

Book Reviews

Collecting, Publishing, and Networking in the Legacy of Grimm
 Gunnell, Terry (ed.): *Grimm Ripples: The Legacy of the Grimms' Deutsche Sagen in Northern Europe*. Brill, Leiden & Boston 2022. 591 pp. Ill.

When the brothers Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm are mentioned today, both professional folklorists and laymen probably think primarily of the brothers' collection of fairy tales, *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, which was published in seven editions with supplements and revisions between 1812 and 1858. During the nineteenth century, however, it was the brothers' collection of legends, *Deutsche Sagen*, published in two volumes (1816, 1818), that was considered more important, at least for the emerging scholarly study of folklore. The most obvious explanation is probably that the genre of legend was better suited to the nationalistic aspirations aroused by the changed national borders after the wars in the early nineteenth century.

Participants in the international symposium held in Amsterdam on the occasion of the bicentenary of *Deutsche Sagen* were not satisfied with that explanation. Under the leadership of the British folklorist Terry Gunnell, working at the University of Iceland in Reykjavík, they took on the task of reaching a deeper understanding of the cultural ripples that influenced the in-

tellectual climate in Northern Europe between the first edition of *Deutsche Sagen* (1816) and the second edition of *Íslenzkar þjóðsögur og æfintýri* (1864).

The book has eighteen authors, mainly folklorists, but also literary scholars, cultural historians, and linguists. All the Nordic countries, including Estonia but excluding Denmark, are represented. In addition, there are researchers from Scotland, Ireland, the Netherlands, and Germany, plus two Scandinavianists from California. In order to achieve the desired result, it was decided not to focus attention on the content of the Northern European collections, but on the introductions to the books and the mutual contacts between the collectors, primarily their correspondence.

In a review like this there is no room to do justice to all the individual contributions. Instead I single out factual information that I found new and thought-provoking, in the hope that it will attract others to read the whole book. For anyone working with the ideas that were current in Northern Europe during the nineteenth century, it offers useful source material.

The two volumes of *Deutsche Sagen* contain 91 legends recorded from oral tradition and 494 taken from printed literature. Approximately twenty informants can be identified with certainty. A third volume promised in the preface to volume 2 never came to fruition, possi-

bly as a result of the lukewarm reception received by the first two volumes, or perhaps because Jacob Grimm instead devoted his energies to his *Deutsche Grammatik*.

Despite its name, *Deutsche Sagen* actually contained legends from other countries: Switzerland, Holland, Austria, France, Alsace-Lorraine, and Schleswig (which at that time still belonged to Denmark). In the wake of its publication, the collecting of national legends began in Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and Ireland, but it was fairy tales that were published. An exception was Finland, where the publication of the *Kalevala* in 1835 would shift the whole focus to epic poetry. Although fairy tales and legends were also collected in Finland, this happened later than in the other Nordic countries. There was some national disappointment when it was discovered that the Karelian poems were of Russian origin and that the Western Finnish fairy tales were related to those in the rest of Scandinavia.

Joep Leerssen describes how the Brothers Grimm used linguistic theories to understand the oral tales. In linking tradition and mythology, they believed that the legends expressed dark collective memories from ancient times. By approaching the folk narratives with scientific methods, the Brothers Grimm laid the foundation for modern folkloristics.

In his text Leerssen provides a useful survey of the terms that appear in the rest of the book, for the benefit not only of its readers but also of professional folklorists and others who wish to orient themselves in the worlds of folk storytelling. In particular, he dwells on examples of how places and emotions are linked together in what he calls topo-narratives, legends explaining

place names, from the Old Testament to modern guidebooks for tourists.

Legends were regarded as good material with which to build new forms of national art and culture, which an independent nation needed for its own self-image and to gain respect from others. The early collections were given national titles, as if the tales were the property of nations and not local communities or individual storytellers. The collected legends also became required reading for schoolchildren so that they would learn the traditional values of the nation to which they belonged.

At first the scholars sat in libraries and compiled material from printed sources, but they gradually switched to recording oral histories on field trips, which had the effect of gradually highlighting the individual storytellers and their communities.

The Norwegian priest and historian Andreas Faye noticed how the collecting of peasant traditions created an incentive to view history from the bottom up. The grandparents of the farm workers were presented to the world as the genuine representatives of the national heritage and patriotic sentiment. Terry Gunnell even suggests that the nineteenth-century collectors of popular traditions could be regarded as the founders of the socialist movements that emerged in the early twentieth century.

The literary scholar Holger Erhardt of Kassel shows how the Romantic turn in the German-speaking lands diverted interest away from classical antiquity and later French influences and instead sought out the pre-Christian Germanic period. A parallel to this is the Gothic League in Sweden, founded in 1811 with the aim of replacing the French influence that had been strong during the reign of Gustaf III at the end of the eight-

eenth century. Instead they wanted to revive the rugged Nordic temperament of the Viking Age. What began in Germany as patriotic resistance to Napoleon gradually turned into an increasingly nationalistic quest for a lost German history. Erhardt follows how the Brothers Grimm, in their collecting work, combined Johann Gottfried Herder's idea of a national *Geist* with practical models from Clemens Brentano's and Achim von Arnim's collection of German folk songs, *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (1806–1808).

Mathias Thiele's (1795–1874) examples of Danish folk legends, *Prøver af Danske Folkesagn* (1817), was Scandinavia's first planned and comprehensive field collection of folklore. Wilhelm Grimm welcomed it in a letter and Jacob Grimm reviewed it in a German journal. The folklorist Timothy R. Tangherlini of Berkeley provides maps that let us follow Thiele's collection journeys, which were often on foot.

Thiele chose to work as a librarian, graphic artist, and illustrator. Later in life, he published in edited form the legends from the earlier collection, expanded with 300 new examples, several of which were taken from printed works. In that book, *Danmarks Folkesagn* (1843), Thiele proposed four new categories of legends: historical legends, local legends, nature legends, and supernatural legends. Although later research has preferred other categories, Thiele's work served as a model for future collections in the Nordic countries and a model for genre analysis.

The aforementioned Andreas Faye (1802–1869) is presented in the book by the Norwegian cultural historian Herleik Baklid. Faye's *Norske Sagn* (1833) is the earliest collection of folktales in Norway. Faye collected the leg-

ends through conversations and correspondence with his informants as well as from printed topographical sources. Like Thiele, he proposed his own categorization of the legends based on the Norwegian material: supernatural beings, warriors and kings, Saint Olav, the Black Death, historical legends, diverse legends. He placed the first five categories in their respective cultural-historical contexts, but supplemented this with relevant (Northern) European parallels. The sources of all the texts are stated.

The Norwegian folklorist Ane Ohrvik of Oslo takes Peter Christen Asbjørnsen (1812–1885) as an example of how wide-ranging the intellectual networks of the time could be. Ohrvik has read 1,621 of Asbjørnsen's letters, which represents 27 per cent of the letters he actually received. There are letters from 500 individuals and from ten institutions. Seventy per cent of the letter writers lived outside Norway. The Northern European intellectuals expressed a genuine desire to share knowledge with each other, they informed each other of their publications, and they sent their books to each other. It was an especially popular habit to exchange photographic portraits of themselves (the daguerreo-type was invented in 1839).

According to the folklorist Line Esborg of Oslo, Jørgen Moe's 58-page introduction (in addition to 115 pages with references, footnotes, variants, and counterparts) to the second edition of *Norske Folkeeventyr* (1852) should be regarded as Norway's first scholarly treatise on folktales. Moe showed that the fairy tales have distinctive national features, chiefly in their descriptions of nature and places. (Terry Gunnell believes that it was Moe who introduced the concept of "type" for fairy tales and legends, which later became the basis

for Aarne-Thompson's classification of fairy tales). From then on, editions of fairy tales in Norway could be treated as scientifically, academically, and culturally significant.

In 1825 a book was published in London with the title *Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland*. It was well received and was translated into German by the Brothers Grimm the following year, possibly as a break from the tedious work of copying the entire catalogue of the Kassel Library by hand. In German it was given the title *Irische Elfenmärchen* and Wilhelm Grimm wrote an anonymous review praising it in a German newspaper.

The Irish folklorist Éilís Ní Dhuibhne Almqvist reveals that the author of the Irish collection of legends, who was also anonymous, was one Thomas Crofton Croker (1798–1854), an Irishman who had moved to London at the age of 18. Either he had heard the 27 legends in the book before leaving Ireland or they had been sent to him by letter. He wrote vivid descriptions of narrative situations that he had obviously never experienced personally. He seems to have invented some of the stories. The author's assessment is that Croker was a talented amateur and a pioneer in documenting folklore in Ireland. As regards the content and style of oral storytelling in Ireland, however, he is not a reliable source.

The foremost collector in Scotland was John Francis Campbell (1821–1885), born in an aristocratic family on the island of Islay, educated at Eton and the University of Edinburgh. He began to collect fairy tales in earnest when he read Asbjørnsen and Moe's Norwegian fairy tales and realized that he had heard several of them in the place where he grew up. He corresponded with George Webbe Dasent (1817–1896), who had

translated the Norwegian collection, and he made plans to undertake similar fieldwork in Scotland. The result was *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*, which was published in four volumes between 1860 and 1862. The Scottish folklorist John Shaw shows how Campbell was influenced by the Brothers Grimm and by Asbjørnsen and Moe, but also how he had his own theories about the origin and transmission routes of fairy tales, about genre definitions and boundaries. He did pen portraits of storytellers and discussed how folk narratives could be used as source material for understanding older cultures and social values. Campbell laid the foundation for later folkloristic fieldwork and publications, and his efforts eventually led to the establishment of the School of Scottish Studies at the University of Edinburgh.

The first translation of *Deutsche Sagen* into another language appeared in 1830. It was translated into English by William John Thoms (1803–1885), the man who coined the term *folklore*. Thoms worked as an antiquarian and librarian, but had the goal of publishing a collection entitled *The Folk-Lore of England*. What was missing was the material. The British folklorist Jonathan Roper, of the University of Tartu, describes how Thoms's professional life and other commitments prevented him from working in the field. He made three appeals in different journals, but the result was meagre. During the nineteenth century several collections of European folklore were translated and published in England, but it was not until 1890 that England acquired a comprehensive collection of its legends. It was Edwin Sidney (incorrectly called Stanley in the book) Hartland who published the collection *English Fairy and Other Folk*

Tales. For a couple of years Hartland was president of The Folklore Society in London, which Thoms had co-founded in 1878.

The literary scholar Kim Simonsen, Amsterdam, presents the priest Venceslaus Ulricus Hammershaimb (1819–1909), who has come to be regarded as the father of the Faroese nation. His magnum opus is the *Færøsk Anthologi* (1886–1891). It consists mainly of legends of the supernatural, all recorded from oral sources, but not only by Hammershaib himself. Unfortunately, there is no information about the informants.

Hammershaimb had indirect contact with the Brothers Grimm through his correspondence with the Danish philologist Carl Christian Rafn (1785–1864), who in turn had corresponded with the Brothers Grimm. Both Rafn and the Det Kongelige Nordiske Oldskriftselskab, of which he was secretary, were advocates of the pan-Scandinavian movement, which was anti-Germanic and anti-Slavic.

Konrad Maurer (1823–1902) was born in Frankenthal but went to Berlin to train as a lawyer. The folklorist Rósa Þorsteinsdóttir describes how he came into contact there with Jacob Grimm, who convinced him that it was important to study linguistics, history, literature, and local legends in order to understand the society in which one intended to practise law. Maurer took him at his word and went on to collect legends in Bavaria and Iceland. There he encouraged Jón Árnason and Magnús Grímsson to resume their interrupted collecting of Icelandic folklore. Maurer would play a role in Iceland comparable to that played by George Stephens both there and in Sweden.

In 1839, the librarian and later professor Finnur Magnússon (1781–1847)

distributed a questionnaire to the clergy in Iceland urging them to record folklore about places, events, and beliefs, but with scant results. When George Stephens made the next attempt six years later, it led Magnús Grímsson and Jón Árnason to start their collecting in earnest. Together they published *Íslensk æfintýri* in 1852, which, despite the title, contained more legends than fairy tales, and which emphasized in the preface that the material represented the Icelandic nation. As for the internationally disseminated migratory legends included in the book, the publishers stress their specifically Icelandic characteristics.

Terry Gunnell highlights the significance of Konrad Maurer (alongside Finnur Magnússon and George Stephens) for the genesis of Jón Árnason's great work *Íslenskar þjóðsögur og æfintýri* (1862–1864), from which several legends were soon translated into English. One of these was the legend of the Lady of the Mountain (Fjallkona), who became an Icelandic counterpart to Mother Svea, Germania, and Marianne, a mythical mother of the nation. She is depicted in a famous painting by the German artist Johann Baptist Zwecker, against a backdrop of Icelandic mountains, with a crown of ice on her head, a raven on her shoulder, a Viking sword in her hand, and runes at her feet.

Estonian linguists maintained contacts with the universities of Göttingen, Kassel, and Berlin, just as the Brothers Grimm were in touch with colleagues in Tartu in particular. The literary scholar Liina Lukas of Tartu introduces Friedrich Reinhold Kreuzwald (1803–1882), of Estonian origin but bilingual, who published the first collection of legends in the Estonian language, *Eesti-*

rahwa Ennemuisted jutud ja Wanad laulud (1860–1864). Kreuzwald had already compiled and published the influential *Kalevapoeg*, simultaneously in Estonian and German. It may be noted that among those who documented Estonian folklore in the nineteenth century, only a few were of Estonian origin.

As a student at Åbo Akademi, Adolf Ivar Arwidsson (1762–1843) came into contact with members of the Gothic League in Sweden, and during a year-long visit to Uppsala in 1817–18 he forged personal contacts with several of them. In Finland he became one of the leading figures in Åbo's Romantic circles. Back in Sweden, he was employed at the Royal Library in Stockholm, where he became a colleague of Gunnar Olof Hylltén-Cavallius. In compiling *Svenska fornsånger*, which was published in three volumes in 1834, 1837, and 1842, he enlisted the help of several of the leading Swedish collectors of the time.

The folklorists Ulrika Wolf-Knuts and Susanne Österlund-Pötzsch of Åbo show how Arwidsson inspired the historian, folklorist, and educator Oskar Rancken (1824–1895) to document the traditions of the Swedish-speaking population in Finland. When Finland became a Grand Duchy under the Russian Tsar, it felt important that the country could retain the old Swedish constitution and legislation. Rancken published an anonymous appeal in a Swedish-language newspaper in Vasa in which he urged readers to record folk traditions. He himself did not publish any collection of Swedish-language legends. Instead, these were included in the great work *Finlands svenska folkdiktning*, three volumes of which were edited by the assiduous fieldworker V. E. V. Wessman (1879–1958).

The book *Grimm Ripples* illustrates some of the advantages and disadvantages of presenting projects in edited volumes. As with published proceedings from conferences, it is beneficial to be able to read each scholar's personally formulated account of the topic that has been studied. One disadvantage is that the levels of the individual contributions can vary in different respects: researchers who report their own findings in a limited field can go into such detail that the broad outlines become unclear, while authors who have been tasked by the editor to elucidate a topic that is not their special field can write superficial texts that miss important points. It is left to the reader to assess what information is relevant in the many different texts if they are to arrive at an overall picture. With the large number of contributions in this volume, that is no small challenge. In many cases, the individual texts provide information that supplements what we already knew about the efforts of early folklorists in Northern Europe in the nineteenth century. Here the interested reader will find valuable information both about specific national conditions and – above all – about the extensive international contacts between researchers. The ideal would be to have a summary of the disparate picture of these contacts that is painted by the eighteen essays in the book.

Terry Gunnell deserves praise for bringing the project to a successful conclusion, like the hero of a folktale. It would be asking him to perform a superhuman feat by connecting the eighteen separate texts into a coherent unit whole, with the overall outlook of an omniscient author and on a uniform analytical level, following the intellectual ripples and all the lateral currents since Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm first threw the

stone into the water. As a reader, one is left alone in the rippling waves, filled with wonder and admiration for the joy of research and the respect with which our bygone colleagues approached the folktales, and for the broad-mindedness and generosity with which they shared their ideas and results with each other. Imagine a person living some way into the twenty-third century reading what folklorists then will be writing about the ripples left by, for example, Jean-François Lyotard's stone – his thesis about the death of the grand narrative!

Unfortunately, the book is marred by inadequate proofreading in some of the German and Swedish texts.

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The “Then” and the “Now” in Constructing the “Here” of a Historical Site

Anne Eriksen: Borre, Hafrsfjord og Stiklestad: Fortidsformateringer fra 1600-tallet til i dag. Scandinavian Academic Press/ Forente forlag, Oslo 2024. 325 pp.

How did the consciousness of Norway's formation, the idea of a “cradle of the Norwegian nation”, develop? Anne Eriksen explains how a similar, albeit more simplistic, question posed by a journalist inspired this voyage of intellectual discovery across the various suggested birthplaces of the kingdom of Norway. Put simply, this is the overarching goal of *Borre, Hafrsfjord & Stiklestad*: to investigate how three different medieval locations ingrained in Norwegian national consciousness developed over time as historical sites, through the many different, overlapping,

and sometimes contradictory projects of Norwegian nation-building and constructions of identity.

Ultimately, this book provides an approachable presentation of complex themes, and an overall stimulating concept, centred around the idea of the “then” meeting the “now” on what is perceived by many in Norway to be hallowed ground, and, as the author states, this meeting between the then and the now being what constructs the “here” of a historical site (p. 11). The book is by and large a splendid and accessible attempt to guide readers into the afterlives of mythic-historical locations in Norwegian cultural memory. The locations themselves provide links between the present and the past, but the book simultaneously presents the long journey of the locations from the past to the present, and the long and multi-faceted creation of said links.

While this is not a theory-heavy book, it is easy to get engrossed in the highly interesting and well-illustrated theory sections. The book's central framework, the idea of the “formatted past” is a fascinating methodological lens through which to interpret the constantly shifting perceptions and uses of historical sites such as these three (p. 20). In the theoretical introduction, it is also linked with welcome reflections on François Hartog's now-famous concept of “regimes of historicity”, where movements in the field of history are tied to whether there is a predominant orientation towards the past, future, or present (pp. 27–28). Hartog's theories are not as deeply embedded in the book as the concept of the formatted past, which is in some ways a shame, as the idea of differing orientations and “regimes” determining various centuries' often different relationships with Borre, Hafrsfjord, and Stiklestad

as historical sites is a deeply relevant one for the structure and concept of this book. Nevertheless, it is a useful concept both for Eriksen to bring up, and for the reader to have in mind while progressing through the following chapters.

Some small comment should also be made on the author's and the book's relationship with actual history and the medieval past. As a scholar of cultural memory and heritage in the last few centuries, the author is understandably hesitant to fully grapple with the study of the Middle Ages. The reader of this book should thus not expect deep academic inquiry into the medieval histories of these places specifically or of the early kingdom of Norway more generally. In fact, the author spends a lot of time stressing this point (e.g., p. 16). As such, the book mostly detaches the sites from their medieval origins. From a medievalist's perspective this is obviously regrettable, but overall it is a completely reasonable demarcation given the book's focus. One might have wished for a separate chapter on the earliest historical context, which might have helped ease readers more seamlessly into why these places and their place in memory are being discussed, but as it stands, the brief chapter on the medieval written sources is both helpful and important, and does go a long way towards filling this gap. Overall, it should indeed be said that despite a difference in perspective, reading this book as a medieval historian is no less rewarding than reading it as a scholar of history culture or cultural heritage. Eriksen manages to be both interesting and educational on the memory and usage of the medieval past, and while some of us might always wish for more, she does pay due diligence to the medieval sources and medieval research. In addition to the brief survey of the material,

there are frequent references to important debates on historicity and older historiography (e.g., pp. 51–54, 82), and in a sense the book as a whole functions as a magisterial historiographical survey, only one with the perspective firmly focused on the historical sites' later existence (particularly during the last four centuries) rather than their origins.

The overall division of that survey is accomplished in a very practical way, effectively splitting the material three ways twice. First, the book is divided in terms of periodical concepts, where three phases are identified: the establishment of the locations as objects of knowledge, their role in and manipulation by national cultures and national movements, and their more contemporary inclusion in more modern views of cultural heritage. Throughout this structure, Eriksen takes us on a step-by-step chronological journey through the afterlives of these three central national-historical locations. Each section is divided into sub-sections for each of the three locations, thus providing a rather rigid walkthrough with the potential to usher unfamiliar readers into the historiography without sacrificing intellectual depth.

The first stage in the process described by the book is the initial establishment of these sites as objects of knowledge. Eriksen rightly points out that while both the places themselves and stories about them obviously existed before, it is only from the seventeenth century onwards that they become objects of formal historical inquiry, where professional scholars would devote time to establish the facts about them through (perceived) scientific methods. Readers are here led through some of the oldest historical research projects in Norway, such as the now foundational Tormod Torfæus and the search for Harald Fairhair's grave.

In the second section, Eriksen moves the lens onto the connections of the places to rising Norwegian national identity, and its use by various groups, in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Eriksen skilfully weaves the national identity tied to the locations into other elements of nation-building and national romanticism to a point where the book almost becomes a miniature history of Norway through the lens of historical agents' relationships with these "cradles". Examples of this can be found in the description of Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson's speech at Stiklestad for the national convention of the newly founded (or technically soon-to-be founded) political party Venstre – itself tied to nationalist sentiment in the period (pp. 158ff.), and an even more emotionally laden patriotic speech given overlooking Hafstrfjord, "our holy saga fjord", by a local priest in front of the then Swedish-Norwegian king Oscar II (pp. 152–153). In both these cases, the book shows the role of the two battle sites in particular in the growing Norwegian self-image, and their embrace by nationalist movements seeking Norwegian independence. Similarly, it is also in the national cultures section that Eriksen tackles the more infamous moments of these places as historical sites, namely their shared usage as propaganda platforms by the Nazi-allied National Unity party during the Second World War. By doing so, she clearly illustrates the conflicting political perspectives and nationalisms surrounding them in the decades before and after the turn of the twentieth century.

This focus is woven seamlessly into the third and final section, cultural heritage, where the author discusses contemporary, or at least post-war, formatting of these sites. Borre, Hafstrfjord, and Stiklestad, symbolic of Norway as

a whole, were deemed to need liberation from Nazi occupation and the darker associations with the National Unity party. Moving away from individuals, the book illustrates the first conscious effort to make these places holistic and unified locations of national commemoration, as described regarding Stiklestad on pp. 246–247. Furthermore, Eriksen shows how the last few decades of formatting the past have tended to bring together all elements of political and cultural use of the locations, in order to create and shape the idea of "historical places". Importantly, however, the author still gives a critical reading of these attempts, showing how they too carry their biases and forced narratives (pp. 265–268). As such, the book goes a long way in showing that these historical sites are very much still under (literal and metaphorical) construction, and that the "cultural heritage" wave is merely the last and most recent in a succession of formatting efforts and recontextualizations.

As the author poignantly concludes, "Historical places do not emerge on their own." (p. 329). There is always a continuous process of creation and indeed, formatting. In this sense, the identity of a historical site also contains the disseminations, experiences, narratives, and remembrances of different people, groups, and identities across centuries, whether it's archaeologists, nation-builders, radical or conventional politicians of various stripes, local patriots, religious authorities, or the population at large. This ongoing process, and the need to understand the long history of a historical site *as* a historical site, is something this book consistently calls attention to.

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Antisemitism from a Historical Text Perspective

Leif Carlsson: *"Fiender till hela mänskligheten". Judefientliga bibeltexter och tolkningar. Universus Academic Press. Lund 2024. 177 pp. Ill.*

In this book the religious scholar Leif Carlsson examines antisemitism, meaning hate and hostility against Jews, both in older times and more recently. To understand the underlying mechanism behind antisemitism, the author turns to biblical texts and statements from clerical representatives throughout the history of the church. The starting point is some verses in the gospels and in the writing of the apostle Paul, arguing that it was the Jews who crucified Jesus, thereby committing deicide. The author, however, is of the opinion that everything indicates that it was the Romans, not the Jews, who crucified Jesus. Non-biblical sources describe the governor Pontius Pilate as cruel and "crucifixion-obsessed". The author seeks to show that the biblical verses in question do not refer to all Jews at all times, but need to be understood in their contemporary social context where Jesus criticized the Jewish Pharisees. The author here joins the liberal theological scholars who argue that the biblical texts cannot be read literally and interpreted as historical sources. This has, however, been the case when antisemitic opinions have been expressed at different times throughout history. One should bear in mind that both Jesus and Paul were Jews. Paul practised a Jewish lifestyle, celebrated Jewish holidays and preached in synagogues. The author finds it hard to believe that Paul could be the author of an anti-Jewish text in the First Epistle to the Thessalonians, chapter 2, verses 13–16. This could be a later addition when the hostility against Jews had increased.

This interpretation, however, rests on a weak foundation.

The author regrets the fact that antisemitism later on, due to misunderstandings, came to build on the biblical statements about the death of Jesus. Whether it is a matter of misunderstandings or not is, as I see it, less important. The main thing is that these writings have strengthened antisemitism. This can be deplored by a scholar, but the scientific task is not to look back and criticize what happened historically, but instead to highlight what happened and make an effort to explain it.

Antisemitism grew stronger as time went by after the crucifixion of Jesus. In the early church, the Christians were initially in the minority and subject to persecution. The Jews, on the other hand, enjoyed a privileged status up until the beginning of the fourth century when Christianity became the Roman state religion in 312. In the new constellation of power, the Jews were gradually marginalized by the emperors and the Christians became the ones who could feel superior. Laws against the Jews were introduced.

The so-called theology of replacement implied that the Christians had assumed the role of God's people and that the role of the Judaism thereby was over. The church father Augustine (354–430) strengthened a prevalently negative view of the Jews. They were seen as being non-spiritual, false and hypocritical, but they were not to be persecuted or killed. They should know their inferior status compared to Christianity.

The author uses the first two thirds of the book up to p. 113 to discuss anti-Jewish statements in the gospels, in the writings of the apostle Paul and in the old church under the Roman Empire. In the last third of the book, from p. 115 onwards, the author takes a look at conditions closer to our present time.

He demonstrates how, in the 1930s and 1940s, antisemitism manifested itself in Sweden in the conservative religious newspaper *Göteborgs Stiftstidning*, which had 2,500 subscribers. The editor and minister Ivar Rhedin sided with Hitler as soon as he took power in 1933. Hitler was perceived as a counterforce against the Bolshevism of the Soviet Union, but also against the Jewish-dominated West, which was accused of having started the Second World War. The positive view of Germany in the newspaper is also explained by the fact that the reformer Martin Luther was German. The newspaper stuck to its pro-Nazi attitude all through the Second World War but was at the same time opposed to the prevalent use of racial biology to justify antisemitism. The only solution to the problem of the Jews was for them to become Christians. Therefore, the newspaper supported the Christian mission among the Jews.

One can wonder how the readers of *Göteborgs Stiftstidning* reacted to the pro-Nazi stance. On two occasions, a letter to the editor from Axel Larsson in Bollebygd was published. In 1939 he objected to the statement that there was an ongoing war between the world Jewry and the German people. He referred to the story about the good Samaritan who helped the wounded man even though he was a Jew. Similarly, Christians in Germany should help the Jews in their vulnerable situation. He cautioned against a situation in Sweden where “Nazism unnoticed becomes the prevailing attitude among many individuals in the church” (p. 130). In a letter to the editor in 1940, Larsson was again upset about how the Jews were treated and how Christians in Germany supported the government’s antisemitism. “From a Christian point of view, this is very con-

cerning” (p. 132). It is interesting that these letters to the editor were published despite the fact that the editorial board in its comments was opposed to the content.

Following the passing of Ivar Rhedin in 1953, there was a clear need for *Göteborgs Stiftstidning* to distance itself from the anti-Jewish and pro-Nazi stance. Instead it was the responsibility of the church to counter antisemitism.

In a later section (pp. 149ff.), the author looks for some ways forward to counter present-day antisemitism. This antisemitism is mainly based on anachronistic interpretations primarily of biblical writings, which are not opposed to Jews in general, but concern situations existing at the time when the texts were written. Jesus and Paul were not anti-Jewish. Once people understand this, there will be no grounds for antisemitic attitudes. The author finds support in current biblical research from various parts of the world. “A number of bible scholars have pointed out Christian misinterpretations of biblical writings, and how these were wrongfully passed on as negative arguments against the Jews” (p. 164).

To conclude, the present book, being a historical text study, is of timely value now that antisemitism is on the rise in various parts of the world. The author’s interpretations, relating to current international biblical research, should be able to remove some of the basis for antisemitism. The book should be brought to public awareness and discussed in the public arena now when the issue of the war against its neighbours by the state of Israel is a topic of political discussion.

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Women's Voices in Northern European Witchcraft Trials

Liv Helene Willumsen: The Voices of Women in Witchcraft Trials. Northern Europe. Routledge Studies in the History of Witchcraft, Demonology and Magic. Routledge, London and New York 2022, xviii+491 pp.

Liv Helene Willumsen is Professor Emerita of History at the Arctic University of Norway in Tromsø. She is both a historian and a literary scholar, and she has published a number of articles and books on memory culture, women's culture and the history of Northern Norway. Not least of all, she is a prominent author of articles and books on witchcraft and witch trials in Northern Europe, often with a clear gender perspective and comparative perspectives. Her doctoral dissertation in history from the University of Edinburgh from 2008 was about a comparison between witch trials in Scotland and Norway.

It is in the perspective of Willumsen's overall academic writing that the present book must be seen – it is an expression of a common concern in her research, namely transnational analyses of witchcraft, witchcraft and gender. It has been published in a well-regarded monograph series, which gives Willumsen deserved prestige as a prominent researcher in this field.

The structure of the book is ambitious. Through a close reading of 23 trials – in which a total of 24 women were accused of witchcraft – in the Spanish Netherlands, Northern Germany, Denmark, Scotland, England, Norway, Sweden and Finland, Willumsen continues her comparative, transnational studies of witchcraft cases. The period for these trials is 1590-1685, i.e. almost a hundred years and in a period when the (Northern) European witchcraft trials underwent major changes both legally and procedurally, ideologically, the-

ologically and politically. These changes are presented to some extent in the introductory chapter and in the subchapters, but they are not actively discussed in the concluding chapter. The concluding overview of unpublished sources and bibliography (pp. 444-465) is impressive and shows Willumsen's broad orientation and deep expertise.

In the introductory chapter, Willumsen gives a detailed and pedagogical account of her theme, the sources used, the methods and structure of the book. The chapter also presents a useful review of previous relevant research. To a certain extent, this review has the character of name dropping, as it is not always clear how Willumsen herself relates to or has used this research. Willumsen draws alternately on her expertise in history and her expertise in literary studies. This interdisciplinary perspective has yielded a result that is both readable and stimulating.

Special note should be made of Willumsen's use of narratological perspectives, which in many ways are also close to folkloristic analyses of oral transmission, oral culture and the relationship between writing and speech. She analyses in a fine and nuanced way how the source material reflects cultural, legal and confessional differences. Willumsen clearly focuses on how this source material as written sources reflects the speech of the accused, the legal norms and "the voice of the scribe".

In the concluding chapter, Willumsen identifies ten central factors that she claims can be compared between the different trials: the confessions of the accused, the statements of the witnesses, narrative structures, elements of orality, the interrogations, the use of torture and coercion, forced narratives, the voice of law and scribes, and – not least – transnational transfer of ideas. A central point in

the concluding analysis is how ideas about magic and witchcraft were spread along different channels and by different media across national borders and confessional differences.

Willumsen's main idea is "that voices can carry meaning" (p. 370). At the same time, it is likely that the voices that Willumsen attempts to identify have been interwoven in a complex network of voices – from above, from authorities, ideologies and strategies, and from below, from highly local and even personal agendas and conflicts, where in part new ideas and narratives have provided instruments for conflict, accusations and power. For all these voices, "witchcraft" was a common denominator, but the dissonances in this language were conspicuous, and they shifted in time and space.

One of Willumsen's methods – close reading of a small selection of court cases from eight northern European areas – has many parallels in past and present historical, folkloristic and anthropological research. The method has its obvious strength in studying textual expressions in detail, assessing nuances, interactions between actors, strategies and protests in a concrete, normative context, namely the legal process. This method produces interesting results, which are especially summarized in the book's tenth and last chapter.

At the same time, it can be said that this method has its limitations. A central question concerns representativity. It is assumed that the 23 court cases from seven northern European "countries" are typical and have a meaning that exceeds themselves. This is, for example, the dilemma of the so-called microhistory in a nutshell. Willumsen is not, however, a microhistorian, since her comparative method goes far beyond the microhistorical, which often only suggests parallels and comparability.

Another dimension of the question of representativity concerns what Willumsen herself puts forward as the most important, namely gender. It is an acceptable choice to focus on "the voices of women", but what about "the voices of men/children/old people" etc. in the historical records? Would such perspectives have given different results? Another question concerns the selection of geographical areas. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Sweden and Finland were one state under one monarch, and Denmark-Norway was a so-called dual monarchy. In Denmark-Norway there were differences between legal practice, administrative order and political authority, but ideology, theology and politics were essentially identical. "Finland" for its part had a partly very different culture, with a Finnish-speaking population with few common references with the Swedish population, but "Finland" had no separate legislation or politics to distinguish it from today's "Sweden". Willumsen does not find any major differences between Denmark and Norway or Sweden and Finland.

A third, hyper-complex question concerns the confessional differences. Both legally and theologically, there were significant differences between the Catholic Spanish Netherlands, Anglican England, Calvinist Scotland and Lutheran Sweden (with Finland) and Denmark-Norway. These variables, which had an impact both on the voices of the authorities and on the response from the common people, receive little attention.

Despite these critical remarks, it is undeniable that Liv Helene Willumsen's book represents new knowledge, fascinating perspectives and an invitation to renewed research.

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