history of religion. In the introduction, Sävborg is clear about the "focus on *inter*disciplinarity, and especially its controversial aspects, with the intention of shedding light on the problems and searching for solutions" (p. 10).

Frog's article is a critical discussion of interdisciplinarity. After a nuanced definition of terms, the chapter pivots into a historical synopsis of interdisciplinarity. Frog manoeuvres complex topics such as the rise of group research projects and the compartmentalization of research fields. Underlining that col-

laboration is fluid, Frog notes that "[m]aintaining diversity is a vital part of the development of knowledge because it does not simply emerge in a 'discipline' but among researchers, and it is tested, refined, developed, or discarded through the discussions with other scholars and groups distributed through the methods" (p. 52). Yet, the discussion surrounding the term "discipline ideology", introduced only on p. 61, might be considered too modest.

Elena Melnikova's study concerns the Invitation Legend of Varangian princes by Finnic and East Slavic peoples with the *Primary Chronicle* and the *First Novgorod Chronicle* serving as sources. Melnikova supplements them with linguistic, folkloristic, archaeological and numismatic evidence. Since written texts may provide unverifiable and incomplete information when taken solely by themselves, Melnikova demonstrates the need for expanded perspectives. However, the contribution appears to use a rather loose understanding of the term "Viking" as indicated by statements such as "Christianity had not reached Eastern Europe to mollify the Vikings' temper" (p. 87).

Tatjana N. Jackson focuses on textual accounts of the eastern settlements of Aldeigjuborg, Hólmgarðr and Pallteskia, investigating their relationship with archaeological data. For instance, Eiríkr Hákonarson *Hlaðajarl* is described as besieging Aldeigjuborg in *c*. 997, incinerating the city's ramparts. Traces of immolated timber which could be dendrochronologically dated to the tenth century were found in archaeological digs. Jackson thus concurs with the earlier notion that such traces could have resulted from this siege, leading the author to conclude that "[t]he close symbiosis and mutual benefit of saga studies and archaeological excavations is evident" (p. 106).

Matthias Egeler's article combines literary studies, cartography and toponymy. The chapter focuses on *Landnámabók*, relating events around present-day Hvolsvöllur, Iceland. A conflict between Dufþakr and Stórólfr results in the physical creation of Qldugróf ('Wave's Pit'). Egeler negotiates the geography of Hvolsvöllur, reflecting on the opaque origins of its toponymic evidence and characters named in the story. Egeler connects the discussion of Qldugróf and its potential relevance to the creators and recipients of the story with the notion of "home". Ultimately, according to Egeler, toponymic evidence need not reflect historical reality but is rather a device Icelanders used to create a sense of belonging in their new "home" (p. 122).

Leszek Gardeła probes whether swords in Viking Age female graves served as agents of symbolic empowerment or ritual devices. Gardeła focuses on three sites in particular, the Norwegian graves from Nordre Kjølen, Hedmark and Aunvoll, Nord-Trøndelag, and Grave Bj 581 from Uppland, Sweden. In view of a more "holistic" portfolio of graves, it would have been helpful if Gardeła had mentioned why no female graves from Denmark were considered, as it could have made for an interesting point for discussion if such graves with swords were lacking. Gardeła urges caution when interpreting such graves as literary sources portray women wielding swords. Since Viking Age graves could be seen as mortuary dramas influenced by various societal elements of the time, any attempt to reach decisive conclusions is a challenge.

William Pidzamecky tackles the question of how historically accurate descriptions of ships in *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar* are. Pidzamecky investigates statements in the saga relating to three types of nautical vehicles: (1) parts of ships; (2) typology of Viking-type ships and; (3) typology of medieval-type ships. Concluding this thorough investigation, Pidzamecky notes that "this saga has a high level of historicity with regards to ship descriptions and hence is a valuable historical source for those studying Viking Age ships" (p. 180).

Yet, it remains questionable whether these detailed descriptions emerge from "[t]he opportunities the author had to see the ships firsthand throughout [their] life" (p. 180), considering the challenge of determining when especially Viking Age ship types went out of use and whether any saga "author(s)" would have had firsthand information on them.

Klas Wikström af Edholm assesses the challenging matter of human sacrifice in Late Iron Age Scandinavia. This interdisciplinary case study combines archaeology and history of religion, since Edholm understands the two disciplines as mutually supportive. Edholm notes that, while archaeology can unearth evidence of ritual killings, history of religion can investigate *intentions* of "sacrifice", such as, who the dedicatee is. Edholm discusses mixed human and animal archaeological sites in Sweden, highlighting that most of the studied human remains are of young men. Cautiously understanding such men to be prisoners of war based on accompanying martial artefacts, Edholm discusses Classical and Old Norse texts disclosing the killing of captives. Edholm expresses that one has to consider chronological and regional variations when discussing the practice of human sacrifice in Late Iron Age Scandinavia.

Olof Sundqvist seeks to establish the *erfi*-feast as a pre-Christian regal initiation ritual. Drawing from diverse sources, Sundqvist crafts a twofold argument: (1) the Viking Age *erfi*-feast represents the inauguration of a new ruler, potentially a *rite de passage*; and (2) the initiate required specific (genealogical, religious, mythic) knowledge. The problem lies with such assumptions being rather hypothetical due to the issues surrounding the reconstruction of pre-Christian rituals precisely because of the broad variety of evidence taken from differing scholarly disciplines. Being acutely aware of this issue, the author nonetheless illustrates the hints about the actuality of the *erfi*-feast as an inauguration ritual for pre-Christian royalty.

Andreas Nordberg tackles the complex question of the usefulness of the term "religion" when dealing with spiritual phenomena in Viking Age Scandinavia. Nordberg navigates various methodological and terminological pitfalls of defining and applying "religion" in this context, stressing the importance of *lived* religion. Maintaining that any perceived homogeneity of Old Nordic religion should be considered an illusion, Nordberg contemplates the usefulness of the emic term *siðr* instead of "religion". While Nordberg accentuates the usefulness of "religion" to be considered a part of *siðr* when understanding "religion" as a *lived* concept, he concludes that the study of religion in pre-Christian Scandinavia is ultimately a "joint venture" due to the "great variety of sources and methods" (p. 270).

Annette Lassen's study is twofold. Lassen considers the myths of the origin of the Skaldic Mead and Þórr's journey to Útgarða-Loki. Lassen reasons that, while some myths might predate Christianity, their portrayal cannot direct their reconstruction, due to authorial interference and the random loss of texts. Lassen's verdict is that they represent interesting study subjects as thirteenth-century texts. The piece then switches to a comparative discussion of textual descriptions of Ragnarr *loðbrók*. Various historical accounts from the ninth-century North Sea region are compared with later Old Norse narratives. Lassen manages to underline the instability and variability of written accounts, since "the indicators point towards a flux of changeable tales, and never towards a single canonical version" (p. 290).

Henrik Janson takes a critical stance on interdisciplinarity in Old Norse Studies, stressing that history as a discipline is frequently overlooked. The work provides a *tour d'horizon* of the history of science of reconstructing Old Norse religion. Beginning in the early nineteenth

century, Janson does not shy away from uncomfortable discussions about the heavily politically charged research conducted by, e.g. Rudolf Kjellén and Otto Höfler, and how such perspectives bled into contemporary scholarship. While stating that this does not "imply a conscious ideological or political connection between scholars of today and the scholars of the past" (p. 342), Janson cites an ahistorical methodology as the root for the absence of history in many interdisciplinary studies on pre-Christian Scandinavian religion. Urging for the discussion to focus "on what can actually be observed" (p. 342), Janson somewhat wistfully concludes that studies in Old Norse religion have hitherto failed in this regard.

While some scholars might take issue with certain aspects discussed in this volume, such as the marriage of textual studies and archaeology, *Crossing Disciplinary Boundaries in Studies of the Viking Age* represents a valuable contribution to the field of Old Norse Studies and could become a foundation for future interdisciplinary studies, providing numerous fruitful cross-disciplinary exemplary studies to emulate. One can conclude that the present volume succeeded in its stated aim of "gaining new knowledge on the basis of genuine interdisciplinary combinations" (p. 25).

Felix Lummer
Reykjavík, Iceland

New Light on Oral Formulas?
New Light on Formulas in Oral Poetry and Prose. Daniel Sävborg & Bernt Ø. Thorvaldsen (eds.). Brepols, Turnhout 2023. 368 pp. Ill.

Once upon a time *oral formulaic theory* was introduced offering a new and inspiring approach to traditional poetry in general as well as to Homeric studies. In medieval scholarship the impact was important in the 1960s, but soon it lost some of its relevance. The present book represents an attempt not only to return to oral formulaic theory as it was originally introduced, but also to widen the application of formulaic studies to oral or oral-derived material, not only in metrical form but also in prose. This widened understanding of formulas will be central to the following discussion.

The book consists of fourteen chapters with rather varied approaches to formulas, as oral or oral-derived, but also in some cases without relating at all to orality. It is, therefore, not always easy to keep in mind the overall aim of the book. One definition that appears numerous times in almost all of the chapters of the book is the one provided by Parry: "a group of words which is regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given essential idea". But many of the chapters treat prose texts and recurrent phrases that have nothing to do with either metrics or orality, sometimes to the extent that they seem to have nothing in common with any earlier concept of (oral) formulas. This leads the editors as well as some of the authors to turn to ideas of "oral-derived texts" which can cover almost any text from the Middle Ages as long as you accept the premises of orality (are Latin metrical texts from the Middle Ages oral-derived?). It does not help that the wide definition of the concept can also be applied to the poetry of Goethe, prose by Marcel Proust as well as songs by Bob Dylan. So, what is left for those of us that are not engaged in formulaic studies?

The editors do conclude that Norse traditions are difficult as there is no extant oral material to study. But this does not lead to despair. They continue uninhibited by this difficulty, stating that: "The interplay between the oral and written forms is more complex than any dichotomy justifies, and in contemporary scholarship this opens up a range of new approaches to the older material" (pp. 7–8).

But the older material they are referring to is still written and the conditions

for its textualization are not all that clear; the oral culture and tradition are still taken for granted. It is, therefore, not too far-fetched to see the reasoning as somewhat circular. This has implications when the discussion turns to eddic poetry, which in the circular reasoning must represent something reminding us of oral poetry. But a first question is whether this poetry really is structured by formulas. Such a conclusion, however, cannot be sustained with any certainty, as what appears as formulaic has only few occurrences where it can clearly be considered part of structuring the poem. And further, what is meant by references to tradition? It would, I think, be of great value if our thinking about "oral" rather operated with a concept of *tradition* for everything before the textualization, i.e. the forming of the written text, where the idea of a text with lines and stanzas is introduced only regarding the extant written poems. Tradition would then be the silence of oral performances independent of the written word of medieval scribes. In a first step this would of course lead to the sad loss of pre-Christian ("pagan") oral poems. With this line of thinking we would also be closed off from the oral poetics allegedly forming part of the tradition. From this point of view the formulas spread unevenly in the eddic poems could possibly be "references to tradition", but it would still be references to a rather quiet tradition.

In some cases, it could be suggested that the editors take honour for something that is perhaps not their own research results. A good example of this is the following passage: "Daniel Sävborg has analysed several formulas in the saga literature, pointing to the fact that they are often charged with meaning and their correct interpretation is necessary for understanding the behaviour and reactions of characters and plot development, and that a reading based only on the literal surface results in an incorrect interpretation of sagas and saga episodes" (p. 9).

It is one thing that Sävborg is perhaps the first to use the *formula* concept in his analysis of the saga texts, but to claim the ownership of understanding that phrases in the saga texts are "charged with meaning" is rather to stretch it a bit too far. It has long been part of the basic training for saga scholars to analyse recurrent phrases as being important for the understanding of the saga texts, and this to an extent that it hardly needs to be exemplified. It could also be interesting to know who it is that determines what the "correct" interpretation should be. Interpretation, as is well known, is a hermeneutic occupation where new interpretations are available with new insights in an ongoing process. The claim of a "correct interpretation" appears to demand that other scholars accept some kind of authority that does not really apply to humanistic scholarship. And even more astonishing is the claim that reading of the saga text "only on the literal surface" (who in our field of scholarship would claim to do this?) leads to "an incorrect interpretation". And again, who is to judge between correct and incorrect interpretations? And should these "correct" interpretations be understood as absolute?

In a similar vein the first article after the introduction, written by Frog, makes claims to fame that are rather pretentious. After a discussion of traditional scholarship on oral formulas Frog makes a distinction between a broader field of formula studies and the more limited oral-formulaic theory. He states: "Although Lord's *magnum opus* is now quite dated, it has never been superseded as a central point of entry into this branch of research, although now *Weathered Words* (2022) will help to fill this gap, along with the present book" (pp. 20–21).

It is not hard to agree with Frog that Lord's book today is perhaps mostly interesting as representative of an earlier stage in formulaic scholarship, but the claim that the collection of essays from 2022 edited by Frog himself and

the book under review here would "fill the gap" is rather presumptuous.

Frog's chapter presents a general introduction to formulas and possible definitions of this phenomenon. He states his aim as offering a "general perspective on the issue of choosing, adapting, or creating a formula definition" (p. 18). The resulting chapter is a mixture of didactics reminiscent of lectures on a course for master students in formulaic theory and method and an attempt to open a discussion on the possibilities of the concept of formulas. This mixture is not always successful as on the one hand the didactic tone sometimes become rather patronizing while on the other hand the scholarly approach to formulaic theory and method appears rather pretentious. It is also difficult to see which reader Frog is reaching out to with his chapter: the master student in class or the scholar interested in the state of the art in formula studies.

In his chapter, Stephen A. Mitchell introduces the traditional concepts of *collocations* and *idioms* in relation to *prose formulas*. He provides definitions for these concepts, stating e.g. that collocations often are referred to as "conventionalised expressions" (p. 63) including "idioms, proverbial expressions, and other patterned utterances" (p. 63). Mitchell, however, distinguishes between collocations, idioms and formulas, without providing any definition of how formulas are different from the two first mentioned. He concludes that "the border between the groups is not always clear" (p. 64). Nevertheless, he provides a discussion of how idioms and collocations may be distinguished. From this he moves on to the third category of *prose formulas*, which, he claims, differs from the two previous categories. Perhaps it is significative that the rest of the chapter operates with the concepts *collocations* and *idioms*, as the *prose formula* does not really add anything more than just another concept.

A different approach to formulas is represented by Slavica and Miloš Ranković in their chapter on a "reading practice that traces networks of formulas in traditional literature" (p. 81). The authors present a thorough discussion of what constitutes a formula and a theoretical approach to the phenomenon, this leading up to their own definition of a formula: "A formula is an evolving habit of composition and reception – a unit of poetic or narrative inheritance" (p. 94). It is not clear whether "narrative" here would involve also the conventional phrases of the medieval law texts, but the definition is otherwise general enough to cover most phrases that appear in medieval (and other, not only traditional) poetry and prose narratives. The question could yet again be, however, whether the concept of *formula* brings any new aspects into the discussion of conventional phrases that was initiated already in the nineteenth century. And the authors themselves do approach this question, asking whether the theoretical implications are that we end up with a theory of everything. Their reply to this rhetorical question is that they find a motivation for the theory in "how enriching it has proven itself to be in the everyday practice of reading" (p. 94). But is this really an argument for a concept or a theory?

Chiara Bozzone in her chapter returns to the Homeric formula. She starts by stating that in Homeric philology the "oral-formulaic theory has received, over the past century, a mixed reception at best" (p. 113) and that "by the late 1980s, enthusiasm for Parry's revolution had largely deflated" (p. 114). She also points out the vague definitions that have been presented and that it "was unclear what they [the formulas] could do for us" (p. 114). Bozzone goes on to replace the concept of *formulas* with *chunks*, arguing that linguistic and cognitive research has reached new insights into the human capacity to hold the attention on information using chunks, that is in our context, groups of words to remember texts; larger passages of text are broken down into chunks of 4–9 items. She concludes

that "formularity, in a broad sense, is an extremely common and cognitively expected phenomenon in all realms of language usage" (p. 116). The implications of this conclusion, that chunks of words are generally ordered in ordinary speech as a sort of syntactic/semantic "formulas", are, however, not discussed further as Bozzone continues her investigation of Homeric chunks (or formulas?). Rather, the focus is on the combination of chunks in more elaborated patterns indicating that a poet, Homer (or the tradition?), could handle more complex poetic structures. But does not Bozzone's conclusion concerning Homer's abilities build on a preconception of orality in the first place? Could not the more elaborate chunks rather point in the direction of a written tradition where the many scribes that have rewritten these poems over generations have continuously elaborated the text?

In 1998 Paul Acker published a book on formulaic composition in Old English and Norse. In his chapter in the present book, he takes on the development in formula scholarship with a focus on eddic poetry. In the first part of the chapter Acker presents recent scholarship on what he characterizes as *extended suspension*, where returning phrases are abbreviated to the initial letter of each word, a phenomenon present e.g. in many of the eddic poems in the Codex Regius (GKS 2365 4°, The Arnamagnæan Institute, Reykjavik). From this he goes on to discuss studies in eddic poetry and formulas from after 1995, as a kind of extension of the 1998 book. This part of the chapter has its focus rather on orality in general and has little to say about formulas. It is also interesting that both for formulas and for orality in general the author primarily refers to scholarship in English. It is easy to get the impression that there is nothing written on the subject in Scandinavian languages, not to mention German. This makes the presentation rather a half-measure. Where is, for example, the large study on the Rök runic inscription presented a couple of years ago by Bo Ralph (in Swedish) which suggests a reading of the stanza in fornyrðislag without the name Þjóðrekr that has made such an impression on Acker (p. 158)? Even more marked is the total absence of references to the valuable large German contribution to eddic studies, *Kommentar zu den Liedern der Edda* 1–7, published in the years 1997–2019. Without taking this work into account, Acker is not presenting a correct review of present research in the field.

William Lamb's contribution to the book treats formulas in Scottish traditional narrative from a considerably later period. In the first part Lamb discusses the definition of formula for traditional prose, that is, for the narratives from a vernacular tradition that has been textualized by collectors and published in editions of various kinds, mostly in the nineteenth century. There is no discussion, however, of whether the prose texts of the editions are representative of an oral tradition; the tradition was simply collected and written down, oral prose became printed prose without any implications. This is of course a legitimate way to study these texts, but perhaps we should be more aware of the process of textualization taking place when tradition becomes text.

In the second part of the chapter examples of texts in the vernacular (Scots and Gaelic) are excerpted for what are considered formulas and these are analysed in patterns. As in many of the studies presented in the book, the question arises whether the definition of formulas actually adds anything to the observations. Could the same study have been executed without the concept and with the same precision?

One chapter of the book has the inscriptions of the older futhark as its object of investigation. Michael Schulte studies what he refers to as "the minimal one-word formula and its extensions" (p. 192). Considering the rather scant runic material extant to the scholar, it is perhaps not strange that Schulte

chooses to operate with the individual word as a formula in itself, but it does seem like stretching the concept to the limit to apply this terminology. It could be tempting to suggest that the application of the term *formula* is done in order to conform to the overall theme of the book rather than to introduce a terminology that leads to new insights if it was not for a previously published version of the chapter in German using the concept *Formeln*. When the one-word formulas are combined in reduplication and what is here referred to as "twin formulas" it would have been just as clear using the traditional concept of *phrase*, so why introduce new terminology that contributes nothing new to our understanding of the material?

At the very heart of oral-formulaic theory lies eddic poetry, which is the object of Scott A. Mellor's chapter. In his initial presentation of the background to oral formulaic theory as established by Perry and Lord the author points out some important aspects of the relation between tradition and the texts of the written culture. In many ways Mellor's discussion is representative of the problems that have always adhered to the study of oral traditions based on written texts, something he also seems to be aware of. The implications of this awareness is, however, all too often forgotten in the study of orality in the extant written texts of the Middle Ages. If we accept the claim that tradition changes organically, as Mellor states, the implication ought to be that the tradition has changed constantly from generation to generation so much that when the textualization takes place, as e.g. of the eddic poems in the thirteenth century, not much remains of what was tradition generations back in time. With this reasoning the texts created in the process of textualization can only represent the tradition at the time of writing, and it could be suggested that the text itself as a unit is established only in this process. This leads to Mellor's discussion of the representativity of the material. How many written examples of repetition do we need to argue that the repetition represents a formula in the all too quiet oral tradition? It is interesting also to note that Mellor applies the division of lines and half-lines, a division which would appear to primarily be defined in the written texts. Where are the lines in oral tradition?

From his general introduction Mellor moves on to discuss formulas and what he refers to as the "formulaic system in the Poetic Edda" (p. 236). He never really defines what he means by a formulaic system (it seems to mean a poetics based on formulas) and seems also to take it for granted as he rhetorically asks "what else would medieval Icelanders have fallen back on when writing traditional stories down but their own oral poetic system?" (p. 237). This appears to align with the tendency in much research on oral traditions to take for granted the object that should be studied, arguing in a circle: this is orality because it is expected to be orality.

Daria Glebova takes her starting point in the contemporary interest in the "fluid nature of medieval Icelandic manuscript transmission" (p. 259). This is a smart move away from applying the formulaic approach which in many of the contributions in the book appears to be rather forced. Her chosen approach is rather to investigate the work of compilers and scribes, always bringing some of their own expectations and tendencies into their transmission. At the outset Glebova points out the need for a general classification of variation types found in the written transmission. This would definitely be a relevant line of investigation and the gate to this field of important work is opened in this chapter. It is unfortunate, however, in this context, that the author is a bit unclear about the relation between a scribe and a compiler. This division, even if both roles could be held by the same person, could provide a first step in establishing types of variation. An illustration of the relevance of a division between compiler and

scribe is found in the following quotation where Glebova notes two strategies within the same version of *Bjarnar saga hítdœlakappa*: "These two observations give an opportunity to argue that the scribe who copied *Bjarnar saga* in *Bæjarbók* could switch between the two modes of copying: the text was copied closely when it agreed with the scribe's view, and it was copied in the mode of 'retelling' when there was something in conflict with the scribe's general perception of the story" (p. 284).

It is interesting here that the author makes a distinction between on the one hand copying and on the other *retelling*. A compiler would be more actively retelling than copying the exemplar. It is worth noting, however, that even a scribe without a compiler's ambition could make significant, if not always consistent, changes in the process of transferring the text of the exemplar; it could be relevant therefore to avoid the associations evoked by the verb *copy*. Glebova's study is both engaging and relevant. It would be of great relevance to establish a typology of variation in the dissemination of texts in the medieval literature along the lines suggested in this chapter.

Eugenia Kristina Vorobeva points out the move of interest in formulaic studies from the alleged origin in oral tradition to a perspective taking into account literacy and aurality as well as orality. She presents a study of the relation between depictions of violence in the *Íslendingasögur* and contemporary legal texts. The chapter points out a number of interesting, but perhaps not very surprising parallels in formulations; the legalistic aspects of the *Íslendingasögur* are often mentioned also in earlier research, not only in the case of *Njáls saga*. It is interesting to note, therefore, that Vorobeva could very well have investigated these parallels without using the formula concept, as e.g. when she discusses the phrases *ok var þat* and *ok varð hann* as repetitive. It could perhaps be argued that these two phrases should be seen as two different, frequently used phrases rather than variants of the same, but that obviously depends on the applied definition.

The overall ambition of the book is explicitly to open new perspectives on formulaic language, not only in Norse material but also in contemporary examples in e.g. Anglo-Saxon texts. Inna Matyushina discusses the formulaic language found in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* in relation to, among other things, skaldic poetry where she finds clear parallels. Her main focus, however, seems rather to be on the written culture and how formulas are used to trigger associations with an older stage of poetry. She states that the "formulaic denotations of the ruler that were used in the *Chronicle* poem, reproduce models which were productive in skaldic poetry…" (p. 309), but notes that: "Traditional formulas have the function of establishing associative links with the canons of heroic poetry in order to recreate key motifs (such as fame, wisdom, merit, generosity), characterizing the hero of the poem, King Edward the Confessor. Formulas are designed to convey the image of a hero, evoking well-known associations; therefore, their main function can be called associative" (pp. 316–317).

Further, she points out the parallels found also in Christian epic where the "motif of exile is widely used" (p. 320) and that the poem evokes "associations not only with Germanic heroic poetry, but also with Christian epic" (p. 323). The formulas from this perspective have a stylistic rather than a traditional function. This is of course interesting from the point of view of modes of modification of tradition in the processes of forming a written canon. The tradition is known by the poet, but is also expected to be known by the audience so that the associations are understood. It is also interesting as it demonstrates how a poet using the written medium can appropriate the tradition for his own purposes. It would have been interesting to follow Matyushina's thoughts as to the further

implications of these insights into the knowledge of poet and audience.

Jonathan Roper approaches a radically different material than most of the contributors to the volume, as he is working with narratives that are recorded with the help of portable audio recording devices in the 1960s: folkloristic material from Newfoundland. His material offers him the possibility to actually approach oral formulas, if not necessarily in a tradition un-troubled by literacy. It is interesting to note that he has a critical view of the transcriptions of the recordings, made by trained scholars. Even in this context there is reason for caution and often it is worthwhile to return to the recordings; what can we learn from this when we study medieval material, often in the both second and third remove from the first written version? It is also interesting to note how Roper moves his attention from alliterative formulas when he realizes that there could be more to it than alliteration. He states that alliterative formulas are perhaps not the only important object of study. After having his focus solely on alliteration, he "came to feel that all kinds of sound repetition should be my topic, with alliteration as only one part of this" (p. 349). If this conclusion is compared to Matyushina's observation of the use of formulas as a stylistic device, could not the implication be that the ones using formulas and forming alliteration in neat stanzas of eddic poetry or the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* were making choices, with a focus on standard forms and using them for their own purposes? The scholar realizes from experience that alliteration is not the sole thing about formulas, perhaps in a similar way to the learned in thirteenth century Iceland creating what we consider an oral-derived poetics and poetry.

In the last chapter of the book, Tatiana Bogrdanova moves into yet another field, studying the aesthetic aspects of Russian folktale formulas as they are transferred in translations into English. It is interesting to note that Bogrdanova mentions the more general aspects of tradition, already at the outset of her study pointing out that "no culture exists without its tradition". This is followed by a very general comment, relevant to all the chapters of the book stating that "[e]veryday conversations may appear to be spontaneous, while in fact they are chiefly based on repetitions of *standartnykh rechevykh blokov* ('standard speech blocs') and clichés" (p. 254). The implications are not only important for the understanding of formulas in folklore and cultural studies, as the author suggests, but also for a more general understanding of language. The individual phrases found in standard speech are in themselves highly formulaic. But would it be at all productive to talk about main clauses of the individual language as formulas consisting of e.g. a subject (the agent of the clause) and the verb phrase, always ordered in the same way according to the grammatical rules of the language? This generalization which is implied by Bogrdanova's statement could illustrate the problem of general definitions of a phenomenon that in practice opens up for including more or less everything under the same concept. Bogrdanova does not comment further on these implicit implications of *standard speech blocs*.

Finally, some more general remarks on the book. First it is worth pointing out a general problem in recent scholarship on subjects concerning the Scandinavian Middle Ages, and perhaps even more so regarding Norse studies. Scandinavian and German scholars have long provided important contributions to these fields of study, and much of earlier, but also more recent research is published in Scandinavian languages and German. As for Norse there is much work presented in Icelandic which seems often to be disregarded in later scholarship. The tendency has become stronger in recent decades to more or less limit the reading of earlier works to those published in English, which seems also to be the case in the present book. Throughout the

book there is an almost total dominance of references to scholarship in English. Scholars writing in Scandinavian languages and German cannot always expect to be properly taken into account, this also to the disadvantage of the work presented in English as it leads to a tendency to neglect and re-invent important results. The most pressing problem, however, is that it is frustrating when relevant work in other languages is not referred to in a proper way. One important example could be the total lack of references to the already mentioned major commentary work *Kommentar zu den Liedern der Edda*, in seven volumes and by a team of highly competent German scholars in the field.

An important part of the editors' work is to conduct proper proof-reading. The present book displays quite a few frustrating errors where the editors could have been more vigilant, as can be demonstrated with a few examples. The spelling *Maal og Menne* (p. 154) for the central journal of Norse studies, *Maal og Minne*, or *Rünron* (p. 156) for the runological series *Runrön*, are two cases of negligence that should make any editor blush. Just as strange is the reference to Carol Glover (p. 164, and in footnotes) until it becomes clear that it should be Carol Clover; this should definitely have been corrected by the editors if the author did not notice it.

A short but insistent complaint must be made regarding the handling of bibliographic information in the book (which admittedly seems to be in line with earlier publications in the series), to provide full bibliographic reference in the footnotes at the first instance, followed by a short reference in subsequent instances, and with no collected bibliography for the individual chapter or the whole book. This is a rather unhelpful system for bibliographic references and should be discouraged in any modern publication!

This book provides a number of both relevant and interesting chapters approaching various forms of repetition of phrases, in poetry as well as prose. The focus on oral or oral-derived texts is not consistently applied, often to the advantage of the individual chapter; the most engaging studies are not focused on the formulas or definition of formulas, but on the investigation of phrases used in various kinds of material as stylistic and perhaps also mnemonic tools. It must, finally, still be questioned whether the book as a whole lives up to its claim to invigorate formulaic studies in general.

Karl G. Johansson
Oslo, Norway