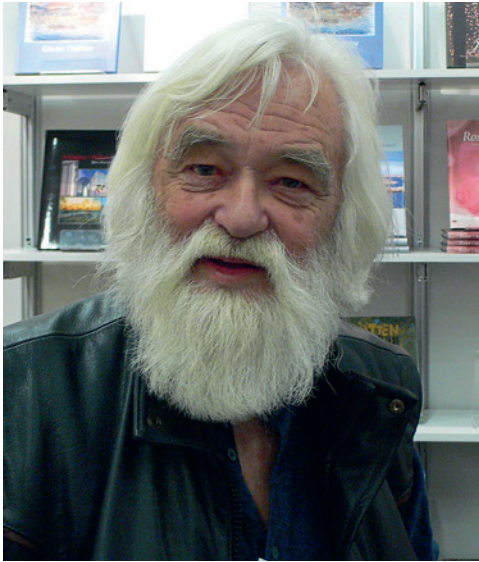


# Biographical Notes

## Ebbe Schön 1929–2022



The folklorist and writer Ebbe Schön passed away on 4 August 2022, 92 years of age. When he died he was known throughout the country for his television appearances and his numerous books on Swedish folk beliefs. His path to this position was unusual. He has himself told about it in his autobiography *Fotspår på röd granit* (“Footprints on Red Granite”, 2012).

He grew up in Brastad, Stångenäset, a stonemason district in the province of Bohuslän. His father was an unbelievably strong rock-blaster boss and a politically active social democrat. The family ran a small farm with two cows. Many of the elders in the district could tell about their own encounters with ghosts and revenants.

Ebbe had a gift for studies, but his parents could not afford to give him a higher education. He did his first daywork for a farmer at the age of twelve. When he was sixteen he enlisted in the coast artillery where he went through training as a radio operator. He spent the evenings in the library of the regiment, reading novels from world literature.

His superiors observed his unusual capacity for studies and encouraged him to apply for admission to the Military College in Uppsala. There he passed the examination and then also completed officer training, which promoted him to a position with the press service of the Navy. At the

end of his military career he was a major, living in Stockholm and head of the Navy’s production of educational films.

Beside his job as a press officer he studied Literature, Nordic languages and Russian at Stockholm University. In 1963 he gained his BA degree. Having taken the doctorate courses in Literature he obtained his PhD after defending a dissertation entitled *Jan Fridegård och forntiden* (“Jan Fridegård and Prehistoric Times”). However, the tutor who had greatest impact on his literature research was not one of his professors at Stockholm University but the professor at Uppsala University Lars Furu-land, who had in 1965 founded the department of Sociology of Literature at his institution. He inspired Ebbe Schön to choose the Swedish proletarian writers as his scholarly speciality.

The reason Jan Fridegård became the topic of his dissertation no doubt had to do with the similarities in life experience and personal disposition between the two. They both grew up in a rural environment, they shared a strong historic interest, and they had both enlisted the military in order to be able, in the long run, to devote themselves to writing. As a matter of fact, they also looked alike. The acquaintance between them developed into friendship.

Ebbe Schön decided to deepen his knowledge of the farm workers’ culture in which Jan Fridegård grew up, and he registered at the Institute of Folklife Research, situated opposite the Nordic Museum, Stockholm. The professor’s chair there was divided between Stockholm University and the Nordic Museum, and the discipline had not yet received the name Ethnology but was called Nordic and Comparative Folklife Research. Here in the spring term of 1974 Ebbe Schön submitted his paper “Proletärdiktaren och folkkulturen: Fridegårdstudier 1” (“The Proletarian Writer and Folk Culture: Fridegård Studies 1”) and in the autumn term the following year a sequel with the same title and the number 2. These papers became the basis of the book *Jan Fridegård: Proletärdiktaren och folkkulturen* (“Jan Fridegård: The Proletarian Writer and Folk Culture”), published in 1978. One year earlier he had been appointed *docent* (senior lecturer) in Literature at Stockholm University.

This investigation of how orally transmitted folk culture is manifested in Fridegård’s author-

ship is Ebbe Schön's first book written from a folkloristic angle. He shows how oral storytelling influenced Fridegård's novels, and he pinpoints the connection between the writer's spiritualism and folk beliefs he had encountered in his childhood and adolescence. The combination of methods from literature and folklore scholarship reappeared in a volume of papers by Nordic folklorists, *Folklore och litteratur i Norden* ("Folklore and Literature in the Nordic Countries", 1987), edited by Ebbe Schön and containing his own paper on Vilhelm Moberg's novel *Rid i natt*. From the year 1980, however, Ebbe Schön's scholarly production is mostly folkloristic.

The background to this is that the professor at the Institute of Folklife Research, Mats Rehnberg, discovered Ebbe's pedagogical talents. He was employed as a non-permanent teacher and conducted fieldwork courses for several years in Bohuslän. When the post as head of the Folklore Collection at the Nordic Museum was advertised in 1980, it was filled by Ebbe Schön on the advice of Mats Rehnberg.

The Nordic Museum remained Ebbe Schön's place of work until his retirement. His assignments consisted, among other things, of answering questions from daily papers and broadcast companies about annual festivals and other traditions. His work situation also allowed him to write a lot of popular scholarship, resulting during his very first year at the museum in the book *Julen förr i tiden* ("Christmas in the Old Days", 1980, 2nd ed. 1993). One could say that he came to a table ready laid; over many years Carl-Herman Tillhagen, the head of the Folklore Collection until 1971, had created a gigantic collection of folklore excerpts which could be used for popular surveys.

Ebbe Schön was especially interested in beliefs in the old peasant society about supernatural creatures, revenants, witches, and magic. He had an innate narrative talent which together with his personal background made him a perfect popularizer of these topics. During the remainder of his life he published altogether more than fifteen highly readable books, all bearing witness to his familiarity with the source material. Not all of them will be listed here; it will suffice to mention *Älvor, vättar och andra väsen* ("Elves, Gnomes and Other Supernatural Creatures", 1986, 3rd ed. 1996), *Folktrons år* ("The Year in Folk Belief", 1989,

2nd ed. 1997), *Häxor och trolldom* ("Witches and Witchcraft", 1991), *Vår svenska tomte* ("Our Swedish House Spirit", 1996, 3rd ed. 2018), *De döda återvänder* ("Haunting Revenants", 2000), and *Asa-Tors hammare* (Thor's Hammer", 2004). The latter book has much to offer readers interested in the history of religion as well as in folklore, and it was especially mentioned in the motion when Ebbe Schön was elected corresponding member of the Royal Gustavus Academy for Swedish Folk Culture in 2006.

The work of popular scholarship that I personally rank highest has the title *Kungar, krig och katastrofer* ("Kings, Wars and Catastrophes", 1993, 4th ed. 2011). The fluent, essayistic presentation does not reveal that this introduction to Swedish historic legend tradition is in many cases based on his own research. It is understandable that it has been published in more editions than any of his other books.

Another book worthy of being read by many is a collection of essays on culture history entitled *Sjöjungfrur, stenhuggare och gnistapor* ("Mermaids, Stonemasons and Spark-Monkeys" [nickname for radio operators], 1997). It contains some twenty short essays, many with autobiographical elements. Almost all had previously been printed in *STF:s årsskrift*, *Kulturens Värld* and other periodicals.

With his big white beard and his ingenuous manner, Ebbe Schön became a popular, often seen guest in television programmes. His work with broadcast media was generally perceived as uncontroversial. It therefore came as a surprise to many when the Christmas Calendar for 1985 (a programme for children) on the channel TV2, *Trolltider* ("Troll Times"), aroused a storm of protests from representatives of the Free Churches. The Christmas calendar was a repeat from 1979, but the images displayed when the calendar doors were opened were new. They had been selected by Ebbe Schön and showed examples of folk beliefs in farm spirits, witchcraft, and magic. TV2 was accused of having spread superstitions which could seduce children into satanism, accusations which were judged as unfounded moral panic and dismissed.

The previously mentioned autobiography *Fotspår på röd granit* is a book that lets the reader come close to Ebbe Schön. It was followed by

three books in which a farm spirit from the author's homestead in Bohuslän guides the reader through the centuries. It may be added that he has also left several books for children and adoles-

cents. The story often takes place in a historical setting, as in *Karolinens pojke* ("The Carolean's Son").

*Bengt af Klintberg, Lidingö*

## Professor Nils Eugen Storå 1933–2023



Nordic ethnology has lost a valued colleague. Nils Storå was professor of Nordic Ethnology at Åbo Akademi University from 1972 to 1997.

Nils Storå was born in Jakobstad, and after attending the city's Swedish grammar school he began his studies at Åbo Akademi University under Professor Helmer Tegengren. As a student Nils Storå focused on the maritime field, which eventually became his central research interest. His publications here include studies of the Åland fishery, *Fiskets Åland och fiskekultur* (2003) and *Havets silver: Det åländska trålfiskets uppgång och avveckling* (2012). Storå was also appreciated in his role as chairman of the board of the Maritime Museum (now the Maritime Institute at Åbo Akademi University).

Nils Storå followed in the footsteps of Professor Gabriel Nikander, the pioneer. The chair at Åbo was established in 1921 with the task of accumulating knowledge about the Swedish culture in Finland. Storå never lost sight of this original vision, but like his teacher Tegengren he expanded the subject to encompass other cultures and areas. His licentiate thesis, *Öst och väst i skoltlappskt gravskick* (1962), dealt with the burial customs of the small minority of Orthodox Sami who had been evacuated from the Soviet Union after World War II to live in a long, narrow area of land in Lapland called Sevettjärvi. His interest in other cultures

was further developed in his doctoral dissertation, *Massfångst av sjöfågel i Nordeurasien – en etnologisk analys av fångstmetoderna* (1968). Storå's interest in Swedish culture in Finland thus went hand in hand with the study of other cultures.

Like many other ethnologists, Storå viewed material culture and everyday practices as representations of cultural ideas and social structure. In this respect, too, he remained faithful to the original mission of the chair. He studied material culture in most of his works, and in *Trender i nordisk föremålsforskning* (1982) he made an early summary of research trends in the field. This also showed his special interest in the Nordic dimensions of ethnology. Ethnology at Åbo Akademi University has continued to build on this legacy.

In 1968 Storå was appointed docent in Nordic ethnology. The following year he took up a position as head of the Department of Cultural History. Despite the name, this was an archive established in 1953 by Professor Tegengren, inspired by the Folklife Archives in Lund. The archive still exists under the name *Cultura*. Its mission was to document folk traditions in both Swedish- and Finnish-speaking areas in Finland. The main method was questionnaires sent to a large network of informants. When Storå was appointed professor in 1972, he also became director of the archive. Under his leadership the work continued and he also initiated changes: the focus on the rural population was expanded to include crofters, mill workers, and urban groups. The changes reflected the reorientation of ethnology in the Nordic countries and Storå's visions. Due to shifts in the subject of ethnology, the title of the professorship, *Nordic Cultural History and Folklife Studies*, no longer accurately reflected the content. In 1974 Storå successfully applied to have it transformed into *Nordic Ethnology and Folklore*. In 1987 the subjects were divided and the professorship was given the title it still bears, *Nordic Ethnology*.

In his research, Storå was partly inspired by British anthropology. In this way he was able to introduce cultural ecology while simultaneously working to expand ethnology to include, for example, industrial culture, urban ways of life, and modernity. His interest in tradition *and* development also gave rise to insightful analyses of the history of the discipline, such as *Fem etnologier*:

*Ethnologin i Finland i finlandssvenskt perspektiv.* This was reprinted in the subject's anniversary volume *Nordisk etnologi 1921–2021: Ett ämne i rörelse* (Nilsson & Åström 2021).

During Storå's period as professor, ethnology developed at Åbo. In Sweden the subject moved towards social anthropology and an understanding of culture as a process. Studies of contemporary problems, marginalization, exclusion, and women's history aroused increasing interest. This reorientation also gained ground in Åbo, not least in the teaching, and it was reflected in Monica Nerdrum's doctoral dissertation on women in the archipelago, *Skärgårdskvinnor* (1998), and Solveig Sjöberg-Pietarinen's licentiate thesis, *Irja Sahlberg: Kvinna i museivärlden* (1997). Yet it

should be emphasized that ethnology still maintained a focus on material culture and cultural history, and the ties to the cultural heritage sector (museums) were important. With a firm grounding in agrarian and maritime culture, the traditions of earlier ethnology were also preserved.

Today's ethnologists at Åbo Akademi University are eternally grateful to Professor Nils Storå. During his time the subject was reformed without losing its traditions. As a bridge builder between traditional folklife studies and modern ethnology, his contribution was significant. Professor Storå will be remembered as an open-minded, good, and insightful teacher who nurtured Nordic contacts.

*Fredrik Nilsson & Anna-Maria Åström, Åbo*

### Nils-Arvid Bringéus 1926–2023



There are easier and harder times to become a professor. The challenges were great when Nils-Arvid Bringéus took up that position in folk life studies at Lund University in 1967. It was a time when the entire Swedish university world was to be radically reformed. Departments were to change their teaching as well as their curricula and be synchronized in national cooperation. In 1967 it was also essential to give the subject a sharper profile. From being a small and obscure subject, students flocked to a discipline that was now renamed “European ethnology”, and directed their gaze towards both history and the present.

Nils-Arvid took on the often thankless task of reconciling local profiles, as well as letting the discipline expand to new university locations. He had to chair many conferences to reform the national teaching structure and make sure that a wide range of new course literature was created. His combination of enthusiasm, impatience and incredible work capacity played a key role in building up the infrastructure that the discipline needed to grow: Shouldn’t we have our own international journal, how do we broaden the cooperation with our colleagues in the Nordic countries and Europe, which research areas should be prioritized? He started *Ethnologia Scandinavica* in 1971 as a successor to the journal *Folk-Liv* and

made sure to keep in touch with ethnology on the continent. During a period when younger generations of researchers turned their gaze towards studies of local communities and national subcultures, he took the subject prefix “European” very seriously. An example of this is the food ethnology that he developed with the help of a series of conferences and edited volumes.

Nils-Arvid’s scholarly career was based in Lund. It was there he began his studies in ethnology and theology and defended his dissertation in 1958 on the “The Bell-Ringing Custom in Sweden, an Innovation Study” by which he became an associate professor at the department. He was full professor between 1967 and 1991. He also had spells as guest professor in Berkeley, Bergen and Edinburgh.

He was constantly writing, even long after retirement. He belonged to the generation that often had a set of proofs in his pocket. It was pulled out during breakfast, travel and work breaks. When it was time to head to his beloved summer house in Kivik, the car was loaded with piles of books and bundles of excerpts. A computer cable was dangling out of the boot when the car started with a bang. Why lie on the beach when you can sit and write on the porch? Thus, the list of his publications came to comprise over four hundred titles on such diverse subjects as food and meals, traditions of the life cycle and material culture – all with the prefix “folk”. In his research he was often inspired by neighbouring subjects such as church history, cultural geography and art history. With interdisciplinary zeal he wrote about new and old religious traditions, studied processes of innovation, and not least of all devoted a lot of work to folk art studies. He put great effort into mapping the discipline’s roots in the fascination with peasant life during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and he wrote many monographs about ethnological scholars. He was quite rightly awarded four honorary doctorates, three in ethnology at the universities of Bergen, Turku and Münster and one in theology at Lund University.

Nils-Arvid was not always happy about the new paths taken by the discipline of ethnology, but he was supportive and took on the important task of creating continuity for a subject in rapid transformation. When the time comes to summarize a long life and an unusually long research

career, there is reason to ponder how a discipline and a university department would have looked without the passion for research, the energy and

enthusiasm that was Nils-Arvid's hallmark.

*Gösta Arvastson, Jonas Frykman &  
Orvar Löfgren, Uppsala/Lund*

## Ane Ohrvik, Professor in Oslo



Ane Ohrvik was promoted to Professor of Cultural History in 2021. Ohrvik defended her PhD thesis at the University of Oslo in 2012 and holds a master's degree in Folklore. Having worked at several departments at the University of Oslo and the University of South-Eastern Norway, she re-joined the Cultural History section of the University of Oslo in 2015 as an Associate Professor for the history of knowledge.

Ane Ohrvik's historical home turf lies in the Norwegian Black Books (*svartebøker*): a large corpus of manuscripts, some consisting of just a few hastily written pages, while others are artfully crafted to resemble exquisite printed volumes. The allure of these "magical" manuscripts, filled with encrypted passages, charms, spells, and rituals, is legendary. According to tradition, they originated from age-old wisdom or the devil himself, and provide their owners with incredible powers that were hard to contain. When they became objects of folkloristic collection and scrutiny in the nineteenth century, their content seemed to allow the most detailed glimpse into the archaic, superstitious, and enchanted aspects of a mythical worldview. But who were the owners, who made these books, and why would you find instructions to tan leather or mix ink alongside prayers to the Virgin Mary and evocations of demons? Ohrvik's research locates the genre, and fundamentally,

popular magic, within the wider history of knowledge.

To gain a new perspective, it is often wise to take a step back and examine what is actually at hand. Ohrvik's PhD thesis, *Conceptualizing Knowledge in Early Modern Norway* (2012), was a first study of the paratext of the black books. The book as a material object – its make and size, its structure and layout – becomes the centre of an entangled history of daily life, knowledge transfers, religious encounters, and social dynamics. In her thesis and a series of articles, Ohrvik documents the local stakeholders and the European profile of protected knowledge, its trade, authentication and collection, and uncovers *The Secrets of Secrecy in Early Modern Manuscripts*. Her book *Medicine, Magic and Art in Early Modern Norway. Conceptualizing Knowledge* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018) compiles her insights as well as her approach, concluding with Claude Lévi-Strauss' metaphor of "the raw and the cooked." While information is raw, knowledge is cooked: processed and manifest. For Ohrvik, it is the materialized, embodied, conserved, encoded, and presented information that constitutes a cultural history of knowledge.

Knowledge practices also serve as the lens of Ohrvik's subsequent explorations of early modern and modern interfaces of European academic, theological and popular cultures, for which the history of books, speech act theory, and Bakhtin's notion of dialogism provide access points and analytical frameworks. For example, she explored the dialogism between legends and manuscripts of magical knowledge and, in a series of articles, the mediations between different regimes of knowledge in historical medical practice – a topic now followed up on in the ReA:Life project. In a study of Peter Christen Asbjørnsen's knowledge network, she details how interests and topics at the heart of the folkloristic endeavor were not only expressed but also developed in pan-European correspondences. Currently, she is working on a new reading of Norwegian witch trials through the lens of theories of affect and emotion.

Characteristic of contemporary cultural history, Ohrvik's research is not limited to the past, making fieldwork as important as archival work. In ongoing research, connected to the EEA *Restored Sites and Routes* project, she continues



her research on ritualisation with studies of contemporary pilgrims who perceive themselves as inheritors of an old tradition and *The Modern Treasure Hunt* undertaken by geocachers that explore largely forgotten St. Olav Wells spread across Norway. For Ohrvik, these practices exemplify the way in which the actualization of tradition through the lens of cultural heritage also actualizes physical topographies and mental maps.

Maybe stemming from a long preoccupation with manifestations of secret knowledge, Ohrvik demonstrates a keen engagement in conveying knowledge openly. She is a prominent ambassador of “cultural histories” in the media, covering topics ranging from the history of the witch-hunts

to discussing re-storied places and mythical sites. From the perspective of the media, popular books such as her *Nisser* (2004), a history of the Norwegian pixies turned from guardian spirits to Christmas decoration, or her studies of Halloween as a new Norwegian ritual, also seem to imply a lasting obligation for an annual contextualization of ongoing holidays. Transparency and directness characterizes Ohrvik’s teaching, where she is an innovative explorer of new teaching methods. Currently, she serves as the head of teaching for the Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages, plotting further projects to which we can look forward.

*Dirk Johannsen, Oslo*

## Dirk Johannsen, Professor in Oslo



Dirk Johannsen was appointed Professor in the Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages (*Institutt for kulturstudier og orientalske språk: IKOS*) at the University of Oslo in 2020. He was awarded a Dr. Phil. in the Study of Religions (*magna cum laude*) from the University of Bayreuth (2008), something which followed an MA in the same subject from the University of Hannover (2002). In addition to this, Johannsen has a Certificate of Advanced Studies in Teaching in Higher Education/ University Didactics from the University of Bern (Switzerland) (2008). He previously studied Indian Philosophy and Religion at the Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi (India) (2000), and after receiving his PhD went on to take up Post Doc research at the University of Fribourg (2007–2008) and the University of Basel (2010–2012). His academic career can be said to have begun in 2007 with work as a Postdoctoral Lecturer (*Oberassistent*) at the University of Fribourg (Switzerland). After this, between the years 2008 and 2011, he served as Academic Coordinator of the Joint Doctoral Graduate School in Interactions of Religion with Politics and Economics in Respect to their Histories of Construction at the Universities of Basel, Zurich, Lucerne, and the Centre for Religion, Politics, and Economics (ZRWP). In 2012–2013, he was taken on as Academic Coordinator of the

Interuniversity Doctoral Program in the Study of Religion at the Universities of Basel and Zurich, and between January and October 2013, served as Assistant Professor of Religious Studies in the Department of Religions and Theology in the Faculty of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, at Trinity College, Dublin. He was then awarded the position of Associate Professor in the Cultural History of Popular Religion in the Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages at the University of Oslo. Since 2006, Dirk Johannsen has also served as a Salaried Visiting Lecturer at the Universities of Basel, Lucerne, Fribourg, Bern, and Bayreuth. In 2019 he served as Deputy Head of *Norsk Folkeminnelag*, and in 2018 joined the board of the Norwegian National Academic Council of Cultural Studies (*Nasjonalt Fagråd*).

In addition to writing *Das Numinose als kulturwissenschaftliche Kategorie. Norwegische Sagenwelt in religionswissenschaftlicher Deutung* (2008 based on his PhD thesis); and editing “*En vild endevending av al virkelighet*”: *Norsk Folkeminnesamling i hundre år* (2014 with Line Esborg); *Narrative Cultures and the Aesthetics of Religion* (2020 with Anja Kirsch and Jens Kreinath); and *Fictional Practice: Magic Narration and the Power of Imagination* (2021 with Bernd-Christian Otto), Dirk Johannsen has written over 25 peer-reviewed articles and chapters, most of which have appeared in international scholarly books or journals and underline his continuous research activity ever since his graduation. His impressive range of research involves four main areas: popular religion; the conceptual transformations of religion in modernity; method and theory in the study of religion; and finally, didactics, research which takes a more directly pedagogical practical focus, analysing and developing new approaches to the study of religions in universities and schools. As will be seen below, key themes throughout this work are those relating to cognitive religion and the cognitive approach.

The range of Dirk Johannsen’s work is particularly clear in his publications concerning to popular religion and popular narrative, which reach from studies of the beliefs, narratives and magical practitioners (“cunning men”) of the rural community in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Norway, drawing on archival material drawn from the *Norsk*

*Folkeminnesamling* at the University of Oslo and other historical sources, to considerations of modern television series such as *Lost*. Studies of figures like Vis-Knut and Spå-Eilev consider, for example, how such men were able to rise through the ranks socially by means of their roles as men with extraordinary powers and representatives of common people vis-a-vis the religious and legal elites, while that dealing with *Lost* looks at how the narrative involved draws on, among other things, mythology and considerations of the history and nature of religion. In each case here (as in his thesis and in articles such as “No Time to Philosophize: Norwegian Oral Tradition and the Cognitive Economics of Belief” [2011] and “How to Sense a Ghost: On the Aesthetics of Legend Traditions” [2020] focusing on folk narratives from Telemark), Johannsen places particular emphasis on the cognitive, and not least considerations of how popular narratives (past and present) and the beliefs that lie behind them “work”. As he underlines in this work, narratives of all kinds demand constant interaction between those passing on these beliefs and narratives and those listening and watching, audiences regularly being encouraged to draw on their background knowledge and understanding to predict and “fill in the blanks”.

The interface between science and religion (a problematic subject audiences of *Lost* were faced with) is another regular theme in Johannsen’s work, and a key feature of his considerations of late 19th-century Nordic literature, which consider how those works created both during and after the so-called “modern breakthrough” commonly focus on conflicts between free-thinkers and believers. Here, as Johannsen shows, individual religiosity and imaginative fiction replace institutionalised belief as part of a Brandesian rejection of religion, something which led to a new post-naturalist interest in the psychological, the

mystical and various kinds of alternative reality, paving the way for greater interest in the fantastic and the symbolistic, and a new kind of “mythical mindset”. Work of this kind demonstrates once again the way in which Johannsen regularly manages to combine approaches from several different fields (here literary analysis, book history, and study of religion). They also once again underline the deep interest Johannsen has in the role of the cognitive, and not least the valuable role it can play in considerations of cultural and literary history.

Indeed, considerations of the cognitive science of religion are also a central feature in Johannsen’s work directly relating to the fields of method and theory, such as “Religion als Nebenprodukt der Evolution: Religionsgeschichte und die Modularität des Geistes” (2010) and “Narrative Strategies” (2019 with Anja Kirsch), the latter of which returns to the cognitive approach to narratives, once again demonstrating how this approach can be effectively applied to archival material, underlining its enduring value and usefulness as a social record even in an age in which emphasis is placed on living performance and performative context.

All in all, Dirk Johanneson’s work demonstrates not only high scholarly competence and fine applied theory (especially that relating to the cognitive aspects of religion, belief and narrative), but also detailed archival research and a solid background knowledge of a wide range of fields (cultural history, folklore, religious history, literature, political history, considerations of performance, reception and semiotics and much more), all of which are regularly drawn on in wide range of interdisciplinary studies that shine light on the numerous innovative ways in which folkloric materials (past and present) can be considered.

*Terry Adrian Gunnell, Reykjavik*

## Lena Marander-Eklund, Professor at Åbo Akademi University



Lena Marander-Eklund was appointed professor of Nordic folkloristics in the Department of Culture, History, and Philosophy at Åbo Akademi University in 2022. She gained her licentiate degree in 1994 with a thesis on home remedies against the common cold, *Från malörtsbrännvin till vitlökskapslar: Huskurer mot förkylning*, and in 2000 she defended her dissertation on women's narratives of childbirth, *Berättelser om barnafödande: Form, innehåll och betydelser i kvinnors muntliga skildring av födsel*. Marander-Eklund was appointed associate professor of Nordic folkloristics at Åbo Akademi University in 2002. She has also held several different positions in the subject at the university, as assistant, lecturer, researcher, and research leader, and she has been a special researcher at the Society of Swedish Literature in Finland (SLS).

In her research, Marander-Eklund has primarily been interested in people's everyday arenas and the stories they tell in relation to the surrounding society. In her doctoral dissertation on childbirth the focus is on narrative analysis of different versions of personal experience stories and how these reflect each other. Besides narratives, the

dissertation addresses gender and body/physicality. Marander-Eklund's interest in narrative analysis led to the study of life stories and other biographical genres, which in turn brought her further into methodological issues linked to different genres, interviews, oral conversations, and questionnaires. Together with the Swedish ethnologist Charlotte Hagström, she has compiled a volume about questionnaires as source and method, *Frågelistan som källa och metod* (2005). She has subsequently combined narrative analysis with emotive analysis, the study of feelings. She asks how emotions are expressed in narrative through laughter, which is interpreted as a way to communicate joy, tenderness, pain, fear, anger, vulnerability, and embarrassment. The inspiration for emotive analysis comes from the American feminist Sara Ahmed and her theories about what emotions "do" and how they are created relationally.

Another prominent theme in Lena Marander-Eklund's research is gender history. The monograph *Att vara hemma och fru: En studie av kvinnligt liv i 1950-talets Finland* (2014) is a broadly based empirical study of housewives using both archival material and interviews. In its methodology it ties in with her previous studies of narrative and emotive analysis. It seeks to ascertain why so many educated women with good jobs chose to stay at home when they got married. Did they do so of "free will"? Marander-Eklund can point to other factors such as joint taxation of spouses, lack of childcare, and the positive image of "the happy housewife" at the time. The book is an important contribution to knowledge about women's lives and experiences in the second half of the twentieth century, and Marander-Eklund also pursues the matter up to the present day. The gender problem in combination with class is addressed in several later articles inspired by the sociologist Beverly Skeggs's concept of respectability.

In addition to the themes mentioned above, Lena Marander-Eklund has devoted her research to medical anthropology (she is a trained pharmacist), weather folklore, and most recently to the summer cottage as a time capsule.  
*Inger Lövkrona, Lund*

### Mikkel Bille, Professor at the Saxo Institute, Copenhagen



In 2022, Mikkel Bille (b. 1977) was appointed new professor of European Ethnology at the University of Copenhagen, the Saxo Institute, coming from a position as associate professor at Roskilde University (RUC), Department of People and Technology. He was employed at RUC in 2014, and before that was assistant professor at the University of Copenhagen, 2010-14, at the Centre for Comparative Culture Studies. Bille's Ph.D. degree in Social Anthropology was obtained in 2009 from the Department of Anthropology, University College London, where he also took a double master in Social Anthropology as well as Material & Visual Culture. Additionally he has both an MA and a BA degree in Near Eastern Archaeology from the University of Copenhagen. With a background in such a wide spectrum of interdisciplinary sister programmes to Ethnology, we can look forward to an interesting and supplementary contribution to the field of European Ethnology as it is practiced in Copenhagen.

In 2020 Bille wrote (co-authored with Siri Schwabe) an introduction to the sociologist Émile Durkheim, "Émile Durkheim: Social sammenhæng og kollektiv opbrusen". The overall aim of Durkheim is described here as "to understand, through the application of a solid scientific methodological apparatus, how social cohesion is created and maintained". In fact, this also covers the

aim of Mikkel Bille's work. He is a researcher who indeed thinks with theory, at the same time as he is focused on analysing how objects and everyday phenomena are central to our understanding of being human. Bille's production covers an impressive range of theoretical inspirations, which he often weaves together in a very readable way, inspiring the reader – students included – to proceed with his approaches to culture as such. In his many monographs, edited volumes, journal articles, book chapters, as well as popular articles, Mikkel Bille covers a wide range of methods and theoretical approaches related to Social Anthropology as well as European Ethnology and even Archaeology. His works revolve around cultural heritage and light as atmosphere and material culture, with a main focus on the latter: a relatively new, rising field (light studies) to which Bille has contributed internationally with originality and depth.

In the monograph *Being Bedouin Around Petra: Life at a World Heritage Site in the Twenty-First Century* (2019) Bille proceeded from thorough fieldwork in Petra, Jordan, which became a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1985. Petra is here seen as a prism to study how different heritage ideologies sometimes clash or are at least not universal. Bille demonstrates how "heritage" can be a vehicle for identity development in various formats (for instance depending on religion) as well as state formation and political issues; that material objects are focal in heritage debates; and how the present is negotiated through (often contentious and differing conceptions of) the past. He studies this heritage site from above, by reading various sorts of official documents, and also from below, through an informed close-reading of Bedouin everyday life in the present, including the tourist industry where many of the local Bedouins are employed today.

With a theoretical starting point in Böhme's notion of "atmosphere", the monograph *Living with Light: Homely Atmospheres and Lighting Technologies in Denmark* (2019) is a study of the role of light in our conception of what a home is. Here, Bille shows how light is pivotal when shaping the atmosphere of a place, in this case the home; how light is culturally informed and related to sociality, affect and emotions; and how light plays an active role in people's lives, although it is

most often not recognized. This book makes an important contribution to a seemingly immaterial part of material culture studies. It indicates how ideas of home and the good life are highly informed by and achieved through technologies, a fact that must also be taken into consideration when for instance policy makers want us to change to other kinds of light-bulbs for the sake of the climate.

A common trait in these two recently published books is Bille's ability to combine specific fieldwork with a thorough theoretical grounding and with more general perspectives on how material culture shapes our daily lives. This, in combination with his engaged way of writing, often based on his own experiences of daily situations, make his books accessible to a wide audience interested in studying material culture in contemporary society. He has also studied contemporary city planning and the use of lighting in cities, asking – critically – “What constitutes good lighting?” and demonstrating how light is never a neutral technology but gives identity to a place and is at the same time entangled in urban politics, economy, and safety concerns. Bille delivers a persuasive argument for a more thorough scrutiny of the uses, meanings and materialities of light in social sciences and in disciplines concerned with material objects such as archaeology. Sensory concepts such as atmosphere and affect are consistently used to think with throughout his research. He has obtained external funding for and led the collective research project “Living with Nordic Lighting”, which is now coming to an end. At RUC he has co-directed the Urban Tech Lab where they use eye-tracking, Galvanic Skin Response and other technologies to investigate urban spaces in combination with qualitative methods, and it is thus as a natural continuation of

this innovative work that Bille's future research will centre on how technologies have shaped and still shape the city and its citizens.

Mikkel Bille has also contributed to a (Danish) learning milieu, for instance through the textbook *Materialitet: En indføring i kultur, identitet og teknologi* (latest ed. 2019, co-authored with Tim Flohr Sørensen). It is a thorough, historically well-grounded and extremely well-informed introduction to material culture studies and “the material turn” in anthropology, archaeology and cultural studies in all its diversity.

Mikkel Bille has an extensive experience of teaching on all levels from BA to PhD and at several different universities with a particular focus on ethnographic interview methods, theory of science, and urban design-oriented courses in collaboration with many external partners. In his teaching, he underlines the importance of creating an active learning space, to integrate digital technologies, and to work with a problem-based learning context. This problem-based collective teaching model is characteristic of Roskilde University and it will be exciting to see how Bille can further develop these aspects in his new position at Copenhagen University.

Mikkel Bille is also a profile who contributes to the development of the field of humanities on a broader scale. From 2013 to 2018 he was a selected member of the prestigious Royal Academy of Sciences and Letters – The Young Academy and as such he co-edited the important *Verden ifølge Humaniora* (2019), explaining and thereby also defending the role of humanities in a modern, global, democratic world. In the next four years he will serve as a member of the Danish Research Council – Culture and Communication.

*Mette Sandbye, Copenhagen*

## Tine Damsholt, Professor at the Saxo Institute, Copenhagen



Tine Damsholt was appointed professor of European Ethnology at The Saxo Institute, Copenhagen University, in 2022. Since 2014 Damsholt has been “professor with special obligations” (see ES 2015) the same place.

Damsholt’s PhD dissertation was published as a monograph, *Fædrelandskærlighed og borgerdyd* (Etnologiske studier, Museum Tusulanum), in 2000. It concerns the decree abolishing adscription in 1788, one of the most frequently debated and described events in Danish history research, celebrated partly as a symbol of freedom from serfdom and partly as an agrarian reform.

Damsholt’s approach is cultural-historical, aimed at analysing the patriotic discourse that generated ideas about the citizen’s responsibility and willingness to die for the fatherland. Damsholt focuses on the patriotic ideological landscape surrounding the reform, emphasizing the development of a specific subjectivity, essential in the idea and feeling of patriotism. The freedom granted to the peasants was supposed to be used to make them into good citizens: free, but at

the same time willing to submit to military discipline and fight for king and country. Inspired by Michel Foucault’s discourse analysis, she examines the process whereby young peasants at the end of the eighteenth century learned to experience themselves as individuals or subjects.

Central topics in her dissertation are nationalism, patriotism, citizenship, emotions, and the sensibility of the late eighteenth century. These topics are investigated in various ways in Damsholt’s later works, again with theoretical inspiration from Michel Foucault. Damsholt has also worked with new approaches to the study of materiality – or materialities – and recently investigated the consequences of the pandemic lockdown for people’s experiences of temporality. She has also conducted investigations based on ethnographic fieldwork concerning experiences of and approaches to research-based education – a cornerstone in university education.

Damsholt is a productive researcher covering studies of cultural history as well as explorations of contemporary everyday life. Subjectification, the complexity of everyday life, political communities, nationalism, patriotism, emotions, materiality as process – all of which are central perspectives in modern ethnology – are discussed from various angles and contexts in a style that is both engaging and thorough, all based on interesting and relevant ethnography.

Tine Damsholt is much sought after as a lecturer and communicator of ethnological perspectives. She has given keynotes at various Nordic and international conferences, most recently the 35th Nordic Ethnological Conference in Reykjavik in June 2022.

With her research combining culture history with ethnographic perspectives and covering a time span from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to modern everyday life, Damsholt is a highly productive and active researcher, teacher and communicator within the broad field of European ethnology.

*Torunn Selberg, Bergen*

### Astrid Pernille Jespersen, Professor at the Saxo Institute, Copenhagen



Astrid Jespersen was appointed professor of European Ethnology at The Saxo Institute, Copenhagen University, in 2022. Since 2011 Jespersen has been associate professor at the institute, and since 2013 the director of the Copenhagen Centre for Health Research in the Humanities (CoRe).

Jespersen is a well-merited ethnologist with a creative approach to medical humanities as well as cultural analysis, and furthermore Jespersen has an impressive track record of interdisciplinary collaboration. Her main research contribution is to be found at the intersection between ethnology and medical humanities. Jespersen's publications are excellent examples of solid ethnographic work and serve as a compelling validation of how ethnological perspectives on everyday life can deepen our understanding of health and ageing. Her contribution demonstrates the importance of "applied ethnology" and critical cultural-analytical perspectives on medical interventions. New ways of thinking are needed, Jespersen argues in *Careful Science? Bodywork and Care Practice in Randomised Clinical Trials* (2014, with Bønnelycke & Eriksen), by paying attention to social, material and physical dimensions in health prac-

tices. It is important, for instance, that caring, not only curing, is part of health promotion. In *Translation in the Making: How Older People Engaged in a Randomised Controlled Trial on Lifestyle Changes Apply Medical Knowledge in Their Everyday Lives* (2021, with Juul Lassen & Schjeldal) Jespersen highlights the complex mechanisms of knowledge translation.

Jespersen has also contributed innovative and interesting perspectives on ageing. In *Retirement Rhythms: Retirees' Management of Time and Activities in Denmark* (2020, with Juul Lassen, Mertz & Holm) Jespersen shows how "the busy ethics" is part of the everyday life of retirement and thus the prevalence of chrono-normativity. The publication demonstrates how a "rhythm-analytical" approach may be productive in an analysis of everyday life. *The Complex Figure of Ageing: How to Think Age, Body and Health from an Ethnological Perspective* (2018, with Juul Lassen) is a fascinating study of ageing, health and sickness as a complex cultural phenomenon. Besides discussing different ideas about age, the article shows how ethnological perspectives on health may reveal the many practices that stabilize ideas about age and ageing.

Jespersen's publications are, as mentioned, fine examples of applied ethnology and prove the importance of critical cultural-analytical perspectives on health and ageing. The critical cultural-analytical perspective per se has been the subject of her interest as well, as in *Kultur-analyse som reflektiv praksis* (2017, with Sandberg & Mellemegaard), and *Cultural Analysis as Intervention* (2012, with Krogh Petersen, Ren & Sandberg).

Jespersen is a productive scholar with broad experience as teacher and supervisor on all levels, including PhD supervision. As director of CoRe Jespersen has established a strong national network of stakeholders and scholars and has collaborated with researchers from various fields. Jespersen will surely continue to advance the development of (applied) ethnology in Denmark and internationally.

Fredrik Nilsson, Åbo