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Editorial

Arne Bugge Amundsen

This is the last volume of *ARV* to be edited by me. *ARV* was first published in 1945, so the current volume will be number 80. Since the beginning, *ARV* has had only five editors: Jöran Sahlgren (1884–1971) 1945–1951, Dag Strömbäck (1900–1978) 1952–1978, Bengt R. Jonsson (1930–2008) 1979–1992, Ulrika Wolf-Knuts (1947–) 1993–2002 and Arne Bugge Amundsen (1955–) 2003–2024.

My responsibility has been for the last 22 volumes, totalling around 5,000 pages. In the period 2003–2024, *ARV* has published a total of 160 articles and 409 books have been reviewed. In addition, a number of conference reports, obituaries and discussions have been published. Many volumes have been "open" thematically, but ten volumes have been thematic:

- 2006 Witchcraft and witch-hunting
- 2009 Nordic Spaces, edited by Lizette Gradén and Hanne Pico Larsen
- 2010 Memory and culture, edited by Henning Laugerud
- 2011 Museums and memories, edited by Saphinaz Amal-Naguib
- 2014 Magic, edited by Ane Ohrvik and Aðalheiður Guðmundsdóttir
- 2016 The cultural history of medicine, edited by Anne Eriksen
- 2018 Broadsheets and folk song, edited by Line Esborg and Katrine Watz Thorsen
- 2020 Digital methods in folklore studies
- 2023 Female folklorists
- 2024 Folk religion

This selection of topics shows that the judgements I made in an editorial in 2003 (pp. 7–8) have been followed up. At the time, I formulated it as follows, based on the very different situation for folklore studies in the Nordic countries: "How can a yearbook like *ARV* manoeuvre in such a situation? My answer is to show editorial openness and academic curiosity. *ARV* must continue to be a platform and a forum for those academic communities in the Nordic countries – and for my part, I am pleased to be able to include the Baltic countries – that see themselves as bearers of an important element

in the scholarly tradition that has defined itself as folkloristics for generations: The study of the relationship between people and elites, of stories and ideas, of religion and thought – all with an emphasis on what previous generations referred to as belonging to 'the people', and which today can perhaps be translated as that which cannot be unambiguously captured by ideologies, political correctness and textual norms." Over the past 22 years, in fact, all five Nordic countries have been represented with articles and book reviews, the Baltic countries have been included, "traditional" topics in folklore studies have been given space, but there has also been room for "new" topics or new perspectives on old topics. Among the authors of articles, 6 have been from Estonia, 11 from Denmark, 14 from Iceland, 15 from Finland, 46 from Sweden and 66 from Norway. The distribution of authors has been roughly equal between men (88) and women (81).

The 2024 volume marks a new way of publishing *ARV*. The number of subscribers has declined significantly in recent years, and printing books is expensive. The Royal Gustavus Adolphus Academy has therefore orientated itself towards digital publishing. As of now, all volumes of *ARV* from 1981 are available digitally via the Academy's website, and the plan is to digitize all volumes. From 2024, the primary form of publication for *ARV* will be digital.

I cannot foretell the future of *ARV* or of folklore studies in the Nordic countries, but I am convinced that, from 2025, when I am replaced as editor-in-chief by a new generation of gifted and dedicated Nordic scholars, the readers of *ARV* can look forward to further inspirational reading.

The Cunning Man

A Microhistorical Analysis of Jacob Orm and the Economics of Magic in Trondheim, 1730–1742

Haakon Hegsvold Sørlie

Abstract

This article presents a microhistorical analysis of the practices of cunning man Jacob Orm and the so-called "great thief conspiracy of Trondheim" of the 1730s. Orm practised treasure hunting and the finding of lost goods, and he participated in an attempt to conjure up the devil. The article argues that Orm partook in creating the narrative that he was a cunning man by going on frequent magical excursions, maintaining contact with other cunning folk and owning magical objects. The article presents the only known trials with elements of treasure hunting from Norway and contextualizes them within the broader field of Scandinavian and European treasure lore. Finally, the article argues that the form of economic behaviour observed in treasure hunts is best understood through the concept of limited good.

Keywords: crime, theft, magic, treasure, devil, money, limited good, cunning folk

On the 3rd of April 1742, three men were escorted to Steinberget, the execution grounds situated along the main road outside Trondheim. In their company, there would have been armed guards, and a pastor whose task it would have been to prepare the men for their coming execution and death.[1] As they approached the gallows, it is possible that they heard singing, as no fewer than three execution ballads were composed for the executions. The attention these men likely received would not have been unwarranted. The men, Ole Christophersen Blix, Ole Ingebrigtsen Eggen and Jacob Ludvig Pedersen Orm, had been pointed out as the leaders of a band of thieves that operated both in the city of Trondheim and in the surrounding area during the 1730s. The scope of their criminal operations was so extensive that King Christian VI (r. 1730–1746) simply referred to them as "the great thief conspiracy of Trondheim" when he revised their sentences in 1742 (RA, Norske tegnelser, 1741–1743, fol. 354a).[2]

This article presents a microhistorical analysis of one of those men – Jacob Ludvig Pedersen Orm (1698–1742). The source material pertaining to the band of thieves and the practices of Jacob Orm is, by Norwegian

standards, unusually extensive and detailed. Based on the existing interrogations, letters, depositions and verdicts, it is clear that, in addition to being a leading figure in the gang of thieves, Orm operated as a cunning man in Trondheim and its surrounding regions. Orm and his associates performed magical treasure hunts, and he used a black book (grimoire) and an alleged magical mirror in attempts to find gold and other treasure in the ground. He also attended an attempted conjuring of the devil where the intention was to obtain gold.

The richness of the source material pertaining to Orm's criminal activity as well as his more magical practices poses a series of questions that typical court records from the first half of eighteenth-century Denmark-Norway usually fail to answer. Through a microhistorical approach, the glimpses we have of the life and practice of Jacob Orm will therefore be used to investigate two key questions: In what ways was magic used in an urban criminal milieu in the first half of the eighteenth century? How did Jacob Orm become a cunning man? In order to elucidate these questions, I will analyse the composition of the group of thieves and their more standard criminal activities, such as theft, break-ins and fraud, in addition to Orm's more magical activities, such as treasure hunting, the use of magical objects, devil conjuring and divination. There is an additional focus on how the city court (*Bytingsretten*) and the Magistrate court (*Rådstueretten*) addressed and treated these magical activities.[3] By investigating these questions, the study establishes knowledge about the possible connections between cunning folk and criminal milieus in general, and new, in-depth knowledge about cunning folk and the use of magic in eighteenth-century Norway in particular. This is the first study to analyse Orm's practices and, to the best of my knowledge, it also presents some of the first known trials containing elements related to magical treasure hunting from early modern Norway (concerning treasure tales, see Werner 1987).

Many studies have been published about the witchcraft prosecutions that took place in Norway during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (e.g. Næss 1982; Knutsen 1998; Blix Hagen 2007:87–128). Some of them have emphasized the roles of the state, the elites and the courts (e.g. Alm 2000; Blix Hagen 2015:211–247; Schjøtner Skaar 2021). Meanwhile, others have emphasized social and economic factors, demonology and the role of gender and ethnicity in the trials (e.g. Willumsen 2013; Blix Hagen 2017). Through regional studies, the number of known trials has been continuously revised, and 870 witchcraft trials in Norway have been documented (e.g. Botheim 1999:188–189; Sødal 2008:142; for this recent figure, see Alm 2022:197). However, we are faced with a drastically different situation concerning studies on witchcraft and magic in eighteenth-century Norway. There exist only a handful of systematic studies, and they are primarily concerned with demonstrating that elite scepticism ended the witchcraft prosecutions by

analysing the rise in so-called witch trials in reverse (Alm & Blix Hagen 2002:33–34; Chan 2009; Sørlie 2023; Løyland 2010).[4] These witch trials in reverse were trials where the court took the side of someone who had been slandered as a witch or physically assaulted because of suspicions of witchcraft (Henningsen 1975:98; Davies 2018:216). Additionally, although cunning folk are often mentioned in passing in studies of the Norwegian witchcraft trials, there are few in-depth studies about them or their function within Norwegian society. Two notable exceptions in this regard are the studies of Bente Gullveig Alver and Rune Blix Hagen, who highlighted the role of cunning folk as "magical experts", offering services to the general public in the seventeenth century (Alver 2008:60–61; Blix Hagen 2003:46).

There is, therefore, still a need for both further systematic regional studies and in-depth microhistorical or case-oriented analysis of actors and groups, such as cunning folk, who engaged in the sphere of magic during the eighteenth century.

As we currently know of few examples to compare with in Norway, I frequently contextualize the practices of Orm and the group of thieves with similar phenomena and examples from other Scandinavian and European countries – especially scholarship which emphasizes that cunning people participated in creating the narrative that surrounded them through social evaluation of their public appearances and behaviours (Tangherlini 2000; Alver 2011; Johannesen 2018:39). Once they became cunning people, they would offer services that were judicially speaking outlawed in Norway until the abolition of the witchcraft ordinance in 1842. Through their services, they therefore operated within a black market of magical services, filled with ambivalent relations and opportunism that, on an overarching level, was associated with an economic rationale connected to the continuing belief in magic and magical services (Davies 2007:60–62; Alver 2008:60–61; Stanmore 2023:13; Dillinger 2012:196–197).

The choice of a microhistorical approach also requires some further elaboration. It is evident that microhistory has been divided into several traditions since its conception and especially after the coming of postmodernism (Kjelland 2020:15–18). Some would argue that microhistory is its own subfield within the historical sciences, while others label it a practice and therefore a way of working with primary sources which is applicable to all subfields of historical research (Ghobrial 2019:13–14; Cohen 2017:54). Despite their differences, most microhistorians agree that the scope of analysis should be on a microlevel; that details and contextualization are crucial and should be held at a high level; in this article the role of agency among historical actors is also emphasized (Cohen 2017; For two different approaches to microhistory, see Magnússon & Szijártó 2013:4–5, 147).

These tenets of the microhistorical method are activated through close readings of the voluminous sources left behind by investigations into

the activities of the gang of thieves. In the archives of the Magistrate of Trondheim, there is an examination protocol which rather briefly mentions several aspects pertaining to magical treasure hunting and the attempted conjuring of the devil. It also contains testimonies and letters to the Magistrate from both witnesses and the detained thieves (SATR, Magistraten, tyver, mordbrennere, 1711–1741).[5] However, the real treasure trove concerning this case is a protocol found in the archives of the regional governor (SATR, Avhør og dommer, pk. 3 1739–1742, 9.11.1741). In total, the protocol contains the testimonies and confessions of 24 people who had either been part of the band of thieves or in different ways had been in contact with members of the group. The confessions given by all of them stretch over 345 pages, rich in detail, concerning their various activities. It is in this protocol that Jacob Orm elaborates at length about his activities related to treasure hunting, using black books and the attempted conjuring of the devil. Through these and other sources, it is possible to follow and contextualize the activities of the group of thieves throughout the 1730s and gain a deeper understanding of their operations involving both theft and magic.

"The Great Thief Conspiracy of Trondheim": Its Members and Their Activities

With the protocol containing the confessions of the thieves, it becomes clear that the magical practices of the group were intertwined with the break-ins and thefts they committed. The court records frequently refer to them as a gang (*bande*) of thieves and as a rat pack. Tyge Krogh analysed several such groups that were given the title of "gang" in Copenhagen and concluded that they were not gangs in the modern criminological sense of the term (Krogh 2022:151). Although the gangs in Copenhagen could number over one hundred people, Krogh found that their relations were of a more random nature and that there was little clear leadership, planning or organization within the groups. Concerning the group in Trondheim, we see that there were clear leader figures. Usually, the same people joined the various break-ins, there were designated jobs within the group and several of the break-ins were planned long in advance. Therefore, the term "gang" seems fitting for this group. Concerning the leadership of the gang, the court records show that there were nucleus groups revolving around central leaders who began cooperating at different points during the 1730s.

In total, the group numbered 18 people consisting of 16 men and 2 women (RA, Norske tegnelser 1741–1743, fol. 354b–357b). They mainly operated in Trondheim and its surrounding regions, but one break-in took place 90 kilometres outside the city. As the size of the group was so large, it is evident that not all members participated in each break-in. Some were lockpicks and muscle power, others took care of transportation and yet

others acted as fences both in selling and smelting the stolen goods. The group also became more tightly connected by the fact that those who did not participate in the break-ins themselves often received a part of the stolen loot. This was done so that they would become involved as co-conspirators in the theft and therefore be less likely to alert the authorities.

From the interrogations and court records it is clear that Jacob Orm, Ole Ingebrigtsen Eggen and Ole Christophersen Blix were central members of the group. Jacob Orm was born in 1698 and was the son of Sergeant Peder Orm, stationed in Snåsa in Northern-Trøndelag. He moved to Trondheim around 1730. Although involved in many of the break-ins, Jacob Orm seemingly also had a more administrative role: staking out targets, acquiring information and receiving cuts of the obtained goods. Orm was also a central character concerning magical treasure hunting and parts of the cunning trade. Ole Ingebrigtsen Eggen was born in 1710 in Orkdal, which is an area bordering on Trondheim. He had worked for seven years as a soldier before being discharged in 1736 because of poor health. He also worked as a blacksmith both during and after his active enlistment.[6] The third central figure was Ole Christophersen Blix, who was born in Trondheim in 1720. He completed his apprenticeship as a smith in Skien in south-eastern Norway. Blix returned to Trondheim in 1739 and moved into the house next to Jacob Orm in *Repslagerveita*.[7] Orm quickly recruited him to cooperate with him in illegal affairs, and within the span of roughly a year, he participated in twelve thefts and break-ins before the group was arrested in 1740.

Another group which was connected to Blix, Orm and Eggen and which seemingly floated on the outskirts of the group's activities consisted of Lars Palmberg, Olaus Bergstad and the three brothers Jacob, Johan Peter and Johannes Grodt. As their names suggest, they were Swedes who had taken up residency in Trondheim. While they were imprisoned, it was discovered that the brothers communicated with each other through notes written in a "vagrant language" (*fantesprog*). The Magistrate also noted that Johan Peter Grodt "understands the vagrant language that vagabonds speak when they do not want anyone else to understand them" (SATR, Rådstuerettsprotokoll 1738–1743, fol. 176a).[8] This implies that the brothers had lived itinerant lifestyles before moving to Trondheim, where their father worked as a smith. Nevertheless, the Swedes were not the only members of the group that originated from outside the town of Trondheim. One example is Peder Johansen Ravn, a glassmaker by trade, who was listed as an "unknown" residing in the city in 1729. He was possibly born in the parish of Løten in eastern Norway (SATR, lister over ubekjente losjerende i byen, 1729, IV no. 73).

In addition to consisting of several people who were immigrants to the city, it is evident that many of the members of the group did artisanal labour such as blacksmithing or glassblowing. Even if they were better off than

day labourers, the artisans of Trondheim were not necessarily affluent. In 1679, artisans constituted 28% of the roughly 5,000 inhabitants of the town but paid only 16% of the total tax (Supphellen 1997:194). For example, the above-mentioned glassmaker Ravn was forced to pawn his house to cover his own expenses (SATR, tyver, mordbrennere, Johan Heinrich Schultz, 21 June 1741). Other members were day labourers such as carriage-drivers and boaters, while others had worked as servants before they became deckhands on ships. At least two of the members, Lars Palmberg and Peder Jensen Aal, were merchants who peddled various goods in the regions bordering on Trondheim. Although registered as a burgher in Trondheim from 1735 to 1739, Palmberg was simply referred to as a Swedish vagrant when he was arrested during a sales trip to Molde in 1741 (SATR, tyver, mordbrennere, bailiff Jacob Eeg to regional governor von Nissen 30.05.1741).[9] In other words, even the merchants involved with the group seem to have struggled financially. One of the members was enrolled in the military, while at least two others were ex-military. Although the protocols of the military tribunal at Christiansten fortress are lost, the court records and investigations of the Magistrate give the impression that it was rather common for enlisted soldiers to engage in petty theft in order to subsidize their meagre salaries. As stated by Supphellen, common soldiers often became a natural part of those social circuits in town which struggled with poverty and crime (Supphellen 1997:212–213; See also Heinsen 2018:17–18, 24).

In effect, "the great thief conspiracy of Trondheim" consisted of a group of people with loose social ties, connections, and loyalties to the town they resided in. Several of them belonged to the lower social and economic stratum of society. Some also displayed other forms of antisocial behaviour, such as committing fraud, engaging in brawls, and leading lives which the authorities deemed "unchristian" and "an insult to God" (SATR, Bytingsprotokoll, 1740–1742, fol. 225b). The multitude of struggles and difficulties many of them faced in their everyday lives, in addition to the economic opportunism which presented itself through a successful break-in, was probably in large part what brought this group of people into contact.

The various break-ins conducted by members of group stretched across the 1730s, and the well-planned ones usually targeted high-status individuals. This could be wealthy elites within the city of Trondheim or wealthy farmers in the surrounding regions. A brief example will suffice. One of the break-ins targeted the pastor Jens Lemvig in 1736. After the group had been detained in 1740, several of their victims sent in lists of what had been stolen from them. The then-widow of the pastor sent in a claim stating that the thieves had stolen a total of 1,582 *riksdaler* from him, although the thieves themselves claimed it was only 600 *riksdaler* (SATR, tyver, mordbrennere, Elen Cathrina Lemvig to the Magistrate 26 June 1741). To put this into context, Christian V's Norwegian law of 1687 defined grand larceny as

stealing anything worth more than 10 *riksdaler* (Christian V 1687:6-17-37). The pastor had been chosen as a target because Ole Ingebrigtsen Eggen felt that he had been stingy with payment for a smithing job that he had completed for him. Additionally, Eggen and Orm managed to recruit a sergeant who had recently helped Lemvig move his money from the house to the outhouse.[10] From there, it was simply a matter of waiting until he left his house to complete the yearly visitation of the parishes. Six months after they agreed to target him, the break-in was completed, and the perpetrators were not caught for five years.

In other cases, the thieves acquired a large number of goods, which were efficiently shifted through fences and pawning. The gang also used female family members as fences, and they efficiently shifted the goods into the urban marketplace. However, the theft from Pastor Lemvig was the group's most successful job, and the rewards of the break-ins varied enormously. On one occasion, the group broke into a boathouse, and the meagre result was nothing more than a pair of shoes.

Considering the number of break-ins and the high status of many of their victims, it was a comparatively trivial matter that led to the group's downfall. During a trip to sell some goods in a village close to Trondheim in 1740, Peder Jensen Aal ended up in a fight with an unrelated thief. The two were quickly arrested, and in the course of that trial the authorities became aware of the activities of the other members of the group. Additional members of the gang were arrested in July 1740 and kept under arrest until the sentences of the Magistrate court were carried out in 1742 (SATR, kopibok no. 52, 1740–1742, 129–130). Three members of the group managed to escape; another was an enrolled soldier and was therefore brought before the military tribunal.

The various members of the group had different reactions to their prolonged imprisonment. Ole Christophersen Blix began writing detailed lists of what he and other members of the group had stolen at various places. He sent these lists to the Magistrate so that "they would receive the truth and so that the stubbornness of others would not lead to a prolonged imprisonment" (SATR, tyver, mordbrennere, Ole Christophersen Blix to the Magistrate 20 July 1741). He also had a faint hope that the town Magistrate would spare his life because of his youth and cooperation. The lists written by Blix grant us a rather detailed impression of the items and money stolen by the group, although it is doubtful that they reveal everything the group stole. With these lists and the claims presented to the Magistrate by victims of the group, it becomes clear that they had stolen money and items worth several thousand *riksdaler*.

After their arrest, the various members of the group were accused of 25 counts of breaking and entering with subsequent theft from the property. Although they were not charged with them at the final sentencing,

an appendix created by the Magistrate lists an additional 15 break-ins that were planned or that for various reasons had failed (SATR, Rådstuen, Saksvedlegg, 1741). The confessions and lists presented at court show that it was rare that more than four members participated in the same job, although informants and fences received their share after a break-in.

The local city court ordered that seven of the fourteen arrested thieves were forfeit of their property to the king and were to be hanged for theft. The remaining seven were sentenced to whippings, to be branded with the mark of thieves and to serve life sentences of forced labour. The men were sentenced to work at the fortress of Munkholmen, and the women as domestic help in fishing villages in northern Norway (SATR, Bytingsprotokoll 1740–1742, fol. 224a–226b).[11] The appointed prosecutor Lorents Nideros, however, thought that this punishment was too lenient and appealed the sentence to the court of the town Magistrate (*Rådstuereten*). The Magistrate court was presided over by *magistraten* which consisted of the president, mayors and leading burghers who were members of the city council. The Magistrate seemingly shared Nideros's opinion, as they ordered eleven of the accused forfeit of their property and to be hanged. The remaining three members were to be whipped, branded and serve life sentences of forced labour (SATR, Rådstueprotokoll, 1738–1743 fol. 167a–178a).

The death sentences were sent to Copenhagen to be reviewed by the king. During the eighteenth century, it became increasingly normal for the king to alter death sentences. This was also the case concerning this group. The Magistrate was instructed to point out three ringleaders who could be executed as examples, while the sentences of the others were commuted to life sentences with manual labour. The town Magistrate pointed out Jacob Orm, Ole Ingebrigtsen Eggen and Ole Christophersen Blix as the ringleaders, and they were hanged on the 3rd of April 1742.

"A Habit of Digging in the Ground": Jacob Orm's Treasure Hunting and Cunning Arts

Various members of the gang of thieves were accused and found guilty of theft. Unlike the rest of the group, Jacob Orm and Rasmus Gjeldvolden[12] were also found guilty of *signing og manen* (SATR, Bytingsprotokoll 1740–1742, 225a–226a). This is a term that has been translated in various ways, but essentially, it describes verbal magic and conjuring (see Tangherlini 2000:285; Sörlin 1999:35; Hagen 2003:47). However, *signing* was also an umbrella term for benevolent magic. Practising such arts was outlawed in a royal decree of 1593, the witchcraft ordinance of 1617 and in the Norwegian law of 1687 (NRR III:302–303; Secher 1891:517; Christian V 1687:6-1-12). According to the ordinance of 1617 and the Norwegian law of 1687, those found guilty of practising benevolent magic had to forfeit

their property and flee the country. Executions did occur if additional suspicions of *maleficium* or diabolism emerged during the trial. Hans Eyvind Næss has estimated that a third of the accused in Norwegian witchcraft trials were charged with *signing* (Næss 1982:134; Hagen 2007:90). This includes cunning folk, their customers and other people who were caught carrying out a benevolent ritual such as healing people or finding lost goods.

From the interrogations and court records, we learn that Jacob Orm practised magical treasure hunting and used a grimoire to find lost and stolen goods. As noted by Gunnar W. Knutsen and Anne Irene Riisøy (2007:52, n. 40), magical treasure hunting does not appear in any of the known Norwegian trials for witchcraft and magic. As far as I am aware, Orm's case is one of the first known cases of magical treasure hunting in early modern Norway. Of course, it comes as no surprise that magical treasure hunting was practised in Norway, as it was a phenomenon that stretched across Europe (e.g. Monter 2013:276; Dillinger & Feld 2002:161; Klaniczay 2017:115; Macfarlane 1970:24–25). The increase in research on treasure hunting in recent decades enables some general remarks on the practice.

Although new cases of treasure hunting in the medieval period have been uncovered, magical treasure hunting seems to have been primarily a phenomenon of the early modern period (Stanmore 2023:68; Dillinger 2012:8; Tóth 2017:306). Magical treasure hunting was usually a collective enterprise, and Johannes Dillinger has identified four types of participants: the leader, who was often economically well-off; the magician, who could be a priest or a monk but on many occasions was a poor person with an itinerant lifestyle, such as a soldier. The third type was supporters who participated in the rituals and helped with manual labour, and lastly, we find curious onlookers (Dillinger 2012:148f). The social and economic status of participants in the same treasure excursion could range from aristocrat to vagrant. As treasure was held to be alive and guarded by ghosts and demons, the treasure hunts were often of a "quasi-religious" nature, especially concerning the soteriological aspects of offering salvation to the ghost bound to the treasure (Dillinger 2022:24). Treasure magic, therefore, revolved around finding the treasure, removing (or liberating) its guardian, and binding the treasure all while maintaining a strict ritual silence. In order to achieve this, the treasure magicians had a variety of magical tools at their disposal: prayers, charms, magical mirrors, divining rods and grimoires. However, many of their tools were linked to high magic and ritual magic, such as magical circles with characters around them used for the conjuration and dismissal of the demons associated with the treasure (Davies 2007:94). Evidently, treasure hunting was closely associated with demonic magic, ghosts and other spiritual entities. When placed in front of a court, treasure hunters were usually charged with superstition or fraud, and on rare occasions, they were charged with being in contact with the demonic

(Dillinger & Feld 2002:115). However, they were usually punished leniently (Dillinger 2012:122; Davies 2007:10). Some states even issued permits to hunt for treasure – provided that no magic was used. Treasure magic was positioned firmly within the realm of male magic used for economic advancement, and it was a form of magic which, in theory, did not contain antisocial consequences for the practitioner's local community. Therefore, treasure hunters were almost never prosecuted for witchcraft (Dillinger 2015:105; Dillinger 2017:11).

Based on the contents of Norwegian black books and Swedish folk tales concerning treasure, Owen Davies has claimed that treasure hunting was as popular in Scandinavia as it was elsewhere in Europe (Davies 2009:124). As it is difficult to date such treasure tales, the following will give some more empirical backing to Davies' claim.

Several of the more than 100 Norwegian black books which still exist contain sections on treasure magic, and by going through the collection kept by *Norsk Folkeminnesamling* (Norwegian Folklore Archive), I found 21 black books with content relating to the discovery of treasure (see also Bang 1901–1902:703–711; Espeland 2014:162–165; Ohrvik 2014:208). Chronologically, the relevant manuscripts stretch from *c*. 1650 to 1850. The various formulas concerned with finding treasure seem to go against Velle Espeland's observation that the contents of Norwegian black books were of a more "homely nature" (Espeland 2014:63). To be clear, there are some formulas for finding treasure that seem to be drawn from Scandinavian tradition, but many of them were also clearly influenced by the European grimoire tradition, with its focus on how to force demons to help one find treasure and how to remove the demons who guard treasure (e.g. Hedmarksmuseet OF 9374). One example is black book NB MS 8° 10, dated to 1790, which contains an almost verbatim translation of an instruction for treasure digging that was published in *Paracelsvs of the supreme mysteries…* translated into English and published by Robert Turner in 1656 (Turner 1656:66). Additionally, several of the manuscripts with information on treasure hunting claim to be *Cyprianus,* meaning copies of the mythical manuscript of Cyprian of Antioch, who became a famed magician in the European grimoire literature (Ohrvik 2018:112–115; Davies 2009:115). Inscriptions in these manuscripts usually claim that they were discovered at the University of Wittenberg, a place steeped in magic and famous for the education of "black book ministers" in Norwegian folklore (Kristiansen 2016:99). Many of the formulas for treasure hunting also seem to have been copied from the same manuscript (or each other), as the formulas are similar and most contain the same figure that was to be drawn where one wanted to dig.

The fact that the sections on treasure hunting in Norwegian black books were influenced by continental treasure lore is another example of what

The figure that was to be drawn on the ground where one wanted to dig for treasure. Source: NFS Joh. Olsen, *Svartebok fra Bærum* p. 23. Dated *c*. 1700–1750.

Davies described as the "democratisation of high magic" (Davies 2007:119; see also Bachter 2004:198). The formulas for treasure hunting give ample examples of how esoteric knowledge spread through the black book/grimoire/*zauberbuch* literature through copying and redistribution and how this literature made available that which had previously been preserved for the few.

When we turn to actual trials for treasure hunting in Scandinavia, we are faced with slimmer pickings. At present, most of the trials we know of where treasure hunting was involved took place in Sweden. In 1726, three men were sentenced to death in southern Sweden for having written the name of Jesus on a cloth to protect themselves against evil forces during a treasure trip. As mentioned, treasure trips were strongly associated with the demonic and with apparitions, and it was common to call upon supporting forces. However, in this instance, using the name of Jesus in such a context was seemingly interpreted as blasphemy by the court (Sörlin 1999:71). Also in 1726, a more elaborate ruse played out, as a man claimed to be looking for treasure in his own house to placate creditors. A retired soldier assisted him by stating that he had chased off the dragon and spirits that guarded the treasure (ibid.:88). In her work on attempted pacts with the devil in Sweden, Soili-Maria Olli also discovered a trial where a trio consisting of a farmer,

a crofter and a soldier were suspected of having abandoned God in order to find treasure. According to Olli, no attempts had been made to enter a pact with the devil, but the authorities drew that conclusion on behalf of the treasure hunters (Olli 2007:36f; in English see Olli 2004:105).

Another study of Gotland mentions a manuscript written by the pastor Lars Nilsson Neogard (*c*. 1683–1758), where he discussed how the devil deceived treasure hunters.[13] According to Neogard, the devil showed himself as a flaming light above buried treasure; he revealed himself in the sky as a dragon that dived into waters containing treasure; he appeared as a ghost above buried treasure; and he revealed himself in the shape of treasure in the middle of the day (Nildin-Wall & Wall 1996:100–102). Neogard was also aware of the rule of ritual silence when digging – a ritual he considered foolish. If we remove the devil from the pastor's examples, we are left with well-established elements of early modern treasure lore (Dillinger 2012:57–59; Espeland 2014:172–173). Although sceptical, Neogard argued that treasure should be located with a divining rod and handed out to the poor. The examples from Sörlin and Solli's research give the impression that treasure magic was punished more harshly in Sweden than in other countries because it was more easily bound to blasphemy and the demonic. Comparative studies will be necessary as more trials in Scandinavia emerge.

In Denmark, trials for treasure hunting seem to be even rarer than in Sweden. Gustav Henningsen found two cases by going through the registers of *Dansk Folkemindesamling* (Danish Folklore Archive). The first was against the itinerant cunning man Jens Clemmedsen, who cured bewitchments and carried a grimoire with him. Clemmedsen was put on trial because he managed to recruit people to dig in a mound where he believed a dragon was guarding treasure. The outcome of his trial is unknown (Henningsen 1975:128f). In 1825, Asmus Møller and two helpers were suspected of witchcraft after digging for treasure in Maribo. Their treasure-digging ritual used a piece of bread, some string, and part of a willow tree. Møller also carried an unknown grimoire. The case was dismissed by the court, but the trio was warned that next time they would be tried according to the paragraph dealing with suspicious arts in the witchcraft ordinance. In 1829, two of the men requested a permit to continue digging in the mound. The application was rejected (ibid.:138).

Clearly, Davies' claim has some backing in the actual trial records as well. Still, there seems to be a rather large difference between the known trials in Sweden and those in Denmark-Norway. The reason for this difference is most likely not because more people in Sweden performed treasure magic and went on treasure hunts. Instead, it is caused by the difference in witchcraft prosecutions and the resulting archival work performed by scholars of witchcraft and magic. Several Swedish regions experienced large numbers of trials for witchcraft and magic well into the eighteenth century (Sörlin

1999:23). Therefore, there has been sustained archival work with an interest in witchcraft, magic, and similar fields for eighteenth-century Sweden as well. The last death sentence for witchcraft in Norway was passed in 1695, and as noted, only a few studies have systematically ventured into the court records from the eighteenth century. More trials will surely appear as archival work proceeds. The following will analyse the magical activities of Jacob Orm and thereby the known trials with elements of treasure hunting in Norway.

According to the confessions they gave in court, we know that the members of "the great thief conspiracy of Trondheim" went on at least four trips where treasure hunting and finding gold was the initial objective. These trips took place between 1731 and 1734, and only two of them were completed. In the remaining two, members of the group committed break-ins before they reached the intended area. These break-ins were part of the more spontaneous break-ins the group committed. However, as the court was gathering evidence to prosecute the group, a woman by the name of Brønnild sent a letter to the Magistrate where she explained that she had been present when Jacob Orm found treasure at Byneset outside of Trondheim and that she was willing to testify (SATR, tyver, mordbrennere, signed by Mette Klyverts, no date).[14] Unfortunately, no surviving testimony from Brønnild exists, but her letter implies that Orm went on several treasure hunts that were not mentioned at court. We also know that he went on treasure hunts with people not part of the group of thieves.

Like other treasure hunters, Orm was seemingly on a continuous search for tools that would make the job easier. After all, one of the simple beauties of magical treasure hunting was that there was always something, or someone, to blame when the hunt ultimately failed. Someone broke the ritual silence, the timing was wrong, or a magical instrument had not worked as planned. Based on his confession, we know that Orm acquired a magical instrument after the first treasure hunt we know of. In 1731, he had travelled to Verdalen together with a smith named Andfind to dig for money in a pile of rocks. During the trip, he had a conversation with a Swede who informed him that one of his cousins, named Peder Iversen Kingstad, owned a magical steel mirror. The mirror could allegedly show where treasure was located in the ground. It was most likely similar to a *Bergspiegel*, which was used for the same purpose in Germany (Dillinger 2015:109). The mirror also worked in such a way that when it was held above the ground, it would chase away all the dragons and trolls lying on the treasure (SATR, Forhør og dommer no. 3, 29–34). Orm did not have the finances to buy the mirror outright, and he needed to gather investors. Once he had returned to Trondheim, he managed to convince the blacksmiths Niels, Claus and Anders, the carpenter Svend, a carriage-driver named Peder, Hans Jensen (a retired master of ammunitions at Christiansten fortress), Sergeant Jens

Tiller, and a man named Elias Mathison to pitch in money for the mirror. In a later letter, the master of ammunitions added that a saddle maker by the name of Stig Pedersen and his servant had also chipped in money. In total, ten people invested in the alleged magical mirror (SATR, tyver, mordbrennere, Hans Jensen to the Magistrate 11 July 1741).

According to Hans Jensen, it was always clear to the investors that the money would go towards the purchase, or at least a pawning, of the mirror from the Swede, who in some instances is referred to as a "wise man" (i.e. a cunning man) in the court records. As we can see, all the investors were male and consisted of artisans, day labourers and both former and active military personnel. Although there was a mix of professions, they all belonged to the lower-middle to working class of Trondheim. There seems to be little reason to question that an interest in increased wealth lay behind their investment.

That a troll and a dragon were guarding the treasure is also natural, as in addition to demons and ghosts, treasure guardians were often taken from local folklore (Dillinger 2012:69; Lindow 1982:259–260). Gunnar W. Knutsen and Anne Irene Riisøy (2007:36–37, 51–52) have demonstrated how the medieval laws of Norway forbade sitting outside to wake trolls and how this activity was connected to attempts at gaining money from mounds and mountains. As they emphasized, the connection between trolls and treasure hoards was clear at least until the High Middle Ages. Orm's intention to use the mirror to chase away trolls, although from a (currently) solitary source, implies that this belief could have survived until the eighteenth century. The dragon is more interesting, as Dillinger has noted that the medieval treasure-hoarding dragon disappeared from early modern treasure lore (Dillinger 2012:71). However, we find dragons mentioned both here and in the above-mentioned Swedish and Danish trials. It is of course possible that "dragon" was a metaphor for the devil. The use of this metaphor can be found in a black book dated to the first half of the eighteenth century where the devil is described as "evil spirit and dragon" (NFS, Joh. Olsen, Svartebok fra Bærum). However, a black book dated to 1650 contains a formula for conjuring a dragon lying inside a mound, and although there is some similarity to later formulas for conjuring demons, it is difficult to say whether it is a metaphor for the devil (NB Ms. 8° 81). Another black book from Copenhagen dated to 1760 contains a formula for conjuring a dragon made of silver and gold (NB Ms. 8° 3136) It is therefore possible that the dragon continued to live on in Scandinavian treasure lore. Further comparisons should be conducted when more trials appear.

Orm's acquisition of the magical mirror meant to chase away such trolls and dragons must have happened quickly, as the failed excursion happened in 1731, and Orm was in possession of the mirror by February 1732 (SATR, forhør og dommer no. 3, 29–34). He had travelled to Sweden, where he

hired the mirror from the Swede for the rather hefty sum of 20 *riksdaler*. It is evident that the group tried it out on at least one treasure hunt, as Hans Jensen was able to describe it in quite some detail. It was a polished iron mirror, formed like a globe, and when looking into it one was meant to see everything that was hidden beneath the ground. However, Jensen could confirm in front of court that the mirror did not have the promised qualities. Orm had returned to Sweden to get the money back, but he claimed that he had fallen ill on the way home and spent all the group's money in order to recuperate. The investors, the city court and the Magistrate court all deemed this an obvious fraud.

The court therefore questioned Hans Jensen as to why he had given money to Orm in the first place. Jensen answered that Orm was known for going out to dig for treasure and that, from time to time, people would join him on these excursions. In addition, Orm had convinced them to invest their money through his "sweet talk which was so well done that we all had faith in him and believed that he was an honest, trustworthy man" (SATR, tyver, mordbrennere, Hans Jensen to the Magistrate 11 July 1741). When answering questions concerning the break-in at Pastor Lemvig's outhouse, his son-in-law also answered that he had heard that Orm and the others travelled around and dug for money, but that he had paid them no mind (SATR, tyver, mordbrennere, Peder Halset 17 June1741) These two testimonies demonstrate that Orm was known for these treasure hunts both inside and outside of Trondheim, and because he seemingly did it rather frequently, he was perceived as experienced. As already mentioned, he appears to have found some treasure on occasion. It is of course possible that on these earlier trips (as was the case on some of the excursions with the thieves), he returned with stolen rather than buried goods. Whether the items he returned with were stolen goods or not is beside the point. The important thing was that during the 1730s, a rumour developed in Trondheim that Jacob Orm was a treasure hunter.

Even if Orm managed to get away with the 20 *riksdaler* that had been invested into obtaining the mirror, we should be careful of drawing the conclusion that he was simply a fraud. As Owen Davies has argued, cunning folk could be fraudulent in certain interactions and situations, but that did not necessarily mean that they did not believe in the efficiency of magic or in using the spiritual world for personal benefit (Davies 1997:104). That Orm was not simply a fraud, but one who believed that the spirit world could be used for personal gain, can be seen from the fact that he obtained a black book in the late 1730s. The above-mentioned Rasmus Gjeldvolden confessed in court that Orm had acquired the black book in order to conjure the devil from the earth so that he could show Orm where treasure was buried (SATR, Forhør og dommer no. 3, 166). Orm confessed that this was true and that Gjeldvolden also carried a black book, although the court was

unable to ascertain whether Gjeldvolden had put it to any practical use. The fact that an unrelated thief by the name of Lars Rolvsnes (who also boasted about his ability to find treasure) was found carrying a black book upon his arrest in Bergen in 1744 suggests that, to some degree, black books were in circulation in criminal milieus in the first half of the eighteenth century (DRA, Højesteret, voteringsprotkoll no. 90, 1745, 554).

Gjeldvolden was not the only cunning man whom Orm was in contact with. After the above-mentioned break-in at Pastor Lemvig's outhouse, a dragoon and well-known cunning man in Gauldalen by the name of Ingebrigt began blackmailing the group.[15] Orm informed his associates that he demanded 30 *riksdaler* to keep his silence, and the group quickly paid. However, Ingebrigt had only demanded 16 *riksdaler*, and Orm put the remainder in his own pocket (SATR, Forhør og dommer no. 3, 192–197). Once again, we see that Orm had a fraudulent side. This blackmail also provides an example of communicative networks between cunning men in Norway. Unfortunately, the source does not reveal what kind of information was shared, what they discussed or how frequently they were in contact. But it does show that information was shared and that they were not above blackmailing each other. Nevertheless, the black book was apparently acquired by Orm without the help of others. In addition, he confessed in court that he had used it to receive assistance from the devil. The fact that Orm attempted to use the devil to find treasure clearly fits with the prominence of the demonic in treasure-hunting magic. The sources do not grant us detailed information about the formula Orm used to conjure the devil, but such formulas can be found in several extant black books from the eighteenth century. One black book dated to the latter half of the eighteenth century reads: "The great Lucifer who has power over everything that is hidden in the earth such as gold, silver and money, I conjure you to show me…" (NB Ms. 8° 3136, no. 31 [40]; see also NB Ms 640 C:1). However, it would be pure speculation to assess the degree of similarity between the formulas in these later black books and the one used by Orm.

Clearly, Jacob Orm was on a continuous search for magical tools which would increase his chances of finding treasure. Like many other treasure hunters, he acquired the mirror and the black book from the regional "black market" of magical items and the international trade in magical books.[16] Another method he might have used to localize treasure was the interpretation of dreams. On 7 December 1741, that is, after he had been sentenced to death by the city court, Orm urged the members of the Magistrate court to meet him without the presence of others. In a letter, he informed them that he had been lying in his prison cell late one evening when the room had suddenly become brighter. A voice had spoken to him and told him about the whereabouts of a coffin of gold in Meldal, another coffin was to be found close to a farm in Verdal, and finally another was to be found buried

in a marsh between two lakes close to the Swedish border. The voice had informed Orm that he would be saved if he revealed this information, but with the condition that Orm personally attend these treasure hunts (SATR, tyver, mordbrennere, Orm to the Magistrate 7 December 1741).[17]

When the Magistrate informed him that this was not an option, Orm informed them of a dream he had had while imprisoned. The king himself had sent him to the Ottoman Sultan in order to convert the Ottomans. Orm's conversion attempt had failed, and just as he was to be executed by the Sultan's court, an angel descended with a sword in one hand. The descent of the angel frightened the Sultan so much that he and the Ottomans converted to Christianity and granted Orm several awe-inspiring gifts. In his dream, he subsequently presented these gifts to the king of Denmark-Norway. The king was so pleased with him that he pardoned his life. Orm urged the Magistrate to relay his dream to the king as quickly as possible (ibid.).

Evidently, this was one of the strategies Orm deployed in an attempt to sway the members of the Magistrate while he was awaiting their verdict. The proposal also demonstrates that he had not confessed to trying to obtain the devil's help in treasure hunting because he was suicidal; Orm was a man who wanted to live. If the Magistrate's greed and curiosity had got the better of them Orm would most likely have tried to escape during their excursions for treasure. The idea of converting the Ottomans was an attempt to trigger the king's moral obligation as a Christian king to convert those of differing religions – in addition to any materialistic desires concerning the luxurious gifts Orm would have brought back.

Still, we should not dismiss the potential use of dream interpretation in relation to treasure hunting only because of Orm's desperate attempts at survival. As argued by Jared Pooley, dreams offered an arena in which "supernatural knowledge could be transmitted and made useful" (Pooley 2015:93). It has also been shown that both treasure hunters and cunning folk used the interpretation of dreams to locate treasure, find lost goods and predict love. The interrogations give us extensive insight into one such case where Orm suggested dream interpretation to Hendrich Nitter in order to help him locate a lost silver cannister (*sølvdåse*).

Nitter was an apprentice tailor and was loosely affiliated with the group of thieves, as he lodged in Ole Christophersen Blix's house. He participated in at least one break-in. According to the lists sent by Blix to the Magistrate, Nitter also socialized with members of the group through gambling and card games. In 1740, someone had stolen Nitter's silver cannister, and he apparently suspected someone from the group of having taken it. Upon inquiring with Blix, Jacob Orm was summoned, but he denied all accusations. Although he proclaimed his innocence, Orm promised Nitter that he would help him retrieve his cannister. Orm presented his black book, from which he read the following:

I conjure by the Northern winds, the Western wind, the Eastern wind and the Southern wind, by the sun and the moon, by heaven and earth, that whoever has taken the silver cannister belonging to Hendrich Nitter shall know no peace or rest until the cannister has been returned. (SATR, Forhør og dommer no. 3, 37–38).[18]

After the conjuration, Orm told Nitter that the cannister would be returned by the following morning. When this failed to come to fruition, Orm informed Nitter to go to the graveyard and take two shinbones from a grave, which he was to bind in a cross underneath his pillow, in order to see the thief in his dreams (SATR, Forhør og dommer no. 3, 39). To sleep on a cross to see a thief while dreaming was suggested in several black books, but they recommended drawing the cross on parchment (Bang 1901–1902:514). Karen Andersdatter, the wife of Ole Christophersen Blix, testified that Nitter had followed Orm's advice, as she had discovered the bones one morning while she was cleaning his lodgings (SATR, Forhør og dommer no. 3, 35). Although he had completed the ritual as instructed, Nitter informed the court that he had not seen the thief in his dreams and that the cannister was never returned to him.

The discovery and return of stolen and lost goods was one of the main activities of cunning folk. Although it is possible that Orm also practised other parts of the cunning trade, this is the only type the court records grant us access to. It is also because of this case that he can be referred to as a cunning man rather than a strictly specialized treasure hunter and thief. As we can see from this example, Orm apparently carried the black book on his person. Naturally, a magical book could not be "out in the open" and had to be either hidden or carried by the owner. This does, however, tell us something about the availability of cunning men. They carried their tools on them and could therefore be consulted on very short notice (see also Davies 2007:69). The conjuration and threat uttered against the thief, in addition to the suggestion of using the bones of the dead, show that Orm had knowledge of common practices for rediscovering lost goods. It is well established that the bones of the dead, and especially the body and possessions of an executed criminal, were believed to have magical potency and were used in everything from magical rituals to medicine (Sörlin 1999:36; Davies & Matteoni 2017:31–32; Klassen & Philips 2006:157).

At court, Orm stated that he had uttered the threat against the unknown thief in order to frighten the thief into returning Nitter's cannister. His explanation therefore fits with what several scholars have identified as one of the primary ways in which cunning folk in England would go about recovering lost goods. A menacing threat concerning the thief's health and future would be uttered with the hope that it would reach the thief and cause him to return the goods out of fear (Thomas 1991:262; Davies 2007:97).

Nevertheless, as far as we can tell from the witchcraft prosecutions in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, dream interpretation was not a very

common method of finding lost items in Norway. It was more common to use various divinatory practices that were referred to as *igjenvisning* (showing again). The divinatory practice of the sieve and shears is but one example of rituals that would be considered *igjenvisning.* As I will return to, it was participation in situations such as these that played a role in making Orm known for both treasure hunting and cunning activities in Trondheim.

The Attempted Conjuring of the Devil

The last example concerning the practices of Jacob Orm is his attendance at the attempted conjuring of the devil, at Ila, immediately outside Trondheim. This ceremony took place in the house belonging to the mother of the above-mentioned Grodt brothers. According to Orm's confession, the assembled party consisted of a retired Swedish lieutenant named Røding, Sergeant Anders Paulsen, himself, Jacob Grodt and an unnamed young boy who was the son of Mads Bing, a sailmaker living in Trondheim. It was the unnamed son of Mads Bing who conducted the attempted conjuring, and the ritual is worth quoting at length.

> Jacob Orm explained that roughly four years ago, a retired Swedish lieutenant from Nordland[19] by the name of Røding came to his house. He had asked him to follow him to Ila if he wanted to see Mads Bing's son attempt something interesting. He had followed the lieutenant to the house of Jacob Grodt's mother by the copper mill in Ila. There, he gathered in an attic together with the son of Mads Bing, the retired lieutenant Røding, Sergeant Anders Paulsen and Jacob Grodt. The son of Mads Bing held a book called *Agripa* [sic] in one hand, and with chalk he drew a round circle on the floor, and around it he wrote some Latin letters.[20] Thereafter, he dressed in a white shirt and stepped into the circle, where he began to speak both Latin and Greek, which Orm did not understand. However, he did hear the son say in Danish that he was going to conjure the devil so that the devil could bring him gold. His speech lasted for a while, but nothing appeared, he told them that nothing was going to happen, and that it was best that they stopped. He then removed his shirt and put the book in his pocket. (SATR, forhør og dommer no. 3, 170–171).[21]

Such a detailed description of a ritual to conjure the devil is very rare in the Norwegian source material. The entire situation might remind us of Émile Durkheim's famous statement that "there is no Church of magic" (Durkheim 1995:42). There were no institutional bonds between these men. They were secretly gathered in an attic on the outskirts of town for the sole purpose of attempting to conjure the devil. The difference between their secret activities and the institutionalized repetitive rituals and processions of organized religion become screamingly evident. Still, the ritual was clearly organized and conducted in a ceremonial fashion. From the use of the white shirt as pre-chosen piece of clothing to the use of the learned languages of Latin and Greek, the conjuration had clearly drawn inspiration from high magic

with its magical circles, conjuring of the devil, and ceremonial proceedings. This attempted conjuring is also another case in point of the process of the above-mentioned "democratization of high magic" which allowed this group of men to attempt a conjuration of the devil for personal enrichment (Davies 2007:119).

In this case, the democratization of high magic becomes evident as Orm describes the manual used for the ritual as being a book written by Agrippa. Although we are never given more than this name, is it most likely a reference to Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim (1486–1535). As numerous scholars have pointed out, Agrippa's *Three Books of Occult Philosophy,* as well as a *Fourth Book of Occult Philosophy* that was commonly attributed to but was not actually written by Agrippa, became some of the sixteenth century's most influential texts concerning magic and occult practices (Sharpe 2006:441; Davies 2007:122–123; Frenschkowski 2008:26–30). The attempted conjuring described by Orm is rather reminiscent of, but not identical to, the ritual found in the *Fourth Book* concerning the use of circles or "rings" for the raising of evil spirits (Agrippa & Turner 1665:65–67).

Acquiring one of Agrippa's books should not have posed too much of a problem for those with connections in Trondheim's shipping community. Trondheim was a merchant town where international trade was conducted. Ships from England, France, Germany and other European countries frequently came to the town, and through this active shipping the town was evidently connected to the market of occult books which stretched across Europe[22] (Dillinger 2012:95). As we have already seen, Orm and Gjeldvolden seem to have had few problems acquiring black books. Others in town, such as the young boy, must also have had access to the same "black market" of magical items and occult literature.

Concerning the attendees at the conjuration, we see the presence of military personnel with one retired lieutenant and an actively enrolled sergeant in addition to Jacob Grodt and Jacob Orm, who conducted break-ins and treasure hunts together. It also tells us something about Orm that he, at least according to his own confession, was summoned by the retired lieutenant to witness this ceremony. As Hans Jensen's testimony demonstrated, a rumour had spread that Orm was a treasure hunter, and we know that treasure magic was highly oriented towards contact with apparitions and demons. It is therefore possible that Orm was summoned as he was perceived as having experience in dealing with the demonic.

In seeking the aid of the devil for economic gain, the group was in the company of several other men in Scandinavia in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. However, these were not devil pacts like the alleged ones we find in witchcraft trials. These devil pacts were attempted by individuals seeking to sell themselves (often through a physical written contract) to the

devil to get something in return. Soili-Maria Olli's studies from Sweden have found that it was primarily teenage boys from literate urban cultures who attempted to enter such pacts with the devil (Olli 2012:94). Concerning Denmark, Tyge Krogh found that it was almost exclusively soldiers who attempted to enter these pacts (Krogh 2000:125f). In both Sweden and Denmark there are examples of suicidal people who deliberately let themselves be caught with such contracts in order to be executed by the authorities (Krogh 2012:59; Sörlin 1999:33). Ultimately, however, it was the wish to acquire money or gold from the devil that was most frequently expressed in attempted pacts with the devil (Olli 2004:107). In the case of Orm, it should be stressed that the attempted conjuring is interesting because it was another criminal activity that he was involved in that used high magic and ceremonial proceedings. It therefore fits within a repertoire of services and activities that he engaged in. After all, the formulas in his black book, which he claimed to have used to raise the devil to find treasure, were of the same category as the ritual used at the conjuring, and both types were highly illegal and attempted to use the demonic to acquire material wealth.

"With His Self-Imagined Magic": How the Courts Dealt with Orm's Magical Activities

On 13 October 1741, the city court was finally ready to pass its sentence on the gang of thieves (SATR, Bytingsprotokoll, 1740–1742, fol. 210a–215a, 216b–218b, 224a–226b). The focus in the verdict given by the court was primarily on the many break-ins committed by the different people in the group. There was, however, some consideration of the magical activities of Orm and Gjeldvolden. The following section examines how the courts addressed these magical activities.

In the verdict, it is stated early on that Orm had used verbal magic and conjuration (*signeri og manen*) which had caused a misuse and a desecration of God's name. With his own evil example, he had deceived others into buying the steel mirror which he wanted to use to chase away the trolls, dragons and ghosts that protected buried goods. All of this, the court stated, was so that he himself would have easier access to practise theft and other ungodly deeds (SATR, Bytingsprotokoll 1740–1742, fol. 225a). The verdict implies that the court viewed any possible treasure found by Orm as theft. This would be in keeping with King Christian V's Norwegian law of 1687, which stipulated that all discovered goods had to be announced in court. This was in order to check whether the goods belonged to a living person. If no one came forward, the goods would be shared between the finder, the owner of the land where they were found, and the state. Failure to announce discovered goods in court was seemingly a widespread practice, but judicially speaking, it was categorized as theft (Christian V 1687:5-9-1–3; e.g.

Dahle Hermanstad 2022:173–179). The city court's mention of ghosts in the charges against Orm is the only instance in which ghosts are mentioned in relation to his activities. It could be that Orm added the ghosts to his confession at a later date, or it could be seen as the court's understanding that ghosts also guarded the treasure, in addition to trolls and dragons.

Rasmus Gjeldvolden was also found guilty of verbal magic, conjuring and the desecration of God's name. The court emphasized that he had used the black book to increase his opportunities to practise theft (SATR, Bytingsprotokoll 1740–1742, fol. 226a). The city court sentenced Orm to be hanged as a thief; meanwhile, Gjeldvolden was to serve a lifetime of forced labour at Munkholmen fortress.

As the sentences were appealed by the prosecutor Lorents Nideros, the thieves ended up in the hands of the leading burghers of Trondheim, who manned the Magistrate court. The verdict of the Magistrate is more extensive but also more sceptical of Orm's treasure hunting and magic. It stated that he had pretended to practise treasure hunting so that he could deceive others to join him on these excursions and then make them his accomplices in theft. In addition, it emphasized that he, through numerous acts of "self-imagined magic" (*selv opdiktede koglerier*), had attempted to convince his associates and others that he was "wise" and understood parts of the art of witchcraft (*hexekonsten*) (SATR, Rådstuerettsprotokoll 1738–1743, fol. 171a). The formulation of the Magistrate's verdict is interesting because it highlights Orm's attempts at appearing to be a cunning man. To strengthen their point the Magistrate listed the activities they were thinking of: the public display of the black book to Gjeldvolden, the magical mirror, the attempt to rediscover Nitter's cannister, and his presence at the attempted devil conjuring. The verdict of the Magistrate allows some insight into a process where Orm, seemingly actively, partook in forming the narrative that surrounded him. Through his various activities, and contacts with other wise men, the narrative surrounding him became connected to what Timothy Tangherlini calls the narrative tradition of cunning folk – a narrative tradition closely related to, but still different from, that of the witch (Tangherlini 2000:296). The Magistrate's formulation informs us, then, that one way of becoming a cunning man was to repeatedly portray oneself as one through networks, activities and in public situations (see also Davies 2003:84–87; de Blécourt 1994:297; Johannsen 2018:41). Over time, repeated engagement with "cunning activities" could develop a rumour about a person's knowledge and experience and cause people to seek them out. To repeatedly participate in such activities was therefore a way of influencing the developing narrative about oneself, although there was always an element of external evaluation by others in the community, which implied a risk that the narrative could turn into a witch narrative.

As we can see, the Magistrate's verdict did not outright deny the existence of witchcraft and magic; it simply denied that Orm had mastered it.

Such a sceptical attitude is unsurprising to encounter in the early 1740s. It is clearly established, in both the Norwegian and international historiography of the witchcraft prosecutions, that increased judicial scepticism towards accusations and proof were part of their demise (Næss 1982:256–257; W. Knutsen 2005:601–604; Levack 2016:231–240). In the Magistrate's summary, the attempted devil conjuring was referred to only as an "infuriating spectacle" (*forargeligt spectacul*) without being addressed any further. The Magistrate was so sceptical of the magical elements that these were left out of the final sentencing; and Orm and Gjeldvolden were sentenced to death solely for their thefts and break-ins.

The lacking emphasis on the magical elements in the final verdict is, however, a recurring theme, as we can observe in the two other known treasure-hunting trials from early modern Norway. In 1727, two Sámi men, Thomas and Amund, were put on trial in Senja.[23] They had been digging for treasure in the remnants of old houses, and a rumour had spread that they had found both money and silver. Because of this circulating rumour, they had been granted lodging and food on credit by the locals. During a drunken stupor, one of the Sámi said that the bailiff (*fogd*) had received his part of the share. The bailiff took great offence at this, as the Sámi had not announced their alleged discoveries at the court and they were therefore, judicially speaking, to be considered thieves. Therefore, the claim that they had cooperated with the bailiff could not stand. The bailiff sued them and accused them of being liars; the alleged treasure was barely mentioned and was treated as fiction when it did come up. The bailiff won the case. As the bailiff had sued them, the case was treated as defamation rather than as a trial for fraud (SATR, Senja sorenskriveri, no. 2, 1727–1731, fol. 22a–23a). This is the only case I have found where Sámi were involved in a treasure hunt in Norway. However, in 1682 a man from Finland was fined in Jukkasjärvi in Sweden because of his intention to get a Sámi to help him reveal a treasure buried at the bottom of a bay, by means of "witchcraft" (Edsman 1985:124; Umeå University library, Erik Nordbergs arkiv, vol. 25:43 ab, 63–66).

In 1741, a much more serious trial took place in Follo, close to Christiania (Oslo).[24] A Swede by the name of Anders Bentson had travelled with three others to search for buried treasure in nearby Nesodden. The men had gone up the mountainside and begun digging for money in a pile of rocks. After digging for approximately an hour, they gave up and returned to the boat. After they arrived at the boat, Anders Bentson beat Peder Giellum to death with a wooden pole. When he was questioned by the court, Bentson argued that there had been quarrels within the group as he was unable to locate the treasure. A third member of the entourage testified that Bentson had claimed he knew how to find buried goods. Tensions had been rising within the group, as Bentson had continued to postpone the dig because he felt

the timing was wrong. Most likely, he was waiting for the most "magically potent" time to begin digging. When the work finally began, late in the evening, Bentson gave each of the members a nail which he had collected from execution grounds. As mentioned, anything associated with the corpse of a criminal was seen to hold magical power. After digging for a while, the murder happened as described. Bentson gave no other reason for the murder than that he had become temporarily deranged. The location for the dig had been chosen because some thieves had been executed there some years prior. In addition, Bentson confessed in the court of appeal that they had abandoned the work as they were afraid of ghosts. Although this trial is filled to the brim with material relating to the treasure-hunting activities of the group, these are not mentioned with a single word in the court's decision. It simply states that Anders Bentson had murdered Peder Giellum and was therefore sentenced to death[25] (SAO, Follo sorenskriveri no. A38, 1741–1747, fol. 96a–101a; SAO, Christiania lagting no. A13, 1738–1761, fol. 118a–119a).

Clear similarities exist between these trials and Orm's. The treasure excursions were collective endeavours consisting of a duo and a trio, which emphasizes that treasure hunting was seldom carried out alone (Dillinger 2012:163). Both these two and the treasure hunts carried out by Orm were carried out by outsiders. The Sámi came from Vesterålen and were apparently not permanent residents of the area where they were put on trial. The trial of the Sámi is also another example of how treasure digging, and its alleged discoveries, could be used for fraudulent purposes. The treasure magician Anders Bentson was a Swede and evidently an outsider to Oslo, where he resided. There was an assumption within the group that he had experience and knowledge concerning how to find and acquire buried goods. This is reminiscent of the expectations the investors in the magical mirror had of Jacob Orm. In a similar vein, the treasure hunters in Follo were scared of encountering ghosts, who were strongly connected to ideas about treasure in the early modern period. Orm, on the other hand, had to seek out tools to chase away the dragons and trolls who guarded the buried treasures he was after. Lastly, all the participants were male. These trials, of course, share many characteristics with trials of treasure hunters in other European countries.

Surviving on the Margins of Society: Magic and Economic Behaviour

This in-depth presentation of "the great thief conspiracy of Trondheim" has made it obvious that they weren't all that great. The number of successful, profitable break-ins they managed to pull off is impressive, but eventually it all came crumbling down. Although only the three leaders were executed

(after a series of royal pardons), the remaining members lived out their lives in forced labour and misery. The group itself consisted of people of different nationalities and backgrounds with the common denominator that most were outsiders to the city of Trondheim. Many of them also scraped by amongst the lower social and economic stratum of the city. Their difficult situation was most likely what initially led them to carry out the thefts and break-ins.

It seems that at least the leaders Jacob Orm, Ole Ingebrigtsen Eggen and Ole Christophersen Blix managed to support a decent lifestyle due to their crimes. Orm submitted a list detailing how he had spent the money he had acquired and listed 215 *riksdaler*. Furthermore, he stated that an undisclosed amount had been spent on his house and children (SATR, tyver, mordbrennere, Orm to the Magistrate 21 July 1741). Ole Christophersen Blix, on the other hand, accounted for 185 *riksdaler* that he had acquired within the span of the year he worked with the group (SATR, tyver, mordbrennere, Ole Christophersen Blix to the Magistrate 22 June 1741).

This prompts the question why several members of the group, and especially Jacob Orm and Rasmus Gjeldvolden, engaged in treasure hunting and the use of black books. Orm even attended an attempted conjuring of the devil. One would assume that all attention from the authorities was bad attention when committing over twenty break-ins primarily targeting the wealthy in the span of a decade. It also prompts the question as to why so many people were willing to invest in Orm's treasure hunts, and why the authorities seemingly did nothing about him even though he had a reputation as a cunning man and treasure hunter.

In recent decades there has been an increasing tendency to use the theory of limited good when explaining economic behaviour and its relation to witchcraft and magic (e.g. Tschaikner 2006:135; Davies 2008:192f; Klaniczay 2017:120; Ostling 2013:320). In particular, Johannes Dillinger has used this theory to explain why treasure hunters were not accused of witchcraft and why the authorities had an ambivalent relationship towards them (Dillinger & Feld 2002:182; Dillinger 2012:190–197; Dillinger 2015:120–121). The following discussion builds on this scholarship and attempts to demonstrate its applicability to the Norwegian treasure trials.

In short, George Foster argued that the theory of limited good is applicable to study the economic rationale and behaviour of people living in traditional agrarian societies. As the name suggests, Foster argued that he could observe an economic mentality in these agrarian societies which operated as if everything existed in a limited amount, which could never increase (Foster 1965:301). One man's gain was therefore to everybody else's detriment. This led to a mentality of social conformism which punished aggressive attempts at rapid economic accumulation within the village, and therefore, within the system of limited good. It was of course possible to

work towards enriching oneself inside this system, but it would come with social stigma (Dillinger 2015:120). It was possible to introduce money and other forms of material wealth into the system of limited good from the outside, however. This could be achieved by taking jobs in a distant city, or, as Foster explores – by finding treasure or winning the lottery. Newly acquired wealth which was difficult to explain would be rationalized through treasure tales. Although this new wealth might be frowned upon, it was not considered antisocial or detrimental to the community. As Keith Thomas has found, the newly rich in England during the Tudor era could be nicknamed "Hill-diggers", implying that their wealth came from finding treasure rather than a nose for business (Thomas 1991:280). Such nicknames and false designations of where wealth originated helped maintain the idea of limited good and a static economy (Foster 1964:42). Rapid acquisition of wealth was therefore not explained through protocapitalist entrepreneurialism but through either antisocial behaviour or luck.

Even if there was a developing market economy during the early modern period, many of the constraints of the old system were still in place. The monopolies of mercantilism and the guilds' tight grip on artisan labour are but two examples of objects that stood in the way of aggressive social and economic climbing. It was of course not impossible, and there are many success stories, but they came with a cost. Up-and-coming people with wanton disregard for socionormative restrictions on economic behaviour could be suspected of witchcraft because they went against the notion of limited good and were thought to infringe on the communal pot. This was a potential fate for the "rich witch" (Dillinger 2022:219). The clearest difference between Foster's theory based on modern societies and the early modern period is that in the latter, magic was to an even greater extent very much real, and it could be used to circumvent the obstacles placed on economic behaviour.

For as several scholars have noted, there is without a doubt a clear economic element connected to witchcraft and magic (e.g. Tangherlini 2000:283; Dillinger 2017:21). The witches accused of *maleficium* were often people who in some way or another were accused of infringing on the communal or personal good. They could be accused of stealing milk from their neighbours by using a *trollkatt* (Lecoutex 2013:91f).[26] Or they could be accused of having used a *drache* to steal money from their neighbours (Dillinger 2022:212). The economic behaviour of the witch was antisocial in nature. She took as hers that which belonged to her neighbours; in addition, she was capable of total destruction. Cunning people were in a more ambivalent position. As argued by Tabitha Stanmore, it is likely that the market of magical services in which cunning people operated was influenced by protocapitalist tendencies (Stanmore 2023:93). As the sale and acquisition of magical services were judicially outlawed, there were no state-sanctioned

regulations concerning their price. Supply, demand, the difficulty of the service, and the status of the practitioner most likely played roles in setting the price (see also Davies:2007:84–87). However, cunning folk often operated within the system of limited good. Their job was seldom to introduce new wealth or fortune; it was rather to restore that which had been damaged or lost – as is evident through the practices of healing, counter-witchcraft, and finding lost goods. Aggressive economic behaviour from cunning folk, or antisocial behaviour in general, could change the narrative that surrounded them such that they could be accused of antisocial witchcraft, although this was rare (Tangherlini 2000:286).

Treasure hunters then present a third alternative that worked outside of the concept of limited good. As we have seen, their activities were strongly bound to the magical and to the conjuring of both demons and spirits. Through these activities, they did not attempt to harvest resources from the world of the living. They used magic to battle for the unlimited resources that were perceived to exist in the spirit world (Dillinger 2017:20–21). Therefore, they did not actively or passively infringe on the community or the idea of limited good. If the treasure hunt failed, this would affect only the treasure-hunting party (given that they hadn't dug up someone else's property). As Dillinger has argued, treasure hunting was a form of economic behaviour practised by those who wanted to amass wealth without violating society's norms concerning increases in material wealth (Dillinger 2012:207). That is why treasure-hunting groups consisted of all social classes, from the destitute poor who wanted a better life to the entrepreneurial middle class who wanted to expand their wealth.

It does seem absurd to discuss treasure hunting as an activity of someone who wanted to climb the economic ladder without stepping on their neighbour's feet, when the case in point is one of the leaders of a gang of thieves. Once again, it would be useful to approach it through Tangherlini's focus on the narrative surrounding a person. It could not have been common knowledge in Trondheim during the 1730s that Orm was a large-scale thief (if it had been he would have been apprehended and prosecuted). This was information that was most likely confined to the circle of his associates (and probably family members). As discussed, Orm gathered a reputation as a treasure hunter and a cunning man during the 1730s. He was bound to the narrative tradition of cunning folk. The example of the magical mirror also demonstrates that he attracted people willing to invest money in magical treasure hunting. Evidently, these men fit more cleanly the bill of people who wanted economic gain without social repercussions. Although the men who invested in the mirror complained to the Magistrate that they had been deceived, this apparently did not happen until Orm was arrested. It is therefore just as likely that the men eyed an opportunity to get their money back from the failed investment. After all, treasure hunts usually failed. That was

the reason treasure magicians usually lived itinerant lifestyles. In this sense, Orm breaks away from Dillinger's categorization of the four typical participants, as he was both leader and magician (Dillinger 2012:148f). The reason Orm was able to stay in Trondheim was that he was an outsider there and an outsider to the places where they dug for treasure. Orm's ambivalent position as a treasure-hunting cunning man meant that he operated both in the sphere that tried to introduce wealth from the spirit world and in the sphere of the cunning people who operated within the limited good. Most importantly, neither his neighbours nor the authorities seemed to think that his magical activities were endangering anyone else. This is also a reason why he was able to attract investors who wanted wealth without antisocial consequences.

The same can be said about the murder trial in Oslo where the participants attempted to gain access to the treasure of executed thieves. The treasure they were after clearly belonged to the world of the dead. The trial of the Sámi demonstrates that the local inhabitants gave them credit because of the alleged treasure. This is unsurprising because the alleged treasure had been reintroduced into society. It was therefore safe for the locals to accept it, as they believed that it was not stolen from the living. Therefore, they did not partake in antisocial behaviour by accepting it as a basis for credit.

One should not underemphasize that Orm's use of magic such as black books and magical mirrors did breach the witchcraft ordinance of 1687; but as we have seen, the Magistrate did not think that magic or witchcraft had been involved at all. Orm and Gjeldvolden were sentenced as thieves. This was due to both the court's scepticism towards witchcraft and to the fact that his treasure hunting, in itself, did not pose any threat to the well-being of society at large. In their ruling, the Magistrate even provided psychological reasoning as to why Orm practised treasure hunting. It was to lure, bait and trick other economically opportunistic people into coming along with him to find wealth – and ultimately make them assist him in what the Magistrate perceived as the true crime – theft.

There is another type of source which can help strengthen this argument: the execution ballads written about Jacob Orm, Ole Ingebrigtsen Eggen and Ole Christophersen Blix. It is estimated that fewer than 200 execution ballads exist for the entirety of Scandinavia (Mcilvenna, Brandtzæg & Gomis 2021:136). Three of them are concerned with the executions of Orm, Eggen and Blix in 1742 (Anonymous 1742a; Anonymous 1742b; Vigant 1742).[27] As a subgenre of the broadside ballad, execution ballads were a commercial product intended for sale, and therefore, they did not spare the macabre details of crimes, which were often presented through sensationalist phrasings (Brandtzæg 2017:30). Execution ballads also contained a highly religious and didactic motif, as they would present the criminal's decline throughout life, a warning to the listener of the dangers of committing

crime and, usually, the criminal as a repentant sinner prepared to meet salvation through God (Krogh 2000:304–313; Brandtzæg 2017:34; Mcilvenna 2022:6).

It would then seem likely that the trial of Jacob Orm presented itself as a treasure trove for the writers of execution ballads in Trondheim with its elements of divination, magical treasure hunting, attendance at an attempted conjuring of the devil and multiple break-ins and thefts. Orm's trial might have presented a rare opportunity to elaborate on a delinquent's decline into the clutches of the devil through an actual case where the perpetrator had, on several occasions, sought contact with the demonic. And yet, all three execution ballads focus almost exclusively on the break-ins and thefts. There are ample references to the three delinquents' close association with the devil, but this was a common phrasing in execution ballads in Denmark-Norway (Krogh 2000:304–307). The one reference to Orm's magical practices is a mention that he desecrated God's name (Anonymous 1742a). This is a formulation which can be found in several trials for witchcraft and magic in the seventeenth century. It is unlikely that the writers of the ballads were unaware of Orm's magical activities and association with the demonic, as they appeared both in the accusations against him and in the confessions he gave. To strengthen this point, one of the execution ballads demonstrates that the author had intimate knowledge of what was happening during the prosecutions. The ballad mentions that Ole Christophersen Blix had broken one of the bars to the window in his cell, which was something he was ultimately charged with and found guilty of doing (1742b). The authors, therefore, seem to have had a good grasp of what was going on. Evidently, they deemed the string of break-ins and thefts as the most sensational and newsworthy.

Based on the previous discussion, I would argue that the lack of focus on magical and demonic aspects in the execution ballads is fitting with the concept of limited good. The reason the focus was on the thefts and break-ins was that they were the clearest forms of Orm's antisocial economic behaviour. He took for personal gain that which rightfully belonged to others. As argued, Orm's magical treasure hunting fell outside this form of antisocial economic behaviour, as the intention was to collect money from the spirit world and the realm of the deceased. Similarly, the attempted conjuration of the devil was about personal economic gain with personal consequences for the conjuror. Although it was an unorthodox way of obtaining wealth, it did not, at least from a purely economic perspective, affect other members of the community. The ballads also point towards this – the thefts were the most outrageous because they directly inflicted economic damage on others.

Treasure hunters were accused of fraud and blasphemy but almost never of witchcraft. As we have seen in the few treasure hunting cases we know of from Norway so far, they were not really accused of treasure hunting at all.

Conclusion

"Now Jacob, farewell! You sinful worm!" (Anonymous 1742b).

This article has presented an in-depth analysis of the activities of Jacob Orm and a group of thieves in Trondheim in the 1730s. It is evident that Orm and several other members of the gang carried out magical treasure hunts in attempts to enrich themselves. As the son of a military sergeant, Orm was most likely raised within a military culture before he moved to Trondheim, but it remains uncertain if that is where he learned about treasure hunting and magic.[28] Orm's actions and practices, at least as these can be perceived through the court records, strengthen the notion that some cunning people could be unscrupulous, fraudulent and criminal. Two of the members of the gang owned a black book, which adds evidence to the argument that the black book/grimoire/*zauberbuch* literature participated in democratizing high magic and spreading it amongst different social classes. Like many other treasure hunters and cunning people, Orm was seemingly on a continuous search for magical items which could aid him, and they seemingly played an important role concerning how he practised his magical skills.

Together with members of both the group of thieves and other investors, Orm went on several journeys to search and dig for treasure. Unfortunately, we are not given information on how he proceeded during the actual digs, but he most likely followed the same pattern seen in other countries: locate the treasure, remove the guardian and bind the treasure. Concerning the recovery of stolen goods, he practised the same type of spells found in many black books. He also participated in the tradition of using the bones of the dead for extra magical potency. As we have seen, there are some clear similarities between the Norwegian trials for treasure hunting and those in other countries. The prevalence of the dragon as a treasure guardian in the Scandinavian trials needs to be further examined when more trials are discovered. All the participants in the treasure hunts in Norway, that we know of so far, were men, and they seem to have stemmed from lower to middle classes of society. Many, but not all, were also strangers and outsiders to the town they resided in or the districts where they were prosecuted. This clearly fits with the European trend where especially the treasure magician was often an outsider to the areas he worked in.

The article has attempted to argue that the treasure hunts can be interpreted through the theory of limited good in Norway as well. The activities of the treasure magicians did not infringe on their neighbours, as their magic attempted to gain money from the spirit world. Therefore, the courts had an ambivalent relationship towards it. Even if treasure hunting featured, no one in the known Norwegian trials was punished for treasure hunting or magic in the final verdict. There were no antisocial elements in their economic behaviour which gave reason to prosecute for witchcraft or magic, as

the norms of limited good had not been broken. The fragile border between acceptable and antisocial was disturbed only when someone considered themselves scammed, swindled or robbed.

Orm then represents a rather extreme example of how deep the ambivalent connection between common magic, cunning folk and the more traditional types of crime could run within a populous urban centre. His treasure hunting gave him a pretext to travel outside the city with other thieves and also with his actual treasure-hunting clients. His presence in the surrounding villages did not necessarily raise any eyebrows – he was accepted by some, ignored by others and was surely an ambivalent figure. This position gave him considerable agency, which he used both in thieving in order to augment his own finances and in offering divination and treasure hunts to his clients. In this sense Orm, like other cunning folk, was able to exist within a sphere between what the state uncomfortably tolerated and that which it rejected.

The court records also give an interesting glimpse into how Orm came to be recognized as a cunning man. As he carried out his treasure hunts and cunning activities, rumours about him spread in the regions surrounding Trondheim. He evidently interacted with the "black market" for magical items and books, and he was in contact with other people reputed to be cunning men. As the court emphasized, it seems as if Orm played an active role in creating the narrative that he was a cunning man. It was this narrative that attracted people to seek him out and join him in business ventures such as treasure hunting and possibly also the attempted conjuring of the devil. This also fits with research from both Scandinavia and other countries which argues that in order to be a cunning man, it was necessary to be, at least partly, a public figure who presented himself as such.[29]

Ultimately, this article has also attempted to demonstrate that we do find trials that are a far stretch from the more common divination, healing and witch trials in reverse that the eighteenth century is mostly known for. There remains a great need for further archival research concerning magic and witchcraft in eighteenth-century Norway.

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[2] Original: "det i Trundheim anholdne store tyvecomplot." Archival references in the running text will be given in short form. The full archival reference is given in the bibliography.

[3] A note on terminology. I refer to *Rådstueretten* as the Magistrate court. *Rådstueretten* was presided by what is known as *magistraten* in Norwegian (from the Latin: "magistratus") which consisted of the president, mayors and often a few city councillors. It was therefore a court where several people acted as judges, but I still refer to their decisions as the decision(s) of "the Magistrate". To avoid confusion with the English magistrate court, the capitalized "Magistrate" is used consistently throughout the article when discussing the actions and sentences of *Rådstueretten*.

[4] Anne-Sofie Schjøtner Skaar is currently pursuing a PhD investigating trials for magic, witchcraft and witch trials in reverse in northern Trøndelag *c.* 1700–1750.

[5] This file contains a multitude of documents relating to the trials. Some of the documents, but far from all, are numbered with letters and/or numbers, but there is no necessary order or relation between the various marked documents. Therefore when referencing to this source, I give the name of the sender and the date.

[6] According to various royal ordinances, soldiers and former soldiers were allowed to practise an artisanal occupation without being part of a guild as long as they did not take on apprentices. Eggen entered such an agreement with the smith's guild in 1734; however, he later took on an apprentice, which led to a legal dispute with the smith's guild in 1737.

[7] *Repslagerveita* can be translated as "Ropemaker Street". Originally, it was primarily inhabited by ropemakers who worked at *reperbanen* at Kalvskinnet.

[8] Original: "[f]orstaar det fantesprog som alle landstrygere haver sig imellem paa det ingen skal kunde forstaae dem…» The word *fant* was frequently used concerning vagrants. It could also be used to denote Romani alongside the contemporary term *tater*. Their father and at least one of the brothers worked as coppersmiths at the copper mill in Ila just outside Trondheim.

[9] As a merchant burgher, Palmberg had privileges to conduct inland trade. He carried out a nomadic sales business drifting long distances away from the town with his goods. When he was arrested together with Johannes Grodt, both were described as "Swedish vagrants" (*svendsche landstrygere*). The term *landstrygere* is an even more general term for vagrants than *fant*, which was used to describe the language the Grodt brothers used to communicate with each other. Palmberg managed to escape during the guarded transportation from Molde to Trondheim.

[10] In Norwegian, the type of outhouse is known as a *stabbur*. Many of the break-ins carried out by the group targeted *stabbur*, as they usually had a door with a lock and key and were used to store food, goods and sometimes valuables.

[11] The deportation of criminals to fishing villages in either Nordlandene or Finnmark was part of the repopulation project that the Danish-Norwegian state pursued from the 1680s. For lesser crimes such as repeatedly having premarital relations, sentences could be limited to three-year periods. For serious offences such as incestual relations, aggravated robberies and theft, life sentences were the norm.

[12] There is a farm in Snåsa with the name Gjeldvolden. It is therefore possible that Jacob Orm and Peder Gjeldvolden came from the same area and knew each other before they moved to Trondheim.

[13] The manuscript is located in the special collections at Uppsala University Library and is called *Gautau-Minning* (c. 1732).

[14] Mette Klyverts was one of Jacob Orm's neighbours. After she became a widow, Orm broke into her house and stole most of what her husband had left her while he knew she was away taking care of a sick person. According to the confessions of other members of the gang, Mette had considered Orm a friend.

[15] The dragoon Ingebrigt had drowned in the river Gaula some years before the trials began in 1741. Gauldalen is a region close to Trondheim.

[16] The Swede lived close by the border on the Swedish side of Femunden Lake, so although Orm did cross into Sweden, he was in regional proximity to Trondheim.

[17] If these treasure troves actually existed, they might have consisted of Orm's personal collections of stolen goods. From his probate record, we learn that he had buried quite extensive amounts of stolen goods in his backyard. Apparently, he also frequently travelled in the areas he mentioned to the Magistrate.

[18] Original: "Jeg maner ved Norden Wind, Westen Wind, Østen Wind, og Synden Wind, soel og maane, himmell og jord, at dend som har taget Hendrich Nitters sølvdaase ikke skall faa nogen roe eller freed, førend dend skaffede Daa-sen tilbage."

[19] It is unclear whether this refers to the region of Norrland in Sweden or the region of Nordlandene in Norway. Røding's last name is also spelled "Ryding" on one occasion.

[20] Latin letters instead of Gothic letters, which was the common writing style in Denmark-Norway at the time.

[21] Original: "Jacob Orm forklarede, at for omtrent 4 aar siden, kom een aftakket svensch lieutnant fra Nordland ved nafn Ryding til ham i hands huus, og bad ham at følge med sig i Ihlen da deponenten skulle faa it artig pus at see af Mads Bing seyelmagers søn, hvilchet hand og giorde, og fuldtes ad med Lieutnant Røding til Jacob Grodtes moders huus i Ihlen, ved kaabermøllen, hvor hand tillige med Lieutenanten forefandt for sig paa it loft Mads Bings søn, Sergiant Anders Povelsen, og Jacob Grodt da Mads Bings søn hafde een bog i haanden kaldet Agripa, og derefter med krid giorde een rundt krids paa gulvet, og der omteignet eendeel latinsche bogstaver, derefter paatog hand een hvid schiorte og træde saa ind i kredsen, og begyndte at tale; hands tale var paa Latin og Graisch som deponenten ikke forstoed, mens dette hørte hand sige af Mads Bing søn paa Dansch, at hand vilde mane diævelen frem som skulde schaffe ham guld, denne hands tale varede saaledes een stund, mens indtet fremkom, hvorpaa hand sagde her bliver indtet mere af, det er best at holde op, og derpaa tog skiorten af sig, og bogen stak hand i lommen…"

[22] The town of Flensburg in Schleswig-Holstein played an especially important role in the shipping traffic to Trondheim.

[23] The surnames (patronyms) of the Sámi men were not entered into the court records during their trial. They are referred to as Thomas Find and Amund Find, meaning Thomas the Sámi and Amund the Sámi.

[24] I am grateful to Ola Teige, who alerted me to this trial.

[25] Bentson was never executed, as he died while in custody.

[26] The *trollkatt* is a rare phenomenon in Norwegian witchcraft trials. I know of only four cases. They were said to steal butter, which they delivered to the witch. W. Knutsen and Riisøy describe them as a Norwegian version of the witches' familiar (W. Knutsen & Riisøy 2007:46)

[27] The three execution ballads concerning Orm, Eggen and Blix have been digitized and are available at https://skillingsvisene.hf.ntnu.no/ (last accessed 6 August 2024). Search using the word: Orm. Original: "Nu Jakob Farvel! Du Syndige Orm". The author of the execution ballad played on Orm's surname, which means worm/snake.

[28] Unfortunately, the court records for the magistrate district of Inderøy are missing for the 1720s. During this period, Orm would have been in his twenties and could perhaps have appeared at local court sessions in Snåsa. As they are missing, we know little about him before he moved to Trondheim in 1730.

[29] There are of course exceptions to this rule as well. In 1710, the clergy in Helgeland cited Peder Christensen Oxtinden at court on several occasions, as they believed that he had practised healing on several villagers. Although they never got their convictions, the sources make it seem like Peder was sought out at the remote Okstinden as he was widely recommended. It does not seem as though he posed as a healer.

Coming to Terms with Dreams in the Early Nineteenth Century

Alf Arvidsson

Abstract

The clergyman Pehr Stenberg (1758–1824) in his autobiography frequently relates his and other people's dreams and attempts to interpret them and makes possible connections to actual happenings. As a scholar he is sceptical about their knowledge value but cannot reject them entirely, so he goes into exploratory discussions of the relation between dreams and reality. In this article the use of dream narratives in social interaction, his use of dreams as a rhetorical device, his reactions to his dreams and reflections about his reactions are studied, besides his ways of discussing the ontology of dreams.

Keywords: Dreams, dream narrative, autobiography, divination, personal narrative, Pehr Stenberg

In August 1809, the Reverend Pehr Stenberg (1758–1824) was taken as a prisoner of war/hostage by Russian troops leaving Umeå parish and town in a northern-bound retreat after some months of occupation. After a few days he and the other hostages were released, and he was able to return to his family. This frightful experience would certainly disturb his general sense of trust and security, although he had his devout faith in God as a source of hope. Some time afterwards, however, he connected this experience to a series of strange dreams he had had the previous spring, and in retrospect he interpreted them as forebodings of his later predicament. This was done in the format of a manuscript titled *Besynnerliga drömmar* (Strange dreams) which he wrote somewhere between August 1809 and June 1815.[1] He starts by relating the dreams, followed by the story of how he was captured, and he ends the manuscript with attempts to interpret the dreams as foreboding the events. He makes no effort to discuss the ontological status of dreams but states a connection between dreams and reality.

This was not the only time Stenberg was thinking intensely about the nature of dreams. In his unfinished autobiography *Pehr Stenbergs Levernesbeskrivning* (henceforth PSL), a life-long project he started around 1780 when he wrote at some 10–20 years' distance, using letters and notes for

support, he discusses dreams and stories of dreams time and time again. The work itself is a vast cornucopia of personal experiences and reflections of all aspects of everyday life. His position as a peasant boy who had the opportunity to study to become a priest and spent most of his adult life as a chaplain in his home parish makes his manuscript of 1,800 printed pages a unique source of cultural history.[2] Stenberg can be seen as a mediator between the peasant milieu of his upbringing and the contemporary academic worldview he represented from his education and the official position he held in church and society. From time to time this results in comments and explanations of popular customs and beliefs, aimed at the studied reader. One recurrent topic that puts his layman's everyday experiences in a challenging relationship to his educated position is dreams, their status as experience and knowledge, and how to explain them. Stenberg frequently returns to the problematic status of dreams and devotes some effort to defending the choice to give them attention despite their estimated low truth value.

> My reader will undoubtedly find me very vain and silly, speaking so often of my dreams as if I had trusted much in them. It may seem so and indeed in part be true; because who is not in some way a little childish and vain. But that is far from any real belief or trust in them. However, I have not avoided observing dreams that have seemed peculiar in order to see if they would be fulfilled in any way, and I have to admit that actually, what I have dreamt has often happened to me, even on the same day […] it is my thought that, although anyone who trusts dreams is more than stupid, one should not completely despise them all but let time explain them. And besides, as a human you are not always such a master of your thoughts that something contrary to your intentions will not sneak in, in connection to some explanations of them that you supposedly may have heard. And since I have promised to record not only what happened to me but also my thoughts at all times as I remember them, it also is my duty to speak of my dreams and my thoughts about them.[3]

There are peculiarities that put dreams in a complicated relation to reality, and humans are not always in control of their thoughts. This makes dreams a phenomenon Stenberg is trying to understand. In a larger perspective, since he tries to connect dreams as experienced to the belief in a God by applying a method of observation and scientific reasoning, he is practising a form of "vernacular religion" (Bowman & Valk 2014) by trying to reconcile different kinds of knowledge systems as they contribute to his ways of thinking on the subject. In this article I will study Stenberg's ways of making sense of dreams by analysing how he represents individual dreams and dream interpretations, and his general thoughts on the subject.

Material and Method

As part of the editorial work in publishing the PSL, I made an index of topics by combining a close reading with a computerized search of the manuscript

file for instances of keywords; thus I have a deep general knowledge of the autobiography. For this article I have once again identified all the passages where Stenberg writes of dreams and dreaming. He tells of 28 dreams of his own, and there are 10 instances of others telling their dreams. For 15 of the dreams there are interpretations, and for 19 (some overlapping) there are also some kind of consequences told (a mood installed, attention to certain things aroused). Furthermore, in 15 cases there is also a kind of metacommentary from Stenberg where he tries to make sense of dreams and dreaming. This division of the material has been one leading principle in the analysis and for the disposition of the article, although it is subordinated to the major aims and questions. I have made very rough translations into English, which means that the eighteenth-century vocabulary and word order of the PSL may produce a strange impression in some places.

I have also used other manuscripts by Stenberg: briefly, his dialect glossary from 1804, and the separate manuscript *Besynnerliga drömmar*. Stenberg clearly had ambitions to take part in the national scientific discussions but hardly anything was published during his lifetime; small and large manuscripts have been found and published posthumously, but he also mentions others which have been lost.[4]

Dreams as a Topic in Culture Studies

The study of dreams spans over many disciplines. I will here restrict myself to my immediate references and research contexts. Dreams and dreaming have had a perennial but marginalized position in folklore studies, being situated sometimes as beliefs, sometimes as narratives, but never with a central position in the respective fields of research. Carl-Herman Tillhagen, who as curator of the folklore archive at Nordiska Museet, Stockholm, had a broad overview of Swedish folklore documentation, in his survey of divination folklore (1968) noted that very few narratives of dreams had been recorded from folk tradition. A possible explanation might be a lack of traditionalized dream narratives, stories that have passed from personal experience to the collective retelling which for long time was a prerequisite for classifying a story as folklore. Tillhagen's survey is as stated focused on magic techniques and the folklore presented is dominated by general statements rather than narratives.

A later work is Annikki Kaivola-Bregenhøj's *Drømme gennem tusinde år* (1986), giving a historical survey as well as drawing upon Danish tradition records. A team of Nordic folklorists supervised by Kaivola-Bregenhøj and Ulf Palmenfelt in 1992 published an edited volume in Swedish on "Dreams and Culture", in part drawing upon literature and archived folklore recordings, in part upon a questionnaire. Palmenfelt notes (1992:59) how Swedish folklore beliefs about dreams mainly draw upon two traditions: the belief in being persecuted by nightmares, and the belief in dreams as divination, either spontaneous

or induced by eating "dream herring" or sleeping on seven varieties of flowers. Kaivola-Bregenhøj has continued doing research on contemporary dream narration (2012), and also together with Carsten Bregenhøj supplied the entry on dreams in the *Enzyklopädie des Märchens* (2010), where Elliot Oring also gives a summary of dream theory and dream interpretation (2010).

A cross-cultural perspective on dreams and dreaming intersecting with religious frameworks makes up the structure for interdisciplinary volumes such as *Dream Cultures: Exploration in the Comparative History of Dreaming* (Shulman & Stroumsa 1999), *Dreams: A Reader on Religious, Cultural and Psychological Dimensions of Dreaming* (Bulkeley 2001) and the German/English *Hundert Jahre "Die Traumdeutung*" (Schnepel 2001), which despite the title's reference to Sigmund Freud's work takes a non-Eurocentric perspective and presents how dreams have different status as knowledge and reality across the world, as does the special issue on "Anthropological Approaches to Dreaming" of the psychology journal *Dreaming* (Stewart 2004). The more recent edited volume *Dreams, Dreamers, and Visions: The Early Modern Atlantic World* (Plane, Tuttle & Wallace 2013) specifically discusses the role of dreams in structuring historic change, that is, dreaming which served as impetus for change or for the understanding of social changes within the time span 1450–1800.

Jean-Claude Schmitt (1999) in the Shulman & Stroumsa volume summarizes the role played by dreams in the historical development of "Christian individuality", using texts by medieval Western scholars. His general impression is "a strong and basic distrust of dreams" (Schmitt 1999:276), with the various positions of seeing dreams as a subcategory of visions, that is, a divine origin, dreams as tricks of the devil, and the concept of dreams come true as a topic of interest. The religious system of explanations was not to be challenged until Descartes in his *Treatise on Man* (1633) reduced dreaming to the individual, the brain and the nervous system (Schmitt 1999:281). The individualization of dreams would be furthered during the eighteenth century. Phyllis Mack (2013), starting with an epiphanic dream reported by the Irish physician and Quaker John Rutty (1697–1775), has discussed enlightened eighteenth-century perspectives on dreaming among Quakers and Methodists, for whom dreams were considered a means for individual conversion. Rutty, in his autobiography written close to his death, and in yet another manuscript, relates how in 1754 he had a dream where "God enlightened his understanding" that made him change his ways of living. "Rutty's account foregrounds two elements that characterize many texts of the period: a vagueness about the nature and origin of dreams or visions and a focus on the emotions generated by the dream rather than the dream's specific message" (Mack 2013:208). Mack also paints a general picture of views on dreams in Rutty's time: "Dreams were a universal source of fascination even though there was no general consensus about their nature. In popular

and learned discourse, dreams were defined as predictive or prophetic, signs of artistic inspiration and also of indigestion. […] Popular street literature attributed dreams to demonic possession or a witch's spell, and dreams could also be 'caught' like a contagious disease" (Mack 2013:209). According to the eighteenth-century philosopher William Smellie, in Mack's words, "the activity of our unconscious selves is a reflection of our true character. […] though we may lie, our dreams tell the truth, and we are therefore responsible for the acts and emotions of our dream life even though consciousness, will, and agency are absent" (Mack 2013:212).

An interesting parallel to Stenberg's work is established when Mack positions Rutty in his contemporary context.

> Rutty composed an account of his dream as a man of the Enlightenment addressing other scientists. As such, he was careful to present himself as an agnostic on the question of supernatural origins, despite his obvious desire to proclaim the spiritual significance of the event: "It is recommended to their consideration, whether … the instantaneous change of temper from a morose and perverse to a sweet state above observed … do not exceed the ordinary power of nature … and if they allow this … consider how far the answer of the prayer . . . may not imply a supernatural interposition. (John Rutty, A Faithful Narrative of a Remarkable Visitation by a Physician, London: James Phillips, 1776:9–10, quoted in Mack 2013:221).

Mack notices a similar ambivalence in other British eighteenth-century writers, with different positions taken in different genres. "The Scottish writer and editor of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* William Smellie wrote confidently of the relationship between dreaming and divine Providence and sceptically about dreams as spiritual messages or prognostications. But in his personal memoir, he revealed his interest in dreams as vehicles of communication between the living and the dead, making a pact with a friend that the first one to die would reappear within a year" (Mack 2013:222). And he also mentions Mary Shackleton Leadbeater, an Irish Quaker writer who "criticized dreams as superstition in her book *Annals of Ballitore*, a study of local folkways, but in her private journal, she revealed a far more complex attitude toward her own dreams" (Mack 2013:222). Mack in her conclusion stresses the rising notion of the individual identity as a frame for the understanding of dreams.

> The writers and religious seekers who explored the phenomenon of dreaming failed to resolve the questions they themselves had raised, but they did complicate the idea of the bounded self that is said to characterize late eighteenth-century culture. Once dreams began to be attributed to a newly discovered unconscious self rather than the activity of spirits, a part of one's identity became inaccessible to the conscious mind at the same cultural moment when the concept of an integrated individual identity was becoming more clearly defined. Eighteenth-century dream theory and interpretation thus promoted not just new knowledge about the self but new levels of mystery and anxiety. (Mack 2013:224)

A recent contribution is the work of the anthropologist Adriënne Heijnen on dreaming in Iceland (2013), which applies a long historical perspective, from early medieval to contemporary society. She aims at a social theory of dreaming, where cultural understandings of personhood, shared knowledge and experience are building blocks for our dreams. Of special interest is how she characterizes views on dreams in post-Reformation Iceland among contemporaries of Stenberg: dreams can be conveyors of truth and thus worthy of collective interpretation, and they can be seen as testimonies of Christian devotion (Heijnen 2013:82). In the final chapter, she cites the anthropologist Vincent Crapanzano on the "messiness" of societies having several authoritative theories of dreaming, which are not fully compatible with each other (Crapanzano 2001:233). Her conclusion is that the interplay of dreams and cosmology restricts the number of theories, and identifies four cosmologies currently circulating in Iceland: "traditional", "Christian", "modernist", and "post-modern" (Heijnen 2013:213). She holds that all four can be drawn upon by the same individual, since a manifold of ideas, different ways of communicating them, and different social institutions promoting them make the co-existence possible.[5] Although her foursome is not applicable here, the co-existence of several kinds of plausible explanations and the (easy or uneasy) process of integrating them is a more general problem.

Dreams are taken up as an integrated part of a person's total worldview in the Finnish folklorist Juha Pentikäinen's study of the Karelian peasant woman Marina Takalo (Pentikäinen 1978). On the one hand he classifies her as a "Homo religiosus", sensible to supernatural experiences and soon to give a religious interpretation of everyday events as omens, signs or results of supernatural mechanisms, while she also was a rationalist always seeking an explanation (Pentikäinen 1978:335) and sometimes accepting a "natural" explanation for many experiences rather than accepting a supernatural interpretation. As for dreams, she grew up in a community where almost every[body]" judged their dreams, but she often took the opposite view to the collective tradition in interpretation (Pentikäinen 1978:137).

The specific contribution of this article to this vast and diverse research field may lie in the ethnographic quality of Stenberg's late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century notations of dream narratives, and his attempts to reconcile vernacular thought, Christian doctrine and a scientific attitude, taken as an expression of his self-understanding as a studied person contributing to general knowledge.

Umeå Parish and Town in the late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries

Pehr Stenberg (1758–1824) spent most of his life in the Umeå region, first as a child and adolescents up to the age of twenty-one (1858–1779). After a

ten-year tenure in Finland with studies and exams at Åbo University interspersed with positions with gentry families, he spent the rest of his life as a priest in the Umeå region. This included a position as town priest in Umeå (1792–1804) followed by an economically more solid position as a second priest under the vicar for the Umeå country parish up to his death.

Up until the fourteenth century the Umeå region was the northernmost part of Swedish-speaking settlement and continued to be a bridgehead for the royal exercise of power during the subsequent expansion northwards and into Sami-speaking Lapland. In the 1620s four new townships were established in northern Sweden (Umeå, Piteå, Luleå and Torneå), with Umeå becoming the official centre of Västerbotten County, established in 1638. Agriculture, hunting and fishing were the main means of subsistence and taxation for the peasantry. The relatively meagre production meant that the countryside never had been of any interest to the Swedish nobility; hence, local society was organized around villages of freehold family farms, with the parish as the administrative unit and the vicar in a central position exercising state control. In the second half of the eighteenth century the town of Umeå, circled by a wooden fence with tollgates, had a population of roughly 900; a regulated number of merchants (including fishers) and tradesmen with families and servants made up the major part, with the county governor and his staff and a mayor with staff representing public office. The annual hiring of servants made interaction between town and country families possible.

Stenberg grew up in a peasant home in the village of Stöcke, some five kilometres from the township and ten kilometres from the parish church. As an orphaned peasant child his father had come as a farmhand and eventually married a family daughter; they would later be heads of the household. His father had urban connections through second cousins in Umeå as well as in Åbo, and an uncle worked as a customs servant in the county harbour – all relations that would be important for the young Stenberg. As a child, he learned to read from the family bible with assistance from his mother – a common pattern for the Swedish peasantry. A long period of illness gave him much time to study the bible, and as physically not so fit for agricultural work it was decided he would go to the town school – primarily for a possible career in book-keeping, but he took an interest in becoming a priest and obtained the parish peasants' consent to collect alms for higher studies.

The parish was part of the diocese of Härnösand, inaugurated in 1772 by separation from Uppsala. With the bishop and the diocesan administration at some 250 kilometres distance and with a small local clergy, theological discussions were not particularly advanced in the Umeå region. Neither was popular sentiment receptive to new religious currents, or any critical evaluations of established systems of knowledge in general, but maintained a conservative view through the responsibility placed on the family patriarchs to uphold the evangelical-Lutheran worldview. This was controlled by

annual catechetical hearings in the home (one of Stenberg's regular duties). As a priest, Stenberg never questioned the clerical hierarchies and stuck to the established theology; when a deputy priest took up "Kant's philosophy" at a gathering in 1800, Stenberg and the other clergy rejected the ideas out of hand (Pettersson 2023:143f).

The provincial physician Daniel Næzén founded a reading society in Umeå in the late 1790s, but this had few members. Stenberg did not join from the beginning due to the high cost, but eventually joined (without leaving any significant traces in his autobiography). He also distanced himself from Næzén in his autobiography, considering him "egenkär" (vain, self-complacent; 3:368, 3:451). In a private letter in 1800 Næzén characterized Umeå as being "short of people and even more short of lovers of reading. Not even the priests have any knowledge, they lag behind half a century in literature and have knowledge only of the 'trivial scholastica' needed to give them their position".[6]

Stenberg thinks of himself as a "philosopher", and despite being placed in the geographic periphery and never advancing beyond a subordinate position, he clearly has ambitions to contribute to scientific production. A dialect glossary, a treaty on hunting methods, a topographic description of Umeå parish are other works that have been posthumously published after being rejected in his lifetime;[7] furthermore, in his autobiography there are sudden digressions on plants, animals, geology etc. Still, as the museologist and historian of ideas Richard Pettersson notes in his essay on Stenberg's autobiographical project, he had no clear direction in his quest for knowledge but hoped that later generations would find his observations useful (Pettersson 2023:122, 138).

Dreams in Everyday Interactions

Why and how do people narrate their dreams to others? Besides the central status that dreams have in Freudian psychoanalysis, the popular practice of dream-telling can have several uses and functions. The Finnish folklorist Leea Virtanen, in an analysis of contemporary material, lists six causes: to shake off a nightmare, to entertain listeners, to speak of sexuality, to share a strong experience, to intervene in others' lives, to draw attention (Virtanen 1989). All these can in one way or another be found in Stenberg's text. As for the social life of dream narratives, I propose the process to be divided into the immediate telling, the interpretation (this is often made in conversation with the intimate relatives, or a local expert), and the subsequent retellings – this is when the dream is re-evaluated as having a more permanent relevance, for instance when it is not forgotten ("must have something to say"), when it is connected to actual subsequent events that makes it a dream come true, or when it is ascribed an extraordinary status such as "a vision" or "a prophecy". Situations actualising the retelling of a dream could be the

déjà-vu experience making it appear true, someone else's dream telling, or discussions of dreams in general (or perhaps, when a conversational theme brings its recurrence in a personal dream to attention).

Stenberg gives no clues to how his upbringing introduced him to the concepts of dreams and dreaming, but he gives some examples of how others tell of their dreams and sometimes try to interpret them. There are at least ten different instances where Stenberg relates how others speak of dreams. The situation can be one of somebody wanting to be comforted or to handle an agitated mood. Employed as a preacher with General Baron Carpelan, he was once addressed by his niece, Miss Flemming.

> The following day, Miss Flemming told of a dream she had, when she thought the general was dead, and that he was hardly grieved by his relatives and me, and she feared for its fulfilment and that she was worried about losing her uncle. But I begged her not to pay any attention to dreams, and wanted to convince her that he would certainly be missed, also by me, although she seemed to want to reproach me for the opposite; this worried me, because I was definitely not that callous. (2:194f)

To speak of dreams can also be a rhetorical device to get a covert message through or be a way of teasing. In November 1785 Baroness Carpelan tells of a recent dream where a manor building burns down. She then makes this interpretation: "They say that when you dream of fire, it means love; it will be interesting to see what kind of wedding we will have here." Stenberg comments as if this was some kind of insinuation: "I will never believe this prophecy will become true regarding me. At least I have not yet any inclination thereof" (2:104). One year later speculations of Stenberg and the spinster Miss Flemming as a possible match give an opportunity for an acquaintance to relate how he had dreamt Stenberg married her. Since Stenberg is not fond of the idea and under significant stress from his employer, this information "increased my sorrow rather a lot, so I secretly shed many tears" (2:280).[8]

Yet another way of using dreams in conversations is to present deliberate thoughts, ideas and provocations as dreams (cf. Hesz 2014 on indirect social criticism by relating dreams). Also with Baron Carpelan, he initially has good relations with to the baron's middle-aged unmarried niece, but this cools off. When one of his pupils in the family tells him of a dream, Stenberg sees this as a trick.

> My disciple Wilhelm Paul remarked that on the 8th he had had a dream in which he thought, he said, that Miss Flemming, his aunt, had threatened that she would put things to the General [Baron Carpelan] so that, for my unsteadiness, instead of 33 dalers 16 shillings I would get just 33 *plåtar* [= 11 dalers] as my annual priest salary. I pretended not to care about this story of his; but since I could not see any reason for him having such a dream, about things of which he had no knowledge whatever, I came to suspect Miss Flemming of having persuaded him to tell me this under the

guise of a dream, in order to test whether self-interest would not bring me to re-install myself in her friendship […] However I did not take any notice of this but took up the story as a genuine dream. (2:201)

A parallel is to be found when his father writes in a letter in 1782: "Sometimes we thought that you would come home, and dreamed several times, that you were back at home" (1:448). Framing his wish for Stenberg's return as a dream emphasizes the paternal longing, and perhaps suggests a feeling of deep sincerity behind his recurring pleas for Stenberg to return.

One interesting point is that Stenberg tells of how others relate their dreams, but he never mentions that he told of his dreams to others. Was he reserved about letting others know what he dreamt about? Was it a matter of keeping up his image as an educated man by not inviting others to discuss on equal terms? In his autobiography, he invites the presumptive well-educated reader to be his discussion partner. Writing of his own dreams, he has many thoughts of their relation to reality, their emotional effects and the problem of whether interpretation is possible, and how.

The Rhetorical Use of Dreams in Stenberg's Autobiography

Sometimes Stenberg relates a dream without giving it any further interpretation or comment, but as included in the autobiography it contributes to the narrative of his life. During all his study years and his first years as a serving clergyman, he is occupied with the question of finding a woman suitable as wife to a priest – a quest which is hampered by his low social background and status. When appointed as a private tutor with the family of an army major belonging to the nobility, he fell in love with one of the young women and interpreted quick glances and ambiguous utterances as signs of reciprocated emotions. He also wrote down a "curious dream" he had one night, where he was awakened by a kiss and found himself surrounded by all four sisters of the family speaking to him and looking affectionately at him. Then they are discovered, and he is summoned by their father to marry one of them (1:320). The following month he has yet another dream where she kisses his hand and speaks tender words. This time he comments that he has never trusted dreams (1:326). In 1:337, 1:398, and 2:79, he confirms his romantic affection for these young girls of the nobility by telling of dreams about them.

The angry father also returns in his dreams. "I dreamed that the Major had been made aware of my love and was going to beat me etc., and I worried; but when I woke and found it was a dream, I was glad but found it necessary to be cautious, since it could become true if he got to know" (1:450, yet another example at 1:444). Thus, the social divide he aspires to cross is further visualized; he not only has to win the affection of a girl above his status, but also to overcome the employer's aversion to the idea of letting an employee into the family and the social group.

Reminiscences of dreams sometimes occur in his text, emphasizing the narrative value of their content despite their dubious ontological status. He would be reminded of the dream of the four sisters (1:320) in further meetings with the sisters in February 1782 and again in April 1783 (1:383, 1:466). This is one of Stenberg's narrative devices – there are many references back in time: "as I had noticed before…" and a page reference for comparison. Sometimes it is clearly stated that he made the connection in the narrated time, but sometimes one may wonder whether this connection was realized only at the time of writing.

Dreams can also be retold for their metaphorical use. One striking example is when Stenberg has a temporary position with a vicar outside of Umeå. He fits in quite well with the vicar and his wife, but at the end of his term they have a disagreement over his salary, and he is suddenly out in the cold. To him, this makes sense in retrospect an account of a recent dream.

> Through this, the dream I had the night before the day of salary payment was fulfilled. I jumped from a roof down on a dung heap, but without getting dirty. So, in just a moment I lost the respect of the master and mistress, although completely innocent, and in their eyes I fell deep down from my hitherto well-known noble principles, and this in the last days of my stay with them; but it did not worry my conscience, although I admit I wished I could have kept their appreciation. But when this could not be, I put on an air of innocence, did not react to their sulkiness, and was just as merry in their company as before. Neither did their opinion of me hurt my image in the public eye, although they told Major Turdfjäll [later on to be Stenberg's father-in-law] and several others of my supposed ingratitude at the salary, etc. But luckily enough, nobody was so concerned and pitiful about the damage to their purse as they themselves. (3:166)

In his own view, he is clean and there is nothing about him to criticize, but those around him look at him as if he were standing in a dung heap. As a metaphor this dream can stand not only for this situation, but also more generally for how he often finds himself unjustly accused although innocent or with no control over circumstances.[9] In this case, he can triumphantly state that public opinion was on his side. His anxiety over his precarious situation – a social standing but no safety net should he fall from grace – recurs in other dream interpretations.

> At this time, I dreamed one night that I was standing on the Degerberg sands, the beach by the road just south of Sörmjöle village. I saw, during a horrible storm, from the sea large columns of water rise to the sky; but I was totally free and secure where I stood. From this, I hoped to escape all persecution if any unknown storms should grow upon me. (3:299)

Seeing the storm as a symbol of human life, a well-known metaphor, is also an unforced interpretation. The previous narrative is soon followed up with a similar one:

I once again had a dream on the 27th. I imagined myself standing on the harbour street and saw a ship on the river that was thrown here and there by the storm, in high speed, circling around and heaving up and down, until it finally stopped. This dream to me seemed to be the most vivid image of human life; and I remembered the many changes I had been through; and thought: who knows how many storms I yet will meet, where I like this ship will be tossed to and fro. (3:304)

These dreams and Stenberg's interpretations clearly reinforce the general ethos of his autobiography, where the constant uncertainty and anxiety of a voyage into an unknown world would be a convenient trope for a life history.

The Emotional Effects of Dreaming

One thing Stenberg notices about dreams is their ability to install moods that linger on through the new day. One example is where he is in a melancholic mood and dreams make him feel still more sorrowful the following day (2:180). Another example is told with an excursus on dreams and moods.

In the beginning of November [1792] I had a comforting dream; I was given a large, beautiful and genuine diamond, in public at the Church Square. Such dreams really have no value; but they somehow *mecanice* tune the mood for the day to merriness, just as unpleasant dreams also leave behind unpleasant impressions in the mind. In both cases perhaps for a long while without our being aware of it, causing many of our better or poorer undertakings or ways of thinking, or at least often stamping our speech to a softer or harsher tone. Because when the mind is happy and pleased, everything seems so easy and pleasant, and vice versa. (3:239)

This reciprocal relation between moods in dreams and emotional being is also referred to *en passant* in other cases. One dream is commented on with "I did not put any trust in dreams; but since this had been a sweet wish for some time, this dream cheered me up, and I hoped it would mean something good" (2:79). Another dream leads to the conclusion: "I could not but get jolly and satisfied from such thoughts" (3:56). But sometime it is also the other way around: a childhood memory tells of a drinking man who liked to scare the children. "We ran like hares and took refuge in secret hiding-places as soon as we saw him coming to our houses; we were also frightened in our sleep from the nastiest dreams about him, a fright that followed me until I was a full-grown man, and had a hard time conquering it with the support of my wits." (1:28)

As a young man, he is constantly troubled by the problems of handling his emotional affections for young women, keeping up a high moral standard as becomes a priest, and finding a suitable wife despite his insecure social position. In July 1780, he stays with a noble family, where he is secretly in love with the daughter, and dreams of her during the night.

I imagined that not only did my Miss declare her tenderness and love for me; but also, that her mother Mrs Major Aminof put my Miss's hand in mine, and said that in this way she wanted to reward my good nature. Of course, it is true that I never give any credence to my dreams and I also found this to be a continuation of my brooding and my phantasies before I fell asleep. (1:278f)

However, since he knows that a previous suitor of common background, a Sergeant Mört, has been abruptly driven away, he immediately realizes that he has no prospects of succeeding. This affects his mood when he meets his hosts.

I went to have coffee and breakfast, but stayed as shy and introvert as ever. When I saw the Major's wife, I certainly remembered my sweet dream. But I also found the enormous chasm that separated me from my Miss, and neither did I have any inclination to ford across it in order to incur the same treatment as Mört. This made me somewhat depressed, so I hardly had the courage to say just a few trivialities to my Miss who was most of the time in the hall with me, and least of all did I dare to speak anything of my love, and my glances were insecure and fleeting. I bade farewell and went home. (1:279)

A dream, the impression it brings to Stenberg and his interpretation of it can have a lasting impact on his reactions in various situations for quite a long time. In February 1782, after a year as a private teacher, he is travelling to Åbo to continue his studies and on his way stays one night at the Cautua manor.

The same night I slept well, but in the morning had this curious dream, which I want to tell since I remember it well. I thought I was in a big town or in Åbo, where someone came in the street and pursued me with a rapier in his hand; I ran as fast as I could and hid in a gatehouse. There I seemed to be concealed from him, but suddenly he was close to me and wanted to pierce me; but someone came to my defence and saved me from him; and this person was half-grown, or it was a Professor, at least it was in the house of a professor, that I hid, and thereby escaped from my persecutor's cruelty. I did not reflect upon this unpleasant dream until it was time for breakfast, and the factory owner Mr Timm also told about the dream he had in the morning. And the contents were something like this: He saw two men, one young and one older, on horseback, at least the older one was on horseback. The latter pursued the younger one violently, knocked him off the horse to the ground and treated him very badly. I was amazed by the similarity of our dreams, which made me aware of them. "Oh dear Lord!" I thought, "Perhaps in this way you want to warn me about some impending disaster, so help me, Oh Lord, and save me all my days; because I cannot by myself anticipate and take heed of ruin and misfortune!" Then I left, after giving my thanks, thinking intensely of these dreams, which made me decide to be careful in all my behaviour. (1:386)

This dream of being persecuted is rather soon commented upon as a memory that can influence his emotional state. When he arrives in Åbo, he visits relatives, friends and acquaintances in order to make his arrival known. He is also greeted by fellow students he hardly knew before, and is happy about

their friendly reception of him (1:390). Later on, writing a comment on a friendly letter:

> I was cheered and encouraged by this letter of his and reminded myself gladly of his advice, which I found spoke the noble language of friendship, while many a conceited and self-centred young man would have met them with contempt. I found it wholesome and good to follow; so much more since it reminded me of my dream in Cautua. (1:396)

Still later, in June 1782, he is visited by a fellow student Sundwall who complains of his severe melancholy, and wants Stenberg to comfort him. Stenberg is suspicious of him, thinking this might be a hoax by a gang of students who want to make fun of him. "I also remembered my dream in Cautua, which reminded me to be careful and cautious in everything", but eventually he realizes Sundwall is serious with him (1:415).

Interestingly, Stenberg never mentions the concept of nightmare (Sw. *nattmara, mara-ritt, mardröm*) or the popular belief in the *mara*, a supernatural being that explains nightmares. As he notices other kinds of popular superstition, this omission might seem significant. However, the *mara* concept was not necessarily connected to dreams and dreaming, but rather to the physiological experience of sleeping badly with pressure on the chest, shortage of breath, fatigue (or horses and cattle found exhausted in the stables in the morning) as a result of being ridden in the night by the *mara*. The *mara* would be an unconscious shape-shifting of someone driven by envy, jealousy or illicit lust towards the afflicted person or his/her property; seemingly, Stenberg or his relations made no connection between dreams and this phenomenon.[10] In his 1804 dialect dictionary, *mara* is not explained: he leaves the reader with the comment "What is meant is common knowledge" (Stenberg & Widmark 1966:84).

Dreams and Reality

At the bottom of the interest in and attention allocated to dreams are the questions of their status as knowledge, what kind of knowledge they convey and their trustworthiness. Here, Stenberg struggles with contemporary discourses and tries to handle scholarly lines of argumentation, the Christian worldview he is brought up with and has been educated to be a professional spokesman and inspector for, and everyday laypersons' conversational exchange of ideas, interpretations and attitudes. Besides the categorical denial of dreams having any real content or value whatsoever, there are three paradigms for construing dreams that dominate in Stenberg's writing: *dreams speak of what is important*, *dreams can foretell future events*, and *dreams can be a message from God*. They are not mutually exclusive and quite often overlap.

He relates most of his dreams to his own life, but he is also open for interpretations which speak of general conditions, that is, a more collective prophetic function ascribed to dreams. In February 1783, he dreams of being at the royal castle in Stockholm, where a child is ill. Soon after arrives the news that the Hereditary Prince has passed away. "There you are, I thought: there is my dream and its meaning" (1:455).

The presaging quality can also consist of providing a general metaphor – a rhetorical device that Stenberg as a priest would be familiar with, as in the dream of the storm-tossed ship quoted above (3:304).

Adriënne Heijnen has noticed how a contemporary of Stenberg, the Icelandic minster Reverend Jón Steingrímsson, in his autobiography relates dreams he had from 1778 onwards presaging a catastrophe, possibly a volcanic eruption. Jón Steingrimsson took the dreams as trustworthy, and referred to other honourable men who had similar dreams. He also changed the topics of his sermons following advice given to him in a dream, to preach about following God's laws and rules. The Lakagígar eruption in 1783 was taken as confirmation of his premonitions (2013:79ff).

The relation to reality can also be one of negation, that is, the dream shows the opposite of what is or will be the case in reality (cf. Schiffmann 1992:106). Stenberg dreams of meeting the girl he is courting and she is nice and loving; however, when they actually meet a couple of days later, she is cold and discouraging. "Thus I got to see my girl, according to my dream, but in a mood quite contrary to what she seemed in my dream; as often is the case with dreams." (3:301, 303)

As quoted at the beginning of this article, "in order to see if they would be fulfilled in any way" (1:398) is the key motivation he ascribes to himself for taking notice of dreams. In the following events, Stenberg thinks of them in terms of dreams being fulfilled, or their interpretations turning into real events. One story takes place when Stenberg as a teenage schoolboy was living with his relatives, the Nordström family.

> The Saturday afternoon after St Michael's day Carl Stenman (town organist, a great musician) came and talked, of many things. Cousin Magdalena was not at home, she was doing some errands. Among other things, he told us the following dream: "I thought," he says, "I was on the old ship *Swan*; a great snake came into the cabin where I sat, I struggled very much to kill that snake: but impossible. At last I seemed to be at Valns (the house of Nordström's neighbours) "and the same snake followed me there; I fought for a long time with him; but I don't remember what happened to him in the end, whether I killed him or whether I got away." Aunt then answered; "I can surely interpret that dream for you." "That would be rather nice," Stenman says. "Yes," she continued, "it is true that you are planning to marry; but you don't remember whether you killed the snake or if he got away?" The answer was no. "If you were able to kill the snake, then the courtship and marriage that you now are planning will have a good outcome and ending; but if he got away, then everything is wasted, because it is certain that dreams of snakes and fires are only about love.

And if you seem to put out the fire you imagine you see, all the courtship is in vain; but if you can't put it out, this means success."

Stenman didn't answer this and that was that for this time. But the next day or Sunday afternoon he came again to us and when he had sat for a long time and spoken of many things, he was about to go home; and since Cousin Magdalena now was at home, she would as always follow visitors to the gate; but instead of advancing out, they stopped in the entrance hall. After a while Uncle wanted to go outside but Aunt stopped him by saying: "Stay inside, let them stand there and talk for a while." He stayed. "Aha," I thought, "this is where the fox lies": I pretended not to hear or understand, but thought to myself: the interpretation of the dream is already starting to be fulfilled. (1:88)

The following day, Stenberg moved to other lodgings. Two weeks later, he went to the Sunday church service and heard the banns proclaimed of the coming marriage between Stenman and Magdalena Nordström. Afterwards he met the family.

Aunt then said to Stenman: "Was it not strange that I should sit and interpret your dream about my own daughter?" And she asserted that she did not have any knowledge about this before; neither could she have, since Stenman then had not told anyone about this. (1:90)

In July 1792 he ran for a position in the Umeå town parish, with several competitors.

I had a couple of dreams that I have to mention: One night I seemed to be sitting in a house made of stone. Then a strong stream and rapids hit the house, and despite seeing great rocks and stones float nearby me, I was perfectly safe in the house, so the threatening stones could do me no harm at all. From this I made the interpretation that the schemes and evil intents of my enemies would not harm me. Likewise, the night before election day on the 15th I dreamed I had obtained a majority of the votes. This long-awaited day came, and I went to the parish church to preach, and in the afternoon just as I came home, the news came that I had received a majority of the votes. (3:209)

The presaging dimension of dreams is clearly and movingly exposed in connection with the death of his first wife. The tragedy is further emphasized since she brings in local superstitions of forebodings into his frame of reference.

Just before the wedding day my fiancée told of a dream she had where her engagement ring had broken straight across, and she commented: "it is a common saying that such a dream means: the planned wedding will come to nothing and never be completed." I told her not to pay any attention to dreams: surely you should know and be sure that I won't back off, I continued, definitely not now when things have gone so far that they can't be changed in any way, so be secure and satisfied and don't worry over such a dream; that would be madness. Still I could not refrain from thinking about it. (3:401)

When she later died, he was reminded of this dream. "Now I remembered the dream of the golden ring that my wife mentioned just before our wedding. And this would also happen!" (3:470) He also remembered an incident at the wedding he had described earlier:

> I went into the wedding room and we took our places before the altar; I was completely happy and satisfied and to show the guests that I was satisfied with my choice, I deliberately looked around merrily and joyfully two or three times, which I would not have done if I had known the peasantry's belief about such looks, which is that the one of the bridal couple who does so will survive the other, and be married once more; since then I would definitely not give them cause for such superstitious prophecies; but it was not until some time after that my wife informed me of this superstition; adding that the basis for such guesses would be that the person looking around is looking for a new spouse. (3:435)

He also remembered an incident some months before the marriage was planned where he interpreted a catch of fish as a sign from God that he would eventually marry twice, and how he had been reminded of this just a month before her death. (3:470)

The thought that dreams may be a sign from God would solve the puzzling contradictions of sense and nonsense, sleep and consciousness, present and future.

> When I woke up one morning those days, I found myself having had the following peculiar dream. I imagined myself lying awake in my bed and could see that two rather beautiful trees stood by my bed, one by the bedhead, the other by my feet, they were in full blossom and had rather beautiful flowers, of which I was very glad and when I looked up, I saw around my table 3 or 4 smaller but just as beautiful trees, also rather delightfully blooming, from which I also had much enjoyment. Then I woke up […] It seemed to me as if this dream would mean something about my future marriage, and thus promised something good about a future wife as well as children. My mood was now definitely, at least sometimes, somewhat disappointed because of my idle hope of Mademoiselle Backlund. […] Maybe, I thought, God, with this dream, wants to cheer up my mind and increase my hope for a happy future in this case? And you will find that from such thoughts I could not but be very merry and satisfied.

These two examples are the only ones where he directly interprets a dream as a divine message. However, the idea of a God who gives signs to the individual recurs throughout Stenberg's autobiography. Stenberg tackles setbacks, enjoys unexpected successes and good luck with reference to God's will and God's plans for him; this context implies that Stenberg had a more general understanding of dreams as a possible medium for divine communication, but did not necessarily hold all dreams to be meaningful.

How to Understand Dreams – a Discussion by Stenberg

Stenberg sometimes speaks to the reader as a scholar, taking everyday

situations as a starting point for discussions of paranormal experiences. A discussion of a woman who has premonitions on people's destinies is justified thus:

> As nothing is so unknown to us as our soul's inner hidden treasures and qualities, which only through undeniable experiential examples can become known to us, it is the way of a philosopher, instead of denying everything without discrimination, to try to define, analyse and decode what may be sheer superstition, distractions and play of imagination, and what may be the natural power, gift or treasure of the soul. (4:194)

Through the autobiography, Stenberg sometimes refers to popular sayings and beliefs as "superstitions" (*vidskepelse*). He never mentions the dream books that were spread in cheap prints (Bregenhøj 1992; Palmenfelt 1992), nor the books on weather signs, but their "*x* means *y*" format was part of the traditional knowledge systems present in his frame of reference. As for dreams, he notices how others speak with this one-to-one signification – "dreams of snakes and fires are only about love" (1:88), "when you dream of fire, it means love" (2:104), a broken engagement ring means "the planned wedding will come to nothing and never be completed" (3:401).

Late in life (when writing his 1802 part, so this would probably be written sometime during the early 1820s), he writes a longer passage where he tries to convince the reader that he is not superstitious, although he has just written of how he had thought that he had dreams that eventually came true. "But to preclude the reader from thinking I have a superstitious confidence and trust in dreams and pin my hopes on them, I now want expose my relation to them and what I think about them as I have done before." He tries to make a rational argumentation where he points to how only the dreams that seem to come true are the ones noticed and remembered. This is accomplished by categorizing dreams into types that are dismissed one by one, according to their ability to stay in memory.

> Dreams I do not attend to, especially not those which just ramble on without any coherence and do not get stuck in my memory in any way; they may go as they have come, and those that cannot be recalled once I have woken up. The other dreams, they may be more or less clear, more weakly or strongly etched into my memory, I let them be or pass them as they have been without any further thought about their meaning and without trying to remember them, still less ask for an interpretation or explanation. (4:236f)

The next category is the dreams that are most clearly remembered. But of these, he discards the majority, except for those that later seem to come true. This latter phenomenon, the evaluation of some dreams as true, he situates in the social and cultural context where interpretations are already to be found.

> Such dreams are so strung in the mind that their remembrance cannot be avoided; the same with their interpretation, as you have heard from young age; who is so

perfect to be able to stop them from returning in memory? That for instance this dream means this, and that one means that. (4:237)

He immediately continues to reconstruct the lines of thought that almost inevitably will follow.

So; if such a dream incurs, its supposed meaning is soon after also recalled in memory. And who is that philosopher, who with all his haughty good sense and reason could stop such a thing from happening? Because that happens ex associatione idearum. – Add to this that the dreams themselves in the most clear and obvious ways present their own explanation, how could one then avoid noticing this their explanation and also its fulfilment, if it not only seemed to, but actually is found to happen. – And you obviously find that the soul has its hidden and inexplicable inklings in waking as well as sleeping states; and who would dare to deny such things? (4:237)

To exemplify his line of argument, he goes into analysis of two dreams that he just has related to the reader – probably the reason why the topic comes up at this moment in his writing. The dream narratives and his interpretations are here given in full.

Dream No. 1. At the end of the month, I had this strange dream. "I thought I was following Vice-Pastor Nordlund, who walked in front and carried a light in his hand, and I followed just behind or beside him, but just after us came a large crowd of people. First, we went over a green and beautiful valley or meadow, and then up a just as beautiful and green but steadily rising hill, but Nordlund shone his light before us. – At the left side was all the way a deep, dark and gloomy valley. – When we came to the top of the hill we met a steep earth slope, in which or under which was an opening or entrance, then Nordlund turned around and gave me the light, saying: "with this light you shall shine the way for the people!" I then took the light in my hand and followed Nordlund into the earth opening to light up his path 2 to 3 steps, there we met two tiny openings: one went straight on or rather somewhat down into the ground; but the other went straight up. Through this latter Nordlund went or climbed higher and higher, and I heard the sound of him preceding, as well as his voice, as also the sound of his climbing, but fainter and fainter. – I tried to follow him the same way, but the opening was too narrow, so I could not possibly go another step further after him; and soon the opening closed completely, and I turned around and met the people just outside the first opening, when I shone the way with my light and went in front the same way back again." Such was the dream: its explanation will be told in the following. (4:234)

Dream No. 2. The last day of the month I had the strange dream, that I seemed to be walking about in my yard where I saw a large and deep hole; almost like a well, covered with planks and logs, on which I had to walk very carefully in order not to fall down. And I also seemed to be saying something about the time to send a message to the Consistory on some issue. – Such a dream, especially about the hole, is said to mean death; and the message to the Consistory would in some respect be about myself?

And the next day the first of April there came a notification that Vice-Pastor Nordlund had died. The preceding dream had thus come true in both respects;

because the death had occurred, and its later content seemed to urge me to mind the date for my application to the Consistory to arrive on time. (4:236)

Let us now make the application to my two preceding dreams. The one written on page 488 [234] had two predictions; the first that Vice-Pastor Nordlund's death soon would happen, which was signified by his wandering beside the dark valley of death and his entrance and disappearance into the small opening in the earthen mound, where it was impossible for me to follow. – Its second prediction is based on the following circumstances of the dream: behold, Vice-Pastor Nordlund carried the light in his hand, went in front of the people and lit up their road; it was the light of the Gospel, the teaching of blessedness, that he until then had preached to the people. – That he gave me the light, with the command to light the way for the people, and that I carried the light in my hand and went with it before the people the same road back, signified that I would be his successor and preach the teaching of blessedness to the people. – Behold, the dream itself seemed to force the acceptance of its explanation. The latter dream, page 493 [236], was just like a confirmation of the previous one, so the matter would appear much more clear; therefore he would also immediately be perfected, by the following day Pastor Nordlund's death was announced, and the issue of the letter to the Consistory was, as already explained, a reminder not to forget the closing date for application to succession. Thus, it was impossible that this explanation would not appeal to me. – I therefore did not place my trust in it, neither with any joyful or sincere hope, yet less waiting anxiously; but, as said before; I left it aside and for its worth, just quietly, and without all worries wanted to await the definite outcome, of which I write later. (4:237)

Later on he wins the election and is able to succeed Nordlund. This is noted in an entry called "dreams fulfilled" (4:279). "So at last I could become Pastor Nordlund's successor, and the dreams stated on pages 488 and 493 and their explanation on page 494 were all fulfilled; of which I could not refrain from being astonished" (4:279).

As Stenberg's most thorough discussion of dreams, this would have been the place where his frames of references would be articulated most clearly. It is interesting to note that he never attempts to postulate a diabolic source, nor a divine one – although the omnipresence of God is an (un)pronounced framing for the autobiography and Stenberg occasionally sees dreams as a direct message from God, this is not outspoken here, even though he interprets the second dream as positioning him as a messenger of the Lord. Instead, his discussion ends where he began, with an astonishment of the dream experience's relation to reality and an agnostic attitude towards the ontological status of dreams.

Conclusion

Retelling your dreams to others, interpreting dreams, paying attention to them and remembering them in later situations were ordinary everyday practices in Stenberg's world. As an educated person in an official position, he also took upon himself a duty to represent a scientific view. In

comparison to the British examples referred to by Mack, the ambivalence between the "enlightened" view[11] of relying on reasoning and empiricism, and the religious experience is also clearly present in Stenberg's discussions. But for the Quakers and Methodists, the dream narratives that were circulated had a stronger emphasis on the individual conversion (which was the motive for their wider circulation) whereas Stenberg used them as a confirmation of his ongoing relation to God but not as in any way a special genre for divine communication. As a priest in the official church, he would support individual conversion, and noted examples among his parishioners with satisfaction, but he did not take part in or promote any spiritual movement (or any internal church opposition whatever).

Mack's observation of the rising tendency in the eighteenth century to understand dreams as stemming from the individual is confirmed in Stenberg's writings. He is sceptical about the traditional interpretations of a fixed signification system; instead, his interpretations of his own dreams take his own worries, anxieties and current life situation as a starting point. But he is also open for the idea of dreams presaging collective and political events and changes, such as a war or the death of a hereditary prince. Like his colleagues in Iceland (Heijnen 2013:82), Stenberg shares his dreams and interpretations, not for other clergy to interpret, but rather in order to discuss the nature of dreams.

The thought that dreams can tell your future is present in Stenberg's mind – he speaks against it, distances himself from superstitions and tries to explain rationally; still, in his environment he meets people who speak with this idea in mind, and Stenberg also directs his attention to notice the fulfilment of dreams – maybe with a touch of insight into the performative aspects of telling of your dreams.

Taking part in several social networks and knowing their discourses, his attempts to integrate different worldviews bears witness to his consciousness of his middle position dilemma. His attempts to gain a deeper understanding of dreams are stated as reflections in a manuscript for a well-educated reader and thus draw upon his self-understanding as a "philosopher", but they may just as well be characterized as an expression of a vernacular scepticism and everyday conceptual reflection. He starts in the middle of his own experiences and notices similarities to events in reality. As a priest and as an academic, he wants to hear God's voice behind the dreams from a distance while at the same time seeking concrete and rational explanations in the individual's life situation; but with no convincing scientific theory available or palatable he can get no further support in his thinking. Still, his "ethnographic eye" has noticed the uses of dream narratives and the emotional effects of dreaming, and he thus qualifies his "silly" interest as grounded in social consequences.

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[1] He refers to Napoleon and Alexander as two contemporary emperors in Europe, thus making the date of the Battle of Waterloo the *terminus ante quem*. Unfortunately, some 16 pages in the middle are missing and other damage makes the discussion hard to follow. The manuscript is now available only as a transcription made at Landsarkivet i Härnösand and digitally published by Umeå University Library.

[2] This article was produced as part of the project *Emotions in Eighteenth-Century Everyday Life: Class, Gender, and Godliness in Pehr Stenberg's Autobiography*, funded by Riksbankens Jubileumsfond grant P18-0700:1. A longer presentation of Stenberg and his autobiography in Swedish is Stenberg, Wennstedt & Elgh 2023. The autobiography is published as Stenberg 2014–18. I would like to thank Michael Yonan, University of California at Davis, and my project colleagues Ina Lindblom and Richard Pettersson, Umeå, and the anonymous reviewers for valuable comments.

[3] Stenberg 2014–2018, volume 1, page 398f. In the following, references to this work will be in the format "1:398".

[4] Published posthumously are a treaty on catching birds, a topographic parish description, and the dialect glossary. There is also a small manuscript which reports an interview with two peasants who had spotted a whale along the coast – this can be seen as a scientific endeavour, reporting a peculiar event as a contribution to the description of the world in order to increase knowledge. See Danell & Stenberg 2021.

[5] Roger Ivar Lohmann has made a more general typology of cultural dream theories, spanning from regarding dreams as "nonsense" to explanations of soul travel and visitations by other souls (2010:230ff).

[6] As summarized by Henrik Sandblad, 1979:165. Næzén also held conservative views and rejected Kant's thinking, Sandblad 1979:158.

[7] In 1823 he had his Swedish translation of Rudolf Hospinian's *De templis, hoc est de origine, progressu et abusu templorum*… (1587) published by a Stockholm publisher.

[8] Stenberg's vain attempts to find a suitable partner among the gentry while being employed as a teacher are discussed in Arvidsson 2024.

[9] This interpretation draws upon a close study of how Stenberg uses the words *skuld*, "guilt", and *oskuld*, "innocence".

[10] The word *mardröm* establishes a connection between the *mara* and dreaming; however, the official Swedish dictionary reports no instances of the word until the 1890s. For the Nordic mara tradition, see Tillhagen 1960, Raudvere 1993.

[11] I here place "Enlightenment" inside inverted commas since Stenberg, although educated during the latter half of the eighteenth century and interested in contributing to science, has no inclination towards the social and theological ideas associated with the Enlightenment; cf. Pettersson 2023.

Týr and Viðarr

Equinox, Wolves and Old Norse Celestial Traditions

Eldar Heide

Abstract

In this article I re-examine the information that we have about the Old Norse and Germanic god Týr. The latest research concludes that, even if the name Týr indicates that he had a connection with the sun and the firmament, this must reflect a period much earlier than our sources. I go against this view and argue that the connection was there in Scandinavia until the Late Iron Age, at least in Denmark. Týr has a clear connection with the sun through the myth where he secures the gods' binding of the Fenrir wolf, because this motif is linked to the myth about the wolves that chase the sun across the sky. Týr prevents the wolf from swallowing the sun before Ragnarǫk. I take a closer look at this myth in the Old Norse texts and the atmospheric phenomenon that we believe it derives from, namely parhelion. I also consider the sun phenomenon at Tysnes in Western Norway, which is the only certain Týr place name in Norway, and I moreover consider the link to Mars that is indicated by the overlapping weekday names týsdagr – Martis dies, the association between Mars and spring equinox, and the names of the constellations Ulfskjǫptr, 'Wolf's Jaws', and Ásar bardagi, 'the God's Battle'. I conclude that Týr's function is to defend the sun and the division of the year. As part of the interpretation, I launch a new suggestion regarding the god Viðarr's origin and function. I argue that he derives from the idea that the sun reaches safety from the wolves when it sets til varna viðar, 'into the safety of the forest, viðr'. The discussion provides arguments that lend some strength to Gísli Sigurðsson's suggestion that we should see the Old Norse gods as directly associated with the firmament.

Keywords: Old Norse mythology, Týr, Viðarr, Zeús, the firmament, parhelia, Hyades, Týsnes

1. Týr and the Myth of the Sun Wolf/Wolves

1.1. Introduction

The Old Norse god *Týr* has traditionally been understood as a god of the sky and of daylight (e.g. Olsen 1905:26, Olrik & Ellekilde 1926–51 I:334; overview in af Edholm 2014:7–33). This is because the name – which also exists in the plural in Old Norse, *tívar*,[1] then meaning 'the gods'[2] – is closely related to Ancient Greek *Zeús*, 'the god of sky and thunder', Sanskrit *Dyáuṣ Pitā* 'the god (father) of the sky', Latin *Dies-piter* (*Jupiter*), 'the god of sky and thunder', Latvian *Dievs* and Lithuanian *Dievas*, 'God', Finnish *taivas*, 'sky, god', borrowed from Baltic languages (e.g. Balode 2006:14), and Latin *diēs* and Sanskrit *divasa*, 'day' (Hopkins 1932; de Vries 1956 II:25;

de Vries 1962:603, 1956 II:25–26; Mallory & Adams 2006:408ff; Wodtko et al. 2008:70–71; Kroonen 2013:519; af Edholm 2014:47–48).

In recent works Wikström af Edholm opposes this understanding of Týr, arguing that the basis for it in Old Norse sources is weak (af Edholm 2014, 2016). He does not reject Týr's "function as sky god" but argues that it is "archaic" and no longer present in the Scandinavian Viking Age material (af Edholm 2016:65). What emerges from the Old Norse sources, Wikström af Edholm says, is a war god. This is not an entirely new view; for example de Vries says something similar (1956 II:21). But Wikström af Edholm stresses this point ("the majority of Germanic sources point in the direction of interpreting Tyr only as a war god", af Edholm 2014:9),[3] which de Vries does not, and many scholars are vague about what primary function Týr had in Old Norse culture (e.g. Turville-Petre 1964:180–82; Steinsland 2005:243–44). Wikström af Edholm bases his view especially upon the following points:

- The weekday name *týsdagr*, Old English *tīwesdæg*, Old Frisian *tiesdei*, Old High German *ziestag*, which is based upon Latin *dies Martis*, 'the day of Mars'. The weekday name indicates that the Germanic peoples along the Roman border understood **Teiwaz* (>*Tīu*, *Týr* etc.) as their counterpart to the Roman war god Mars (af Edholm 2014:48, 53, 75, 82).
- The Eddic poem *Sígrdrífumál* 5–6, where the hero Sigurðr is advised to inscribe *sigrúnar*, 'runes of victory', on his sword and then mention Týr twice (af Edholm 2014:43).
- The Týr kenning *vígaguð*, 'god of battles' (*Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* 1931:99; af Edholm 2014:39, 57, 80).
- Snorri's information that Týr often decides victory in battles (*ræðr mjǫk sigr í orrostum*.[4] *Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* 1931:32; af Edholm 2016:72).
- The large amount of weapons sacrificed during the Iron Age in the lake of *Tissø*, 'Týr's lake', in Zealand (af Edholm 2014:54–57, 2016).
- Týr's volunteering to put his right hand into the maw of the young Fenrir as a pawn – to make the wolf test the magical tether Gleipnir around its neck (af Edholm 2016:36). Týr loses his hand[5] but the gods succeed in binding the wolf, which would otherwise have overpowered them when it grew up (*Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* 1931:35–36).

I do not agree that the binding myth points in the direction of Týr being a war god. But I do agree that this follows from Wikström af Edholm's other arguments[6] and I agree with Schneider that the probably thirteenth-century Norwegian runic poem fits with this understanding of Týr:

Týr er einhendr ása,	'Týr is a one-handed god,
opt verdr smiðr at blása.	the smith often has to blow.'
(Liestøl 1948:66)	

The blowing clearly refers to the bellows during the smith's work. When this is mentioned in connection with Týr, weapons easily come to mind (Schneider 1956:361).

I will nevertheless argue that a connection with the sky was still essential in the Scandinavian Týr tradition in the Viking Age. I will further argue that Týr's war-god aspect follows from this celestial essence.

1.2. The Sun Phenomenon at Týsnes, the Sun Wolves and Parhelia

My starting point will be the sun phenomenon noticed at the headland formerly known as *Týsnes*, 'Týr's headland', in western Norway, 30 km south of Bergen. Today, the name – in the form *Tysnes* – usually refers to the whole island on which it is located, whereas the headland is now known as *Todneset*.[7] I will refer to the headland as *Týsnes*. The place is the centre of western Norway's largest concentration of sacral place names (Olsen 1905). When sunset is observed from Týsnes through the year, an odd occurrence appears around all the four solar turning points, winter solstice, spring equinox, summer solstice and autumn equinox: the sun sets behind a mountain and then reappears for an "encore" of a few minutes before setting for the night. At the winter solstice, the gorge in which the sun reappears is so close that the sun shines with a concentrated beam on to a 20-metre-wide prehistoric cairn at the top of the headland. Around the solstices, this happens for several days, while on the equinoxes, it occurs only on that exact day (Heide 2013[8] Olsen & Dahl 2015).[9]

The sum of landscape traits that produce this sun phenomenon may be unparalleled in the entire world, and Týsnes is the only place in Norway known with certainty to have borne a Týr name (Olsen 1905, 1942:65). All other secure Scandinavian Týr place names are found in Denmark. Why would exactly this place be linked to Týr, and why would exactly Týr be linked to this place? The case seems to indicate some kind of connection between Týr and the sun. Wikström af Edholm considers this connection but rejects it because it "lacks confirmation in any other source" (af Edholm 2014:52).

There are, however, several links between Týr and the sun or the sky in our texts. The strongest one is the myth of the binding of Fenrir, which is the main myth about Týr. Why was it so important to have the wolf bound? Because, it seems, he would otherwise swallow the sun (as suggested by Andrén 2014:215 and Lindow 2020:1352–53). This emerges from *Grímnismál* 39 and *Vafþrúðnismál* 46–47 combined. *Grímnismál* 39 says (cited by Snorri, *Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* 1931:18):

39. Skǫll heitir ulfr	'Skǫll is the wolf
er fylgir inu skírleita goði	that unto the protection of the woods
til varna viðar;	pursues the bright god;
en annarr Hati,	another is Hati,
hann er hróðvitnis sonr,	he is hróðvitnir's son,
sá skal fyr heiða brúði himins.[10]	who must run before heaven's bright bride.'

The line *til varna viðar* probably is a parallel to phrases like *solen går i skog*, *sól gengur til viðar*, 'the sun goes into the woods', which, until

modern times, have been a reference to the setting sun in several places in the Nordic countries (Hyltén-Cavallius 1863–68 I:286; Olrik 1902:190; von See et al. 2019b:1400).[11]

In *Vǫluspá* (57), the sun vanishes by itself at Ragnarǫk, without hostilities from a wolf. But according to *Vafþrúðnismál* (46–47), which is an equally good or better source, the sun vanishes in Ragnarǫk because *Fenrir* destroys it (as pointed out by Olrik 1902:189, Tegnér 1922:32, and others).

This alternative is supported by the word *hróðrsvitnir*, 'the famous wolf', in *Lokasenna* (39). To be sure, this word is usually understood as a proper name and printed with a capital initial letter in text editions. If this is correct, *Hróðvitnir/Hróðrsvitnir*[12] (*-vitnis*, genitive) refers to a different wolf than *Fenrir* because it is a different name. There is, however, no need to understand *hróðrsvitnir* as a proper name. The manuscripts do not follow the modern convention regarding capitalization (they mostly use lower case), and we tend to interpret too many nouns as names (Heide 2018). In this case, we may read *hróðrvitnir*, 'the famous wolf', as a *kenning* referring to Fenrir. In *Lokasenna,* this is what we must do. In stanza 38, Loki insults Týr by reminding him that *Fenrir* tore off his right hand. When Týr parries in the following stanza, he says: Yes, being without his hand is bitter for Týr but being without *hróðrsvitnir* must be equally bitter for Loki. This statement only makes sense if *hróðrsvitnir* refers to Fenrir. Loki is Fenrir's father, according to *Lokasenna* 10 and other sources, and Loki is without him because he was bound by Týr and the other gods.

Against this background, *hróð*(*rs*)*vitnir* should in general be understood as Fenrir (and this is the most common understanding, e.g. Simek 2006:204; af Edholm 2014:77). In a stanza in *Ragnars saga loðbrókar*, *sókitík sólar*, 'sun-chasing bitch', is used as a kenning for wolves in general (McTurk 2017:689).

The myth about Fenrir or some other wolf chasing the sun is believed to be reflected in the fact that, throughout northern Europe, a parhelion is referred to as "wolf" and the like (e.g. Jón Árnason 1958–61 [1862–64] I:655; Olrik 1902:189–95; Sigfús Blöndal 1920:251; Ólafur Briem 1985 I:174; Sørensen 1999:48; von See, et al., 2019b:1398; Bek-Pedersen 2021:459). Parhelia are formed when sunshine is refracted by ice crystals high up in the atmosphere when a low-pressure system is approaching (Wedøe 2007:75–76). They typically appear as a pair of bright patches to the left and right of the sun, sometimes above as well (Sørensen 1999). See Figure 1.

Parhelia forebode storms and were according to traditional belief often seen as bad omens. In *Njáls saga* a light phenomenon in the sky forebodes the terminal fight between Flosi Þórðarson and Njáll Þorgeirsson, in which the latter and his sons are burned to death in their house. This light phenomenon comes with a crash in the air (*vábrestr*) and is described as a fire-coloured ring with a rider inside it (*hring ok eldslit á*). It is referred

to as a *gandreið*, 'witch-ride', literally '*gandr* ride' (*Njáls saga* 1954:320–21). This information combined makes it analogous to Shetland and Orkney Norn *ganfer*, probably from **gandferð*, '*gandr* journey', which is a weather phenomenon with the same characteristics, explicitly identified as a parhelion in the traditions, and which forebodes bad weather or disasters (Jakobsen 1921:200–1; Marwick 1929:51, 22, 50; Heide 2006:30, 206–11).[13] Throughout northern Europe parhelia have this foreboding function in later traditions as well (Storaker 1923 [before 1872], Norway; Rietz 1862–67:652, Sweden; Stegemann 1936–37:48–49, Germany).

In Norwegian dialects a parhelion can be called a *solulv*, 'sun wolf' (Aasen 1873:727–28, Berge 1920:84), which it can in Danish as well, alongside with *vejrulv*, 'weather wolf', and also just *ulv*, 'wolf' (Sørensen 1999:47). In Swedish we find *solvarg* as well as *solulv*, both meaning 'sun wolf', and in English a parhelion can be called a *sun dog* (Rietz 1862–67:652; Hyltén-Cavallius 1863–68 I:286; Olrik 1902:191; Tegnér 1922:32). The English-language Wikipedia article about parhelia has the title *Sun dog* (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sun_dog, 13 August 2024). In Icelandic the light patch to the left (east) of the sun can be called an úlfur, 'wolf', and

1. Bright sun dogs in Saskatoon, Canada.
From https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sun_dog 13 August 2024.

the one to the right (west) a *gíll*. If both appear, the two of them together can be called úlfar, 'wolves', and it is then said that the sun is í úlfakreppu, 'in wolf-straits', i.e. 'attacked by wolves from both sides' (Jón Árnason 1958–61 [1862–64] I:655; Cleasby & Vigfusson 1874:668; Sigfús Blöndal 1920:251, 878). Icelandic *gíll* is the same word as Norwegian (*sol*)*gil*, which has variants like *-gitl*, *-gissel*, *-giksel*, *-gidder* (pronounced /ji/-), and mean 'parhelion'/'a stump of a rainbow' (Aasen 1873:215, 727, Storaker 1923 [before 1872]:42), which parhelia sometimes look like (Sørensen 1999:47, 50–54). *Gíll/gil* probably belongs to the same root as Old Norse *geisli*, 'light beam', and *geisl*, 'staff' (cf. Ásgeir Blöndal Magnússon 1989:245). The 'wolf' and 'dog' terms for parhelia clearly are fossilized remains of the myth of the sun and the wolves known from Old Norse sources. At the same time, parhelia are probably the main basis for the idea of the sun-chasing wolves.

1.3. Týr Stopping the Wolf from Swallowing the Sun before Ragnarǫk

In my judgement, Týr is clearly linked to the sun through the myth about the binding of Fenrir and the myth(s) about the wolf/wolves chasing the sun. This is especially clear in *Vafþrúðnismál* 46–47, which says that Fenrir succeeds in destroying the sun at Ragnarǫk.

An objection to this view may be that Týr is not the one that fights Fenrir in Ragnarǫk. According to *Vǫluspá* 61–62, Óðinn rather than Týr fights the wolf but is killed and then avenged when Víðarr/Viðarr kills the wolf. *Vǫluspá* does not mention Týr at all. Then, in Snorri's account of Ragnarǫk, there is an alternative enemy for Týr. He fights against Garmr, and they kill each other, before Þórr and the Miðgarðsormr kill each other, and then the wolf swallows Óðinn (*Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* 1931:72). *Garmr* is a common dog's name (Fritzner 1883–96 I:563) and *Vǫluspá* speaks of a being called Garmr that barks ominously several times in the prelude to Ragnarǫk (stanza 44, 49, 54, 58).

However, these aspects of the complex surrounding the wolf seem to be late developments. Most scholars believe that Víðarr/Viðarr is a late addition to the Old Norse pantheon (e.g. de Vries 1956 II:276; Simek 2006:467; af Edholm 2014:15, footnote, 60). There are several reasons for this. Firstly, the name *Víðarr/Viðarr* never occurs in the skaldic poetry (Finnur Jónsson 1913–16:621). In contrast, because of the etymology of his name, Týr must be an ancient god, and the sources portray Fenrir/the wolf as Týr's arch-enemy. The wolf bites off his hand in the only myth in which Týr plays the main role (*Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* 1931:35–36). Týr is moreover referred to as *ulfs fóstri*, 'the wolf's foster-father', in a skaldic kenning (*Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* 1931:99). Thus, the link between Týr and the wolf seems essential, and Týr certainly is no late god.

An additional argument, hitherto overlooked, may be the Jutish parish name *Tïlst*, from Old Danish *Tīslæst* (Holmberg 1986:113–14). *Tīs* is the singular genitive of *Tīr*, which is the Old Danish form of *Týr*. And, as

Holmberg points out, *-læst* can hardly be other than Old Danish *læst*, 'cobbler's last' (ibid.:113), cognate with Old Norse *leistr*, "the foot of a sock" (Fritzner 1883–96 II:476). As far as I know, the meaning of the name is unexplained. Holmberg mentions that the element *-læst* could refer to a road because the etymological meaning of *læst* is 'footsteps' (*spor*. ibid.:113–14). But this would be unparalleled.

I suggest that the *læst* reflects the main characteristic of Fenrir's killer, namely his thick shoe or iron shoe. According to Snorri, Fenrir's killer "has a thick shoe" (*Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* 1931:33), made from all the cut-off pieces of leather that people have thrown away when making shoes since the dawn of time, and in kennings he can be referred to as "the owner of the iron shoe" (*eiganda jarnskós*, *Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* 1931:99. I am not able to find this kenning in any of the extant poetry.). He needs this strong shoe for the fight against Fenrir, in which he steps into the wolf's lower jaw to be able to tear the jaws asunder[14] (*Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* 1931:72. According to *Vǫluspá* 52, Fenrir is killed by being stabbed in the heart with a sword).[15] But Snorri says this about Víðarr/Viðarr, so if we are to explain the name *Tīslæst* in this way, Víðarr/Viðarr must be a younger variant of Týr. *Tīslæst* is not a strong argument, however, because the outlined explanation of the name clearly is uncertain, although it is difficult to find a better alternative.

Regarding Týr's encounter with Garmr at Ragnarǫk, most scholars believe that Fenrir and Garmr are the same (e.g. Olrik 1913:157–59; Sigurður Nordal 1927:86, referring to several other scholars sharing his view; Ellis Davidson 1964:58; Simek 2006:127; af Edholm 2016:35–36, 57, 71; Bek-Pedersen 2021:458–59). There are several arguments for this, as Sigurður Nordal points out (1927:86). In the *Vǫluspá* stanzas, Garmr is mentioned in a repeated phrase that is identical in all four cases: *Geyr nú Garmr mjǫk* / *fyr Gnipahelli,* / *festr man slitna* / *en freki renna*, 'Garmr bays furiously / in front of Gnipahellir, / the chain will snap / and the wolf run free'. The word *freki* here seems to refer to *Garmr*, and *freki* is a *heiti* (poetical synonym) for 'wolf' (Finnur Jónsson 1913–16:151). The phrase *festr man slitna*, 'the chain will snap', seems to refer to the fear of the wolf breaking his tether. According to *Hákonarmál* 20 (Fulk 2012:192–93) and Snorri (*Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* 1931:71), Ragnarǫk comes when Fenrir is no longer bound. There is generally a blurred line between dog and wolf in the mythological sources. For example, Óðinn's has two wolves that function as dogs, Geri and Freki (*Grímnismál* 19). These considerations taken together point in the direction of Garmr being the same character as Fenrir.

If this is the case, Snorri's account becomes a bit strange. The problem is not that Óðinn and then Víðarr/Viðarr meet Fenrir instead of Týr. This is compatible with the impression we get from the combined corpus, that in the tenth century Týr was no longer in the foreground of the Old Norse

pantheon. Because our sources reflect the latest phase of Old Norse religion, and Óðinn is the main god in these sources, it is understandable that Óðinn in Ragnarǫk fights one of the gods' two main enemies, namely the wolf (the other being the Midgard Serpent, Þórr's old enemy).

However, Garmr as an alternative canine enemy for Týr is a bit odd, especially when we find this only in *Gylfaginning*. Then it comes to look like a solution introduced by Snorri or a later scribe because they felt that Týr, as the old enemy of Fenrir, should fight something wolf-like in Ragnarǫk. Thus, the fact that Týr does not fight the sun's enemy Fenrir in Ragnarǫk should not count against the link between Týr and the sun that emerges from other sources and which may reflect an older layer in the mythology. Below, I return to how we can explain Víðarr/Viðarr.

1.4. The Constellation *Ulfskjǫptr*/Hyades and the Gaping Sun-Wolf

The next point in my reasoning is the indigenous constellation name *Ulfskjǫptr/Ulfskeptr*, 'Wolf's Jaws', attested in a list of astronomical glosses in an Icelandic manuscript from around 1200 (Gks 1812 4to. *Alfræði íslenzk. II. Rímtǫl* 1914–16:72, 74). I believe this constellation name is a further indication that the wolf-binding myth, and thus Týr, did have a celestial element in Old Norse tradition.

Etheridge (2013:129) and Gísli Sigurðsson link this constellation to the myth(s) about the sun-chasing wolves (but they say nothing about Týr): "This 'maw' is identified [in the manuscript] as the Hyades, which form a prominent V-shape lying flat along the Sun's path […] People who saw the Hyades as the jaws of a wolf are likely to have thought that the Sun emerged from this mouth once a year, and would continue to do so until the day the jaws finally snapped shut and swallowed the Sun" (Gísli Sigurðsson 2022:241).

The linking of the Ulfskjǫptr and the sun-wolf myths seems plausible against the background of the gaping stressed in the sun-wolf traditions, of which I will now give an overview. Snorri says about Fenrir in Ragnarǫk: *En Fenrisulfr ferr með gapanda munn ok er hinn neðri kjǫptr við jǫrðu en hinn efri við himin. Gapa myndi hann meira ef rúm væri til* (*Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* 1931:71) 'But the Fenrir wolf runs with gaping maw, and the lower jaw reaches the ground, but the upper one the heavens. He would gape even more if there were room for it.' The enormous, gaping jaws of the wolf are also highlighted in Snorri's account of Ragnarǫk:

> Ulfrinn gleypir Óðin. Verðr þat hans bani. En þegar eptir snýsk fram Víðarr/Viðarr ok stígr ǫðrum fǿti í neðri kjǫpt ulfsins. […] Annarri hendi tekr hann inn efri kjǫpt ulfsins ok rífr sundr gin hans, ok verðr þat ulfsins bani. (*Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* 1931:72)
>
> 'The wolf swallows Óðinn and that is how he is killed. Then right away Víðarr/Viðarr comes up and places one foot in the lower jaw of the wolf and grasps with one hand in the upper jaw and tears asunder his maw. This is how the wolf dies.'

As we can see, Fenrir does not just kill Óðinn but swallows him, and the way to kill the wolf is by tearing his jaws asunder. Snorri also focuses on Fenrir's maw when the gods bind him:

> Ulfrinn gapði ákafliga ok fekksk um mjǫk ok vildi bíta þá. Þeir skutu í munn honum sverði nǫkkuru. Nema hjǫltin við neðri gómi, en efra gómi blóðrefillinn. Þat er gómsparri hans. Hann grenjar illiliga, ok slefa renn ór munni hans. Þat er á sú, er Ván heitir. Þar liggr hann til ragnarǫkrs. (*Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* 1931:37)
>
> 'The wolf gaped enormously and fought vigorously and tried to bite them. They put a sword in his mouth. The hilt stood against the lower gums and the point against the upper. This is his gag. He howls terribly and saliva flows from his mouth. That is the river Ván ('Waiting'). He lies there until Ragnarǫk.'

The maw is also the part of Fenrir that howls and barks[16] and that Víðarr/Viðarr tears asunder to kill him and that Týr encounters in the binding myth. Accordingly, the maw is the essential part of Fenrir in the myths.

The idea of the gaping sun-wolf also seems to be reflected in *Vǫluspá* 40. This stanza says that some hag in a certain forest bears "Fenrir's children" and that one of them will become *tungls tjúgari*. *Tungl* means 'luminary' (Finnur Jónsson 1913–16:573 – although later only 'moon', especially in Icelandic) and is in this case usually understood as 'the sun' (e.g. Sigurður Nordal 1927:81–82).[17] *Tjúgari* is not attested elsewhere but is an agent noun (like English *bak**er***, *teach**er***), apparently derived from the feminine noun *tjúga*, 'a pitchfork' – Figure 2 – or the verb **tjúga*. The infinitive of this verb seems obsolete in Old Norse but the participle, *toginn*, is attested many times. The verb is cognate with Old High German *ziuhan*, Modern High German *ziehen*, 'to pull'. Thus, *tjúgari* is understood as 'a robber, thief', either via the idea that a thief pulls away the stolen gods (e.g. Finnur Jónsson 1913–16:569, Ásgeir Blöndal Magnússon 1989:1048, von See et al. 2019a:320), or the idea that he "forks" them away (e.g. Cleasby and Vigfusson 1874:636, Sigurður Nordal 1927:82).[18] Both strands of reasoning result in *tungls tjúgari* referring to the wolf that makes the sun disappear (e.g. Finnur Jónsson 1913–16:569, Sigurður Nordal 1927:81–82, von See, et al., 2019a:319–30).

In my judgement, the pitchfork interpretation is the more plausible one. Because the infinitive went out of use early, and formations with *-ari* are late (*Ásgeir Blöndal Magnússon 1989*:1048), it seems best to understand *tjúgari* as formed from the feminine noun *tjúga*. If this is correct, it implies, at first glance, an image of someone using a pitchfork to remove the sun. But it would be odd to envisage a wolf using such a tool. Therefore, I suggest that the point is to compare the maw of the wolf to the "maw" of a *tjúga*, see Figure 2. The noun *tjúga* may not derive from the same root as the verb **tjúga* but from a root meaning 'split, two-part' (Hellquist 1948:980, de Vries 1962:592–93, *Ásgeir Blöndal Magnússon 1989*:1048). The byname

tjúguskegg, 'fork-beard' (e.g. *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar* 1941:272), of the Viking Age Danish king Sweyn (and others), implies that the forked or split end was seen as the most characteristic part of this tool. Thus, *tungls tjúgari* should probably be understood as 'the sun's gaper', i.e. 'the one gaping over the sun'.

1.5. The Constellation *Ásar bardagi*/Auriga

A further reason to link Týr to the sun-chasing wolf/wolves is found next to Ulfskjǫptr in the firmament. The closest neighbour to Ulfskjǫptr/Hyades to the upper left is Auriga/the Charioteer, which is attested with the name *Ásar bardagi* in the same Old Icelandic manuscript as *Ulfskjǫptr* (*Alfræði íslenzk. II. Rímtǫl* 1914–16:72 – although in unclear writing). *Ásar* is the singular genitive of *áss*, the term for the largest group of Old Norse gods, and *bardagi* means 'battle'. *Ásar bardagi* thus means 'the god's battle'. This is usually understood as referring to Þórr driving his cart across the sky, because, in this way, *Ásar bardagi* links up with the name *Auriga*, which means 'the charioteer' (Beckman & Kålund 1914–16: CXLIII–CXLIV, 73; Kiil 1959:87; Holtsmark 1972:193).[19] This view is problematic, however. I know of no myth where Þórr fights from his cart in a battle. In fact, Þórr is not at all connected to battles in the myths. Dumézil argues that Þórr is a war god (Dumézil 1973 [1959]), and this view is supported by some scholars (e.g. Näsström 2001:72–83). But the basis for it is weak, although Þórr certainly does fight. Kroesen puts it this way when considering Dumézil's theory:

> Þórr is not a war god, at least not in the mythological stories of Iceland, as they have come down to us. A war god is a leader and propagator of battles, or at the least he takes part in them, and Þórr always fights alone against single adversaries. A single combat is never called a battle. […] Neither can the fight between Þórr, on the one hand, and Geirrøðr, on the other, be called a battle. There is no kenning that relates Þórr to battle, nor does any saga tell us that Þórr is a patron of warriors. (Kroesen 2001:97, similar in Steinsland 2005:197 and Storesund 2013:22, 112–18)[20]

Þórr seems to be a bad candidate for the *áss* in *Ásar bardagi*, 'the god's battle'. At the same time, Týr does seem to be a war-god, as we saw above. In addition, it appears unreasonable (as Reuter points out, 1934:279) to

2. Tjuga, 'pitchfork, eighteenth or nineteenth century, from Småland, southern Sweden. 146 cm long. https://digitaltmuseum.se/021028601336/tjuga.

disregard the immediate proximity between the constellations Ásar bardagi (Auriga) and Ulfskjǫptr (Hyades) when interpreting the name *Ásar bardagi*. If so, we should note that no known myth links Þórr to the jaws of a wolf whereas Týr has an essential connection with this feature, in the only myth where he plays a major role.

You could object that a one-man fight against a wolf monster is not a battle either, according to Kroesen's argument. Regardless of this, it is said of Týr that he is a *vígaguð*, 'god of battles' (*Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* 1931:99) and that he often decides victory in battles (*ræðr mjǫk sigr í orrostum*, ibid.:32). It should also be pointed out that the wolf is closely associated with the battlefield in Old Norse thinking because it is a scavenger (Finnur Jónsson 1913–16:593–94), and *Fenrir* is often used referring to wolves in general (ibid.:128). Thus, it is less problematic to understand *Ásar bardagi* as Týr's fight with Fenrir than Þórr's fight with a troll. I conclude that the most plausible interpretation of the constellation name *Ásar bardagi* links Týr to the sun-chasing wolf/wolves and also to the firmament. This argument is, however, weaker than the one presented for the constellation name *Ulfskjǫptr*.

Even so, the constellation names *Ulfskjǫptr* and *Ásar bardagi* do seem to indicate that Týr opposes the sun wolf (cf. *Vafþrúðnismál* (46–47) not only in the binding myth but also in the sky.

To this one could object that the stars (in Ulfskjǫptr and Ásar bardagi) and the sun are (usually) not visible in the sky at the same time. But it is a question how much logic we may demand. As an analogy, we may consider the fact that in Roman mythology, Mars, Jupiter and Mercury were on one level identical to the planets bearing the same names. These planets are only visible when the sky is dark, but this does not imply that these gods were associated with night and darkness in particular. Jupiter was, on the contrary, associated with the sky in daylight, cf. the etymology of his name.

1.6. Týr in the Sky in the Old English Rune Poem

Týr is also placed in the sky in the Old English poem (probably eighth or ninth century), which explains the names of the runes. The rune ᛏ was called *Týr/Tīr* etc. The stanza reads:

ᛏ biþ tacna sum,	Tir is a token,
healdeð trȳwa wel	it keeps/holds faith/troth well
wiþ æþelingas;	with athelings;
ā biþ on færylde	it is always on its course
ofer nihta genipu,	over the mists/clouds of night,
nǣfre swīceþ.	it never fails/betrays.
(Jones 1967:76)	(translation by Dickins 1915/af Edholm 2014:42)

The problem in the stanza is the word *tācn* (*tacn*, *tácn*). It is cognate with modern English *token* and Old Norse *teikn* and means "A token, sign", "a

sign, significant form", "an ensign", "a token, a credential", "a sign, monument", "a sign of the Zodiac", "a sign, distinguishing mark (lit. or fig.)", "a sign to attract attention, a signal", "a sign of anything future, a prognostic", "a sign, an action that conveys a meaning", "a sign, indication, mark which shews condition or state", "as a medical term, a symptom", "a sign, symbol, emblem", "a sign which shews the truth or reality of anything, proof, demonstration, evidence", "a supernatural sign, miracle, prodigy", and "a signal event, remarkable circumstance" (Bosworth and Toller 1898:966–67).

Tācn in this stanza is often understood as 'star', referring to Polaris functioning as a guiding star (e.g. Reuter 1934:199–200; Winfried 2011:49). However, we have no information that Týr was in any way related to Polaris.[21] Furthermore, *tācn* can equally well mean 'a sign of the Zodiac' (Jones 1967:102), as in modern Scandinavian languages, where *stjerneteikn/-tecken/-tegn,* literally 'star *tācn*', is the term for this. Several scholars understand *tācn* as 'a constellation' or 'a sign of the Zodiac' in the runic poem (e.g. Jones 1967:62, 102; Page 1999:18).

Because Týr is the most plausible *áss* in the constellation name *Ásar bardagi*, the *tācn* associated with Týr in the rune poem may well be Ásar bardagi/Auriga. If so, it is possible to understand ↑ and "it never fails/betrays" and "over the mists/clouds of night" in the runic poem as referring to another navigational star than Polaris. Auriga's brightest star is Capella, which is one of the northern hemisphere's brightest stars. In former times it, too, played an important role in navigation (Stenersen 1930:80–85; Ditlefsen 1994:165, 182, 185, 216).

I find this understanding of the Old English rune poem more probable than the alternatives. Even so, we cannot know that the *tācn* Týr (Tīr) in the poem really does refer to Ásar bardagi/Auriga or Capella. Still, there can be no doubt that "over the mists/clouds of night" (*ofer nihta genipu*) places ↑ in the sky. Thus, the rune poem provides additional support for Týr's celestial aspect.

1.7. The Týr Derivate Viðarr and the Sun's Forest Asylum

How can we explain Víðarr/Viðarr, who seems to replace Týr as the enemy of the wolf, alongside Óðinn? Why did Víðarr/Viðarr turn up in the mythology? I suggest that he derived from the complex of the sun-chasing wolf/wolves. In our combined sources, the sun is saved from being swallowed by the wolf/wolves in two ways: Firstly, the wolf/wolves are kept in check when the sun is out in the open, i.e. on its way across the sky. Of this there seem to be two versions: Fenrir is bound by the magical tether Gleipnir (until he breaks it at Ragnarǫk), and Týr probably fights the *Ulfskjǫptr* (which represents the wolf) in the *Ásar bardagi* in the sky. (Andrén 2014:157 arrives at a view that resembles this, based on the sun-wolf myths and Týr's defence of the sun that these myths imply.)

Secondly, the sun is saved by the forest which it enters when its way across the sky is finished in the evening. In the words of *Grímnismál* 39, the wolves follow the sun across the sky *til varna viðar*, 'to the safety of the forest, *viðr*'.

This *til varna viðar* probably was a fixed expression, paralleled in modern times by "solen går i skog", 'the sun goes into the woods', and the like (Hyltén-Cavallius 1863–68 I:286; Olrik 1902:190; von See et al. 2019b:1400). The name *Viðarr* may derive from *viðr*, 'woods, forest' (Ásgeir Blöndal Magnússon 1989:1130), and if so, it means approximately 'forest-man'. Formally, the name comes very close to *viðar* (genitive of *viðr*) in the phrase *til varna viðar*, and it can be seen as alluding to this phrase. I suggest that the idea of the god *Viðarr* who protects the sun and stops the wolf emerged from the idea that the forest functions as an asylum for the sun at the end of its journey across the sky.

The association between forests and the sun chased by a wolf or wolves may derive from the fact that parhelia are most often and most clearly seen (in cold weather) when the sun is near the horizon (although they can also be clear high in the sky when a bank of clouds functions like the horizon, see Sørensen 1999:44; Wedøe 2007:76). In Figure 1 the sun is about to reach the trees and be safe.

To be sure, many use the spelling *Víðarr*, with a long vowel (í), not *Viðarr*. If this spelling is correct, the name can have nothing to do with *viðr*, 'woods, forest'. But we do not know whether the actual form was *Víðarr* or *Viðarr* (Ásgeir Blöndal Magnússon 1989:1130), and some scholars spell it with a short *i* (e.g. Cleasby & Vigfusson 1874:703). In the common personal name *Viðarr*, the *i* was short (ibid.; Dictionary of Old Norse Prose, https://onp.ku.dk/onp/onp.php?o107405). If *Viðarr* is the correct form of the god's name as well, it must be associated with the masculine *viðr*, 'woods, forest' (ibid). The alternative to this understanding is not good. *Víðarr* is generally seen as deriving from the adjective *víðr*, cognate with English *wide*, and understood as "the wide-ruling one" (de Vries 1962:659; Ásgeir Blöndal Magnússon 1989:1130; Simek 2006:467). But this does not fit well with the myths about the god in question. There is no hint in the sources that he was seen as a ruler or that he possessed a wide realm.

On the other hand, Viðarr does seem to be a god of the forest. *Grímnismál* 4–17 describes the residences of Þórr, Ullr, Freyr, Sága, Óðinn, Skaði, Baldr, Heimdallr, Freyja, Forseti, Njǫrðr, and Viðarr (in this order). Viðarr's residence is presented very differently from the others. In Løkka's words: "When Viðarr's abode is presented as the last one in stanza 17, it presents a clear break with the preceding ones – where the other divine dwellings represent a cultivated landscape, Viðarr's place appears to be a natural landscape" (Løkka 2010:223; similar in Steinsland 1991 [1989]:263). It is only the first half of *Grímnismál* 17 that describes Viðarr's residence, and it goes like this:

Hrísi vex ok há grasi
Viðars land Viði/viði[22]

These lines can be understood in two ways:

(a) 'Viðarr's land is overgrown with brushwood, high grass and forest', or
(b) 'Viðarr's land, [called] Viði, is overgrown with brushwood and high grass'.

Translation (a) implies that *viði* in line 2 is the masculine *viðr*, 'wood(s)', in the dative as part of the instrumental dative construction in line 1. Translation (b) implies that this word is a proper name, *Viði*, in which case it should not be translated. Alternative (a) would be odd, for two reasons. Firstly, it is unusual in Eddic poetry to shuffle the different parts of a clause in this way. Secondly, if we do suppose that this is a shuffled clause, we should still expect the cumulative conjunction *ok*, 'and', to be placed before *viði* rather than *há grasi*.

Accordingly, it is most natural to read *Viði* and understand the word as the name of Viðarr's residence. This understanding is favoured by two more factors. One is that, in the preceding list of gods (st. 4–16), the name of each god's residence is always mentioned. The other is that we know no other name of Viðarr's residence.

Thus, there are several and independent reasons to see a name of Viðarr's residence in *Grímnismál* 17. Quite a number of scholars have read the stanza in this way, even if they have not found the name *Viði* meaningful (Bugge 1867:79 with further references; Hultgård 2022:119). However, some understand the word as an appellative with the meaning 'forested land' (e.g. Ødegård 2014:400), and this must also be the meaning if the word is a proper name. In that case, the name is a very common type of derivation from the masculine *viðr*, 'woods', and it means 'wood(land)', which fits the context well. *Hríss* in line 1 usually means 'brushwood' but can sometimes mean 'forest', as in *Atlakviða* 5, where *hríss* refers to *Myrkviðr*, 'darkwood', which is a legendary forest mentioned in several Old Norse sources.

Grímnismál 17 fits very well with the suggestion that the god Viðarr, as enemy of the sun-chasing wolf, derived from the setting sun's refuge in the forest of the horizon. Viðarr's role in *Lokasenna* also fits well with this suggestion. This poem tells of a gathering where all the gods are present, but from which Loki is banished in the beginning because he kills a servant. He later returns and reminds Óðinn that the two of them mixed their blood in primordial times and promised not to drink unless they were both offered (stanza 9). Then, in the following stanza (10), Óðinn urges Viðarr to rise up and accept "the wolf's father' (*ulfs fǫður*) into the party. Viðarr does so by standing up, offering Loki a drink. This is all Viðarr does in the poem. The event may indicate that Viðarr was not only destined to avenge Óðinn and kill the wolf in Ragnarǫk but also had the task of blocking the wolf's

passage on a daily basis up until that point in time – though he was urged to make an exception in this situation. This fits with the way in which the forest (*viðr*) rescues the sun on bright-sky evenings.

I expect that some readers will find farfetched or naïve the derivation of Viðarr from the idea that the forest functions as an asylum for the sun at the end of its journey across the sky. But most of the mythology may appear naïve seen from a modern perspective (e.g. the idea that thunder and lightning come from a hulk's hammer blows), and we should not ask whether an explanation is plausible or unsurprising in an absolute sense. We should ask whether it makes more sense than alternative explanations. The previous explanation of the god Viðarr and his name is clearly unsatisfactory. The connection with the adjective "wide", upon which the spelling *Víðarr* is based, has no foundation in the sources. And nobody has been able to say anything about what led to the addition of Viðarr to the Old Norse pantheon. We believe that this happened at a late stage. But why? Such changes do not happen by mutation. The explanation based upon *til varna viðar* explains this, as well as the name, as a natural offshoot from the complex around the sun and wolf/wolves chasing it which already existed. In addition, it can explain the name and nature of Viðarr's residence and other information related to him or Týr, as I will now outline.

Holmberg has pointed out that strikingly many *Týr* place names in Denmark are compounds with Old Danish *-lund* and *-with* (Old Norse *-lundr* and *-viðr*), meaning 'grove' or 'forest' (Holmberg 1986:122; also Simek 2006:445; Lindow 2020:1356). Examples are *Tislund* on Zealand and *Tiset*, *Tiiswid* 1409, in southern Jutland (8 *-lund* and *-with* combined. Holmberg 1986:110, 111–12). This indicates that the Týr cult "was especially linked to the forest", Holmberg concludes (1986:122). This is entirely compatible with the idea that the forest saves the setting sun from the arch-enemy of both the sun and Týr, namely the wolf. But if this is a correct understanding of these place names, they must reflect the time before Viðarr was invented and took over some of Týr's functions. Possibly he never did in Denmark. Viðarr is only known from Icelandic sources, and, as we have seen, in Denmark the place name *Tīslæst* seems to link the main Icelandic myth about Viðarr to Týr.

The 'forest-man' understanding of Viðarr could also explain his being "the silent god" (*inn þǫgli áss*, *Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* 1931:99). The wolf said to follow the sun in *Grímnismál* 39 is called *Skǫll*, which is easiest explained (see Hellquist 1948:726) as:

- the same word as Old Norse *skǫll* 'mockery, loud laughter' (Cleasby and Vigfusson 1874:565), from Proto-Scandinavian **skallu*, which must be closely related to:
- Swedish *skall*, 'a loud or penetrating and widely audible sound or shout' (*Ordbok över svenska språket* 1898–2023, *skall*),

- Norwegian *skoll*, 'noise, racket' (*Norsk Ordbok* 1966–2016 X:37–38. Old Norse *ǫ* regularly becomes <o> /o/ in Norwegian),
- Old Norse *skella*, 'to make to slam, clash' (Cleasby & Vigfusson 1874:543),
- Norwegian *skjelle*, '(about loud noise) din, slam, boom; shriek',
- Swedish *skälla*, 'sound loudly or strongly; resound, echo' (*Ordbok över svenska språket* 1898–2023, *skälla*).

Thus, the name *Skǫll* seems to express that the wolf which chases the sun "to the safety of the forest" (*Grímnismál* 39) is noisy. When the defence against this wolf is the calm forest, the personification of that forest will easily be described as silent.

Some readers may object that this wolf's name is often spelled *Skoll* and seen as related to *skollr*, 'a fox', and *skolla*, 'to hang over, dangle' (e.g. de Vries 1962:498; Ásgeir Blöndal Magnússon 1989:853–54; Simek 2006:385). However, the oldest manuscript reads *sca/ll* (Bugge 1867:84; von See, et al., 2019b:1399), and *a/* represents *ǫ* in normalized writing rather than *o*. Wikström af Edholm finds it obvious that the real form of this name is *Skǫll* and that it means "howling" (af Edholm 2014:77). In the *Hauksbók* version of *Heiðreks saga*, the name of this wolf is *Skalli* (von See, et al., 2019b:1398), which links up with *Skǫll* because *ǫ* most often derives from a *u*-mutated *a* (cf. *skǫll* from **skallu*).

1.8. Spring Equinox – the Main Link between Týr and Mars?

Gísli Sigurðsson does not explain what he means by saying that the sun "emerged from" the *Ulfskjǫptr*, 'wolf-jaws', "once a year" (Gísli Sigurðsson 2022:241, possibly inspired by Etheridge 2013:130). But he may have in mind the fact that Hyades/Ulfskjǫptr, which is a part of Taurus (the horizontal V in Hyades forms the horns of Taurus), was, in the mornings around spring equinox in ancient times, located low in the sky, due east – which is where the sun would rise at this time of the year (Ulansey 1989:131–33; Ulansey 1991:51; Banos 2006:27, 30). A link between Ulfskjǫptr/Hyades/Taurus and the sun escaping the jaws of the wolf at spring equinox would fit very well with the sun observations at Týsnes and the etymological connection between *Týr* and the bright sky or sun.[23] This understanding of *Ulfskjǫptr* would be partly analogous to a Siberian and Altaic myth in which the constellation Ursa Major, seen as an elk, steals the sun around the time of autumn equinox (Frank 2015:1681–82).

However, the firmament slowly changes (moving left), and in Greco-Roman times, sunrise on spring equinox had moved into Aries (González-García & Belmonte 2006:102, Ulansey 1989:131, 133). This shift happened around 2000 BC (Ulansey 1989:131, 133. Today it occurs in Pisces and will around 2200 enter Aquarius [ibid.]). This implies that, if the constellation name *Ulfskjǫptr* does reflect sunrise in Hyades at the spring equinox, it is a cultural fossil from around 2000 BC. To assume this would clearly be rather

daring, so I hesitate to suggest it. Still, the name makes more sense if this is, indeed, the case. And when we consider how the Scandinavian Bronze Age sun-disc wagons are believed to anchor the Scandinavian sun myths at this early time (below, § 2), a somewhat earlier date of the name *Ulfskjǫptr* should not be entirely out of the question. Interdisciplinary studies now indicate that the Germanic language (or its predecessor, North-Western Indo-European) came into Western Europe with the Corded-Ware Culture in the Late Stone Age (Kristiansen et al. 2017).

There was in any case a link between Týr and spring equinox, even after the changes in the sky that moved the sunrise at the spring equinox out of Taurus. This link was Mars, who was understood as corresponding to Týr by the early Germanic peoples, as attested by the weekday name, and Mars was strongly associated with the spring equinox by the Romans. The month of March (Latin *Martius*) was named after him – most festivals honouring Mars occurred in March (14, 17 and 19–23 March) – and March is the month of spring equinox. Mars was a god of war, and the season for warfare started with Quinquatrus, a festival in honour of Mars and Minerva, lasting from March 19 to 24 (Beard et al. 1998:47–48, 53; González-García & Belmonte 2006:98–99; Rüpke 2011:26, 28). The spring equinox occurs on March 20 or 21. Some Roman army camps and fortresses are oriented according to sunrise in March, "related to the 'war season'" (Espinosa et al. 2016:237 – and according to sunrise at the winter or summer solstice as well, Goethert 2002; Espinosa, et al., 2016). Mars was also a god of agriculture, and March was the main planting period for the Romans (e.g. Scullard 1981:85). These aspects of March were considered so important that March was the first month in the old Roman year (cf. the fact that *September* derives from *septem*, 'seven' and is followed by the 'eighth', 'ninth' and 'tenth' months of October, November and December).

Why was Týr understood by the early Germanic peoples as their counterpart to Mars? The usual answer is that Týr was a war-god, like Mars (e.g. Lindow 2020). But at least in the Old Norse sources, Óðinn was a more obvious war-god than Týr, and Freyja seems to have played a role similar to that of Óðinn. We do not have much information about this, but according to *Grímnismál* 14, Freyja received half of the fallen warriors in her abode, *Folkvangr*, 'army field', which must be understood as a counterpart to Óðinn's Valhǫll. In short, Týr was not the only Germanic war-god, so his being a war-god could hardly be enough to make him Mars' counterpart.

I suggest that a combined association with war and spring equinox and the division of the year is what Mars and Týr have in common. Mars' association with spring equinox and the division of the year is clear from the classical sources. Týr's association with these phenomena emerges from the sun observations at Týsnes. It could also be reflected in the immediate proximity of Ulfskjǫptr, which could reflect the sun-wolf myth and an

original association with the spring equinox, with Ásar bardagi, in which *Ásar* probably refers to Týr.

1.9. Conclusion of 1

I will now try to sum up the discussion hitherto. I find it undeniable that there is a link between Týr and the sun in Old Norse myths. But this does not mean that Týr *is* the sun or the daylight or the sky, as the evolutionists of the early twentieth century claimed (see af Edholm 2014:7–8, 16–20).

Instead – on the basis of the sun-and-wolf myth complex (including the place-name connection with forests), the constellation names *Ulfskjǫptr* and *Ásar bardagi*, the sun phenomena at Týsnes at the four solar turning points, and the week-day link to Mars – the Old Norse Týr (with his derivative Viðarr) seems to be essentially a *defender* of the sun. He appears to be the one who saves the sun from the wolves in the sky in the evening, secures the sun's return at winter solstice, helps the sun regain the upper hand at spring equinox, and postpones the sun's destruction at Ragnarǫk (by tethering the wolf) – cf. the "encores" before the final sunsets at Týsnes. In short, Týr is the god who gives us more sunshine (Týsnes has more sunshine than the settlements from which the place can be observed), or at least ensures that we do not get less.

The sun phenomena at Týsnes and Týr's link to Mars, who was celebrated around spring equinox, also seem to imply that Týr was a god of the year-dividing solar turning points. This aspect of Týr may have been decisive when the Germanic peoples understood him (*Teiwaz) as their counterpart to Mars, rather than Óðinn (*Wōdinaz/Wōdanaz). If the spring equinox moreover marked the start of the campaigning season among these peoples, this may constitute the roots of Týr's war-god aspect.

It has previously been argued, mostly on the basis of the inscription *Mars Thingsus* on a third-century votive stone from Hadrian's Wall, that Týr had a prominent position in the Germanic assembly institution (Old Norse *þing*. E.g. Herrmanowski 1891:6–7; Olsen 1915; Bing 1937:115–17; Dumézil 1940; Turville-Petre 1964:181; Ásgeir Blöndal Magnússon 1989:1179; de Vries 1956 II:11–12; Aune 2009:86; Dumézil 1973 [1959]:1359–60). The support for this view of Týr is not very strong. But even if it does hold true, his association with the division of the year would fit with it – although the assemblies were not held at the solar turning points themselves, but as much as a month later. This was because the calendar combined the solar and lunar systems (Nordberg 2006), which is also the principle behind the way in which we still determine the date for Easter.

The constellation names *Ulfskjǫptr* and *Ásar bardagi*, possibly also the Old English Týr rune poem, seem to indicate that Týr opposes the sun wolf not only in the binding myth but in the sky as well. The name *Ulfskjǫptr* could be a fossil from the time when the sun rose in this constellation at the spring equinox. If this is correct, the name *Ulfskjǫptr* anchors the sun-wolf myth of

the Eddas at a point in time three millennia before it was recorded in writing. This idea is so radical that I find it difficult to suggest. But it clearly would make better sense if the name were given when the sun emerged from the maw of the wolf at the spring equinox, which is when the sun escapes from being dominated by the long nights. This possibility should not be ruled out entirely, because the Old Norse myth of the sun wagon is believed to be anchored in the Bronze Age on the basis of archaeologically found sun-discs. Regarding the question of long-lasting tradition, we should also consider the fact that the essence of the sun-wolf myth has, in fact, survived in oral tradition until modern times, that is, for another near-millennium, in connection with parhelia.

One factor that contributed to Týr's being pushed into the background in late paganism could be that the Ulfskjǫptr constellation ceased to match the spring equinox. The link would not be lost right away. As a comparison, the Dog Days in modern-day northern Europe (Jansson 1962) derive from the heliacal rise of Sirius – i.e. the time of the year when Sirius, the Dog Star, rises just before sunrise. Today, the Dog Days occur in August, but much earlier originally. The tradition was borrowed from the Romans (*dies caniculares*, 'dog days'), who got it from the Egyptians, and the starting point was the celestial circumstances during the Middle Kingdom, *c*. 2040 to 1782 BC. During this period, the heliacal rising of Sirius was important because it coincided with the first indications of the flood in the Nile – and it happened at the beginning of June (Jong 2006, DeYoung 2000:481–83).

The early dating of the name *Ulfskjǫptr* is not at all required in order to explain the decline of Týr. This may well have happened for reasons we no longer have access to. However, another factor that may have contributed to the decreasing importance of Týr, may have been the sixth-century cold-climate crisis caused by enormous volcanic eruptions in the 530s and 540s (Gräslund 2007). During these years, Týr did not succeed in protecting the sun, and crop failure, famine and the abandonment of whole agricultural districts were the results of that failure. This could have led to a rejection of him. Virtually all surviving Týr place names are found in Jutland (Holmberg 1986:123), which is the part of Scandinavia that would be least affected by the lack of warmth from the sun. This region sports the combination of being located southernmost in Scandinavia, and having an Atlantic climate – the Gulf Stream would still be flowing. This scenario moreover fits with the fact that Norway's west coast does feature a Týr name, Týsnes, which is the centre of a cluster of sacral place names, whereas Sweden, a continental country, has no Týr names (Holmberg 1986:123).

People who rejected Týr may have turned to Óðinn instead. He is associated with winter, through the name *Jólnir*, 'Yule man', and generally with darkness and storms. In addition, he is treacherous and promises nothing. Therefore, he could not fail to deliver, in the way Týr failed during those harsh years.

At any rate, archaeologists see a large increase in the depositions of gold hoards and bracteates during the climate crisis, and some see this as a reaction to the crisis (Axboe 2001). If this it correct, the crisis did lead to religious changes.

If the understanding of Týr that I have outlined above is correct, it could throw light on aspects of the majority of Týr place names. I have already mentioned some such cases: *Týsnes* and its solar turning points, *Tilst/Tīslæst* and its possible connection with the fight against the wolf at Ragnarǫk, and how the many forest names linked to Týr fit together with the sun's woodland refuge at sunset and with the Týr derivate Viðarr. In addition, forests and groves could have been chosen for Týr sanctuaries because they can easily be trimmed to produce such sun phenomena as we see at Týsnes (which the landscape alone cannot produce in Denmark because it is flat). At present, this is speculation, but it could be confirmed by archaeology.

At Tissø, the location of the king's manor and the cultic area on the west bank of the lake could be significant because it implies that, at the spring (and autumn) equinox, sunrise will be seen across the near circular lake, reflected in its waters. Could the many swords sacrificed in the lake be understood as representations of the sword functioning as the *gómsparri*, 'gag', that prevents the jaws of the cosmic wolf from snapping shut over the sun? According to Snorri, the river *Ván*, 'hope', is formed by the saliva that flows from the gaping jaws of the bound Fenrir (*Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* 1931:37).[24] Or were the swords deposited at the spring equinox as part of the opening of the campaigning season? We cannot know.

I note that most of the Týr place names (Holmberg 1986) that I am able to localize are associated with landscape formations that are interesting with respect to the celestial position of sun at the equinoxes. The spring at *Tisvilde*, 'Týr's spring', northern Zealand (now called *Helene kilde*), is located near the beach where an east–west-running gorge runs down to the sea. Would the equinox morning sun perhaps reach the spring first when shining down the gorge? *Ti*(*r*)*svad*, 'Týr's ford' west of Horsens, central Jutland, may feature a similar situation, depending on exactly where the ford used to be located. The farm *Tislum*, 'Týr's grove', east of Sindal, northern Jutland, is located in a well-defined east–west-running valley. The farm of *Tiset*, 'Týr's forest', south-west of Aarhus, is located where the north face of a hill runs quite accurately east–west. *Tisbjerg*, 'Týr's hill', south-east of Aars, northern Jutland, is a long and high hill with steep slopes on both the northern and southern sides, running almost east–west.

Tisbjerg, 'Týr's hill', in Thy, northern Jutland, is found in a group of high hills facing east, falling steeply down towards the sound of Vilsund. *Tirsbjerg*, 'Týr's hill', north-east of Ølgod, central Jutland, is also a high hill facing east, falling steeply towards the Påbøl river. *Thise*, 'Týr's forest', north of Skive, northern Jutland, is located on a plateau facing east towards

the sound of Hvalpsund. These would all be good places from which to observe sunrise at the equinoxes.

Whether or not the landscape traits I point out here are overrepresented in connection with Týr place names, compared to other names, I cannot tell.

Many Týr place names are located on heights on the Jutish ridge (Holmberg 1986) or are compounds with *bjerg*, 'hill' (4 or 5 quite certain examples), or *høj*, 'hill, mound' (ibid:118–19). This could reflect a habit that I only know from modern times in Norway, but which could be ancient: To greet (*helse*) the sun "on the morning of Easter Day or the first day of summer (14 April)", to "see the sun dance and take omens from it". This should be done "high up on a mountain" (Lid 1934:123). Easter occurs around the time of spring equinox (which is probably reflected in the word *Easter*'s relation to *east*, Old English *easter*, Old Norse *austr*; de Vries 1962:21). Týr's Greek cognate Zeus is connected to high mountains in the Greek area (Fox 1964:159; but so are other Greek gods, e.g. Dionysus and Magna Mater). De Vries points out both the frequency of names like *Tīsbjerg* and the Zeus analogue (de Vries 1956 II:22). The places bearing Týr names compound with *bjerg* and *høj* are located on the Jutish ridge, which is Denmark's version of high mountains.

It may be worth noting that due east from the manor at Tissø, i.e. where the sun will rise at the spring (and autumn) equinox, we find hills reaching 100 m, the highest in the region. This area is largely wooded from the lake and up to the top of the hills, whereas the land has been cleared to both the north and the south of the area. But we do not know, of course, what the forest cover was like in this area in prehistoric times.

Týr may have been important in Viking Age Denmark even though he was no longer at the forefront of the mythology that Snorri knew in Iceland. That this was indeed the case is suggested by the name *Tissø*, by the significance of that place in the Viking Age, and by the fact that the deposition of weapons in the lake, especially swords, continued into the eleventh century (Edholm 2016:82). Furthermore, *Tīslæst* and names like *Tislund* and *Tisved* (*-vith*, *-viðr*) seem to indicate that the "Wood-Man" Viðarr never took over any of Týr's roles in Denmark. We should note that Viðarr's taking over the task of killing the wolf at Ragnarǫk does not necessarily contradict Týr's essential role. A distribution of roles could have developed, where Týr kept the wolf in check (with or without the tether Gleipnir) during its course across the sky and Viðarr (/the forest) stopped it in a more definitive way.

What I suggest about Týr, the sun and parhelia corroborate the ideas already put forward by Gísli Sigurðsson regarding his theory that the Norse gods had a very direct connection to the sky and the firmament, just like the gods of other ethnic religions (Gísli Sigurðsson 2014, 2018, 2022). In a similar way, Heimdallr should be linked to Polaris and the invisible pillar

that was widely believed to support it and the firmament (Heide manuscript 2024).

To me it seems that the Germanic Týr's role evolved at least partly from observations of parhelia. I am thus talking about an evolution of this god from a natural phenomenon. This, however, should be no more controversial than noting that the god Þórr evolved from observations of lightning and thunder. Noting this has little in common with the school of evolutionism that dominated religious studies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, which has rightly been severely criticized. I do not claim that the veneration of natural phenomena preceded the veneration or evolution of gods, nor that deities did not develop before the Roman Iron Age, or anything like that (see the summing up of evolutionism in connection with Týr studies in af Edholm 2014:7–33 and of sun studies in Nordberg 2013:199–38). When I point out that the constellation name *Ulfskjǫptr* could anchor the Týr/sun-wolf myth in the Late Stone Age or Early Bronze Age, this goes against evolutionist thinking.

We have no indication that Týr was associated with the planet Mars. In general, I find little about the planets in the indigenous traditions about the sky in this part of the world.[25] This could be because the planets move much faster and in orbits which are much more difficult to map than the case is with the stars. This fact is reflected in the concept of *fixed stars* (Latin: *stellae fixae*, Old Norse *festingarhiminn*, 'fixed sky'). Compared to planets and comets, the stars appear not to move. Thus, traditions will not so easily form around planets.[26]

2. The Sun Horse and Sun-Wagon Myth, and the Time Depth of the Myths

I have now done what I set out to do in this article, namely to argue that Týr was indeed linked to the sun in the Scandinavian Late Iron Age, at least in Denmark; that he essentially was a defender of the sun, and that Viðarr is a derivate of this sun-defender role.

In addition, however, I believe it is appropriate (and necessary) here to discuss some (possible) implications. The first of these concerns the relationship between the sun-wolf myth and the other Old Norse myth about the sun's journey across the sky. *Grímnismál* 37 tells of the horses *Árvakr*, 'early awake', and *Alsviðr*, very quick' or 'the one that burns', that pull the sun (*sól draga*) "up from here" (*upp heðan*). *Vafþrúðnismál* 11–14 tells of two horses with other names – *Skinfaxi*, 'shining mane', and *Hrímfaxi*, 'rime mane' – that every 24 hours pull, respectively, the day and the night across the skies above the humans. Snorri mentions all four horses but in addition chariots that the horses pull, and he says that they go around the earth (*umhverfis jǫrðina*) every 24 hours (*Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* 1931:17–18).

The two sun-horse myths seem to be variants of one myth. They could also be variants of the myth where the sun is chased by wolves. There is no contradiction between being pulled by horses and being attacked by wolves – wolves may attack even if the sun is pulled by horses.[27] Even so, I see these as different myths because, when horses are mentioned, the means of transport seems to be in focus, whereas when wolves are mentioned, the threat to the sun seems to be in focus.

Scholars often link the sun-horse myth to Bronze Age sculptures of horses pulling what is apparently a sun disc (e.g. Mortensson 1905:45; de Vries 1956 I:356–58; Steinsland 2005:18; Nordberg 2006:125–30; Andrén 2014:117; Etheridge 2013:123, 130), of which the best preserved is the Trundholm chariot from Denmark, dated to around 1400 BC; see Figure 3. This disc has one gilded side and one with no traces of gilding (Larsen 1955:46), which could correspond to the day half and the night half of the passage around the earth in Snorri's sun-horse account. The constellation name *Ulfskjǫptr* and its probable background in the sun-chasing myth complex could lend further support to the idea of interpreting Bronze Age objects in light of a myth known from Old Norse texts, more than two millennia later.

3. The gilded side of the Trundholm sun chariot.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trundholm_sun_chariot

Probable sun discs are also known from numerous other bronze objects, Bronze Age rock carvings and Early Iron Age pictorial stones from Gotland (Kaul 2004; Andrén 2014). Examples of the latter are given in Figures 5 and 6. A special example of the former is shown in Figure 4. It is believed to be a symbolic sun holder (for which a strong argument will soon be given; other exemplars are also known, Kaul 2004:357–61). Many believe that the scene in Figure 6, from the picture stone from Austers in Hangvar, Gotland, depicts the monster Fenrir biting off Týr's hand (e.g. Ney 2006:63; Andrén 2014:150; Lindow 2020:1352) – although it would then be a different kind of monster.

The type of probable sun disc that I have shown in Figures 4–6 have symmetrical crosses inside them, commonly referred to as wheel-crosses. The cross can be formed simply by crossing lines, as in Figures 4 and 6. The cross in Figure 4 only becomes visible when strong light (e.g. sunlight) shines through the red amber that the disc is made from (Kaul 2004:358).

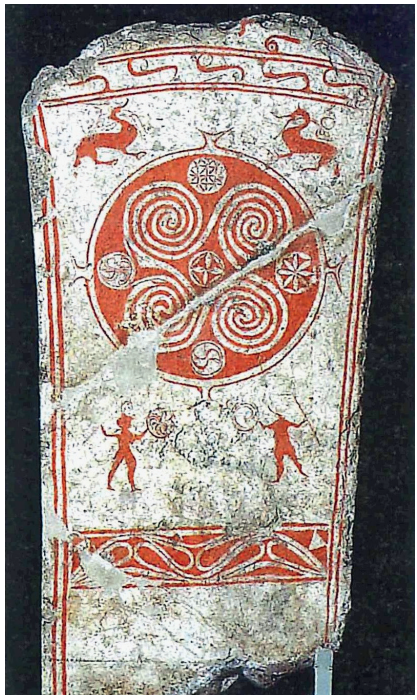
4. A 7 cm high Bronze Age sun holder from Denmark. Cover illustration of Kaul 2004.

To me, this is a strong argument that the object really is a sun disc. The cross in probable sun discs can also, as in Figure 5, be formed by smaller spheres inside the main one and/or by buds protruding from the main disc where the lines end, as in Figure 4 and Figure 6. More examples of this type of probable sun disc can be found in Kaul (2004), Andrén (2014), Lindqvist (1941–42:142, plate 4) and other works.

Why was the cross added to the sun disc in Figure 4 and the others? If the idea was simply to make an imitation of the sun, there would be no need for a cross. Kaul implicitly suggests, with the cover illustration of his book, shown in Figure 4 (Kaul 2004), that the horizontal line in the cross represents the horizon and the vertical line the reflection of the setting sun in the sea. But this does not match reality, because, during a sunset, the sun is not located in that cross until half of it has disappeared behind the horizon (as emerges from Figure 4).

The probable sun representations with crosses through them strikingly resemble the four-spoke wheel which is often seen around the sun in a parhelion; Figure 1. A parhelion is an unusual sight which we know formed the basis for a sun myth that was central in Germanic cosmology and prophecy (see above). This suggests that the phenomenon of the parhelion is the main background to wheel-crosses in sun-discs.

Alternatively, you could argue that the wheel-crosses reflect the cardinal directions. This, however, can hardly be the starting point

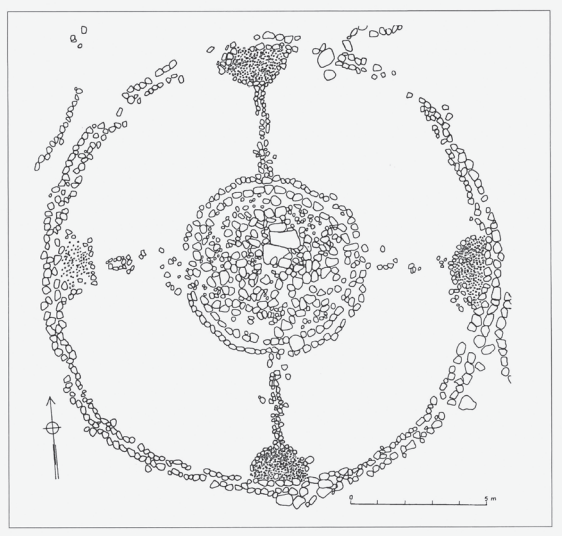


5. Fifth- or sixth-century pictorial stone from Vallstenarum in Vallstena, Gotland. Andrén 2014:125.

6. Fifth- or sixth-century pictorial stone from Austers in Hangvar, Gotland. Andrén 2014:156.

because the sun, as we see it, is never divided in this way – that is, unless it is located in the centre of a parhelion. Sun-dog circles are divided in this way, and the visual impression of a parhelion corresponds closely to the Germanic idea of four cardinal directions with south as up and north as down, which we see in the etymology of the terms (*norðr*/*north*, *suðr*/*south*. Falk & Torp 1903–6:553–54, 875; Ásgeir Blöndal Magnússon 1989:673, 985; de Vries 1962:411, 559). Parhelia may be seen as nature's 'map' of cardinal directions, then reproduced by humans in objects, depictions (Figures 4–6) and graves shaped as wheel-crosses, like the one at Sälle in Fröjel, Gotland, which is oriented according to the cardinal directions; see Figure 7.

More remotely, the parhelion/sun wolf/Týr complex could be part of the reason why the seven Viking Age ring fortresses found in what was then the Danish areas have the same essential shape and cardinal orientation (e.g. Olesen 2000). Because the Týr cult seems to have been strongest in Denmark and Týr was a war god linked to equinoxes and solstices (Týsnes and the association with Mars) whose essential role was to oppose the sun wolf, as seen in parhelia, it is conceivable that the ground plan of the ring fortresses was inspired by parhelia. This is just a suggestion, of course. One objection could be that army camps of the Romans, who did not know the sun-wolf myth, were also often oriented according to the four cardinal directions (e.g. Espinosa, et al., 2016; Andrén 2014:106–8). This is correct, but the Roman camps were quadratic. Why would the Danish Vikings make theirs circular? The ground plans of some Danish ring forts (Olsen 1962:96–97; Olesen 2000:102) resemble very closely the disc with decorative elements in Figure 5.



7. Roman Iron Age grave in the form of a wheel-cross from Sälle in Fröjel, Gotland. Andrén 2014:137.

It is also interesting how the wheels on the Trundholm chariot resemble a parhelion, as seen in Figure 1, and a grave with a wheel-cross in it, as shown in Figure 7. Four-spoke wheels are well known from battle chariots in the Mediterranean and Middle East, and from Scandinavian Bronze Age rock carvings (e.g. Kaul 2004:294–95; Bengtsson 2002; Askum Raä 67:1, 67:2). But such wheels are more difficult to make and are weaker than wheels with more spokes. A reason for still choosing the four-spoke alternative could be a wish to make the wheels of the sun chariot resemble a parhelion, because parhelia seem to have played an important role in sky and war mythology from ancient times. "Parhelion wheels" may also form part of the background of the idea that the sun is transported across the sky in a chariot.

If this understanding is correct, the design of wheels on the Trundholm and other sun chariots forms a bridge between the wolf and horse versions of the sun myths: The same type of wheel is there in both versions (Figure 1 and Figure 3).

The interpretations and considerations presented in this section (§ 2) are generally uncertain or very uncertain. This, however, should not be taken to invalidate what I suggest and argue in § 1, which forms the essential part of this article.

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[1] Marteinn H. Sigurðsson (2002) argues that no individual god *Týr* existed; this god was only constructed by Snorri as a result of misunderstanding the sources. However, as Wikström af Edholm points out (2014:29–32), this position requires much explaining away, and the name *týsdagr/Tuesday*, etc., analogous to *Óðinsdagr, Þórsdagr*, etc., clearly points to the existence of an individual god *Týr* at the time when the weekday names were borrowed from Latin.

[2] I use "double inverted commas" to mark quotations or figurative speech, and 'single inverted commas' to indicate linguistic meaning.

[3] Quotations in non-English languages, unless otherwise stated, are translated by me.

[4] For consistency and readability, all quotations in Old Norse are normalized according to the standard found in Heggstad et al. 2008.

[5] Many believe that this scene is depicted on a Migration Age bracteate from Trollhättan, western Sweden (e.g. Axboe & Källström 2013:154–56).

[6] …although it seems illogical that a war god loses the hand with which he should hold his weapons. The explanation may be the pattern that the gods have to sacrifice essential body parts or objects to achieve what they want: Óðinn his eye, Heimdallr his *hljóð* ('hearing'? 'horn'?), Freyr his sword – and Týr his right hand (see Meulengracht Sørensen 1977; Steinsland 1991 [1989]; Clunies Ross 1994; Mundal 2001).

[7] How the name *Todneset* is to be understood is uncertain. It cannot be very old because *Týsnes* was the name of the headland in medieval times. A plausible solution was suggested to me by Erling Garatun in late 2021. He comes from Eidfjord, Hardanger, not far from Tysnes. In his dialect, *todna* means 'to thaw, melt way', as in the name *Todnhaugen, 'Todn*-hill', which refers to a hill where the snow melts away early. I suggest that this verb *todna* is a hybrid of Old Norwegian *þíðna*, 'to thaw, melt away', and *þorna*, 'to become dry'. Todneset understood as describing a place with little snow would make sense because the headland is a windy place which has more sun than the settlements across the bay of Våge (Heide 2013:52–53). Even so, the verb (form) *todna* is not attested from Tysnes, as far as I know.

[8] The basis for Heide 2013 were the observations that I had from Svein Ove Agdestein. In August 2022 I became aware that the sun phenomenon was discovered independently by Øystein Martinsen and Anne Marie Tysnes, who have a summer house next to the cairn on the headland.

[9] The Earth's axis wobbles slightly (Ruggles 2015:479–80) but the described sun phenomenon at Týsnes seems not to be affected by this because it does not depend on too much precision regarding the sun's position.

[10] Eddic poetry is quoted from *Sæmundar Edda* 1867.

[11] In light of this, it should be considered whether the many phrases that seem to express that the sun is glad/pleased/happy when it sets could, in fact, mean this (as opposed to what the etymological dictionaries say: Falk and Torp 1903–6:233; Torp 1919:161; de Vries 1962:171; Ásgeir Blöndal Magnússon 1989:252). Examples are, with apparent meanings added: Old Norse *sólar-glaðan*, Modern Norwegian *soleglad*, *solarglad*, Swedish dialect *solagladning/solaglädning*, *solglæ*(*d*)*e*, all seeming to mean 'sun pleasing'; Swedish dialect *solen gladas*, 'the sun is pleased', cf. English dialect the *sun goes to glade* (Hyltén-Cavallius 1863–68:I 286; *Norsk Ordbok* 1966–2016 X:852–53, 858). In popular tradition in modern times the understanding clearly was, at least in some places, that the sun was pleased when setting (Hyltén-Cavallius 1863–68:I 286).

[12] The former version is found in *Grímnismál*, the latter in *Lokasenna*. Both forms are compounds with *hróðr*, 'fame'. The form without *-s* genitive marker may be a stem compound but the lack of *-r* suggests that it rather is an eroded form.

[13] In *Vǫluspá* 40, *Ketils saga hængs* (*Ketils saga hængs* 1954:172–73) and *Äldre Västgötalagen* 1919:62, Beckman 1933:45, cf. Heide 2006:74, 123, 127) there seems to be a connection between equinoxes and wolves in the shape of trolls (or vice versa) riding through the air. This topic I hope to address in a separate article.

[14] Some believe that this scene is depicted on the pictorial stone from Ledberg, eastern Sweden (see e.g. Hultgård 2022:157–63).

[15] Conceivably, the two Danish place names *Tiskær* (Holmberg 1986:117–18, 121) relate to this. *Skær* means 'cut', so *Tiskær* could mean 'Týr's cut'.

[16] In dialectal and standard Swedish, *grina som en solvarg*, 'gape/grin like a sun wolf', has become an idiom used to refer to someone screwing up their face (Rietz 1862–67:652; Hyltén-Cavallius 1863–68 I:286; Tegnér 1922:32; *Ordbok över svenska språket* 1898–2023, *solvarg*, *solulv*).

[17] It seems that Snorri misunderstands *tungl* as 'moon' in *Vǫluspá* 40 and that, because of this, he constructs the name *Mánagarmr*, 'moon dog', and applies it to a being that he believes

swallows the moon in Ragnarǫk (Edda Snorra Sturlusonar 1931:18–19). This seems to be Snorri's own construction; several scholars understand it this way, e.g. Olrik (1902:189–91), Finnur Jónsson (1934:182).

[18] At first glance, this understanding is supported by the fact that a 'pitchfork' in modern Danish is called *høtyv*, which is a compound of *hø*, 'hay', and tyv, which is formally identical with tyv, 'thief'. But this *-tyv* derives from *tjúga* rather than from an older form of the word meaning 'thief'.

[19] An Old Norse translation of the Latin term *Auriga* is also attested, *kerrugætir*, 'wagoner' (Fritzner 1883–96 II:278).

[20] Näsström (2001:72) mentions war cries that allegedly contain the name Þórr. It is doubtful that this is correct, however (e.g. Edwardes & Spence 1952:173; Mohr 1980:597; Słupecki 2003:139; Bek-Pedersen 2021:89, 465).

[21] Instead, it seems that the god Heimdallr is linked to Polaris; Heide manuscript 2024.

[22] Some scholars, for example Holtsmark, read this word as an adjective in the definite form, meaning 'the wide' (*det vide*, Holtsmark 1970:170). But this understanding would require a final *-a* (*víða*) to make the adjective congruous with land, which is a neuter. Thus, this reading is difficult to accept. *Viði/viði* could also be read as *víði*, '(dative of) willow' but this would not make any better sense.

[23] There is, in fact, a link between Zeus, whose name is cognate with *Týr*, and Taurus. Zeus abducted the maiden Europa in the shape of a bull, which was commemorated in this constellation (Clarke & Bolton 2010:206; Banos 2006:28). If this myth is sufficiently ancient, it implies a link between Zeus and spring equinox because of Taurus'/Hyades' position in the sky at that time of the year in ancient times. But we have no indication that the myth of Zeus, Europa and Taurus existed as early as around 2000 BC. However, the myth of Zeus, Persephone and Hades could represent a link between Zeus and spring equinox. In this myth, Persephone is abducted to the underworld by Hades and forced to be his wife. As a reaction, her mother Demeter forbids the earth to produce, which leads to a famine. Because of this, Zeus forces Hades to return Persephone, but because of a trick from Hades, the result is that Persephone every year spends the winter in the underworld and then returns in spring, possibly around the spring equinox (Fox 1964:227–33; Gantz 1996:65). This is caused by Zeus's intervention. A link between Zeus and autumn equinox may be suggested by Zeus's role as thunder god, which implies that he is also a god of rains (Fox 1964:159–60; Banos 2006:31). The start of the winter rains in Greek lands is associated with Taurus's position in the autumn (Banos 2006:31).

[24] The background to this image may be the fact that parhelia usually forebode precipitation (Sørensen 1999:44; Heide 2006:207–8).

[25] Qvigstad (1921:9) only says that Venus has received some interest among the Sami. He does not mention other planets.

[26] The bush *Daphne mezereum* is in Norwegian called *tysbast*, in Swedish *tibast* and in German *Zeidelbast* (*Norsk Ordbok* 1966–2016 XI:1541–42; Noreen 1911:280; Grimm & Grimm 1854–1961 31:498). Grimm suggested (1882–83 [1876–78] III:1193) that the first part of these names is *Týr/Ziu*; the second element being the same word as English *bast*. I think this could be correct and I suggest the following aspects as a basis for the link to Týr: A. The most conspicuous feature of Daphne mezereum is its blossoming before the leaves come out in early spring. In southern Scandinavia, this often happens as early as March (Lindman 1977:374), in Germany in February, March and April (Esser 1910:119). The bark, which in former times was much used both in popular medicine (Høeg 1974:307–13) and in school medicine (under the name *Cortex Mezerei*), was collected early in spring (Lindman 1977:374). This fits with Týr's link to spring equinox. B. In popular medicine, Daphne mezereum was often used to repel the hidden people and trolls from people and livestock (Høeg 1974:310–11), reminiscent to how Týr's derivate Viðarr seems to have had the task of repelling monsters in *Lokasenna* 9–10 (discussed above). C. One name of Daphne mezereum in German is *Wolfsbast,* 'wolf's bast' (Grimm & Grimm 1854–1961 30:1260; Grimm 1882–83 [1876–78] III:1193). D. If eaten or just tasted,

the bark and the berries will cause a burning pain in the mouth and throat (Lindman 1977:374). This could relate to how the bound Fenrir is tortured in several ways, for instance with a sword standing in its mouth, causing the mouth to produce a river of saliva. Some scholars reject the connection between *tysbast* etc. and *Týr* because of the German name *Zeidelbast*, Middle High German *zidelbast* (Noreen 1911280–81; Hellquist 1948:965–66; de Vries 1956 II:22). But I agree with Grimm that the first part of *zidelbast* may well be a reinterpretation of Old High German **zīulinta*, where *linta* is 'bast', and which seems to be the original form of Austrian *Zillind/Zwilind/Zwilinde*, 'Daphne mezereum' (Grimm 1882–83 [1876–78] III:1193; Grimm & Grimm 1854–1961 31:498, 12:1034). Grimm also suggested that the Norwegian plant name *torhjelm/tyrihjelm* means 'Þórr's helmet' (Grimm 1882–83 [1876–78] III:1193). This must be rejected, as demonstrated by Nordhagen (1951).

[27] The Lithuanians used to believe that solar eclipses were caused by a troll attacking the sun's chariot (Olrik 1902:194).

Smallpox and Vaccines in the Nineteenth Century in Sweden

Anders Gustavsson

Abstract

Smallpox was a severe epidemic disease that took many lives in older times. The disease could be prevented medically, though, as a vaccine was developed in England at the end of the eighteenth century. This was the only vaccine available against epidemic diseases in the nineteenth century. In 1816, vaccination of children became mandatory by law in Sweden and in Norway this had been the case since 1810. The last major epidemics took place in Stockholm in 1874 and in Gothenburg in 1892–1894.

For me as an ethnologist the question is how affected individuals and their environment have handled such times of disease. To gain an idea of how smallpox affected the lives of individuals in different parts of Sweden, I have studied folk life records in archives in Gothenburg, Lund and Uppsala. They are from the twentieth century, recorded from informants born in the nineteenth century. In many cases they have told about their own memories where smallpox was involved.

There was horror and anxiety both in the affected homes and in the neighbourhood. The country people understood that it was necessary to stay away from houses where someone was sick. There was a belief in fate that served as an explanation as to why some people suffered from smallpox, and why some of them died while others survived.

The person giving the vaccine shots was often the parish clerk after he had received some medical instruction from a physician. The person giving the injection carved out a mark in the skin of the children's arm and filled it with vaccine extracted from cowpox or from other human beings who had been sick.

In a regional study focused on the islands of Orust and Tjörn, north of Gothenburg, the issue is how the vaccination was carried out on these islands, and how this was related to different outbreaks of smallpox.

Keywords: smallpox, cowpox, vaccine, clerk, infection, belief in fate, medical reports

Epidemic diseases have occurred at intervals in both older and more recent times. For me as an ethnologist the question is how affected individuals and their environment have handled such times of disease.

Previously I have studied the recurrent cholera epidemics in the nineteenth century (Gustavsson 2020) and the Covid-19 pandemic in Norway and Sweden in the 2020s (Gustavsson 2022). There were no medical

protection against cholera, and it was almost a year before a functioning vaccine against Covid-19 was developed at the end of 2020.

Another severe epidemic disease was smallpox, which took many lives. However, this disease could be prevented medically as a vaccine was produced in England at the end of the eighteenth century. This became the only vaccine available against epidemic diseases during the nineteenth century.

The Nature of the Disease

Smallpox (*variola*) was an extremely contagious disease with a high mortality rate. It was caused and spread by a virus from the family of poxviridae or smallpox virus. It was not until the seventeenth century that smallpox became a widespread disease in Europe. During the eighteenth century smallpox was a significant infectious disease in Europe. The mortality rate was 20–30 per cent. The Swedish Queen Ulrika Eleonora died of smallpox in 1741.

A less aggressive variant of smallpox was called varioloids and occurred in vaccinated individuals or in those that previously had suffered and survived the disease (https://www.merriam-webster.com/medical/varioloid).

The incubation period of smallpox is typically 12–14 days. The patient suddenly falls ill with a high fever, body aches, headache and a general feeling of sickness. Around three days later facial rashes emerge, spreading to the trunk, legs and arms over a couple of days. Rashes also emerge on palms and soles. In those who survive, the rashes turn into blisters over a two-week period, and end up drying out and forming scabs. The disease was followed by disfiguring scar formation, most prominently in facial areas. Blisters could occur in the eyes, leading to blindness. At the turn of the nineteenth century, the physician and medical professor Eberhard Munck af Rosenschöld presented a detailed and horrifying description of the course

Figure 1. Child with smallpox (https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Smittkoppor).

of the disease. Among other things he wrote: "the whole body, head to feet, is covered with numerous overlapping blisters, burning like fire. The face is severely swollen and disfigured, the eyes deprived of light and the nose of air" (Tillhagen 1962:143).

Transmission happened by direct contact with sick individuals or indirectly from contaminated objects. Infection could also be airborne to the immediate surroundings. Infectivity peaks one to two weeks following the emergence of rashes.

Smallpox outbreaks happened in unpredictable surges and could hit the same parish several times. From Stenkyrka on the island of Tjörn epidemics are mentioned in 1750, 1757, 1758, 1767 and 1773 (Bergstrand 1937). The situation was at its worst from the autumn to the spring. That was the case regarding smallpox outbreaks in both the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. This seasonal profile fits well with the Covid-19 pandemic, when the summer season was less hit than the colder part of the year.

Before the use of vaccination started, there was variolization or inoculation, where material from an infected individual was placed on the skin of an uninfected person and the skin was then subject to a small cut. The infectious agent caused a relatively mild infection and the person became immune. The future king Gustav III and his sisters and brothers were variolized in 1769.

Vaccine

The first vaccine was developed in England following the discovery that individuals who had been infected by cowpox did not contract smallpox. Among farmers in England it was known that the females who milked cows often had smooth and fresh skin since they had not been infected by smallpox. Cowpox was a common infectious disease in the eighteenth century among beef cattle and caused blister-like rashes on the udders and teats of the cow. The first vaccine (from Latin *vacca* meaning "cow") was made from fluid obtained from cows infected by cowpox. The cowpox virus is closely related to the variola virus that gives rise to smallpox in humans.

The physician Edward Jenner (1749–1823) noted that individuals who had been infected with cowpox did not contract smallpox. He therefore concluded that someone who had been infected with cowpox, an illness with a relatively benign course, then developed immunity that protected against the significantly more serious smallpox. On 14 May 1796 he had inoculated an eight-year-old boy with fluid from cowpox followed by two cosmetic scratches in his skin. The boy caught cowpox but he was now protected against smallpox (www.ne.se/smittkoppor, https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Smittkoppor; Schiøtz 2017:250). Jenner's results were published in 1798. The year 1800 was a tough smallpox year in Sweden with over 12,000 dead (Tillhagen 1962:143).

The first vaccination in Sweden was in 1801 and in Bergen, Norway in 1803 (Alver, Fjell & Ryymin 2013:51). Vaccination was already under way in Gothenburg in 1802. By 1814 the same doctor had inoculated 1,200 children (https://gamlagoteborg.se/2018/01/18/smittkoppor-en-gang-vanligt-i-goteborg/).

In 1816 vaccination became mandatory by law in Sweden, as it had been in Norway since 1810, and at the same time variolization was prohibited there (Schiøtz 2017:250). In Sweden those who refused vaccination of children could be fined. In Norway the law was even more strict. Those not vaccinated were not allowed to be confirmed in the church or get married (Schiøtz 2017:250). The smallpox epidemics did not end in the nineteenth century but they happened less often than in the eighteenth century and not at all that many fell ill or died. The difference between the eighteenth century and the nineteenth century in this respect is clearly shown in Figure 2. The last major epidemics happened in Stockholm in 1874 (https://www.scb.se/hitta-statistik/redaktionellt/nar-vaccinationerna-utrotade-smittkopporna/) and in Gothenburg in 1892–1894 (https://gamlagoteborg.se/2018/01/18/smittkoppor-en-gang-vanligt-i-goteborg/. In 1874 the infestation of the infection was believed to be related to a lack of vaccination particularly among the worker population in Stockholm. From the annual report of the National Board of Health in 1874, it is clear that 81 per cent of children born this year had been vaccinated but only 60–70 per cent in Stockholm.

Adult individuals seem to have been immune from previous epidemics. Children were more vulnerable and therefore had to be vaccinated. Parents

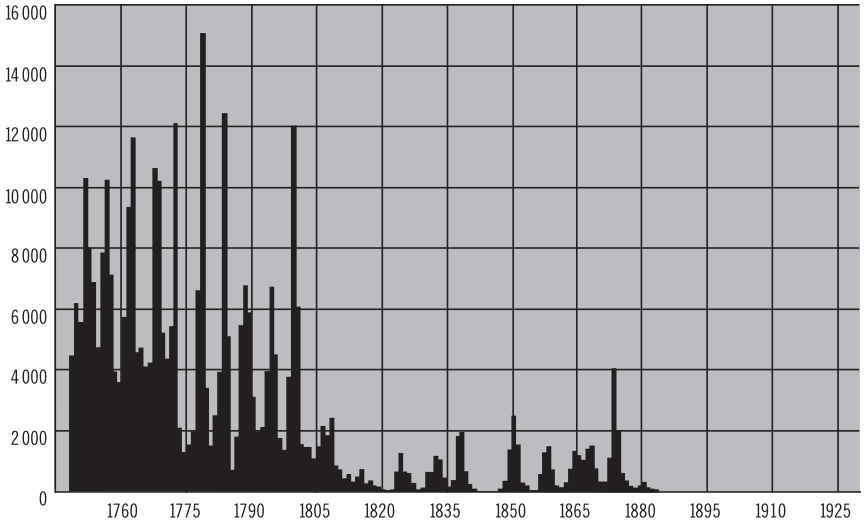


Figure 2. Number of deaths from smallpox in Sweden 1749–1930.
(https://www.scb.se/hitta-statistik/redaktionellt/nar-vaccinationerna-utrotade-smittkopporna/).

were obliged to bring them to campaigns that were announced for pox inoculation. According to notes from the vaccinators, it was mostly mothers who showed up with their children.

Folklore Stories about Smallpox

To gain a general idea of how smallpox affected the life of people in various places in Sweden, I have reviewed folk life records in archives in Gothenburg, Lund and Uppsala. They were recorded in the twentieth century from informants born in the nineteenth century. In several cases they have told about smallpox in their home area and also in their own family. Some informants were themselves afflicted by the disease and survived while other loved ones died. Those afflicted were children and young people. One informant in Råggärd, Dalsland, remembered a smallpox epidemic in 1866 when both small children and young individuals, aged 25 and 30, fell ill and died (ULMA 18874:5).

Those who took sick experienced severe itching. They scratched themselves so badly that large wounds arose with blood pouring from them. To prevent the scratching they could have their hands tied. One woman born in 1856 in Finnekumla, Västergötland, reported that this had happened to her father (IFGH 4147:24). There was no help to be found against the itching and the wounds that followed.

Those who were sick typically lived in their homes together with other members of the household. There it was not possible to keep any distance. One woman born in 1867 in Fjärås, Halland, had visited a neighbouring family where the children were ill. She did not get sick herself, but she infected her sister who was sleeping in the same bed and later died (IFGH 5514:3). It may have seemed as if chance governed who got sick and who escaped the infection. One woman in Uddevalla born in 1862 had two siblings who were ill but she did not get sick despite the fact that she played with them as a little girl.

It is easy to understand that fear and anxiety emerged both in the afflicted homes and in the neighbourhood. Country people understood that they needed to stay away from houses where someone was ill. One woman born in 1862 in Uddevalla remembered when her aunt died of smallpox in 1869. No one was allowed to visit the house where she was sick in bed. The maid in the informant's family used to get milk at her aunt's house every day, but in this time of illness the milk pot was retrieved outside on the doorstep where it had been placed by the aunt's maid (IFGH 4530:4). This is reminiscent of how milk pots were handled when cholera broke out in the nineteenth century (Gustavsson 2021). One woman born in 1863 in the town of Falsterbo recalled that no one dared to visit her family when her father was hit by smallpox and died. The only one who came to visit was an old

master mariner that had himself been sick with smallpox (LUF M 8902:6). Placards or notices on paper were posted outside houses where there were persons who were ill (LUF M 3241:10).

Physicians likewise kept a distance from those who were sick. One woman born in 1880 in the town of Ängelholm told about a doctor who was standing at the door outside the house calling to the patient: "How are you doing?" The patient answered by calling back, but later ended up dying (LUF M 9690:9).

Although most individuals who were sick typically remained in bed in their homes, some towns also had infirmaries for epidemic diseases where some sick people could be admitted. However, during epidemics those hospitals did not have a sufficient number of beds. Patients just had to stay in bed until they died or recovered. There was no treatment according to a statement from one informant born in 1862 in Uddevalla who had recovered from smallpox. In Malmö there was a "house for smallpox" where some sick persons could be admitted (LUF M 11164:4).

The general view of infections was that it happened through contact not just with people but also with items that had been touched by infected persons. Medically this could have been possible since the smallpox virus was quite persistent. A female informant in Malmö, born in 1869, stated that the infection arose when a customs officer opened a package containing a piece of silk fabric that was supposedly contaminated with smallpox (LUF M 11164:4). One woman born in Falsterbo in 1863 told about her father who died of smallpox at the age of 38. "He got the infection from a carpenter, Landgren, who had caught smallpox and recovered, but who still had the contagion in his clothes" (LUF M 8902:6).

Methods of protection in folk medicine were similar to what was used in the cholera epidemics. People were supposed to use smoked juniper, to bring in sulphur, or to drink water containing tar and aquavit.

The physician Rosén von Rosenstein spoke in 1764 about tar water and mercury being used by country people as protection against smallpox. Sulphur could also be used. He pointed out that even if these supposedly protective means had no effect, at least they were not harmful and served a function to "put many individuals' mind at rest, who are living in fear on a daily basis, and in this way they are helpful" (Tillhagen 1962:321). In a smallpox epidemic in Malmö in 1837, the city's Society of Apothecaries recommended the use of tar water (LUF M 8167:177).

One informant born in 1862 in Ånimskog, Dalsland reported: "Against the smallpox you used smoked juniper or tar. The elderly drank aquavit and chewed tobacco. So you were drinking tar water and brought in sulphur and even smoked with sulphur" (IFGH 4240:19). During a smallpox epidemic in Göteryd, Småland, in 1859 it was recommended to eat wood tar. "Some ate more than they could take but could still become infected," a woman

born in 1832 reported (LUF M 10092:78). A woman in Malmö born in 1869 recalled an outbreak of smallpox when she was around 14 years old. At that time her mother visited her sick sister and her children. She herself and her children did not catch the disease. "We always had tar at home. My mother took pieces of it, placed in the gutter and set fire to it both when the smallpox and the dysentery broke out" (LUF M 11164:4). In Råggärd, Dalsland, the use of aquavit was mentioned in particular as protection. "First aquavit was consumed for the blisters to 'emerge' because otherwise you would die, it was said, and then particularly the face was washed with aquavit so that the scars would not be so ugly" (ULMA 18874:5).

Supernatural experiences could occur in those situations of fear that arose when someone fell ill. People have experienced omens about illness and death ahead. The grandfather of one informant in Tävelsås, Småland, supposedly had a vision where he saw a funeral procession for three individuals that he later had to care for until all three died of smallpox but he himself survived (ULMA 16115). A woman born 1918 in Stehag, Skåne, reported that her grandmother had died from smallpox in 1872 at the age of 35. She wanted to speak to her son who was working at a farm close by. Because of the risk of infection the son was not allowed to visit her. As he was watering the horses the next day, he suddenly observed a bright shape that disappeared fast. The horses also shied away at that moment. Later he was told that his mother had died at exactly that moment (LUF M 3244:30).

In an effort to explain why some individuals were afflicted with smallpox and some died while others survived, there was a belief in fate. It was simply believed that some would be affected and others would escape. It was fate or God that decided over this, and there was nothing you could do about it. This way of thinking could have helped people to feel less anxiety when the epidemic struck. There was nothing you could do about what happened, even though some of the protective agents mentioned above, such as like tar water, aquavit, and so on, were considered to give some protection. One woman born in 1861 in Nättraby, Blekinge, was not hit by the disease herself, but her sister fell severely ill and lived with terrible pox scars for the rest of her life. The informant commented that "she was supposed to have it, that is how it was decided" (LUF M 10052:13). From Tävelsås, Småland, it was said: "He who was supposed to get it, got it and if his time was up he died, otherwise he survived, that is how people reasoned." The informant's grandfather took care of those that were sick, but he himself never got infected. There was the idea that he had a "white tongue" and those with such a tongue were immune against infection (ULMA 16115). This was a popular version of immunity that country people could believe in. Belief in fate went parallel with belief in God. One woman born in Södra Ljunga, Småland, in 1871 reported about some sick people with smallpox who died,

while others survived and got pox scars. Her comment was: "What God wants always happens, his will is the best."

As with deaths from cholera, there were special problems when dead persons were to be transported to a graveyard. It was supposed to be done under cover of darkness so that the transport met as few people as possible (LUF M 3701:1, Billinge, Skåne). Individuals with low social status could be talked into taking care of the corpses. A woman born in Ängelholm in 1880 reported about a person who died in his home and no one wanted to take care of the corpse. "But finally Sven, the driver, who lived here on the farm, got help from a couple of drifters. But as they were on their way with the body, the cover sheet came aside and they saw that the dead person had been infected with smallpox – they got so scared that they let go of the transport and ran off" (LUF M 9690:9). In contrast to the cholera outbreaks, there were no special graveyards for those that died from smallpox. The mortality from this disease was so much lower than was the case with cholera.

Those who survived the disease were left with permanent pox scars all over the body and could occasionally also lose their vision. Various informants reported that they often saw people with pox scars, especially at markets, up until the end of the nineteenth century, but not after that (LUF M 10092:78). The scars were prominent. In folklore tales it was said that when "the evil one" got a hold of a pox-scarred person he said that it was like curly-grained wood that is harder and firmer than ordinary wood. He then supposedly said: "This is knife handles all this" (ULMA 11901:13–14).

Vaccinators

The vaccinator was often the parish clerk who had received some medical instruction from a physician. For the supervision of the vaccinator's work every place had a head of vaccination. In 1828, the clerk Johan Heljesson in Valla, Tjörn, showed a certificate from the city doctor Falck in Marstrand and the assistant judge Holmer in Uddevalla that he was able to vaccinate. Therefore, the church committee decided that the clerk should perform the vaccinations (Pettersson 1979:145).

As qualified midwives were gradually hired in the parishes during the nineteenth century, they typically took over the task of vaccinating. On Orust and Tjörn this did not happen until the 1890s, when the first graduated midwives were hired there.

The vaccinator carved a mark in the skin on the arm of the children and filled it with vaccine from cowpox or from other individuals that had been sick. The cowpox vaccine was kept in a glass container, and was considered to lose its effect over time until the vaccination was performed. From Tjörn it was reported that children had come down with pain and suffering

Figure 3. Inoculation instruments owned by the clerk Anders Lundgren and used for all children in the parish of Lid in Södermanland approximately during the years 1884–1900. The instrument was a very sharp and pointed lacemaking tool that could be folded in between brown slabs made of horn that also served as the handle for the tool. Sörmlands museum. (https://kringla.nu/kringla/objekt;jsessionid=76CA65EF83021142A21D-CBBD3D061F03?text=smittkoppor&referens=S-DM/object/DM07353).

a couple of days after being vaccinated with a vaccine that had been kept in a glass jar (Pettersson 1979:147). That kind of suffering was not mentioned when inoculation material had been retrieved from other children that had been infected.

The district doctor Fredric Marin (1872–1834) in Uddevalla stated in his annual report for 1831 that the vaccine likely did not protect against smallpox unless at least five inoculations were made on both arms of the children at certain intervals. The vaccinator was to inspect the inoculation for pox marks nine days after inoculation had been performed. This was an indication that the vaccination had been successful. Otherwise a new inoculation had to be performed. The heads of vaccination had to be tough when inspecting to make sure that this was performed as recommended.

A female informant born in 1881 in Hallaryd, Småland, reported that the midwife ordered vaccines and vaccinated a couple of children. Then she took blisters from these children and vaccinated other children (LUF M 11026:8). One informant born 1854 in Kulltorp, Småland, reported about a clerk working in 1860–1898 who placed three blisters in each arm of the children. They may have been just one month old when they were vaccinated (LUF M 7244:2).

The vaccinator received financial remuneration for every vaccinated child. The parishes themselves decided the size of the amount. Poor people typically got a reduced fee or did not have to pay at all. In Röra, Orust, it was said that the clerk Carl Fredriksson got 50 öre for every vaccinated child and 25 öre for crofter children plus a yearly collection gathered at catechetical meetings.

Successful vaccinators often received rewards such as money and/or a medal. In Stala, Orust, the clerk Isak Rutgersson (1831–1915) had been so

Figure 4. Oil painting from 1898. The clerk vaccinating. Painting by the artist Nils Alfred Larson (1872–1914) of Sannäs, Bohuslän. Painting privately owned. (https://digitaltmuseum.se/021015921288/dokumentation-av-verk-pa-utstallning-om-konstnaren-nils-larson-pa-bohuslans).

ambitious that there were no elderly people in the congregation who were not vaccinated in the 1890s. He had received rewards such as silverware and money in 1890, and the district physician also recommended him for a medal in 1893. On Tjörn, the clerk A. J. Kristensson had been a vaccinator since 1868, and in both 1895 and 1897 he was nominated by the district doctor for a medal. In 1896 the clerk Isak Rutgersson in Stala and the organist H. Andersson in Myckleby were said to be "honourable veterans in their profession with vaccination records never tarnished by any complaints".

It could be very expensive for parents who, as was generally the case, had several children to vaccinate. From Stora Herrestad, Skåne, a woman born in 1837 reported that a mother came to have her children vaccinated, but when she heard about the price being a whole riksdaler per child, she turned back home and wanted to vaccinate the children herself. She got what was needed from a boy who had blisters on his head and went about vaccinating her children. Not just the expense may have been a deterrent for the mothers, but also experiences of children getting sick and having died following vaccination. One woman in the town of Halmstad, according to her grandchild, had been vaccinating a child that died soon after. When the

next child was born, she refused to show up for vaccination. Her husband, though, secretly brought the child with him to have it vaccinated.

The vaccinators were required to file yearly reports that served as a basis for the physicians' yearly reports and for parsons' and bishops' official reports. The reports were then forwarded to the Royal Commanding Officer. In reports from physicians it was stated when the report had been filed in due time, which was most commonly the case. However, there were some exceptions where vaccinators were reported for neglect. On 29 June 1840 the head of vaccination on Tjörn complained that clerk Johannes Heljesson in Valla had refused to turn over the register of vaccinated children. The church committee informed him that it was the vaccinator's responsibility each year to compile a register (Pettersson 1979:147). In a physician's report from 1898, it was stated from Långelanda, Orust, that "the clerk A .S. P. Edström over several years had been neglecting to send in the vaccination registers".

Figure 5. Leather case with pox inoculation tools. Golden print of a royal crown and three crowns underneath. This is a reward to clerk Carl Dahlgren in Södra Sandby, Skåne, for vaccinations. Helsingborg Museum. (https://kringla.nu/kringla/objekt?text=smittkoppor&referens=HeM/objekt/84320https://kringla.nu/kringla/objekt?text=smittkoppor&referens=HeM/objekt/84320).

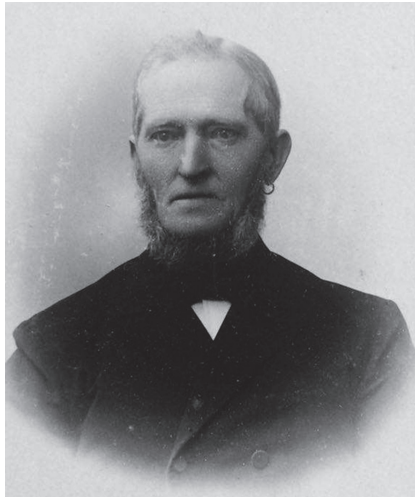
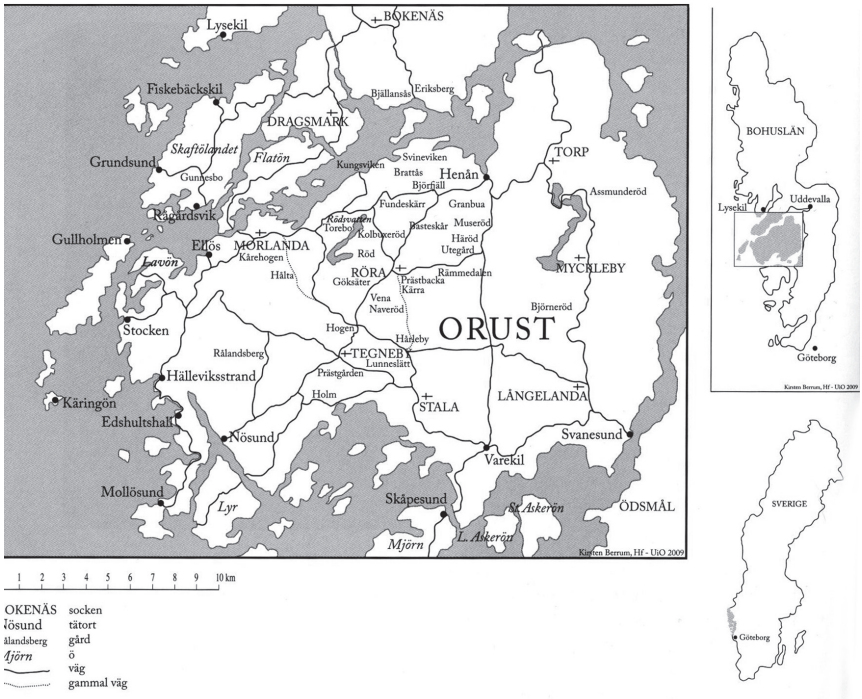


Figure 6. The clerk Isak Rutgersson (1831–1915) from Stala, Bohuslän. Photo privately owned. He received 50 öre for every vaccinated child plus a yearly collection.

A Regional In-Depth Study from a Perspective of Change

In minutes of parish meeting there is information about how smallpox broke out on several different occasions in the same parish, not just during the eighteenth century but also during the nineteenth century although to a minor extent. The disease appeared in non-predictable waves of outbreaks. People should



Karta över Orust. Den har ritats 2009 av Kirsten Berrum, Oslo universitet.

Figure 7. Map of Orust, Bohuslän and Sweden. Map drawn by Kirsten Berrum, Oslo University 2009.

therefore have been well aware of the fact outbreaks of smallpox could happen. This must surely have had an impact on the willingness to get vaccinated. But how did it work in reality?

As with the study regarding cholera in the nineteenth century, I have particularly studied annual reports from physicians on the islands of Orust and Tjörn in Bohuslän. They formed a district of physicians from 1835 and a deanery. Before 1835, the islands belonged to the Uddevalla district of physicians, which covered all of southern Bohuslän. Annual physician records exist starting in 1836, and these are digitally available in a medical database at the University of Linköping (https://ep.liu.se/databases/medhist/). Official reports from bishops and ministers can be found for all of the nineteenth century.

Orust and Tjörn were connected by a small ferry crossing the fairway at Skåpesund. The hinterland of the islands was dominated by farming. The western parts were coastal villages where fishing and shipping dominated.

The question formulated in the present regional study was how vaccination was carried out on Orust and Tjörn during the nineteenth century and how it relates to different outbreaks of smallpox. To follow the development

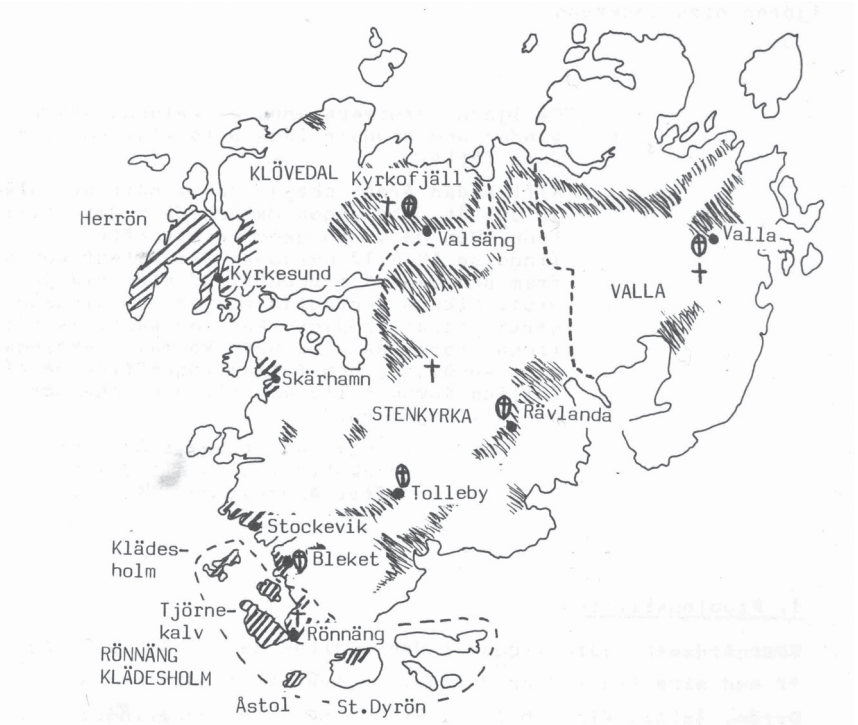


Figure 8. Map of Tjörn. By Holm 1984.

over time, I address one decade at a time up until 1900. While Tjörn constituted one parish, there were three parishes on Orust – Myckleby in the eastern part of the island, Morlanda in the west and Tegneby in the centre of the island. Thus, in contrast to the situation on Tjörn, there are official reports from three different areas on Orust. The yearly physicians' reports pertained to both Orust and Tjörn up until 1892, when Tjörn became a medical district of its own.

Early evidence for extensive vaccination comes from the minutes from Stenkyrka, Tjörn, for 1809 and 1810, reporting on all children brought by their mothers to be vaccinated. All social classes were represented. There were married mothers, widows and unmarried maids. It was carefully noted how many children were brought by each woman. This was before vaccination against smallpox became mandatory by Swedish law in 1816 (GLA Stenkyrka KIa:1). At a parish meeting in Valla, Tjörn, in 1817, the importance of the parish inhabitants showing up with their children for the vaccination opportunities offered by the vaccinator was emphasized. If the vaccinator had to visit the homes it would take more time and the inoculation vaccine could degrade as it was kept in a glass.

During an episcopal visitation on Tjörn on 16 June 1827, there were complaints that many children did not show up for the check-ups that had to be done following vaccination. This meant that the vaccinator was unable to see whether the vaccination had been successful. This in turn could have led to smallpox being around a couple of years later. The disease was however mild for those who were vaccinated. The bishop pointed out the importance of vaccination and follow-up inspections to maintain health, which was said to be "the most valuable thing owned by human beings on earth" (GLA GDA FIIa).

From Orust the first reports are from the 1830s. Earlier summary information was provided by district physician Fredric Marin (1772–1834), who worked in the Uddevalla medical district from the beginning of the nineteenth century. In his annual report in 1831 he did not discriminate between information from Orust and Tjörn, but stated that "smallpox had increased during the year to become basically ubiquitous, with a similar impact now as in previous times". This led him to point out that "the infallibility of the vaccine never should or can be doubted".

In 1837 there was only one case of smallpox on Orust. A two-year-old girl was mildly sick and the contagion did not spread. On Tjörn, however, the disease was widespread starting at the end of 1837. It culminated in February 1838 and then petered out with only scattered cases up until June when instead Orust was hit. There the disease was at its worst in February 1839. For inoculated individuals the disease was milder and was called varioloid. The doctor stated that the protective properties seemed to decrease the longer it was since the inoculation had been performed. Therefore a re-vaccination was needed. Uninoculated children and individuals aged 20 to 35 years, for whom some 20 years had passed since their inoculation as children in the 1810s, were the hardest hit. The dedication of the vaccinators seems to have had a special impact on the re-vaccination. It was most likely important that the clerks who were working as vaccinators met parish inhabitants in church on Sundays.

That also inoculated persons could get sick with smallpox, "has increased the uninterest and unwillingness, in particular on Orust, to get vaccinated". Only on Orust, where vaccination supervisors and vaccinators were very strict, did adults who had been vaccinated as children get re-vaccinated, according to the medical report in 1839.

At an episcopal visitation in Myckleby in 1839, it was stated that vaccination was no longer trusted among the country people as it had been previously. The parents did not bother coming to check-ups following vaccination. At that time, over twenty years had passed since the start of vaccination. The bishop pointed out the necessity to show up for check-ups for the vaccinator to be able to ascertain that the vaccine had left a clear pox scar. According to the bishop, it should be looked at as a Christian duty

to diligently accept the protection that had saved so many humans from a premature death. As the bishop stated, it was proven that if inoculated persons were later hit by smallpox, the disease had a milder course. This same opinion was also firmly pointed out by the bishop at a visitation in Tegneby a few days earlier in May 1839.

During the 1840s there were no visitations, but doctors filed reports every year. In 1840 the district doctor stated that vaccination, which had been neglected in Tegneby in 1839, was "performed more successfully" in 1840. The requests by the bishop in 1839 to vaccinate the children had thus been effective. The parish minister had taken it upon himself to be a vaccination supervisor to get the vaccinations in more proper order. Re-vaccination had only happened with a few individuals on Tjörn. To increase the extent of re-vaccination, the doctor had distributed to all district vaccination supervisors the leaflet of 16 May 1839 from the Royal National Board of Health about protective inoculation by means of ivory needles.

Throughout the rest of the 1840s, physicians' reports did not contain any more mentions of smallpox and vaccine. This would indicate that there were no problems with outbreaks of disease or failure to vaccinate. At an episcopal visitation on Tjörn in 1845 it was noted that vaccinations were done in an orderly manner and skilfully and that check-ups were not neglected.

According to the medical report, no cases of smallpox had occurred in 1850 despite the fact that the disease had been general, and in a malignant form in the nearest parishes on the Bohuslän mainland over the latest months of the year. Perhaps the people on Orust and Tjörn had not known about this smallpox outbreak. There had been no major re-vaccination. Here it may be mentioned that in 1851 a major smallpox epidemic took place in Sweden. A large number of children who were not vaccinated died on Orust and Tjörn in 1852, and also younger and middle-aged individuals. At an episcopal visitation in Myckleby in May 1852, it was noted that vaccination was carried out in an orderly way and that the vaccinated children "also in an orderly way" returned to the announced check-up appointments. It is interesting to note the difference in vaccination frequency and check-up visits in various areas of Orust. Everything was in order in Myckleby as opposed to the situation in Tegneby. Perhaps that was due to the vaccinator? At an episcopal visitation in Tegneby the same month in 1852, it became clear that parents neglected the vaccination of their children and failed to show up at check-ups. The bishop firmly pointed out that Swedish law could not accept the arbitrary behaviour of the parents. Since smallpox "was severely raging in many places" it was an "almost inexplicable foolishness" not to observe the law. At a visitation in Morlanda in 1851, the bishop likewise made a similar vehement request to obey the law in view of the fact that "vaccination was not so generally used".

During the late 1850s the contagion disappeared. In 1857 only one case, a bather, was reported in Henån, Orust. This person was from "the then

pox-infested province of Närke". At an episcopal visitation in Myckleby in 1857, increased trust in vaccination was reported and "few try to avoid having their children vaccinated and inspected".

During the first part of 1858, a mild variant, called varioloid, was epidemic on Tjörn. Many people fell ill but few died. The physician had made several trips to Tjörn because of that.

The 1860s began with the doctor stating that vaccinations and reports on re-vaccination had been filed in due order with the Royal Officer in Command. The vaccinators performed their duties "with assiduity and expertise". According to an ecclesiastical report from Tjörn in 1860, parents seemed to be caring for the vaccination of their children and having them examined when called on. Everything seemed to be in good order. The same impression can be had from the episcopal visitation in Tegneby in 1861. "The parishioners are willing to let the children be vaccinated and inspected", in complete contrast to the situation twenty years earlier in that parish.

In 1864 there was mild smallpox in several places. This was caused by a sailor who died following his return home from Gothenburg. The doctor stated that "contagious contact could clearly be traced in the beginning". The infection remained local. The existence of these pox infections led to re-vaccination in Myckleby. There was a clear connection here between local infection and re-vaccination.

In July 1868, smallpox flared up in the parishes of Myckleby and Torp. Epidemics arose in Torp and on the island of Käringön far out west, places that did not border on each other. In Myckleby, Röra and Morlanda there were only scattered cases. There were a few incidents of deaths. Due to these smallpox events the vaccination had started "on full scale" during the month of December. Here we have another clear connection between local infection and vaccination. The doctor had made several trips in the autumn due to the smallpox.

In 1869 some 101 cases of smallpox and varioloids were mentioned, of which nine individuals ended up dead. Twenty-five of the 101 cases occurred in January as a prolonged phase of the disease events at the end of 1868. In other words, there was a clear peak in infectivity during the coldest time of the year.

In 1868 the provincial doctor A. E. Goldkühl in the Håby medical district, in mid-Bohuslän, published a textbook on health and medical care with special focus on conditions in Bohuslän. To avoid getting infected with smallpox, healthy children should be vaccinated preferably before they got their first teeth, and weak children at the end of teething. Elderly people should be re-vaccinated if more than ten years had passed since the previous vaccination. Goldkühl had found that several individuals were sceptical about the protective property of the vaccination, since both vaccinated and non-vaccinated individuals could be hit by the disease. Instead he stressed

the importance of not being doubtful but instead thanking God for the protection offered by the vaccination (Goldkühl 1868).

In the first years of the 1870s, the doctors only reported the names of the vaccinators and vaccination supervisors, and stated that records of performed vaccinations had been filed in due time. In 1870 it was reported that no re-vaccinations had taken place. The word smallpox was not mentioned.

In 1875 smallpox had been present in the parishes of Valla and Stenkyrka on Tjörn since the end of 1874. This was, by the way, the same year as the severe smallpox epidemic took place in Stockholm. The doctor, however, had not been informed about the cases on Tjörn until 27 April. By then, one man had died on a farm the week before. His wife, three children and two farmhands were sick. In a neighbouring place, three persons were sick, one of whom died. On 24 May the doctor was called again to Tjörn. This time seven persons in the same parish as the previous one were severely ill while a large number of persons were already convalescent.

At the same time, in Långelanda in the east of Orust, the mild variant of smallpox, varioloid, had appeared. The patients were well enough to be up and about. Five individuals had been treated by the doctor. The parish neighbouring on Långelanda, Stala, had two cases of smallpox. Thus there were scattered and mild cases on Orust at the same time as the infection was raging severely in a limited part of Tjörn. It did not spread from there to the neighbouring island of Orust. Contacts between the islands at that time were not very frequent via the small ferry that connected the two islands. The doctor lived on Orust and had to be called from Tjörn when he was needed there. In 1875 it was reported that 736 individuals had been successfully vaccinated but that no re-vaccination occurred. At an episcopal visitation in Tegneby in 1875, it was reported that vaccination was properly performed. There was no resistance among the country people.

In 1876 there were only two cases of smallpox in Morlanda, western Orust. In one of the cases the illness was severe, but both persons that were sick survived. In 1878, re-vaccination had been performed on adults who had been vaccinated as children.

In 1880 both vaccination and re-vaccination were diligently performed. At an episcopal visitation in Myckleby in 1882, it was reported that vaccination was properly performed by the clerks. This was also the case at an episcopal visitation on Tjörn in 1884. There were no complaints about the parents' willingness to vaccinate their children.

The physician Emil Olsson, working on Orust and Tjörn in 1879–1892, was brief in his reports compared with previous doctors. He was known in the neighbourhood for having alcohol problems (Gustavsson 2017). This may have been reflected in the brief yearly reports. He stated that vaccination reports had been filed in due time and that re-vaccination had not been performed.

From 1885 onwards there were special medical reports from western parts of Orust that supplemented to the reports from Emil Olsson. From the western parts of Orust in 1885, 1886 and 1887 only the names of the vaccinators and their allowance was mentioned. Nothing was stated about cases of illness or frequency of vaccination.

In 1891 Emil Olsson reported that vaccination was said to be performed according to regulations. One case of smallpox occurred in December with a person coming from Gothenburg and that was isolated. It is worth noting that Gothenburg was hit by a severe smallpox epidemic in 1892–1894. At an episcopal visitation in Tegneby in 1892 it was reported that vaccination was performed in good order. "There was no non-compliance."

In 1893 re-vaccination had only been performed in Långelanda on Orust, which was surprising to the doctor considering the smallpox epidemic in Gothenburg "as steamboats and sailing ships from Gothenburg visit the harbours of the district several times a week". Thus, the willingness to get vaccinated, according to the doctor, should have been greater also in other parts of Orust.

In 1894 vaccination procedures were properly carried out and no one tried to keep their children away on Orust. During the year many had themselves re-vaccinated "fearing the ongoing smallpox epidemic in Gothenburg". And so the willingness to get re-vaccinated had finally happened. One could ask why it took so long for this willingness to be established. How did information from Gothenburg get out?

Figure 9. The midwife Sofia Nordgren (1840–1910) started performing vaccinations in 1891 in Tegneby parish when she became a midwife. She received a salary of 10 kronor and 50 öre for each vaccinated child. Photo privately owned.

In 1896, vaccination was performed in western parts of Orust, and no one had refused to vaccinate their children. However, in some cases parent had refused to allow their children to be vaccinated with vaccine from inoculated children. There was no re-vaccination.

In 1898 there was likewise no refusal to let children be vaccinated on Orust, and at the same time there was no re-vaccination. On western Orust, however, one mother, "out of non-compliance had kept her children away from the follow-up inspection at the set time". She had therefore been reported to the municipal board by the vaccination supervisor. In 1900 it was reported that vaccination was performed "with the utmost diligence".

From 1892 on there were special medical reports from Tjörn by the new medical doctor, John Emil Wachenfelt. In 1895 there were no non-vaccinated elderly people in the coastal villages of Rönnäng and Klädesholmen, which was ascribed to the diligence shown by the vaccinator clerk, A. J. Kristensson. In the farming parish of Klövedal, on the other hand, there was a group that for religious reasons had refused to have their children vaccinated. A mission church in Klövedal was established in 1877, and by 1889 it had 99 members, which was roughly 6 per cent of the inhabitants in the parish. This mission church was more critical of the state church than other mission congregations established on Tjörn in the 1870s. It arranged baptism by a layman, it had its own holy communion, Sunday school and confirmation teaching (Holm 1984). The resistance against vaccination performed by the church clerk could have been older in Klövedal than in the 1890s without it being reported in Doctor Emil Olsson's brief reports (1879–1892).

In 1898, parents conscientiously showed up with their children for vaccination. In Rönnäng, Klädesholmen and Valla there were no records of elderly people who were not vaccinated. In Klövedal, however, there was still the group that for religious reasons had so far not wanted to vaccinate their children. In Stenkyrka only animal vaccine from cows had been used and not from already inoculated children. This was likely due to the fact that parents had previously refused to vaccinate their children with vaccine from inoculated children.

In 1900 the religious party in Klövedal had abandoned their principle not to vaccinate their children. Therefore, there were no elderly unvaccinated individuals in Klövedal, Stenkyrka, Rönnäng or Klädesholmen, in other words, all of Tjörn. In Stenkyrka only animal vaccine was still used.

Conclusions

Smallpox was one of the most severe epidemic diseases in the nineteenth century. This disease was the only one for which there was a vaccine during that century, and its use was established early as mandatory by law. One

would think that under those circumstances all children would be vaccinated and that adults would be re-vaccinated a couple of decades after their childhood vaccination. This was not always the case, however.

The present investigation has highlighted the practice of vaccination and its frequency, relating this to the presence of the infection. Collaboration between church and medical expertise was clearly present. Bishops, ministers and not least clerks were highly active in the protective work against smallpox.

In addition to the vaccine, the country people observed common protective measures that were used against epidemic diseases such as cholera. This meant, for example, drinking water mixed with tar but also aquavit. The public also understood the significance of staying away from houses that were afflicted by the contagious disease. This was not possible, though, when the infection hit one's own home where everybody in the household lived together, whether they were sick or healthy.

Thanks to the vaccine, smallpox did not cause the same high death rate as cholera during the nineteenth century. Therefore there was no need for special epidemic graveyards, as was the case with cholera.

The doctors differentiated between severe and mild forms of smallpox. The milder form, called varioloids, could be associated with those individuals who had been vaccinated or re-vaccinated. In the regional study of Orust and Tjörn, the vaccination frequency was shown to have been high in the early nineteenth century. Thereafter, it declined in some places for a couple of decades. Then bishops, ministers, doctors and not least clerks had to start an extensive information campaign to reverse the development towards greater acceptance for vaccination. These measures seemed to have been effective in that the willingness to vaccinate increased from the mid-1800s onwards.

People appear to have been more reluctant to bring their children for check-ups than for the actual vaccination. The country people do not seem to have realized why these check-ups were necessary. Another reason for the reluctance to vaccinate during the first part of the nineteenth century was that country people had noticed that even vaccinated persons could become infected. There was also some resistance due to the fact that the vaccine was taken from already vaccinated children instead of from cowpox. At the end of the nineteenth century, there was a different kind of resistance against vaccination for religious reasons in free church communities on Tjörn but not on Orust. The resistance does not seem to have been very widespread, but it ran against the commitment of the state church to carry out the vaccinations.

It also seems to have been hard under some circumstances to get the country people to understand the need for re-vaccination. It appears that it was only when the infection came close to a locality that the willingness to re-vaccinate increased. Some examples of this can be found in the regional study.

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The Swedish Menocchio

or
How Can One Explain the Appearance, in Two Places Separated in Time and Culture, of Similar and Parallel Cultural Forms without the Diffusion of Ideas and Historical Contacts?

Jonas Liliequist

Abstract

Separated by a century in time, the landmass of a continent and differing confessional communities, the religious attitudes and views of Italian miller Menocchio (1532–1599) and Swedish farmer and former soldier Nils Olofsson Bååt (1637–1696) still share numerous parallels and similarities. Both were brought to trial for impious and heretic utterances and in court both presented highly unorthodox statements about the nature of Christ, God and the sacraments. While the focus and themes in their accounts differ, there is a striking similarity in the tendency to question and bring down official abstract religious doctrines to a kind of pragmatic understanding based on everyday practical experiences. Are these similarities and parallels only a coincidence or were Menocchio and Nils Olofsson Bååt both representatives of an oral peasant culture proposed by Ginzburg? Or alternatively, did they share a similar way of reading marked by oral culture? Menocchio had read at least eleven identified books – Nils Olofsson Bååt none as far as is known. In this article it will be proposed that the similarities and parallels can be related to a kind of "practical rationality" and common-sense logic that was neither exclusively popular nor learned but a universal mode of thinking brought to the fore by their respective lived experiences as well as by inspiration from a cultural repertoire of common-sense-based doubts and statements circulating between high and low culture. Finally, Menocchio's and Nils Olofsson Bååt's personal strategies will be analysed and compared based on differences in themes, focuses and personal living circumstances.

Keywords: doubts, unbelief, common sense, practical rationality, non-contradiction, universal mode of thinking

Introduction

Separated by a century in time, the landmass of a continent and differing confessional communities, the religious attitudes and views of the Italian miller Domenico Scandella, known as Menocchio (1532–1599) and the Swedish farmer and former soldier Nils Olofsson Bååt (1637–1696) still

share numerous parallels and similarities.[1] Both were repeatedly brought to trial for impious and heretic utterances and in court both presented and insisted on highly original understandings of the Creation and God's nature. While focus and themes in their accounts differ, there is a striking similarity in the tendency to bring down official abstract religious doctrines to a kind of pragmatic understanding based on everyday practical experiences. Was this only a coincidence or were Menocchio and Nils Bååt representatives of what Carlo Ginzburg calls an oral peasant tradition of "religious materialism"?

Nils Olofsson Bååt was brought before the district court of Umeå parish in 1687 accused of "religious aberrancy" and was sentenced a year later to death as a "blatant blasphemer, the brazen scorner of the Word of God and our Christian religion," to quote the minutes of the district court.[2] The statements and opinions of Nils caused consternation not only among the local clergy and bureaucracy but also in the capital, where he was transported for further interrogation. After eighteen hard months in the penitentiary intended to make him see the error of his ways, Nils finally apologized. A few months later, he was released and allowed to return to his home in Nybyn, where he lived out the remainder of his days, passing away in 1696. Almost exactly one hundred years earlier and some 2,500 kilometres away as the crow flies, Ginzburg's Menocchio had been put on trial in north-eastern Italy.

Menocchio was born in the village of Montereale in 1532 and was father to eleven children by the time he was put on trial for the first time in 1584. Nils Olofsson Bååt was born just over a century later and was in his fifties at the time of his trial with a wife and four small children to provide for. Both described themselves to the court as "very poor". Both were also literate, although while Menocchio often referred to what he had read, Nils instead referred to conversations with what he called his God in "the barn in the big field." The difference between proximity to the metropolises of Renaissance culture on the one hand and seventeenth-century Lutheran peasant society in the sparsely populated northern countryside was of course enormous. At best, residents of the latter had access to hymnals, catechisms and the prayer book, while Menocchio himself had read the Bible, Boccaccio's *Decameron*, *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville* and possibly even an Italian translation of the Koran. Nonetheless, there are remarkable similarities and parallels in their unorthodox statements. How could this be explained? That is the main theme of this investigation.

Some Similarities and Parallels – a First Inventory

Menocchio's most famous statement deals with the Creation. "In my opinion, all was chaos, that is, earth, air, water, and fire were mixed: and out of

that bulk a mass formed – just as cheese is made out of milk – and worms appeared in it, and these were the angels. The most holy majesty decreed that these should be God and the angels, and among the number of angels, there was also God, he too having been created out of that mass at the same time" (Ginzburg 2013:5). The analogy of the cheese and the worms can be traced back to learned theories of abiogenesis, but also practical experience of what happens or can happen when manufacturing and storing cheeses. The same sort of "down-to earth" reasoning concerning the official religious doctrine lay at the basis of other statements by Menocchio. "What do you think," he said to his neighbours according to witnesses, "that Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary? It's impossible that she gave birth to him and remained a virgin" (Ginzburg 2013:4). And to the inquisitors, he explained that "he who was crucified was one of the children of God, because we are all God's children, and of the same nature as the one who was crucified and he was a man like the rest of us, but with more dignity just as the pope is a man like us, but of greater rank, because he has power, and the man who was crucified was born of St Joseph and Mary the Virgin" (Ginzburg 2013:5; Del Col 1996:26).

The statements made by Nils Olofsson Bååt are very similar. "As far as Jesus Christ is concerned, that he is God, this he cannot understand, for that means there are too many gods." Nor can he accept that Jesus is the Son of God, because "we are the sons of God."[3] For Nils, the voice in the barn was a practical and thus decisive sign of the presence of God. "My God is he with whom I speak; this is my God; show me anyone better."[4]

On the whole, Nils was highly sceptical of the stories of the Bible. "The book" was "discovered" and assembled by "human cleverness" in order to sell more copies, "but no one should be fooled by its certitude."[5] "What he [Nils] talks and speaks, however, is revealed by God himself … and more certain to stick to than a dead letter".[6] Once again Nils's own practical experience is set up against the priests' teaching. Menocchio expressed a similar scepticism: "I believe that sacred Scripture was given by God but was afterward added to by men; only four words would suffice … but it is like the books about battles that grew and grew". He went further on another occasion and claimed, "Holy Scripture has been invented to deceive men" (Ginzburg 2013:1). He considered the Holy Sacraments "human inventions" and "merchandise". And of the communion wafer, he stated, "I do not see anything there but a piece of dough, how can this be our Lord God?" (Ginzburg 2013:10). Nils too found Holy Communion hard to credit. He himself attended "just like others" to "have a little bread and wine" and "taste a little sweetness".[7] He had never chosen nor been capable of believing in Christ, let alone that he had suffered and died for our sins, since God already punishes man in this world "with constant affliction".[8] If Christ had indeed suffered on the cross, it must have been for his own sins,

according to Nils's thinking. If he was a God, how could they arrest him? That is incomprehensible to him.[9] Menocchio stated similarly: "I said that if Jesus Christ was God eternal, he should not have allowed himself to be taken and crucified … and so I suspected that since he was crucified, he was not God…" (Ginzburg 2013:60).

One might say that Nils Bååt and Menocchio both boiled religion down to a few straightforward principles of moral and practical character. "It is not necessary to believe" is a recurring phrase with which both Jesus and the Holy Spirit are dismissed, along with original sin and Hell and Paradise in the afterlife. Nor are the devil and the angels necessary.[10] The voice of God in the barn had said, "if mankind did not live in hate, enmity, bickering and quarrels, then they would already be living in a paradise."[11] Over the course of his many interrogations, Menocchio comes to a similar conclusion. "Preaching that men should live in peace pleases me but in preaching about hell, Paul says one thing, Peter another, so that I think it is business, an invention of men" (Ginzburg 2013:72). "When the body dies, the soul dies too" (Ginzburg 2013:72). Ginzburg summarizes Menocchio's opinion: "the hereafter doesn't exist, future punishments and rewards don't exist, heaven and hell are on earth, the soul is mortal" (Ginzburg 2013:45).

How unique were the religious doubts and statements of Nils Bååt and Menocchio the Miller? Is it possible to find parallels across the European continent indicating that the similarities in statements and reasoning were products of cultural transmission? Or did these similarities and parallels arise independently of each other due to a common mode of thinking? These are the two alternative hypotheses that will structure this article. In the first section Ginzburg's original thesis of an age-old oral peasant tradition will be recaptured in the light of later modifications and criticism, followed by a detailed comparison between Menocchio's and Nils Bååt's religious world views and practices. The latter reveals that behind the similarities and parallels there were profound differences. The hypothesis of a cultural transmission of a set of unorthodox ideas can now be dismissed. Accordingly, the focus is shifted in the following section from content to form, that is, the argumentative style and logic that characterizes the apparently similar statements. A hypothesis is proposed that the similarities and parallels can be related to a kind of "practical rationality" and common-sense logic to be found across time and culture that was neither exclusively popular nor learned but a universal mode of thinking brought to the fore in daily life as well as in certain contexts and for specific reasons. Examples will be given in the following sections of how such common-sense doubts and objections were used and circulated among lay people as well as in theological and learned disputes and in between. Thus, cultural transmission is brought back into the analysis but not as a transmission of ideas but of a repertoire of common-sense idioms and exempla circulating between high

and low culture. A more extensive mapping of this repertoire might constitute a fruitful field of investigation. With this analytical turn, Menocchio's and Nils Bååt's individual motives for publicly expressing and asserting common-sense objections and unorthodox arguments based on practical reasoning come into focus, which is the theme of the final section. Two very different personalities emerge, similar in their use of common-sense arguments to question religious doctrine but contrasting in personal style and social motivations shaped by different cultural contexts and personal experiences. Thus, while starting by comparing likeness the analysis ends up comparing differences.

The Thesis of an Age-old Oral Peasant Tradition

In the first edition of *The Cheese and the Worms* Carlo Ginzburg sees Menocchio as a representative of an oral peasant tradition with ancient roots that the church still hadn't suppressed. This is modified in the foreword to the English edition into a much more complex circular relationship between high and low culture composed of reciprocal influences (Ginzburg 2013: xix–xx). Menocchio's specific manner of reading marked by oral culture is hence given a greater importance. It was not the books as such, but the encounter between the printed page and oral culture that formed an explosive mixture in Menocchio's head (Ginzburg 2013:49). The same could not be said about Nils. Menocchio had read at least eleven identified books, Nils none as far as is known. When asked by the court he could read prayers and the creed by heart and explain the official meaning of the holy communion. He was literate but no books are mentioned. Thus, the clash between oral culture and the reading of religious and learned texts could not have been a common denominator for Menocchio's and Nils Bååt's unorthodox statements.

The importance that Ginzburg attaches to Menocchio's reading has furthermore been questioned by the Italian historian and editor of the English translation of the trial records, Andrea Del Col. Citing books was part of a defence strategy to avoid the disclosure of "accomplices" and at the same time lessen his own responsibility. Del Col gives example of statements and doctrines that are either virtually impossible to extract from the referred book or completely missing. Some of these quotations seem to have been made up in the prison cell or on the spot during questioning (Del Col 1996: lvi–lvii). A more profound source of inspiration seems instead to have been ideas from a surviving corpus of Cathar doctrines, especially when it comes to Menocchio's cosmology and concepts of man and salvation. Such influences must have been transmitted by oral tradition – very few texts by Cathars exist and all are in Latin: still the similarities are obvious according to Del Col. But Menocchio was not a Cathar. Del Col points to influences

from dissident evangelical groups, anabaptists and antitrinitarian doctrines as well (Del Col 1996: lxxv). Ginzburg and Del Col have in their turn been criticized for ignoring what seems to be obvious analogies and influences from the Koran (Levine & Vahed 2001).

While influences from Catharism and Islam seem highly unlikely in the case of Nils Olofsson Bååt, oral dissemination of radical and antitrinitarian ideas is still a possibility. Several trials from Northern Sweden in the 1650s and 1670s reveal the presence of such ideas but their possible influence on Nils's statements will be considered in the last section.

Menocchio's and Bååt's Religious Worldviews Compared

The American medieval historian Caroline Walker Bynum warns of the pitfalls of interrogating likeness based on a superficial morphology (Walker Bynum 2020). How profound are the similarities behind the somewhat disconnected phrases and statements listed in the introduction above? A more in-depth comparison between Menocchio's and Nils Bååt's religious worldviews is necessary, but first some words about the source material. The trial records are in both cases products of an inquisitorial legal procedure, which means that they are strictly structured by the inquisitors' and interrogators' selective questions and cannot be expected to give a comprehensive and authentic account of the interrogated person's religious worldview. There is in a corresponding way a possibility that ideas were modified, elaborated and twisted in response to the questions, as remarked by Del Col. Sometimes valuable side information is revealed in passing or added on the initiative of the interrogated. In the case of Menocchio there are also witnesses' accounts which make it possible to compare his answers before the court with what people had heard him say. The latter is of great importance. As Ginzburg remarks there is sometimes a striking contrast between the testimonies of the inhabitants in Montereale and the trial records (Ginzburg 2013:69). Many of Menocchio's most controversial statements referred to in the introduction are reported by witnesses. A few of them are denied before the inquisition, others are elaborated and modified, sometimes in a fundamental way. Nils's answers and explanations in contrast remain straightforward and simple throughout the questioning, without any confrontations with witnesses' accounts.

With these remarks in mind, a first start at a comparison would be the controversial statements about Christ's nature. Christ's divine nature is denied by both Menocchio and Nils in almost identical wording. The argument goes like this: If he was an almighty God, he should not have let himself be arrested and crucified. That is, Christ could not be a human being and God at the same time. The fact that he let himself be arrested and crucified was taken as the decisive proof of his humanity. Christ's status as God's

son is denied in a corresponding way since "we are all God's children" (Menocchio), "God does not have a son we are the sons of God" (Nils). The idea that Christ had died for our sins is rejected in a similar manner. "If a person has sins, he himself must do penance" (Menocchio), "Man has never angered God to earn condemnation but what we have otherwise transgressed against him he punishes with earthly torments" (Nils).[12]

The Nature of Christ

A closer look, however, reveals substantial differences. While Nils's denials are categorical and even sardonic, Menocchio's are more qualified, at times ambiguous, and follow a different kind of logic. Far from being dismissed, Christ is still recognized by Menocchio as a sacred person. When asked if it is true that he had said that God had "sent his Son, who let himself be hung up like a beast", he replies that when God saw that people did not follow his commandments "he sent his son, whom the Jews seized, and he was crucified", adding "I never said that he let himself be hung up like a beast. Indeed, I really said that he let himself be crucified, and he who was crucified was one of the children of God, because we are all God's children, and of the same nature as the one who was crucified and he was a man like the rest of us, but with more dignity just as the pope is a man like us, but of greater rank, because he has power, and he who was crucified was born of St Joseph and Mary".[13] This stands in sharp contrast to Nils's categorical denial: "If someone had suffered [on the cross] it must have been a devil or one of the devil's followers who permits humans to do evil and sin, commit adultery, murder, theft and other such vices, over which the one and only God who has life and spirit which he believes in, becomes wrathful and punishes humans in this world."[14] This likening to the devil should however not be taken literally. Nils not only denies the existence of Christ but the devil as well. When asked if he believes that an evil spirit or the devil exists, he answers "man is the devil and no one else".[15] In Nils Bååt's religious world view, God's sovereignty is here and now on earth. There is no original sin, no hell, and no devil but only mean people tormenting the godly.[16] Offences against God are punished in this world. Thus, if the crucified Christ had ever existed, he must have been a great sinner and a most evil man – "devil" is a paraphrase uttered by Nils before the court judges with an ironic smile.[17]

The Sovereignty of God

While God's sovereignty is absolute and indivisible, according to Nils, divinity and sacredness is a question of degrees in Menocchio's religious worldview. This is illustrated most explicitly in how the presence of Christ's body in the Eucharist is rejected. At first sight they both seem to argue that

material objects are nothing more than what they are perceived to be by our senses – "I only see a piece of dough" (Menocchio), "he only attended the Lord's supper to have a little bread and wine" and "taste a little sweetness" (Nils). Before the inquisition, however, Menocchio modifies his words. "I have said that the wafer is a piece of dough, but the Holy Spirit comes down from heaven in it, and this I really believe." And this is because "I believe that the Holy Spirit is greater than Christ who was a man, and the Holy Spirit came from the hand of God."[18] The Holy Spirit is greater than Christ and Christ has more dignity than an ordinary man, but greatest of all is God.

In the outlines of their religious worldviews Menocchio and Nils Bååt follow different kinds of logic. In Nils's absolutist worldview there is no room for a plurality and degrees of divinity. God is one and only. That God consists of three persons he could not believe. That would mean that there are too many gods.[19] Christ, if he had ever existed could not be God and human at the same time. Nils's argumentation reminds of the law of non-contradiction formulated by Aristotle and commented upon by Aquinas: "It is impossible for the same thing [attribute] to belong and not to belong at the same time to the same thing [subject] and in the same respect".[20] Christ cannot be divine and not divine at the same time. This is in its turn not far from an early scientific conception of categories as mutually exclusive so that nothing can be two things at once and one thing cannot be in two places at the same time (Mousalimas 1990:35). Or, transferred into an everyday crude empiricism: things are nothing more than what we perceive them to be by our senses.

While there are several statements by Menocchio based on a similar logic, especially among those reported by witnesses, his religious worldview is much more complex and follows what Del Col calls "the concept of the indispensability of intermediary cause in the operation of things", which in turn is reminiscent of the medieval philosophical concept of instrumental cause (Del Col 1996: lxxix; lxxx note 150). When asked if this God makes, creates, or produces any creature Menocchio replies: "He made the design and gave the will through which all things were made."[21] That is, the creation of all things was caused by a cause that acted only insofar as it was moved by another cause (God). This kind of logic is further illustrated by Menocchio's metaphors from daily life and his own working experience. Like a carpenter building a house, God needed material, tools, and assistants. Spirits were created to help him build the world.[22] He could have done it all by himself but that would have taken a much longer time.[23] When it was done God bestowed on the noblest of spirits all his will, knowledge, and power to run the creation like a steward.[24] Lastly, the Holy Spirit and his ministers created man through the will of God with Christ, as a moral example to all the others.[25] What is described is a hierarchal world with God as the mightiest and most perfect followed by the Holy Spirit, Christ, and man in a declining scale. The chain of instrumental causes is set in

motion through the infusion of God's will, knowledge, and power with the Holy Spirit in an intermediate position as God's steward. However, Christ although still human, is co-opted into what appears as a new kind of holy trinity. Menocchio's motivation for this is most intriguing and at the same time a break with the aspects of subordination inherent in the logic of instrumental causality, so it seems: "Things cannot be done well if they are not three," he explains, "and thus God, since he had given knowledge, will and power in the Holy Spirit, thus gave it to Christ so that they could console each other" adding that "when there are two who cannot agree in judgement, when there is a third, if two agree then the third joins in, and thus the Father has given will and knowledge and power to Christ, because it has to be a judgement".[26] A kind of trinity consisting of three members of equal status (at least in decision making) is established for practical reasons, so it seems. This stands in stark contrast to Nils Bååt's rejection of the Trinity as not only contradictory but unreasonable as well – "if there are many Gods, they will just start arguing with each other."[27]

The Sacrament of the Eucharist, Spirits, and Souls

The divine hierarchy becomes even more ambiguous in Menocchio's further statements about the Eucharist. When asked who he thinks the Holy Spirit is that comes into the host he replies, "I believe he is God."[28] And some weeks later, when asked "What do you think God is?" he replies: "Light, happiness, consolation and this signifies the Trinity. The Trinity resembles a candle: the wax is the Father, the wick is the Son, and the light is the Holy Spirit. I believe there is the Trinity in the sacrament of the Eucharist because there is happiness, consolation, and light, and what makes me believe this is that when I go to this sacrament of communion repenting for my sins and having done my penance, I feel happiness, consolation, and light."[29] Paradoxically, the meaning and experiences of the Eucharist turns out to be the most fundamental difference between Menocchio and Nils Bååt. Both enjoyed attending it but for diametrically different reasons – Menocchio to experience divinely inspired sensations of happiness, consolation, and light, Nils to taste the sweetness of wine. In an ontological perspective, however, Menocchio's experiences of the Eucharist could be compared to Nils's intimate talk with God in his barn. While denying the transubstantiation of the consecrated bread and wine, attending the Eucharist still seems to have been the focal point in Menocchio's religious practice. Nils's conversation with God in the barn filled a corresponding function. There were emotional aspects in his conversation as well. The relationship with God is described as "a deep friendship" sealed by mutual testimonies of fidelity.[30]

When Menocchio describes the emotional experiences of receiving the Holy Spirit, he uses the words "one's spirit is joyful".[31] Talking about spirits

and souls, Menocchio entangles himself in what Ginzburg characterizes as a muddle of words (Ginzburg 2013:71–72). Several witnesses reported that he had said that when the body dies the soul dies as well but the spirit remains. The distinction between an eternal spirit and a mortal soul was according to Del Col characteristic of Cathar beliefs, but Menocchio's comments on this are far from consistent (Del Col 1996: lxxi). At one moment he claims that soul and spirit both return to God, at another that there are two spirits in man, one good and one evil, while the soul is nothing more than various faculties of mind, likened to the tools of a carpenter, that will perish when the body dies. And what will happen with the good and evil spirits on Judgement Day "the three will judge".[32]

This stands in sharp contrast to Nils Bååt, who claims that the soul is God himself who is in every man. "Therefore, there cannot be any hell etc." – the complete sentence is unfortunately not taken down in the notes, but according to Nils's kind of causal logic it would be a contradiction and logical impossibility to believe that souls, that is, God himself, could be damned.[33] This also explains his repeated statements that "God is in him, and he is in God" as well as "we are the sons of God." In these statements there is an obvious possibility of influence from radical reformers that will be dealt with in detail in the last section. Thus, Nils's rejections of the official doctrine are in all respects, apart from Menocchio's version of the creation as a process of spontaneous generation, more radical and categorical than Menocchio's.

A Shift of Focus – from Content to Form

According to Ginzburg most of Menocchio's controversial statements reported by witnesses did not do justice to his true beliefs. They were a simplified, exoteric version of his ideas uttered somewhat hastily in discussions with the ignorant villagers. Still, we have to explain, writes Ginzburg, how Menocchio managed to say things [in the trials] that contradicted his statements to the people of Montereale (Ginzburg 2013:49). From the point of comparison with Nils Bååt I would turn this around and ask how Menocchio managed to say things to the people of Montereale that seem to have been contradictory to his true belief. One possible answer would be that these statements were not just simplifications but starting points for more complex ideas that could be fully elaborated only in his confrontation with the inquisitors. Thus, the enigma of the similarities and parallels remains but needs to be qualified. A shift of focus is needed from content to form. The statements that bring Menocchio and Nils Bååt together are formulated as rejections, negations, and doubts with reference to everyday experience grounded in a narrow empiricism and conclusions based on a simple logic of cause and effect. Such statements by Menocchio were not only reported

by witnesses but expressed in the trials as well. In the case of Mary's virginity, he had based his doubts on "the fact that so many men have come into the world, and none is born of a virgin".[34] And when asked about the resurrection he replies: "I do not believe that we can be resurrected with the body on Judgement Day. It seems impossible to me, because if we should be resurrected, bodies would fill up heaven and earth."[35] Nils Bååt's scepticism draws on the same kernel of everyday experience but is not spelt out in the same way but more as insinuations about the impossibility, pointlessness, or unnecessity of a specific doctrinal thesis. The existence of guardian angels is dismissed by Nils for practical reasons: "there is no need for it, God is almighty enough to protect us."[36] The resurrection of the flesh is denied as a preposterous idea: "What should God do with all these rotten bones?"[37] And Christ's arrestment and crucifixion is turned into absurdity: "Were not people as wise and sensible then as nowadays?" he asks, [if so] "why do people not take hold of God and crucify him in our time [if the story is true]?"[38] The doctrinal issue is brought down to a question of practical (im)possibility here and now. In the face of the objections and challenges of the court and the clergy, he demands palpable, practical proof. He could not believe that Christ suffered on the cross unless someone informed him where it happened, and after being told that it occurred in Jerusalem, he replied "Who was there then?"[39] Nor could he believe in Paradise since no one could tell where it is located.[40] Menocchio's doubts are sometimes echoed almost verbatim. The denial of Christ's divine nature is one example, the disbelief in the biblical paradise another: Questioned in the second trial, he explains "I did not believe in paradise because I did not know where it was".[41] Menocchio and Nils Bååt appear both to be anchored in the empirical world of everyday life. This should of course not be mistaken for a rationalist doubt of the supernatural. What is denied by Menocchio is the transubstantiation of bread and wine into Christ's body and blood, not the spiritual presence of the Holy Spirit/Trinity unseen but experienced as blissful emotions and light. Nils's rejection of the Bible as God's words is in a similar way founded on what may be called a sensualist epistemology.[42] "By my five senses I have learnt the existence of God," Nils declares – not by written words, one may add, "because a letter cannot create or contain him [God]".[43] The letters are "dead" and written by humans. The words come true only in God's own voice as they sound in his barn. Menocchio takes his rejection of the Bible even further. According to witnesses he had said when talking about the host being just a piece of dough: "It is a fraud on the part of Scripture to deceive people and if there were a God, he would let himself be seen."[44] And before that: "What do you imagine God to be? God is nothing else than a bit of air and whatever man imagines him to be."[45] Del Col takes these statements to be a true measure of Menocchio's pantheistic thoughts that had brought him to question the actual existence of God – if

God is in all things and all things are God then God only exists in man's imagination (Del Col 1996: lxxx). These statements are however neither confirmed ("I did not say that I do not believe in a God I cannot see") nor elaborated ("I was only referring to the things of this world, which I do not believe, if I cannot see.") in the trials.[46] A more accurate characterization of Menocchio's rejection of the Holy Scripture would be that God only exists in man's emotional and sensual experiences, not in the words of sacred texts written by humans. The detailed comparison of Menocchio's and Nils Bååt's religious worldviews can thus be summarized as similarities and parallels in form and profound differences in content.

Practical Reason and Common Sense

How can one explain the appearance, in two places separated in time and culture, of similar and parallel cultural forms without the diffusion of ideas and historical contacts? The question is not new. Caroline Walker Bynum gives examples from anthropology and art history. The answer provided by Panofsky and Lévi-Strauss refers to a common structure which on closer look turns out to contain radical differences in content (Walker Bynum 2020:32). What kind of common structure could be proposed in the case of Menocchio and Nils Bååt? A proposition may be provided by the late twentieth-century historic-anthropological debate on rationality and cultural relativism. One key question of special relevance for this study could be summarized as follows: Do certain "given" cognitive and perceptual mechanisms structure common sense, independent of cultural differences? Or are cognition and perception entirely dependent upon the culture in which they exist, so that each and every culture has its own common sense and rationality?[47] In his critique of the anthropologist Marshall Sahlin's analysis of the death of Captain Cook, the anthropologist Gananath Obeyesekere presented a modified version of Weber's concept of "practical rationality" as an elementary mode of thinking rooted in perceptual and cognitive mechanisms that are common to all humans. His definition of the concept includes reflection on goals and means and the implications of actions and problems in terms of empirical and practical criteria as the basis for decision-making, improvisation, and reasoned judgements about what is plausible or implausible, possible, or impossible in everyday practice (Obeyesekere 1992:15–22; 228–230. Obeyesekere 1995). Common sense is a further concept mentioned by Obeyesekere as easily blurred with practical rationality but less reflective and of a more taken-for-granted character. These concepts were of course far from new. The reference to Weber has already been mentioned but practical reason is used by Sahlins as well, although in quite another meaning with reference to an old-fashioned utilitarian kind of functionalism and Marxism that sees culture as a superstructure evolved from the problems

and practices of daily living (Sahlins 1976:55–125).[48] Common sense in its turn has a longer history (Melkonian 2020). The most relevant discussion of the concept is provided in an article by the American cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz. Geertz underlines that common sense is not just the immediate deliverance of experience but includes deliberate reflections as well, guided by a few "quasi-qualities" – naturalness (of-courseness), practicalness (sense, foresight), thinness (simpleness, literalness), immethodicalness (ad hoc) and accessibleness (possible to grasp for any person with faculties intact) (Geertz 1975). While Geertz demonstrates how common sense can be used to support prevailing cultural beliefs, Obeyesekere asks what happens when common-sense assumptions are violated. People may start to behave irrationally but they could just as well practise reflective reasoning and argumentation – that is where practical reason comes in. Whereas assumptions of a primitive and pre-logic mentality have become outdated, the problem according to Obeyesekere is that cultural systems are increasingly described by anthropologists as homogeneous and all-encompassing with little room for reflective reasoning. Natives have become slaves of their own cultural concepts (Obeyesekere 1992:228–229). This is what Obeyesekere tries to break up with the assumption of practical reason as a kind of elementary mode of thinking tied to basic cognitive mechanisms common to all humans.

What immediately comes to mind is the common-sense character of Menocchio's and Nils Bååt's statements. If common-sense notions can be seen as taken-for-granted assumptions derived from reasoned judgements and practical decision-making in everyday life (practical reason), then they can also be used as a means to question and reject official doctrines that seem to violate them. This is what has been proposed by the French historian Jean-Pierre Albert in his studies of cases of unbelief in the medieval inquisitorial register of Jacques Fournier. According to Albert, common sense fuelled both alternative explanations based on everyday experiences and outright objections to official doctrines. The main resource of religious contestation (and thus of the production of statements held heretical) was in fact based on common sense (Albert 2003:81,89; Albert 2005:91–106).[49] This is also perfectly in line with what British historian John H. Arnold calls "materialist expressions of unbelief". The material production of religious objects like the bread of the host or wooden statutes of saints prompted sceptical reflections on the supernatural claims of religion (Arnold 2010: 65–95). Thus, practical reason and common sense as an elementary mode of thinking across time and culture, not the dissemination of a mode of thought, could provide the common structure that brings the similarities and parallels found in Menocchio's and Nils Bååt's statements together. A practical rationality and common-sense perspective open up a broader study of doubt and unbelief. Doubt has been a controversial issue in medieval and

early modern historical research. Was it even possible? According to the long-influential view of the French historian Lucien Febvre (1878–1956) European society up to at least the sixteenth century was totally dominated by Christian religion to the degree that unbelief and atheism were literally unthinkable (Febvre 1982:455–464).[50] Similar notions of a homogeneous culture have guided the history of mentalities (Arnold 2010:67). Ginzburg's study represents in fact an early break with this tradition. Or at least an attempt. According to a critical remark by Peter Burke, Ginzburg has made Menocchio a spokesman for an agelong "common peasant culture" only vaguely described as oral and materialistic with roots in ancient myths, "so that mentalities, thrown out of the door, came back in again through the window" (Burke 2012). The perspective of practical reason and common sense may provide a new fresh approach.

Common-Sense Arguments in Theological Discourse – the Real Presence of Christ's Body in the Eucharist

To assume that common-sense arguments were restricted to lay and ordinary people would however be premature. Such arguments and objections occurred in major theological controversies as well. A most telling example is the controversies about the real presence of Christ's body in the Eucharist. The leading opponent in the early disputes was the archdeacon Berengar of Tours (999–1088). His opinion has been summarized in the following way: "The historical body of Jesus must take up space and be seen, felt and tasted as a human body. This body can only exist in heaven. The presence on the altar is the spiritual body of Christ." The material substance of the consecrated bread and wine are not changed or diminished but remain since they are "symbols that point to the spiritual presence of Christ" (Macy 2013:23). What is interesting is the way Berengar grounds his arguments in the "reasons of all nature", asking questions about how a body could be present without being sensed or in more than one place at the same time (Macy 2013:24–25; Radding 2003:xvii). Berengar was preceded by the monk Ratramnus (died *c.* 868) who argued that Christ's body was only present figuratively in the Eucharist and not in reality.[51] Ratramnus and Berengar may be seen as forerunners in a break with the influences from a Platonic and Neoplatonic distrust of the senses as indicative of what is real, culminating with Thomas Aquinas's adoption and modification of Aristotelian metaphysics in the thirteenth century. The question of how Christ's body could be present at the same time in different places is taken up by Thomas. His answer is that Christ's body is not present in the same way as a body that fills up one place with its material dimensions, but in a uniquely "sacramental" way – an example of how Aristotelian rationalism eventually had to give way to miracle (Andrée 2008:39 footnotes 45–46). There is especially

one expression attributed to the more materialist objections of Berengar that circulated widely. According to the Cluny abbot Peter the Venerable (1092–1156), Berengar had once pronounced: "Had the body of Christ been as large as the mighty tower that rises over there in our sight, it would have been eaten up long ago, so many men throughout the world would have partaken of it" (Andrée 2008:36 & footnote 18; Fearns 1968:102). The expression immediately gained heretical status (Macy 1999). Two hundred years later it was iterated almost verbatim by Bridget of Sweden (1303–1373) in a revelation on the Real Presence in the Eucharist but now as a temptation of Satan. Bridget describes how "a monstrous creature appeared to the bride at the elevation of the body of Christ and said: "Do you really believe, silly woman, that this wafer of bread is God? Even if he had been the highest of mountains, he would have been consumed long ago" (Lundén 1957:108). The phrase spread outside orthodox clerical and theologian circles as well. It is reported by both the author of *Historia Albigensis* Peter of Vaux-Cerney (1194–1218) and the inquisitor Bernard Gui (1261–1331) to be a standard argument among adherents of the Albigensian and Cathar movements.[52] Details vary but the narrative structure remains the same. In the late twelfth century, a dying man in Cologne is said to have declared to the priest that he did not believe in the Eucharist because "if the body of Christ was as big as the Ehrenbreitstein [a nearby hill on the Rhine], it would have been eaten up long ago" (Lesch 1927:67). Further examples are given from France and England without any connection to the Cathar and other heretical or unorthodox movements (Wakefield 1973; Rubin 1992:321; Arnold 2010:69–71). And in 1311 a man named Botolf from Gottröra parish outside Uppsala in Sweden was convicted of heresy after expressing his scepticism in similar wordings: "Were it truly the body of Christ", he said, "then the priest himself would have eaten it up long ago" (Ferm 1990:112–113). This is a version that comes very close to the words uttered by a woman in the village of Adalon near Montaillou in 1276: "even if it were as big as this mountain [showing a mountain called Domergali] it would have already been eaten up even by the priests alone (this is also probably how Botolf's utterance should be understood) (Rubin 1992:321). Examples like these testify to the pedagogical problem of convincing people of something that seemed contrary to common sense and everyday experience. Arnold gives examples of performative utterances in sermons and poetry inviting assent and faith in the God-made bread (Arnold 2010:77–78). Magister Mathias provides one further example: "Do not say in your heart: How can the body of Christ be present in two different places at the same time" (Andrée 2008:39). Ironically such performative utterances reveal at the same time the very arguments of doubt. As shown by Macy and others, the theological controversies did not end with the dogma of transubstantiation accepted by the Lateran Council 1215 (Macy 1994). The term had several coexisting

meanings, and arguments about the material and spatial limits of bodies continued to be an issue of controversy up to the time of the Reformation. In a colloquium between Luther and Zwingli at Marburg on 1–4 October 1529, Zwingli argued that since Jesus has bodily ascended into heaven, he cannot be bodily in the Sacrament too. "For one and the same body cannot be in several places at the same time" (Sasse 2001:248). Similar arguments circulated among lay people as well. In 1550 an Italian mason in Lucca was reported for having questioned the efficacy of sacramental confession and priestly absolution, "since Christ could not be in person at the side of two or three friars confessing in different places" (Berengi 1999:448).[53] Luther's principal answer to such objections was that it is not a question of reason but of faith: "It behoves us not to call in question that which the word of God says unless the literal understanding would lead to an absurdity that would contradict (not our reason, but) our faith" (Sasse 2001:243).

The Consumption of Christ's Flesh and Blood

Botolf also developed his argument further, though in a social context. "If someone were to consume the body of another man, that man would seek vengeance, if he could. How much more would not all-powerful God?" (Ferm 1990:112–113). The latter follows a common-sense logic – the mightier man, the greater the revenge. Cannibalism as a logical consequence of the transformation of the bread into the body of Christ already occurs in the New Testament, expressed as an immediate reaction to the words of Jesus in the synagogue in Capernaum: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eats of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world." Then the people began arguing with each other about what he meant. 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?' they asked" (John 6:51–52). "Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, this is a hard saying; who can hear it?" (John 6:60). The cannibalistic theme continued to provoke aversion. In the colloquium between Luther and Zwingli, the Zwingli camp argued that "it is impossible to understand the words of the Lord's Supper ['this is my body'] literally because God has forbidden us to eat his flesh bodily" (Sasse 2001:240). The latter should be seen in the light of Zwingli's understanding of a strict divide between earthly and divine – "he found it repugnant to believe that the Lord Christ could be chewed and torn apart by filthy human teeth" (Euler 2013:61).

Cannibalism could however be turned around and become a pedagogical example with the help of common-sense reasoning. In his treatise *Liber de Corpore et Sanguine Domini* the monk Paschasius Radbertus (785–865) talks about a sceptical old man who demands visible proof. The following Sunday during communion the participants have a vision of the Eucharist

as a small boy lying on the altar, his blood tapped, and his body cut in pieces by an angel of the Lord. The old man becomes very afraid when the piece of bloody flesh is handed over to him and exclaims, "I believe, Lord, that the bread which is placed on the altar is your body and the cup is your blood", and immediately the bleeding flesh is transformed into bread. The by now convinced old man says: "God knows human nature, that it is not able to eat bleeding flesh, and on account of this he transformed his body into bread and his blood into wine" – a kind of reverse transubstantiation which appeals to a means-to-an-end rationality (Boenig 1980:316. Cf. Walker Bynum 2015:142–143; Zamore 2020:607–608). First formulated by the church father Ambrose (339–397) in his *De sacramentis*, this kind of argument became widely disseminated as well (Zamore 2020:607, footnote 38). A further example of how learned theologians could use common-sense reasoning in order to explain spiritual and mystical matters is provided by Magister Mathias (d. 1350s), Bridget's first father confessor: "We thus see that our nature converts food and drink into flesh and blood. Would that which is possible for our very nature be impossible for God?" (Andrée 2008:40).

Radical Reformation – Socinianism and the Appeal to Right Reason

Common-sense arguments lingered on in the time of the Reformation. Zwingli's objections and arguments have already been mentioned. A more programmatic common-sense rationality is represented by the radical movement founded in Italy by Faustus Socinus (1539–1604). Socinianism developed its first stronghold in Poland (MacFarlane 2011:478). In 1604 a summary of the movement's doctrines was published in the form of a catechism with questions and answers followed by Latin, English and German editions. As with Nils Bååt, the story of man's fall and redemption by the suffering of Christ is rejected, but what is most interesting is the argumentative style in the unfolding of the doctrine. As to the question of Christ's nature it is framed in the following way (Smalcius & Sozzini 1652:28):

> Q. You said a little before that the Lord Jesus is a man by nature, hath he not also a divine Nature?
>
> A. At no hand; for that is repugnant not only to sound Reason, but also to the holy Scriptures.

Christ could not be both human and divine "since two substances with opposite properties cannot combine into one Person"…"two Natures, each whereof is apt to constitute a several [separate] person, cannot be huddled into one Person, for instead of one, there must of necessity arise two persons,

& consequently become two Christs, whom all men without controversy acknowledge to be one, and his Person one" (Smalcius & Sozzini 1652:28). According to the general guidelines for Socinian exegesis every interpretation of the Scripture, "which is repugnant to right reason, or involves a contradiction" should be rejected (Racovian Catechisme 1818:18).[54] "Right reason" is in a corresponding way assisted by eyewitness proof and common-sense logic in the argumentation for non-natural miracles and the resurrection of Christ from the dead (Smalcius & Sozzini 1652:5–6):

> That he was raised from the dead by God, is hence apparent; first because there were many presently after his death, who constantly affirmed that they had seen him raised from the dead, and for this very reason, because they affirmed him to have been raised from the dead, they suffered many calamities, and some lost their very lives. Again, an innumerable multitude of others receiving the same from those that went before, did upon the same ground endure very great calamities, and most exquisite deaths. From whence it followeth necessarily, either that Jesus was raised from the dead, or that they by constantly affirming a thing which they knew to be false, did willingly involve themselves in so many calamities, and so bitter deaths. The latter could by no means come to pass, inasmuch as very common sense doth abundantly refute it; And therefore, it is apparent that the first is altogether true.

This is strongly reminiscent of Nils Bååt's way of reasoning and demands for proof and eyewitnesses. It is a possibility that cannot be ruled out that Nils Bååt had encountered fragments of Socinian ideas and arguments in military camps during his service in the Swedish-Polish war of 1657–1660.

Woman is Created from a Dog's Tail – Common-Sense Rhetoric in Learned and Popular Culture

Both Arnold and Albert warn against connecting individual examples of disbelief immediately to heretical or unorthodox movements. When people say that these doubts are their own thoughts this should be taken seriously. Arnold also rejects a possible influence from elements of Aristotelian philosophy in late medieval sermons (Arnold 2005:227; Albert 2003:11). The British historian Miri Rubin makes a similar statement in relation to Wyclif's (1324–1384) unorthodox formulations. They were "fed into pre-existing types of doubt and criticism which, in England, had been fairly muted until then" (Rubin 1992:325). Menocchio and Nils Bååt both claim the originality of their ideas. Menocchio refers to books he has read but his thoughts are nothing but his own: "I have never known anyone who had these ideas, and whatever ideas I had came out of my own head."[55] And when Nils was questioned as to "how he had arrived at such ungodly thoughts, perhaps by being instructed by someone or the reading of certain books?" his answer was a straightforward no. "He had always had these thoughts from his youth."[56] Since he had been a soldier he was asked once again by the superior court

if he perhaps had heard some discourses about such things during his time in the army. At first, he did not give a straight answer but eventually he said no.[57] Arnold makes a strong case for material experience as the basis for doubt, independently of unorthodox or heretical ideas. This is nicely illustrated by a case from early eighteenth-century Sweden. The peasant Elias Matsson was reported to have denied the presence of Christ's body in the host in front of his dinner guests. When the guests started to read the Lord's Prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread", he objected loudly – bread could be earned without prayer and kneeling in the church. "I have earned my bread by my own efforts!" And then he cut a piece of bread and said, "this is made of flour just like the host but more filling, and there is no body and blood of Christ present in the Communion."[58] That doubts could arise spontaneously from experience of material production and the social facts of everyday life is at the core of the assumption of a universal mode of practical reason and common sense. However, the cited examples indicate that common-sense arguments in religious matters were widely expressed in both high and low culture. Similarities in formulations across time and country imply that common-sense arguments and practical reasoning constituted a repertoire of idioms and exempla circulating between high and low culture rather than stemming from a popular materialist religion. This circulation between high and low, learned and popular culture has probably been grossly underestimated, as indicated by the following remarkable example:

On a Sunday evening in 1713 in the parish of Lappfjärd in the Finnish part of the Swedish kingdom, a verbal exchange started between a farmer and a wife about the origin of sin. The wife said that the devil and mankind were the origin of sin, and more precisely the devil in the shape of a snake seducing Eve who then persuaded Adam to sin. The farmer responded that woman is worse than man. The wife objected that man was created from dust of earth, but woman from a finer matter, namely Adam's rib. Certainly not, the farmer responded. Woman was created from a dog's tail. When God had taken the rib out of Adam, a dog came running and snatched it away, God hurried to take it back but only got hold of the tip of the dog's tail, and from this tail God created woman, and that's the reason why women are so angry and bark like dogs against their men.[59]

The anecdote demonstrates the principles of everyday practical reasoning in all ways but this time in a parodical context. Eve's subordinate status and being the immediate cause of Adam's sin is turned the other way around by an incongruent analogy that brings down female and male spiritual qualities to a comparison between the material qualities of human flesh and dust. In the farmer's response God's creation of woman is in its turn placed in the everyday scenario of a cheeky dog snatching a bone from the hands of a fumbling man. The cheekiness and cunning of dogs fighting over bones was

a theme for proverbs: "While two dogs are fighting for a bone, a third runs away with it" (*Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs* 2008:122). Taken unaware by the dog, God must be content with what he manages to get hold of according to a simple practical logic. It all ends with a pun: the Swedish word for barking has the double meaning of scolding. An example of popular creativity and inventiveness, so it seems. But the first statement about Eve as made of a finer material is an obvious reminiscence of the learned rhetorical common-sense argument for the nobility of women over men advanced by the German natural philosopher Agrippa von Nettesheim (1486–1535) which in its turn can be traced back to Abelard's (1079–1142) proto-feminist epistle to Heloise (Nettesheim 1996:50; 83; Newman 1995:233–234). Neither is the farmer's reply entirely of his own devising. The dialogue between the Finnish wife and the farmer is in fact an almost verbatim staging of some passages in the English poet Edward Gosynhyll's anti-feminist poem *Scole House Of Women* from 1560, most unlikely to be found in the Swedish-Finnish countryside. The verses start with a woman telling the poet that God made us (women) of a much more precious thing than man, namely a ribbon, while man is made of earth. This is denied by the poet who replies that a dog ran off with Adam's rib before God could fashion a woman. Since the dog ate the bone God had to make woman from one of the dog's ribs, which accounts for women's barking at their husbands (Woodbridge 1984:28–29; Gosynhyll 1560: verses 435–439; 498–510). In comparison the Finnish version is more vulgar, leading to greater comic effect, but the storyline is the same. Maybe this dialogue was something that Gosynhyll had in his turn picked up from oral culture?! The origin will of course never be known, but the anecdote can still serve as a source of inspiration for more systematic research in a broader field of statements of doubt, deliberate blasphemies, swearing, proverbs, parodies, and jokes (Cavaillé 2022).

A Shift of Focus Anew – from Likeness to Differences

To what extent Menocchio's and Nils Bååt's common-sense statements were inspired by a cultural repertoire is impossible to know, but their religious views were more than a collection of common-sense idioms. A closer look at the differences in themes and focus and their respective lived experiences and personalities may reveal underlying motifs for developing doubts and rejections into more extensive systems of thought. The concept of lived experience is used here as personal experiences acquired over time from the cultural and social circumstances of one's life.

First, while both Menocchio and Nils Bååt express a strong sense of social criticism, the main target was different. Menocchio's constant references to the sacraments of the church as "merchandise" was just a small portion of a much greater exploitation in which the church played a central role. "And it seems

to me that under our law, the pope, cardinals, and bishops are so great and rich that everything belongs to the church and to the priests, and they oppress the poor, who, if they work two rented fields, these will be fields that belong to the Church, to some bishop or cardinal".[60] In Lutheran Sweden, where both church lands and the number of sacraments had been greatly reduced and the clergy transformed into government civil servants, Nils aimed his wrath at the state itself, more specifically its tax burdens. Paying tax was not only a duty, but a divine commandment, as it is written in Luther's small catechism: "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. (Matthew 22:21) Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for the sake of conscience. Give each one what you owe them, tax as tax should…" (Luther 1648:35). For Nils, things were clear. His God had told him that he was not required to pay King and Crown any taxes. He was poor and the Crown would be "in fine shape without his tribute."[61]

Nils Bååt's and Menocchio's cultural and social living conditions were also entirely different. Living in the transitional period between Reformation and Counter-Reformation, in a region of Europe where Christianity and Islam met, it was the very diversity of faiths and creeds that exercised Menocchio the most. How could this multiplicity be understood? A miller by trade, he encountered many individuals. The mill was a meeting place where peasants jostled before the gates waiting to have their grain ground, a time for chatting and the exchange of news and opinions involving the miller as well. Accordingly, millers like tavern keepers were especially receptive to new ideas and inclined to propagate them, writes Ginzburg (Ginzburg 2013:114). His views seem to have long been well known in the village without leading to anyone alerting the authorities. He also seems to have enjoyed a solid social reputation, at least intermittently. He had served as mayor and administered parish finances (Ginzburg 2013:1–2).

Above all, Menocchio's message was *tolerance* or at least religious recognition (Saarinen 2016). He explained to his inquisitors that "since I was born a Christian I want to remain a Christian, and if I had been born a Turk I would want to live like a Turk," and when asked if he did not think one could conclude which faith was the true one, he answered, "I do believe that every person considers his faith to be right, and we do not know which is the right one: but because my grandfather, my father and my people have been Christians, I want to remain a Christian, and believe that this is the right one."[62] From this radical relativism and at the same time inclusive attitude, the step to a kind of common core to all religions, regardless of doctrinal differences, was not long. "The majesty of God has given the Holy Spirit to all, to Christians, to heretics, to Turks, and to Jews; and he considers them all dear, and they are all saved in the same manner".[63]

Nils expresses a kind of relativism and tolerance as well but of a more defensive character. "Priests and other Christians have the same faith as he,"

he insists, "though they teach and discuss differently." His request is simple: "if he may be allowed to maintain his beliefs, …another may hold to those he believes to be better…"[64] If Menocchio's ideas were formed by curiosity and an inquiring mind, Nils's statements were made against the backdrop of an increasing social marginalization. Born in a small village in Northern Sweden, he became a soldier in 1657. After returning home he married and set up a household of his own on a small piece of inherited land. His wife was the sister of his closest neighbour Per Nilsson. Nils Bååt's allotment was by far the smallest in the village (Fahlgren 1969:51–56). His brother-in-law Per Nilsson was however an important person. Appointed by the vicar, he hosted prayer meetings in his house for those in Nybyn and nearby villages who could not attend service because of the long distance to the parish church. In the 1680s the relation between Nils and his neighbours became more and more tense, ending in a total breakdown. At a court session in 1685 three neighbours, including his brother-in-law Per Nilsson, complained in the presence of the county governor that Nils had not paid any tax rent to the crown, nor contributed to the village's communal rent for the last ten years.[65] An immediate refunding of the neighbours' expenses was demanded. At the same court session Nils was cited by Per Nilsson for accusing him of theft which he could not prove. Due to lack of means to pay the fines, he was sentenced to be taken into custody with a warning to mend his ways to avoid a much harder, corporal punishment in the future. The warning did not only concern Per Nilsson but all his neighbours and his wife as well, "whom he often maltreats when she gives him advice and tries to stop him from his ungodly way of living".[66] According to the law Per Nilsson had the power and right to represent his sister and he was now authorized to report if Nils continued to maltreat his wife. What the maltreatment was all about is explained by Nils later in the first court interrogation. She had "turned against him", he said, and when asked why he had not attended church or the local prayer meetings his answer was that he could not leave his small children unattended.[67] A poor excuse, so it seems, but also an indication of a total split between him and his wife, leaving him at home with the children when she attended church or prayer meetings in her brother's house. In May the next year (1686) Nils was once again reported by his brother-in-law for quarrelling with his wife and battering her. This time he was sentenced to run the gauntlet – a punishment in which the delinquent is forced to run between two rows of men who strike at him as he passes, a most painful and dishonourable corporal punishment.[68] He must by now have become an outcast, alienated from the local religious and social community alike. In the front line stood his brother-in-law, not only appointed guardian for Nils's wife but also the local guardian of Lutheran orthodoxy and morality, probably with the active support from his sister, Nils's wife. This must without doubt have been a fertile ground for constructing a God of his own.

While Menocchio seems to have been driven by an irresistible wish to argue and discuss, Nils withdrew into his barn to talk with God. The enmity between Nils and his brother-in-law may have been the starting point and his refusal to attend the prayer-meetings the very cause of the quarrels with his wife (there is not a word about drunkenness). In his communication with God, he could compensate for everything he had lost in social life – friendship, recognition, respect and not the least reciprocal sympathy and loyalty. His God was a God who suffered from marginalization as well: "not many people think about me, but I am still the one who has created heaven and earth," God's voice told him.[69] Addressing them both as "you and me", God promises him lifelong loyalty: "since you have followed me from your day of birth, I will follow you to your dying day."[70] This is a relationship modelled on close friendship rather than worship, reverence, and godliness. "A deep friendship" (*en synnerlig vänskap*) is also the explicit term Nils uses to describe their relation.[71] In company with his mate, he could outline a vision of a peaceful world in stark contrast to his own experiences as a soldier and the conflicts with his wife and neighbours. Nils's vision and worldview could thus be seen as firmly anchored in the world of everyday experience in terms of an imagined sociality. Still there are some statements that indicate a possible influence from radical movements and preachers in the reformation.

A Dissemination of Radical Ideas after All?

Surprisingly, no serious efforts were made by the Swedish courts to trace influences from the radical Reformation. So, what were the supposed origins of his ideas? A medical examination of Nils Bååt's "corporal constitution" was suggested by the consistory to find out if some sort of phantasy may have caused his delusion.[72] The district court had, however, already stated that Nils Bååt was neither feeble-minded nor melancholic but in his right mind.[73] This seems also to have been the opinion of the superior court. The presence of the devil was insinuated as another possibility: "it seems as though he regards as his God the one that others take to be the devil". Nils's reply is most remarkable: "his God says that he is God though others call him the devil" and "people do call me a devil, but I am still the true God".[74] Less than two decades before, in the time of the great witch trials, this would most certainly have raised strong suspicions about consorting with the devil. But in 1676 the reality of stories about abductions and meetings with the devil at the witches' sabbath were reassessed as illusions and lies caused by "the devil's play through evil (*arga*) people".[75] The devil's power was hereafter reduced to instigations and illusions, according to the opinion of the judicial authorities. Accordingly, while instigated by the devil for certain, Nils Bååt's delusions were now considered a case of idolatry. The

district court uses the Latin expression *Idolum Fidei* and in the superior court Svea Hovrätt the case is presented by one of the deputy judges as "a most evil example (*res mali exempli*) of idolatry".[76] This may explain the strong and lengthy efforts to convert him.

Still there are some obvious similarities with radical ideas, apart from the already mentioned Socinianism. The first concerns the voice of God once heard when he was out mowing grass in the field. One of the founding leaders of Quakerism, James Nayler, told a similar story about hearing a voice when he was at work at the plough (Leachman 1997:212). The Quakers developed an extensive publishing business from the middle of the seventeenth century, reaching the Nordic countries in 1666 with a tract published in Danish (Peters 2005; Aarek 2002). Just as in the case of Socinianism it can't be ruled out that Nils had heard some talk about Quakers and their beliefs during his military service in the Swedish-Polish war (Fahlgren 1969:52).[77] There are however profound differences as well. While the voice was identified by Fox and Nayler as the voice of Christ and internalized into the soul and conscience as an "Inner Light", the voice of Nils's God was audible and principally situated in the barn (Pennington 2021:ch. 4, especially 69–94). And whereas the communication between Nils and his God was conducted on equal terms "whenever he wanted", the guidance of the Inner Light was often experienced as explicit verbal commands (Barbour 1964:111–115). Nevertheless, Nils's statement that "he was in God and God in him" is reminiscent of the early Quakers' doctrine of "celestial inhabitation". The latter was however perceived by the early quakers as a most literal and even corporal presence of Christ dwelling in the body unlike Nils Bååt's conception of the soul as the spiritual abode of God (Bailey 1992:75–136).[78]

Radical ideas were however present closer at hand. In a trial from 1672 a student in the secondary school in the town of Gävle south of Umeå, Olai Rahm, was reported to have said that "Christ was a son of a whore, Mary was a whore and Joseph a whoremonger". This was further explained before the court as follows: Christ cannot be the son of God, since God is a spiritual being, and a spirit cannot have sexual intercourse with a woman and even if it were so, Christ could not have been born legitimate since Mary was betrothed to Joseph.[79] What is of particular interest here is not Olai's common-sense reasoning but his explicit reference to a book written by "Andreas Kempe". Anders Pedersson Kempe (1622–1689) was an artillery officer stationed in Frösön south-west of Umeå. He became strongly influenced by the Bohemian evangelic priest, chiliast, and visionary Paul Felgenhauer (1593–1661) (Hasselberg 1922:9–33; Ambjörnsson 1981). The book referred to was most probably Kempe's Swedish translation of Felgenhauer's *Probatorium Theologicum*, printed in Amsterdam in 1664. Kempe had left Sweden in 1670 when threatened with prosecution, but copies of his translations still circulated in the nearby county of Jämtland. There is however not a word

about Christ as being simply human in Felgenhauer's text. On the contrary. What is claimed in the text is that Christ is of an entirely divine nature. As such he has two shapes – one divine and one human. In human shape his flesh and blood are still of divine nature, not to be confused with the earthly, perishable flesh and blood of sinful humans. In his earthly appearance he is according to Felgenhauer "a heavenly man" (*himmelsk människa*). Just as Christ has only one nature, God is just one person (*individuum*). Christ is thus just a "pouring out" (*uttömmelse*) of God in human form (Felgenhauer/Kempe 1664:4–5; 17–18; cf. Ambjörnsson 1981:52–55). In his heavenly human shape Christ still needed an earthly father: "If Christ had no father on earth, how could he then have been born a legitimate child, and be a son of David?" (Felgenhauer/Kempe 1664:9). Maybe it was this passage that had caught Olai's attention and inspired his distorted version and common-sense conclusions according to the social facts of everyday life. Could fragments of Kempe's and Felgenhauer's antitrinitarian ideas have still been circulating twenty years later? That Christ could only be found within oneself is expressed by Kempe and Felgenhauer in formulations that come close to some of Nils's utterances. Felgenhauer/Kempe: "Our immortal soul or spirit is the spirit of the Almighty" (Felgenhauer/Kempe 1664:18–19). Nils: "the soul is God himself who is in every man." Felgenhauer/Kempe: "The Son is in the Father, and the Father in the Son" (Felgenhauer 1666:146). Nils: "God is in him, and he is in God." There is also an even more intriguing possibility that Felgenhauer/Kempe's claim that the "inner man" could arise from earthly flesh and become heavenly already on earth is echoed in Nils's characterization of his relationship with God (Ambjörnsson 1981:54–55).[80] God had told him that "if you and I had not existed, then there would be no peace, and if you and I did not exist, war would have broken out a long time ago – thus [he] Nils Olofsson cannot die yet but live on".[81] Maybe Nils's description of their relationship should not be interpreted as a bringing down to an imagined sociality of everyday life, but as an elevation of himself to a celestial level?! Apart from the highest improbability that Nils had read any of Felgenhauer's and Kempe's texts, this is effectively denied by his entire appearance before the court. When asked in what way he had been the cause of peace, he answers in a provocative style "who knows if prayers haven't been able to accomplish something" followed by a sarcastic "you know that, right?"[82]

Concluding Remarks – a Restless Freethinker versus a Frustrated Provocateur

Nils's answers before the court are marked by sarcasm and irony. When questioned he could answer with a smile and joking gestures or in rebuking words like "you ought to know" or "you understand better, don't you, my

good gentlemen".[83] His words about Christ as a devil or the devil's follower are uttered with a smile.[84] The question of the trinity he turns into a sardonic joke: "it is no wonder that I am poor, who have no more than one God. Ye who have so many must be far wealthier."[85] Time after time the court admonishes him to stop smiling and take the examination seriously, reminding him of the death sentence that hung over his head. This casts new light on Nils's motives. God's voice in the barn should probably not be seen as a place of refuge but rather as a deficient counter-image to the Lutheran God that represented his brother-in-law and the authorities. He did not need to attend prayer meetings or catechism examinations since "he had God at home" was his answer when questioned by the court and probably also what he had told the priest and his brother-in-law.[86] Such a strategy was however double-edged. According to the examining priests in the consistory Nils had expressed regret at having talked about God's voice in the barn "since it made people think that I was completely mad."[87] Not to be taken seriously would certainly have undermined his arrogant sarcasm and ironies. The spiritual essence of his described relationship with God can also be questioned. Matters discussed were hardly sacral, ranging from the paying of taxes to the keeping of the peace in everyday life. And when admonished that the word of God is food for the soul his answer reveals a basic materialist and sensuous rather than spiritual and transcendental attitude to life: "food for the soul is also when you have something tasty to put in your mouth."[88] On the other hand, the utterance about God being in him and he in God did not necessarily contradict this down-to-earth attitude. If God was present in every human soul, there was no need for churches, priests, sacred texts or communion rituals. God became a lifelong companion with whom one could have daily conversations instead of a distant Lord demanding to be worshipped.

In any case his stubbornness and provocations cost him dearly. Put to hard physical labour on a starvation diet with a shackle around his ankle he was locked up almost naked in an unheated ice-cold prison cell at night.[89] After enduring this torture for several months he eventually resigned and renounced his "delusions".

Menocchio, by contrast, addresses the inquisitors with respect. He is eager to explain his ideas and often makes additions on his own initiative. His taste for argument was well known among the villagers. Several times people had heard him say that he wished for nothing more than to express his opinion before the ecclesiastical and secular authorities (Ginzburg 2013:8). Entangling himself in sometimes long expositions, Nils's replies were in contrast always short and abrupt. While Nils returned home a broken man, Menocchio could not resist taking up his arguments once again after being released from the first trial, even though he must have been aware that recidivists were to be executed.[90] In November 1599 Menocchio was

executed at sixty-seven years of age (Ginzburg 2013:121). Almost a century later in 1696 Nils died at the age of fifty-nine, destitute and marked by his longstanding suffering in custody (Fahlgren 1969:93–94). Thus, while equal in the use of common-sense arguments to question religious doctrine, Menocchio and Nils were contrasts in personal style and social motives – a restless freethinker driven by a taste for argument versus a frustrated provocateur nurtured by social marginalization and public humiliation. Behind the same mode of thinking there were at the same time also substantial differences in statements of religious beliefs – an illustration of the complexity of Walker Bynum's distinction between likeness and lookalikes.

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[2] Court record, Umeå socken, September 24, 1687; May 6–8, 1688.
[3] Minutes, Stockholm consistory, August 15, 1688, p. 256. All translations from Swedish into English by the author.
[4] Court record, Umeå socken, September 24, 1687, f. 726h.
[5] Court record, Svea hovrätt, July 18, 1688, f. 130h.
[6] Court record, Umeå socken, May 7–8, 1688, f. 731h.
[7] Court record, Umeå socken, September 24, 1687, f. 727v; May 6, 1688, f. 731h.
[8] Court record, Umeå socken, September 24, 1687, f. 730h.
[9] Court record, Svea hovrätt, July 18, 1688, f. 130h, Minutes, Stockholm Consistory September 18, 1688, p. 286.
[10] Court record, Umeå socken, May 7–8, 1688, f. 730hv.
[11] Court record, Umeå socken, September 24, 1687, f. 725v.
[12] Court record, Umeå socken, May 7, 1688, f. 730h.
[13] First trial, Tuesday, February 7, 1584, Del Col 1996:25.
[14] Court record, Umeå socken, May 7–8, 1688, f. 730h.
[15] Minutes, Stockholm Consistory, September 18, 1688, p. 288.
[16] Court record, Umeå socken, May 7–8, 1688, f. 730hv.
[17] Court record, Umeå socken, May 7–8, 1688, f. 730h.
[18] First trial, February 7, 1584, Del Col 1996:26.
[19] Minutes, Stockholm Consistory, August 15, 1688, p. 256.
[20] Aristotle on non-contradiction, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* 2007/2019.
[21] First trial, May 7, 1584, Del Col 1996:49.
[22] First trial, May 7, 1584, Del Col 1996:47, cf. 57, where he claims that those spirits were produced by nature, just as worms are produced from a cheese.
[23] First trial, May 12, 1584, Del Col 1996:57.
[24] First trial, May 7, 1584, Del Col 1996:47; 57.
[25] First trial, May 7, 1584, Del Col 1996:51; 53.
[26] First trial, May 7, 1584, Del Col 1996:52.
[27] Minutes by Olaus Matteus Cumbleus October 30, 1688, Stockholm Consistory, Filed acts EIII:37, 1689, no. 80.
[28] First trial, February 7, 1584, Del Col 1996:26.
[29] First trial, May 7, 1584, Del Col 1996:48–49.
[30] Court record, Umeå socken, May 7–8, 1688 f. 729v.
[31] First trial, April 27, 1584, Del Col 1996:43.
[32] First trial, May 7, 1584, Del Col 1996:52.
[33] Minutes by Ericus Lundius & David Eekholm October 1688, Stockholm Consistory, Filed acts EIII:37, 1689, no. 80.
[34] First trial, 7 February, 1584, Del Col 1996:24.
[35] First trial, 28 April, 1584, Del Col 1996:45.
[36] Court record, Umeå socken, May 7–8, 1688, f. 730hv.
[37] Minutes by Olaus Matteus Cumbleus, October 30, 1688, Stockholm Consistory, Filed acts EIII:37, 1689, no. 80.
[38] Court record, Svea hovrätt, July 18, 1688, f. 130h; Minutes, Stockholm Consistory September 18, 1688, p. 286.
[39] Court record, Svea hovrätt, July 18, 1688, f. 130h.
[40] Court record, Umeå socken, September 24, 1687, f. 726h.
[41] Second trial, Monday July 19, 1599, Del Col 1996:137.
[42] For this concept see Levine 2001.
[43] Minutes by Olaus Matteus Cumbleus, October 30, 1688, Stockholm Consistory, Filed acts EIII:37, 1689, no. 80.

[44] First trial, February 2, 1584, Del Col 1996:17.
[45] First trial, February 2, 1584, Del Col 1996:13.
[46] First trial, February 7, 1584, Del Col 1996:26; Second trial, July 19, 1599, Del Col 1996:137.
[47] For critical reviews and comments on the debate, see Lukes 2000; Yoshida 2014, chapter 5; Österman 2021.
[48] For Sahlin's critique of Obeyesekere's use of the term, see Sahlins 1995:148–156.
[49] Cf. Reynolds 1991:30 for the term "common-sense rationalism".
[50] This is how Febvre's conclusion has been traditionally interpreted. For a modified argument see Wootton 1988.
[51] Chazelle 1992:21, a material entity may not be considered "truly" present if it has been endowed with the appearance of another material entity; for something to be classified as veritas, it must continue to possess only characteristics originally belonging to it. Cf. Radding 2003:xii–xiii.
[52] "Bernard Gui on the Albigensians", text from Gui 1905:381–382. Quotes from *Historia Albigensium* in Rubin 1992:321.
[53] Berengi calls this a case of "elementary rationalism". I thank Mattia Corso for this reference.
[54] Deniq; ne quid statuatur, quod ipsi sanæ rationi repugnet, seu contradictionem involvat. Cf. Wilbur 1977:5.
[55] First trial, February 22, 1584, Del Col 1996:34.
[56] Court record, Umeå socken, July 7–8, 1688, f. 731v.
[57] Court record, Svea hovrätt, July 18, 1688, f. 132h.
[58] Justitierevisionen, February 12, 1702, no. 51, Swedish National Archive, Marieberg, Stockholm.
[59] Justitierevisionen, July 6, 1713, no. 25, Swedish National Archive, Marieberg, Stockholm. Cf. Olli 2007:82–83.
[60] First trial, April 28, 1584, Del Col 1996:43.
[61] Court record, Umeå socken, September 24, 1687, f. 727v.
[62] Second trial, July 12, 1599, Del Col 1996:132–133.
[63] First trial, April 28, 1584, Del Col 1996:53.
[64] Court record, Umeå socken, September 24, 1687, f. 731h; f. 732h; f.733v.
[65] Court record, Umeå socken, May 3–5, 1685, f. 535v.
[66] Court record, Umeå socken, May 3–5, 1685, f. 536h.
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[69] Court record, Svea Hovrätt, July 18, 1688, f. 129h.
[70] Court record, Svea Hovrätt, July 18, 1688, f. 131v.
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[74] Court record, Svea Hovrätt, July 18, 1688, f. 126v.
[75] Royal letter to Trolldomskommissionen i Stockholm, quoted in Linderholm 1913:208.
[76] Court record, Umeå socken, May 7–8, 1688, f. 734h; Court record, Svea hovrätt, July 18, 1688, f. 128h.
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[78] Court record, Umeå socken, May 7–8, 1688, f. 729v; f. 733v.
[79] Court record, Gävle rådstugurätt och magistrat, AIb:13, March 16, 1671.
[80] This possibility was according to Felgehauer and Kempe uncovered for the first time by the arrival of Christ, Felgenhauer 1666:174–175.
[81] Court record, Umeå socken, September 24, 1687, f. 727v.
[82] Court record, Svea hovrätt, July 18, 1688, f. 131v.
[83] Court record, Svea Hovrätt, July 18, 1688, f. 129h, f. 131v.

[84] Court record, Umeå socken, May 7–8, 1688, f. 730v.
[85] Court record, Umeå socken, September 24, 1687, f. 727h.
[86] Court record, Umeå socken, September 24, 1687, f. 727v.
[87] Court record, Svea Hovrätt, September 19, 1688, f. 589.
[88] Court record, Umeå socken, September 24, 1687, f. 727v.
[89] Court record, Svea Hovrätt, October 13, 1688, f. 828; Letter from the warden of the royal castle Georg Stiernhoff December, 1688, Stockholm Consistory EIII:37, no. 80; Letter from the governor general Christoffer Gyllenstierna to his Royal Majesty, January 5, 1689, Överståthållarämbetets äldre kansli, BIa registratur.
[90] This was spelt out explicitly in the commutation sentence, Del Col 1996:xcix.

Methodological Reflections and Theoretical Perspectives on Analysing Church and Cemetery Finds

Herleik Baklid

Abstract

Archaeological investigations of the ground beneath church floors and cemeteries have uncovered extensive and varied artefactual material. Based on individual studies of four types of artefacts – coins, sticks with incised notches, dolls and hazel rods – in which the social significance of the artefacts and their association with the church area are analysed and discussed, this article aims primarily to develop an overall perspective on this thematic field. This is done by summarizing my applied methods and analytical results from the individual studies, conducting a comparison with other and more recent research and placing all these elements in a larger theoretical perspective. Christopher Tilley's concept of materiality, Alfred Gell's agency theory and Jonathan Z. Smith's place theory are used as theoretical inputs.

Keywords: church and cemetery finds, materiality, agency, topography of holiness

Archaeological investigations of cemeteries and the ground beneath church buildings have uncovered extensive artefactual material. The function and association of some artefacts with the church and the church area are obvious, but for other artefacts it is not clear what their purpose and function were, and neither, therefore, is their presence in the church ground or the cemetery ground. Nevertheless, this archaeologically produced artefactual material represents a potential for acquiring new cultural-historical knowledge about the behaviour and ideas associated with the church building and the church grounds. As an extension of this, I will explain and discuss methodological approaches and the source-related challenges of using this artefact material in cultural-historical research. Furthermore, I will discuss theoretical perspectives on the relationship between people and artefacts from the church and cemetery grounds, and how theoretical perspectives on the church building and the church grounds can help explain the findings and provide a better overall understanding of them.

The background to this question is that on the basis of many years of studying several types of artefacts produced by archaeological investigations of churches and cemeteries, I see the need to develop an overall perspective on this thematic field. I will do this by summarizing and compiling my methodological approaches and analytical findings from each of the individual studies, comparing them with other and more recent research and finally placing all these elements in a larger theoretical framework.

The individual studies I have conducted and published previously, and which I will use as a starting point to discuss the problem, concern coins, sticks with notches, dolls and hazel rods. The first three of these artefact types come from church grounds, while the fourth comes from graves in cemeteries (Baklid 1995, Baklid 2004, Baklid 2007 and Baklid 2017).

The Materiality of the Analysed Artefacts

The studies of the four types of artefacts mentioned above from archaeological investigations of churches and cemeteries have involved studies of material culture. A conventional approach to such material artefacts would be an empirical description and assessment of them in terms of e.g. material, design, colour, content and age (cf. Tilley 2007:17). However, since the primary purpose of my studies has not been to describe and examine the artefacts themselves, but rather to discuss and clarify their function, purpose or significance and why they have ended up under the church floor or in graves, which is not obvious from the outset, other and additional approaches have been required. As a result, I have moved on to the research concept of materiality, which has a far more comprehensive content in a scientific context. The term is defined somewhat differently and can have somewhat varying content (Rogan 2011:313ff), but since I have been concerned with the relationship of the objects to people, the British anthropologist and archaeologist Christopher Tilley's (b. 1955) account of the concept is highly appropriate in my context. He emphasizes the relationship of objects to people in a contribution to a discussion about stones and stone axes:

> I am concerned with the properties this stone has in relation to people. I am going beyond an empirical consideration of the stone to consider its meaning and significance. In doing so I move from a "brute" consideration of material to its social significance. This to me is what is meant by the concept of materiality. To consider the materiality of stone […] is to consider its social significance, the stone as meaningful, as implicated in social acts and events and the stories of people's lives, in both the past and the present (Tilley 2007:18).

In the following, I will link my four aforementioned studies to this theoretical-methodological framework, and specifically account for and reflect

on the procedure for clarifying the function or social significance of the artefacts, and thus penetrate behind the artefacts themselves. In this work, it has been necessary to take an interdisciplinary approach and draw on various professional competences. Since church and cemetery artefacts are relatively unexplored, it has been necessary to carry out very basic descriptions and investigations of the objects. In the following review, the general procedure for the four artefact types will be explained, while specific adaptations for each artefact type will be discussed.

The description and discussion are divided into the following main points:

- Description of the artefacts themselves
- The context of the discovery as a source of information
- Statistical hypothesis testing
- Comparison of the four artefact types
- Comparison with other source material
- The social significance and meaning of the artefacts

Description of the Artefacts Themselves

Describing the artefacts themselves, assessing and categorizing them has been a necessary first step on the way to clarifying their relationship to people or their social significance. I have done this through four approaches:

1. Description of the artefacts' categorization, design and occurrence
2. The material
3. Scientific investigations
4. Dating of the material

1. When it comes to categorizing the artefacts, it can sometimes be challenging as the artefacts can be both damaged and fragmented. In addition, the design of an artefact type can vary. However, it cannot be denied that categorization is easier for some of the object types than for others, e.g. categorizing coins is easier than categorizing dolls.

Although the categorization of coins is somewhat simpler, numismatic expertise is still required both to categorize them and to describe and evaluate them. This is therefore work done by numismatists. The coins in the church finds mainly consist of the following types: bracteates, hollow pennies, quarter pennies, half pennies, pennies, 2-shillings and 1-shillings. This means that the coins in the church finds are the smallest nominals in circulation at any given time (Baklid 1995:188). The total number of coins in the four church finds I have examined – Uvdal stave church, Ringebu stave church, Høre stave church and Bø old church – varies from about 350 to about 900.

The second type of artefact is sticks with notches cut into them. These are flat wooden sticks with a rectangular cross-section where the notch is cut

into the narrow long sides. The total number of such sticks uncovered is not particularly large, only 36, and they have only been found in Uvdal stave church and Bø old church (Baklid 2004:179, 182f). The number of notches on the sticks varies between 1 and 13, while the length of the sticks varies between approximately 5 cm and 58 cm (ibid.:181f).

The next type of artefact, dolls, does not occur in any great numbers either. In this context, a doll is textile pieces with lashings around them or textile pieces that are rolled up and bound and/or assembled in such a way that the head and body are visible (Baklid 2007:189). This is clearly visible on some of the dolls, while on others it is only hinted at. The design is therefore reminiscent of a small human child. From Reinli stave church, Lom stave church, Uvdal stave church and Vågå church, 19 dolls have been uncovered, varying in length from approximately 4.5 cm to approximately 12.5 cm (ibid.:189 and 191). Some of the dolls occurred in series, i.e. two or three pieces of identical or almost identical design made of the same type of textile (ibid.:196). As mentioned above, the categorization of dolls can present challenges. The guiding principle for categorization has been that if it is doubtful whether the object satisfies the definitional requirements, it has been omitted. This may of course have affected the number of objects included in the study, but it is unlikely to have any impact on the actual results of the analyses of the social significance of the objects. On the other hand, it could have an impact on our knowledge of the prevalence and extent of the practice.

The last type of artefact, hazel rods, have been found in graves in Norway, Sweden and Denmark. However, it should be noted that hazel rods are by no means found in all graves. The number of rods in the graves varied from 1–2, which is the most common, up to 7. In the graves, the rods were in different places in relation to the skeletons and in different positions. In coffin graves, the rods were placed under, in or on top of the coffin, while in coffinless graves the rods were placed under, next to or on top of the deceased. Sometimes the hazel rods were placed on top of the deceased in a cross formation (Baklid 2017:8ff). In the case of this artefact type, the number, location and formation of the rods may have been affected by decay.

2. The description of the artefacts also includes determining the material they are made of. The coins are mostly made of silver, but with somewhat varying silver content. For a couple of the artefact types, however, specialist expertise was needed to determine the material of the artefacts. A wood expert determined the species of a selection of the sticks with incised notches with the naked eye or a microscope to take a closer look at the cell structure, and found that they were mostly made of pine (Baklid 2004:186). Furthermore, a textile expert stated that the dolls were made of linen or cotton cloth (Baklid 2007:194f). As we will see below, the identification of material can be a useful aid to dating.

3. Scientific examinations of the artefacts have also been valuable in extracting further information from them. Such examinations can, for example, reveal whether there are biological or chemical traces on the artefacts or whether they have any content. The results of such investigations have been able to provide evidence to determine the purpose or meaning of the artefacts. This was the case, for example, with the sticks with notches carved into them, where the application of the chemical benzidine revealed blood stains on one of them (Baklid 2004:186).

When it came to the dolls, it was relevant to investigate whether they could contain anything. X-rays and computed tomography (CT) scans were therefore carried out on them. But nothing was found inside them. However, such examinations have limitations in that they have difficulty detecting very small or thin objects. As a result, there is a risk that important information may be missed, which in turn may affect conclusions about the purpose and social significance of the artefact type (Baklid 2007:199).

A more reliable method is endoscopic photography, which involves inserting a narrow tube with a light and camera at the end into the artefact. The method produces sharp images of the interior of the object, and any contents are clearly visible. However, the method is limited by the fact that there must be an opening in the object where the camera tube can be inserted. Since there were no such openings in any of the dolls and it was not desirable to damage them by making separate holes for the examination, endoscopy photography was not carried out on them.

As can be seen from this review, scientific investigations can provide valuable information for determining the meaning and social significance of artefacts, but they can also have limitations that make the results of limited value.

4. The dating of artefacts is also an important aspect of their description and evaluation. But dating them can sometimes be problematic. Coins are the easiest group of artefacts to date. Coins from more recent times are generally marked with the year, but this is not the case for medieval coins. Instead, they must be dated by comparing the style and technical characteristics of the coins or by the name of the sovereign or lord of the mint stamped on the coin. This means, therefore, that the dating of these coins can only be specified within a limited period of time (Baklid 1995:182f). The numismatic material in each of the church finds forms a continuous series of coins from the end of the twelfth century to around 1850 (cf. ibid.:186). In each of the church finds, more than 80 per cent of the coins originate from the Middle Ages (ibid.:185).

When it comes to the sticks with incised notches, as archaeologically produced material, these can only be dated on the basis of the stratigraphic conditions in the church ground. This does not provide any evidence for an

exact date, but the result was that the majority of the sticks very probably date from the second half of the seventeenth or eighteenth century (Baklid 2004:186). The majority of the dolls also date from the post-Reformation period, but these too cannot be accurately dated. However, the dating basis for the dolls is different from that for the sticks. The dolls were generally dated based on the textiles in them, and around half of them can be attributed to the nineteenth century (Baklid 2007:194f).

Different dating methods have been used for the hazel rods. In most cases, the rods have been dated based on archaeological criteria, but the C-14 method has also been used. Both of these methods only provide dating within a broadly defined time period and therefore no precise dating (Baklid 2017:15). In addition, written source material as a basis for dating has provided evidence for dating the hazel rods from Heddal (Nøstberg 1993:30 and 33f). The dating of the hazel rods spans a long period of time, from the tenth century to the nineteenth century (Baklid 2017:15f).

This review of the dates shows that it has been necessary and appropriate to use different types of dating methods for the church and cemetery artefacts examined. If we compare the dates of the four types of artefacts, we see that the coins and hazel rods mainly date from the tenth/eleventh century to around 1850, while the sticks with incised notches and the dolls mainly date from the post-Reformation period, with a concentration after the end of the seventeenth century or from the nineteenth century.

The Context of Discovery as a Source of Information

Since the artefacts studied are archaeologically produced, their context of discovery, not just the artefacts themselves, may also be of importance and a valuable addition to clarify their function. This will apply in particular to the church finds – the coins, the sticks with carved notches and the dolls. The topographical distribution of the artefacts in the church interior has been of particular interest, in order to investigate whether there were clusters/concentrations that could be linked to church furnishings, or whether the artefacts were evenly distributed throughout the church space.

From a source-critical point of view, however, there are a couple of problems associated with such an analysis. Firstly, the ground beneath churches is often disturbed by building work and burials (cf. Müller 1984:184), which means that it is not always certain that the artefact is in situ. Secondly, excavation and documentation routines were not fully developed at the earliest excavations (cf. Baklid 1995:183). This means that the information about the location of the artefacts can be very general, e.g. the site is only stated to be part of the church space. Of course, both of these factors may to some extent affect the informational value of the context in which the artefacts were found, but this is unlikely to affect the main results of the study.

As the numismatic material comprises several hundred coins and forms an almost continuous series of coins from the end of the twelfth century to around 1850, I carried out a topographical-chronological analysis of it for each of the four churches examined. In Uvdal stave church, Høre stave church and Bø old church, the majority of the coins from the Middle Ages occurred in the chancel, while this changed during the post-Reformation period, and from around 1650 onwards most of the coins were located in the nave. The ratio in Ringebu stave church deviated somewhat from the other churches, which is most likely due to the fact that soil has been disturbed and removed in connection with the construction and excavation of burial chambers. Coin accumulations occurred in all four churches in the Middle Ages, including in a depression in the apse of Høre stave church, the eastern part of the chancel in Bø old church and in the eastern part of the nave in both Uvdal stave church and Ringebu stave church. These coin accumulations could then be related to church furnishings. The depression in Høre stave church is probably a reliquary, the accumulation in the chancel of Bø old church can be linked to the high altar, which according to church regulations should contain a relic, and the accumulations in the eastern part of the nave of Uvdal and Ringebu stave churches can be linked to medieval side altars with associated saint sculptures. After the Reformation, the general trend in all four churches was that the coins no longer occurred in clusters, but were more scattered (Baklid 1995:186f, 191). For both groups of artefacts, sticks with incised notches and dolls, the number was small and they were relatively scattered in both the chancel and the nave (Baklid 2004:182f; Baklid 2007:190ff).

Statistical Hypothesis Testing

In cases where a type of artefact is found in large numbers under the church floor, it would also be scientifically appropriate to use statistical hypothesis testing as this provides a measure of how likely it is that a given accumulation or distribution is random or non-random. This statistical method was therefore applied to the coin material.

Statistical hypothesis testing has been used very little in historical or cultural history research. This may be because there has been a common perception that statistical tests cannot be applied to historical material as the historical data that has been handed down to us usually does not fulfil the requirement of being a random sample of a finite population. The Norwegian historian Eli Fure has countered this view in her article "Skipperskjønn og stokastikk". In the article, she shows that model-based statistical theory makes it possible to use hypothesis testing on historical data, even if they are not a random sample from a larger, finite population (Fure 1983).[1]

A well-suited type of hypothesis test for testing conditions related to church coins is the χ^2-test. The test involves testing hypotheses in relation

to the observed distribution compared with the expected distribution (cf. Bhattacharyya & Johnson 1977:424f). For the coin material from all four churches, the coin density was tested: 1. between the church's chancel and nave and 2. between clusters and the rest of the church. The result of the hypothesis testing showed that for Uvdal stave church, Høre stave church and Bø old church, the coin density in the chancel in the Middle Ages was statistically significantly different from the coin density in the nave below a level of 5 per cent. Similar test results were obtained for the density of coins in all of the above-mentioned coin hoards in relation to the density of coins in the rest of the churches (Baklid 1995:186, 194). When these test results were combined with the fact that the coin hoards could be linked to a reliquary and altars, this provided a stronger basis for clarifying the social significance of the coins.

However, it is important to realize that even if a hypothesis test results in a statistically significant accumulation of artefacts, nothing specific can be concluded about the underlying cause. The statistical hypothesis test can only be used to substantiate the existence of a type of causal relationship. In order to arrive at the specific underlying cause, a separate discussion is required.

Comparison of the Four Artefact Types

As archaeological investigations have been carried out in dozens of churches and church ruins, this has made it possible to compare the individual, specific artefact type with the associated find context from several churches. The same applies to cemetery excavations.

Such comparisons provide an opportunity to demonstrate the prevalence and regularity or the opposite, that is, the lack of prevalence and regularity for the individual artefact type. Prevalence, regularity and correspondence support an inference that the artefacts were attributed a collective and general social significance, while a lack of prevalence and regularity may indicate the opposite. This methodological approach has to a greater extent yielded results and strengthened the conclusion of a meaningful function for the coin material, the doll material and the hazel rods than for the sticks with incised notches, as the latter have only been found in two places.

While the coin material and hazel rods showed a greater degree of consistency, there was somewhat more variation when it came to the doll material. Although the sticks with incised notches were only found at two sites, the correspondence between the type of wood and design of the sticks, and the number of sticks at each of the sites, suggest that they were given a special meaning. However, based on the available source material, the geographically limited distribution would suggest that this cultural phenomenon had a more limited and localized practice (cf. Baklid 1995; Baklid 2004; Baklid 2007; Baklid 2017).

Comparison with Other Source Material

The descriptions, assessments and analyses of the artefacts themselves and the associated find context only provide evidence that the artefact types studied have been assigned a social significance, but this information is not sufficient to clarify specifically which one. In order to fulfil the content of Tilley's concept of materiality, i.e. to determine the function or social significance of the artefacts, it has required a discussion in which other source material has been drawn in. Information in different types of sources has therefore been compared with the descriptions and analyses of the objects themselves. This applies in particular to traditional records, but sagas, church-historical documents, legal material, descriptions, questionnaires, dictionaries and artefacts from archaeological investigations of a holy well have also been utilized (Baklid 1995:191f; Baklid 2004:188f; Baklid 2007:200ff; Baklid 2017:18ff). Through juxtaposition with these other sources, material culture has been linked to information within immaterial culture.

From a source-critical point of view, there may be a couple of challenges with this. Firstly, it is not given that the types of artefacts and the information in the tradition or the other sources are contemporaneous, and secondly, there is not always a geographical correspondence between the place where the artefacts were uncovered and the place where the information originated. However, when it comes to behavioural traditions, it has been shown that they can last several hundred years (Baklid 2015). What is more, the same traditions are often found over large distances. On the basis of this, these two stated source-critical elements should not have any decisive impact on the results of the analysis.

The Social Significance of Artefacts

As pointed out above, the social significance of artefacts is central to Tilley's concept of materiality. In the following, I will therefore briefly explain this for the four artefact types studied on the basis of the above descriptions, investigations and approaches. The conclusion regarding the coins is that the majority of them from both the Middle Ages and the post-Reformation period were deposited as votive offerings to alleviate a situation of illness or crisis (Baklid 1995:192f). This was primarily practised in the Middle Ages, but the practice continued in post-Reformation times, albeit to a lesser extent. While many of the coins from the Middle Ages occurred in clusters adjacent to or near the high altar in the chancel and adjacent to or near the side altars in the eastern part of the nave, and were apparently aimed at relics and sculptures of saints, the post-Reformation coins were far more scattered in the church grounds. When I make some reservations and do not claim that all church coins were laid down as votive offerings, it is because the congregation in the Middle Ages made their sacrifices of offerings on or at the high altar or on

the side altars (*NGL*, Anden Række, vol.1:552; *DN*, vol. 4:107). Since coins were usually sacrificed in the Middle Ages as well (Molland 1967:526), we cannot completely rule out the possibility that some of the coins may have fallen down or been lost. The same applies to the post-Reformation period. After the Reformation, there seems to have been a partial change in terms of places of sacrifice in the church. Sacrifice on the high altar in the chancel was retained for the major festivals and for baptisms, weddings and the introduction of women after childbirth, the so-called axiden sacrifices (Fæhn 1956:260ff; Amundsen 1987:258ff), but it seems that offerings in so-called tablets that were distributed among the congregation in the nave occurred to a greater extent (Fæhn 1956:59ff). This partial change in sacrifice sites can perhaps to some extent explain the shift in the topographic-chronological distribution of the coins through the loss of coins in the nave during sacrifice. However, when I claim that the majority of the coins under the floor of the nave in the post-Reformation period were also deposited as votive offerings, it is because there is tradition-based evidence of such a practice (SAO, Kallsbok no. 1 for Rødenes:69f; Fonnum & Svarteberg 1952:193).

In votive offerings, we encounter the gift-giving principle in the God/saint–human being relationship. This type of votive gift practice was a folk-religious form of behaviour associated with the church as a sacred place with its sacred objects and its sacred ground. In other words, the coins reflect a religious-magical behaviour that occurred within the church building (Baklid 1995:193).

When it comes to the other three types of artefacts examined, the analysis resulted in the conclusion that they are instead linked to the church, the church grounds and the cemetery as a burial place. It is highly likely that the sticks with notches carved into them were placed in the church ground as a magical transfer of warts to the dead (Baklid 2004:190). It is also highly likely that the dolls were placed under the church floor as a therapeutic measure against the childhood disease *liksvekk* or *valken*. The supposed cause of the disease was that the dead inflicted it on the child through *forgjøring*. The idea was that the dolls would fool the dead into believing that they had got the child to them, and that the disease-causing influence would be transferred to the doll, thereby making the child healthy (Baklid 2007:203ff). Both the sticks and the dolls are part of a folk medicine practice that is linked to the church building and the church grounds through magical-therapeutic behaviour aimed at the collective of the dead. Based on the material studied, these two folk-medicine remedies were practised in the post-Reformation period, with the second half of the seventeenth or eighteenth century as the *terminus post quem*.

Although hazel rods have been found in graves in the church area, they did not have a folk-medicine purpose like the sticks and the dolls. It is very likely that their social significance was to discourage the dead from

becoming revenants, and they were thus a magical-prophylactic measure. The practice can be traced from the tenth century to around 1850 (Baklid 2017:15, 22).

Materiality and Church Artefacts

The religious studies scholar Birgit Meyer (b. 1960) and the sociologist Dick Houtman (b. 1963) write in the introduction to the book *Things: Religion and the Question of Materiality* from 2012 that the relationship between religion and artefacts

> has long been conceived in antagonistic terms, as if things could not matter for religion in any fundamental way. This antagonism resonates with a set of related oppositions that privilege spirit above matter, belief above ritual, content above form, mind above body, and inward contemplation above "mere" outward action, producing an understanding of religion in terms, basically, of an interior spiritual experience (Meyer & Houtman 2012:1).

Meyer and Houtman's point is clearly rooted in what is referred to as the material turn, which led to a change of focus in religious research "from beliefs to practices, from ideas to material things" (Heilskov & Croix 2021:15; Strijdom 2014:1).

Researchers who have conducted religious studies based on the material turn include the American medieval historian Caroline Walker Bynum and the Swedish historian Terese Zachrisson. In the book *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe*, Bynum discusses the place of materiality in both learned theology and the practice of piety in the late Middle Ages. Bynum's study includes material religious artefacts such as relics, communion bread, communion wine, anointing oil, baptismal water, statues, altarpieces, prayer cards and paintings (Bynum 2011:25f). Her conclusion is that the ecclesiastical authorities and ordinary believers were ambivalent towards the official religious material objects they worshipped and honoured. She points out that the high clergy promoted some miraculous material artefacts while failing to recognize others (ibid.:267). Furthermore, she claims that theorists "tended to argue that the material simply pointed beyond itself rather than enfolding or incorporating the divine" (ibid.). Bynum exemplifies this by referring to external religious acts linked to artefacts, such as the use of rosaries to keep prayers in order (ibid.). The objects thus became an aid in the behaviour to achieve the inner, religious experience. On the other hand, among dissidents who did not follow official church practice and mainstream theology, there could be an excessive focus on relics and images and their inherent power (ibid.:268).

The Swedish historian Terese Zachrisson conducted a similar study in her doctoral thesis *Mellan fromhet och vidskepelse: Materialitet och religiositet*

i det efterreformatoriska Sverige from 2017. The main focus of the study is an examination of how ideas and practices linked to sacred artefacts and places were influenced by the Lutheran Reformation. Her area of inquiry is Sweden. As a starting point, Zachrisson assumes that there was an interaction between religious artefacts and people, i.e. that the artefacts were not exclusively the targets of human actions, but that they also influenced the people who came into contact with them (Zachrisson 2017:9). In her study, Zachrisson concentrates on altars, sculptures, relics, free-standing crosses and sacred springs (ibid.:10). Zachrisson concludes:

> The belief in the mediating powers of holy matter did not die in the wake of the Reformation. Rather, it transferred from official teaching and liturgy to the realm of what the clerical élite labelled "superstition". It is paramount to emphasize that there is no reason to assume that the people who held these beliefs – where matter still mattered – considered their thoughts and actions superstitions (ibid.:313).

In terms of development, Zachrisson argues that pre-Reformation ideas of interaction between people and artefacts declined as early as the sixteenth century, and that there is little evidence from the seventeenth century that people's behaviour in relation to religious artefacts involved achieving penance or that the artefacts were regarded as a means of gaining spiritual merit. The motive for this was to alleviate worldly affairs. Furthermore, she claims that the number of records of superstition in relation to sacred artefacts decreases from the second half of the eighteenth century (ibid.:315).

Central to the material turn is the concept of agency (cf. Heilskov & Croix 2021:15). While Bynum explains that her approach to her study to some extent parallels agency-theoretical perspectives (Bynum 2011:31), this is more explicit in Zachrisson's thesis. As described above, she assumes that there is an interaction between people and religious artefacts, which implies an agency perspective.

The British anthropologist Alfred Gell (1945–97) was an important contributor to the development of agency theory. In his book *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* from 1998, he studies art and states that objects "interact" with the people who come into contact with them in one way or another. However, he argues that aesthetic theories take too narrow a view of art objects and their influence on audiences. According to these theories, artists are regarded as exclusive aesthetic agents who design artworks in which their aesthetic intentions are manifested. These intentions are then communicated to an audience that is assumed to view the works in much the same way as the aesthetic intention. Gell, on the other hand, argues that a wider range of influences must be allowed for, as the impact – agency – of an artwork on people can vary considerably depending on contextual factors (Gell 1998:66).

Gell's formulation is, in short, that artworks "are themselves seen as the outcome, and/or the instrument of, social agency" (ibid.:15).[2]

Gell's book gave rise to a major academic discussion, but as we can see from the studies cited above, the agency perspective has been adopted in materiality studies of other artefacts than works of art. The term "agency" itself is not unambiguous and precise, but the Norwegian ethnologist Bjarne Rogan has presented a clarifying conceptual content. If, he writes, we accept that artefacts or things "can be carriers of a meaningful content that affects us and sometimes causes us to act" ("kan være bærere av et meningsinnhold som påvirker oss og noen ganger får oss til å handle"), then "the 'effectual power' of things" ("tings *Virkningskraft*") will be an adequate translation of "agency" (Rogan 2011:362).

The Artefact Types from Church and Cemetery Excavations and Agency

The question is then how the agency model can be applied to the four types of studied artefacts from the church and cemetery excavations.

Both the studies referred to above focus primarily on ecclesiastical artefacts, i.e. artefacts in the church space that have a function in the church's communication with its congregation. This contrasts with the coins, dolls, sticks with carved notches and hazel rods. Although all of these types of artefacts occurred within the area of the church, they originate from and are associated with popular cultural practices and have no function in the dissemination of the Christian-ecclesiastical faith. In other words, they are not ecclesiastical artefacts. Of the types of artefacts I have examined, only the coins can be linked to religious activities, and then to a popular religious practice. But even if the artefacts from the church and cemetery grounds cannot be linked to ecclesiastical practice, they are nevertheless linked to a practice within the ecclesiastical, sacred area where religion was practised.

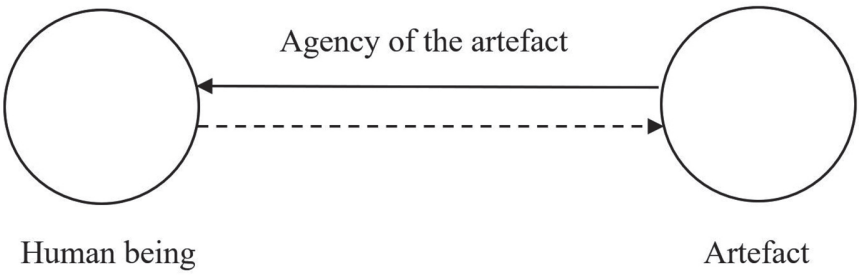

Figure 1. Schematic illustration of the interaction between artefact and human being according to agency theory.

The coins, sticks, dolls and hazel rods do not belong to the church's permanent furnishings, but were added to the church or church area by members of the congregation on a situational basis, and some of them were also self-produced. When the four types of artefacts were placed under the church floor or in the graves in the cemetery, the purpose was to achieve some kind of effect, be it prayer, healing from illness or protection. In such cases, the artefacts were aimed directly at some type of power in order to influence or evoke an effect from it. This power was perceived as being present within the ecclesiastical sphere, and it could help, cause illness or harm people.

Thus, the situation is generally different from that of the ecclesiastical artefacts used in the practice of religion. With the artefacts from the church grounds and cemeteries, we are moving within a folk-cultural religious-magical, magical-therapeutic or magical-prophylactic context. The agency model must therefore be expanded, adapted and adjusted in order to be applied to the four studied artefact types from the archaeological investigations of the church grounds and cemeteries. In this context, religious-magical practice refers to practices directed towards the Christian God/saints in order to influence them, while magical-therapeutic and magical-prophylactic practices refer to practices directed towards other types of supernatural powers in order to achieve an effect.

In the following, the adaptation and adjustment of the agency model will be specified and somewhat elaborated on. As explained above, I concluded that the majority of church coins were deposited as votive offerings to alleviate a crisis or emergency situation. A votive gift is a gift that in a strict sense was promised in a votive prayer as a thank-you offering if one's prayers were answered by God/saints. However, the votive gift could also be given as an offering at the same time as the prayer for help (Edsman 1976:253). The coins, whether given at the same time as the prayer or promised in the prayer, were thus directed towards God/saints with the intention of eliciting an effect from them, which in turn would have an impact on or significance for the person. In the case of the sticks with notches, the result of the analysis was that they were very likely to have been stuck into the church grounds for the magical transfer of warts to the dead. In this context, we have to keep in mind that some dead people were buried under the church floor. The idea behind this magical-therapeutic medical advice was that the sticks had an effect on the dead by transferring the warts onto them, so that the person suffering from warts got rid of them. The same applied to the dolls. They were supposed to influence the dead by transferring the disease-causing effect of the dead to them, and thus the child would be healed. Furthermore, the hazel rods are believed to have been placed in the graves to prevent the dead from returning, which in turn would protect the living from them. In all these religious-magical, magical-therapeutic and

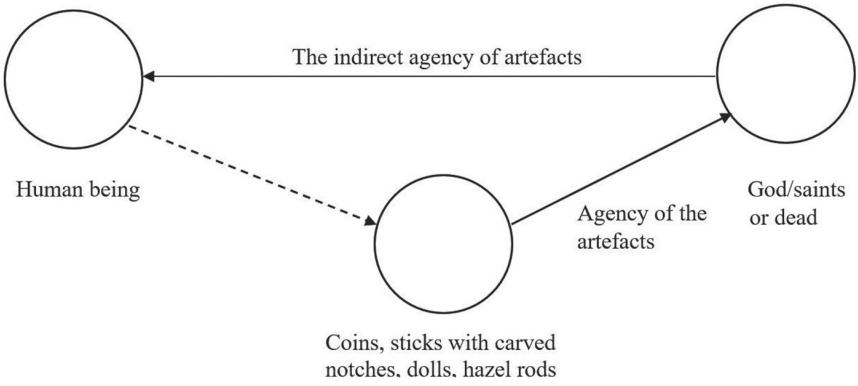

Figure 2. Schematic illustration of the interaction between artefacts, God/saints or dead and human being in a religious-magical, magical-therapeutic and magical-prophylactic context.

magical-prophylactic cases linked to the church area, the objects' agency is linked to God/saints or the dead, not directly to people as in the original agency model. Instead, the artefacts are linked to people through indirect agency, as the artefacts' effect on God/saints or the dead affects or has significance for people. This expanded and adapted agency model is schematically illustrated in Figure 2.

Theoretical Perspectives on the Church Building and Church Area

In the following, I will draw on theoretical perspectives that can help to explain and provide a better overall understanding of why the analysed artefacts have been added to church grounds and graves in cemeteries.

The theoretical framework I will use as a starting point is a theory of place developed by the American professor and religious studies scholar Jonathan Z. Smith (1938–2017).[3] In 1987 he published the book *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual*. Here he thematizes the construction of sacred places in Judaism and Christianity. In his theoretical view of the creation of sacred places, Smith can be said to be a constructionist (Moxnes 1998:VI). Smith claims that a place and its sacredness are socially created, and that they are not given and do not exist from the beginning. In addition, Smith believes that myths cannot be read straightforwardly as accounts of actual historical events, but that there is a distinction in them between event and memory, and that it is memory that creates a place (ibid.). Furthermore, Smith states quite unequivocally: "Ritual is not an expression of or a response to 'the Sacred'; rather, something or someone is made sacred by ritual (the primary sense of sacrificium)" (Smith 1992:105). This means that

it is people who create the sacred place through their activity there. The fact that the place is made sacred will in turn influence further human behaviour in the same location.

Smith's approach to the formation of holy places in the Christian tradition proceeds from the religious practices of the Christians in Palestine in the 4th century. According to him, they came to Palestine with a catalogue of places in the Christian myth or narrative, places that were linked to the life and work of Jesus. They then had to localize these places in the landscape. In other words, this involved combining the information about a place in the Scripture with the localization of the place in the landscape (Smith 1992:114f). Such places were, for example, the tomb of Jesus, the place of his resurrection, the Mount of Olives where Christ's ascension took place and the birthplace in Bethlehem (ibid.:92). On the basis of these "recollections", the Emperor Constantine built a memorial over the Holy Sepulchre (ibid.:77). Some of these, which Smith also calls central liturgical sites (ibid.), cannot be localized with complete accuracy on the basis of tradition (ibid.:76). Smith argues that the spread of church buildings was made possible by the fact that the Holy Sepulchre with the Anastasis building, which Constantine built, could be symbolically reproduced or recreated elsewhere (ibid.:86f). Furthermore, Smith writes that the Holy Sepulchre could be moved in the same way through the *pars-pro-toto* principle as relics (ibid.:87).

Applying Smith's theory to Norwegian and Nordic churches implies that the church sites themselves are socially created, whether they are parish churches or private churches. This is supported by the ritual practice of consecrating or sanctifying church buildings and cemeteries, which thus correlates with Smith's theory. The practice of consecration is enshrined in Old Norse Christian law from the twelfth to thirteenth centuries (see e.g. *Den eldre Gulatingslova*:39, *NGL* vol. 1:133; *NGL* vol. 2:346; *De eldste østlandske kristenrettene*:40, 44, 168; Nilsson 1989:70ff). The church consecration itself was carried out by the bishop and involved reading exorcisms and blessing salt and water separately before mixing them. He then sprinkled this on the church both inside and outside (Nilsson 2021:56). He also drew twelve consecration crosses with chrism, i.e. holy oil, on the interior walls of the church (ibid.:57 and Rydbeck 1962:458).[4] At the dedication of the church, at least one of the church's altars was also consecrated, which involved placing relics in a depression in the altar slab or adjacent to the altar (Nilsson 2021:57; cf. Karlsson 2015:51).[5] The latter can be linked to what Smith refers to as symbolic reproduction or recreation. By sanctifying the church building and the delimited church area, clear boundaries were also drawn to the surrounding areas as non-holy or profane.

But even though the church area was sanctified, it was still not homogeneous in terms of holiness within the church space and between the

church space and the cemetery. This is what we might call the topography of holiness in the church area. If we return to Smith's account, he uses the Book of Ezekiel in the Old Testament as a starting point to show, through a reconstruction of a temple's floor plan and spheres of activity, the relative holiness of the temple with its central parts and adjacent areas. Running east-west through the centre of the temple is the altar and other central parts for the practice of religion, and these are consequently the most sacred parts of it. This is followed by decreasing holiness on either side of this passage, first areas for the priests' domestic activities and then areas for the people (Smith 1992:58ff).

If we transfer and adapt the heterogeneous holiness of the different parts to the Christian medieval churches in Norway, the greatest degree of holiness will be associated with the altars where the centre of religious practice took place. This will apply in particular to the high altar in the chancel, but also to the side altars in the eastern part of the nave. How central the altar was to the function of the church is evident from one of the legal provisions in the Christian section of the Frostating Law. This states that a church's consecration remains valid as long as the stones in the altar have not been disturbed and the latter has not been altered (*NGL*, vol.1:133). It was also, as mentioned above, adjacent to the altar that the relics were deposited.

The Reformation in 1537 brought changes to the church, and in the following decades the church was altered and furnishings removed. Shortly after the Reformation was completed, some provisions were added declaring that images that were worshipped should be removed from the churches (Amundsen 2011:290). Studies show that saints' altars/side altars, saints' representations/sculptures and altar relics were gradually removed from the churches, and new furnishings such as pulpits, altarpieces, benches and

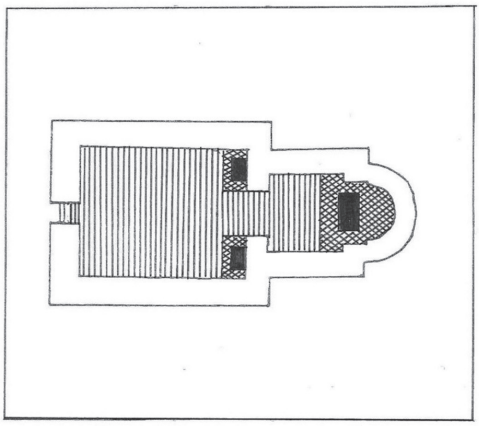

Figure 3. The sketch schematically shows the varying holiness within the church building and church area in the Middle Ages. The highest degree of holiness is associated with the high altar and the side altars, followed by lower holiness in the other parts of the church and lowest in the cemetery.

galleries were added (ibid.:293, 296 f). According to the Danish superintendent Peder Palladius, the Lutheran church should only have one altar, that is, the high altar in the chancel (Palladius 1925:30, 36f). These changes also led to changes in terms of the heterogeneity of holiness in the church space. The area of greatest holiness in the church space was now limited to the high altar in the chancel.

As mentioned above, cemeteries were also consecrated or sanctified as burial grounds for the dead. However, the sanctity of the cemetery seems to have been considered lower than the various parts of the church space. Norwegian medieval diplomas show that it was not uncommon to carry out farm trade or exchange land ownership in the cemetery (see e.g. *DN* vol. 5:203; *DN* vol. 6:390f; *DN* vol. 16:77). The Swedish historian Göran Malmstedt writes in his book *Bondetro och kyrkoro: Religiös mentalitet i stormaktstidens Sverige* that in the seventeenth century, "there are indications [...] that the cemetery was not accorded the same sanctity as the church building in the parishes" ("tyder […] på att man ute i socknarna inte tillmätte kyrkogården samma helgd som kyrkobyggnaden") (Malmstedt 2002:46). Information from the Diocese of Bergen from the first half of the nineteenth century leaves the same impression. The congregation showed "generally little reverence for the final resting place of the dead" ("i alminnelighet liten vørnad for de dødes siste hvilested") and the bishop complained about "the indifference that people displayed with regard to cemeteries" ("den likegyldighet som folk la for dagen når det gjaldt kirkegårdene") (Nilsen 1949:87). Not only were the cemeteries a regular gathering place for the congregation on mass Sundays (ibid.), but at weddings it was not unusual for there to be music, dancing, drinking and shooting in the cemetery (ibid.:146). Secular trade also took place in the cemeteries

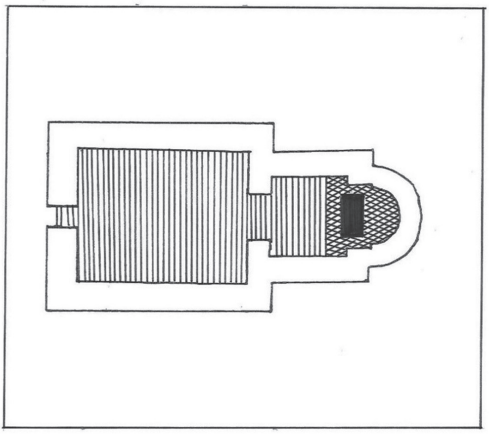

Figure 4. The sketch schematically shows the varying holiness within the church building and church area in post-Reformation times. Compared to the Middle Ages, it is now only the area around the high altar that has the highest sanctity. The holiness is lower in the other parts of the church and lowest in the cemetery.

(ibid.:393, 428). Rotten coffin parts and human bones were often left lying around in the cemetery (ibid.:155), and cows were sometimes seen grazing there (ibid.:173).

The Types of Artefacts and the Topography of Holiness in the Church Area

If we now combine the results of the analysis of the topographical-chronological distribution of church coins with the topography of the holiness of the church, there is a tendency for medieval coins to occur to the greatest extent in the ground of the parts of the church with the highest holiness, i.e. adjacent to or near the high altar in the chancel and adjacent to or near the side altars in the eastern part of the nave. The altars were the centre of religious practice and thus contained relics, and as mentioned above, the side altars also contained sculptures of saints.

As previously mentioned, the Reformation resulted in changes to the church space over the following decades, with relics and sculptures of saints being removed from the altars. As a result, both the specific sacred objects to which votive offerings were directed were removed and the topography of holiness in the church space was partially altered. As we have seen, the church space became somewhat more homogeneous in terms of holiness, and the post-Reformation church coins were more scattered in the church grounds without any signs of accumulation.

The conclusion must nevertheless be that the church grounds and the holiest areas of the church area were considered by the congregation to be particularly suitable for personal and direct approaches to God and the saints with a prayer for help and an accompanying votive offering (Baklid 1995:193). The areas with the highest degree of sanctity were thus used for religious-magical behaviour.

When it comes to the other three artefact types – sticks with carved notches, dolls and hazel rods – the result of the analysis is that they are linked to the dead and the church area as a burial site. The reason why the church area has been used as a burial site is to be found in the Christian tradition, in which there has been a desire to be buried near the sacred, i.e. near the altar and relics (Andrén 2000:8). Thus, in addition to the cemetery, the church ground has also been used as a burial site. Here we can see how the social creation of the church site also has an impact on the physical place where the dead are buried. The practice of burying the dead under the church floor can be traced back to the Middle Ages, but it increased in scope in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Munch 1988:30). In relation to the topography of holiness of the church area, graves were thus made in places of varying holiness.

With regard to the three types of artefacts, based on the available results of the archaeological investigations, there seems to be a distinction between

the sticks with notches and the dolls, on the one hand, and the hazel rods, on the other. The sticks and dolls have all been found in the church grounds, i.e. in the areas with the highest sanctity. In all the churches from which the sticks and dolls originated, there were graves under the church floor (cf. Baklid 2004, 2007). In other words, both the sticks and the dolls were aimed at the collective of the dead for magical-therapeutic purposes, which shows that the church ground was perceived as a dwelling place for the dead. In this context, it should be pointed out that there is a significant coincidence in time between the dating of the sticks and dolls and the period of the increase in burials under the church floor, i.e. the seventeenth–eighteenth centuries. In all likelihood, this coincidence is due to the fact that there was an easier access to the dead, for whom the sticks and dolls were intended, under the church floor than to the dead buried in the cemetery.

The hazel rods, on the other hand, were mainly uncovered in cemeteries, that is, in areas with a lower degree of holiness, and as pointed out above, they were laid down as a magical-prophylactic measure to prevent the dead from becoming revenants.

But the question then becomes why people had the idea that the dead could cause illness and inconvenience the survivors despite the fact that they were buried within the sacred sphere. Perhaps the aforementioned Smith can help provide an answer to this. In his book he writes about corpse pollution. "Within systems of status, grave sites (no matter how special) will always give rise to the question of corpse pollution" (Smith 1992:77). According to this, the dead could pollute the church site. And even if the dead were buried within the sacred area of the church, they were still profane elements within this sphere. Secondly, there was an idea that the distinction between life and death was not as absolute as it is today, as the belief in revenants shows. This may perhaps be an answer to the question posed. The lower respect for the cemetery and its holiness may also have contributed to a greater focus on the cemetery as a burial place, which in turn may have created greater concern about revenants.

Conclusion

Based on four individual studies of artefacts from archaeological investigations of churches and cemeteries, the main purpose of this article has been to explain and discuss methodological approaches for cultural-historical studies of them, to discuss theoretical perspectives on the relationship between people and the artefact types, and how theoretical perspectives can provide a better understanding of the artefact finds. I have used Christopher Tilley's concept of materiality, Alfred Gell's theory of agency and Jonathan Z. Smith's theory of place as theoretical approaches to these three sub-problems.

Tilley's concept of materiality includes not only a description of the artefacts themselves, but also a discussion of their social significance. This theoretical-methodological approach to the four archaeologically produced artefact types made it necessary to draw on several auxiliary sciences and interdisciplinarity. As I have explained, when discussing the social significance of the artefact types, it has been useful to draw on the context in which they were found, scientific investigations, statistical methods, comparisons of finds from several sites and comparisons with other source material. This has provided several important and sometimes decisive points of reference for the discussion. However, there are also some source-critical problems associated with the material when it is analysed, primarily that the excavation and documentation routines were not fully developed during the earliest archaeological investigations.

As opposed to what is the case for the ecclesiastical artefacts, I have shown that Gell's theory of agency is not directly transferable to the folk-cultural, non-ecclesiastical artefacts from the church and cemetery surveys. The coins, the sticks with carved notches, the dolls and the hazel rods are all intended to influence either God/saints or the dead, not people. But the influence on God/saints or the dead was intended to provide an indirect agency on humans.

On the basis of Smith's theory of place and his study of the relative holiness of the temple, I have customized a topography of holiness for Norwegian churches and church areas in the Middle Ages and post-Reformation period. Coupled with the locations of the various artefact types, this shows that there was a tendency for medieval coins to be found in the areas with the highest holiness in the church, i.e. the areas around the altars. In the post-Reformation period, the topography of holiness in the church room changed and became more homogeneous as relics and side altars were removed. This is reflected in the locations where the coins were found, as they were more scattered throughout the church without any clear tendency to accumulate. Based on the results, we can see that the votive offerings or religious-magical practices were linked to the most sacred areas in the church room and at the church site. The fact that the religious-magical practice of votive coins continued in the post-Reformation period is consistent with Zachrisson's finding that belief in "the mediating powers of holy matter" did not cease with the Reformation.

However, at the same time as the religious-magical behaviour linked to the church grounds and the holiest areas weakened after the Reformation, the magical-therapeutic practice linked to them increased. This latter practice was aimed at the collective of the dead, and must have its background in the fact that church grounds were increasingly used as burial grounds in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In other words, from the seventeenth century onwards, the church ground was also perceived as the abode of the

dead. As a result, popular culture from this time onwards had a dualistic perception of the church ground and the practices associated with it. The hazel rods in the graves in the cemetery, which have the lowest sanctity in the church area, stood out from the other types of artefacts studied. True, they too were aimed at the dead, but they had instead a magical-prophylactic purpose.

The theoretical approach to the analysis has shown that the occurrence of the archaeological artefact types at church sites depends on the degree of holiness of the various areas and the burial places of the dead. In conclusion, it should be noted that although there is a variation and range in the types of artefacts analysed, the number is still small. Analysing more types of artefacts will therefore be able to nuance, supplement and increase our knowledge of the folk tradition's perception of and practices related to the church grounds and the cemetery's dead.

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[1] Fure's explanation for being able to use statistical hypothesis testing on historical source material is as follows: In model-based statistics, the data are regarded as the result of a real or imaginary experiment. In the case of historical data, the experiment must necessarily be imaginary and it is not possible to repeat it. When the observations in a historical data set can be regarded as the result of an imaginary experiment, it is because we can assume that there are certain underlying conditions that are common to them and that are constant. At the same time, these underlying conditions must allow the outcome to vary if the experiment could be repeated. Given a specific historical data set to be studied, this can be done by establishing a stochastic model. This involves developing an imaginary experiment that "produces" the outcome of the phenomenon you intend to investigate. The historical data to be analysed is assumed to be the result of the experiment described in the stochastic model. In this context, it is irrelevant whether the data material is a random sample or whether it comprises an entire population (Fure 1983:405).

[2] In his article "A Collective of Humans and Nonhumans: Following Daedalus's Labyrinth", Bruno Latour also discusses the influence of objects on people. But he does not use the term "agency".

[3] I would like to thank Dirk Johannsen for his valuable advice on the theoretical approach.

[4] *Gamal Norsk Homiliebok* (Old Norwegian Homily Book) contains two sermons related to church consecration (95–101).

[5] The Second Council of Nicaea in 787 decided that relics should be placed in every church at its consecration. If a bishop did not comply with this rule, he was to be deposed (Mansi

1902:751). Based on the document "Canones Nidrosienses", dated to the period 1152–1180, it seems that the provision was widely followed in Norway at an early stage. In any case, the document assumes that all churches contain relics (Bagge et al. 1973:56).

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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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).

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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.

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