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Contents

Hazel Rods in Graves[1]

Herleik Baklid

Abstract

During archaeological excavations of older cemeteries in Scandinavia hazel rods have been found in some of the graves. This article discusses the reason for placing them in the graves together with the deceased. The rods appeared in varying number and in different positions, e.g. under, on top of or next to the deceased and sometimes in a cross formation. Most of the rods were found in graves from the early Christian period, but they also occurred in graves from the Middle Ages and the early nineteenth century. Based on the results of the description and analysis of the rods, sagas and tradition records, it is argued that the rods were placed in the graves to prevent the spirits of the dead from coming back to haunt.

Keywords: archaeology, cemeteries, graves, rituals, hazel rods, the dead, spirits, Scandinavia

In the summer of 1988, an archaeological excavation was performed in parts of the Heddal Stave Church Rectory grounds in Telemark, Norway. At this site thirty graves were excavated, but dating them posed problems. Several factors contributed to this – the grave's directional placement, the shape of the coffins, and the position of the corpse's arms. In addition to this sticks, or wooden rods made from the tree species hazel, were also found in some of the graves (Brendalsmo *et al*. 1989:31ff). Hazel rods placed in graves can be traced back to pre-Christian times, but this practice has mostly been associated with the early Christian period, i.e. eleventh century (see e.g. Krogh 1965:14; Eide 1974:230; Mårtensson 1980:57). However, it was eventually possible to determine, through archival studies and written source material, that the graves and the hazel rods in Heddal originated from the early nineteenth century (Nøstberg 1993:30ff). Although this may give clues about continuity, I shall not pursue or thematize that here. Instead, I will ask the question; why were hazel rods placed in graves, or in other words, what was the justification for placing them in the graves?

Burial rods are not exclusively found in Heddal or in Norway, but also in Sweden, Denmark, England, Germany and France (see e.g. Mårtensson 1980:56ff; Krogh 1965:13ff; Daniell 1997:167; Gilchrist & Sloane 2005:

171ff; Hägg 1997:120f; Doppelfeld 1964:11f). However, in this article, I have chosen to refine the study to the Norwegian, Swedish, and Danish burial-rod material.

This choice has been made partly on the basis of the fact that according to the literature, these three countries offer the most comprehensive finds of burial rods, and partly on the basis of a methodological consideration, as there should be a defined geographical correspondence between the burial-rod material and the source material available to discuss the rationale.

In the following, I will first offer a description and analysis of the present burial-rod material from Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. Then, on the basis of the results from the description and analysis of the rod material, I shall discuss the reasoning for placing these rods in the graves.

Description and Analysis

The burial rods are essentially revealed through archaeological excavations of older, abandoned cemeteries. The scope of the investigations ranges from the excavation of a few dozen graves to over 2100 graves (cf. Brendalsmo 1989:24; Brendalsmo *et al*. 1989:45; Mårtensson 1980:25 and 65). It should also be noted that in general, the cemeteries have not been totally excavated. In some places, like for example Heddal, only some of the graves have been archaeologically investigated (see e.g. Brendalsmo *et al*. 1989:30, Anderson & Göthberg 1986:1f; Cinthio 2002:235). Furthermore, there are some critical aspects related to the source material. First of all, the rods may have rotted after lying in the soil for hundreds of years, and secondly, the weather conditions during the excavations, such as precipitation and rain, may have contributed to the rods being difficult or impossible to detect (cf. Brendalsmo *et al*. 1989:18). These circumstances though, will have hardly any particular impact on the result of this study.

In Norway burial rods have been found at the following locations: St. Clement's Church, Oslo, St. Gregory's Church and St. Olav's Church, Trondheim, St. Peter's Church, Tønsberg, Heddal Stave Church, Telemark and at the Guddal Church in Sogn og Fjordane (Eide 1974:205 and 230; Long 1975:16, Christophersen & Nordeide 1994:108f; Anderson & Göthberg 1986:12f; Brendalsmo 1989:23 and 26; Brendalsmo *et al*. 1989: 16f; BMKS Christie 1970:2; cf. Müller 1984:71). In Sweden burial rods have been found at St. Stephen's Church, Kattesund Church, the Holy Trinity Church and Lund Cathedral, Lund, and at Skara Cathedral, Skara (Mårtensson 1980:56ff; Cinthio 2002:83; Welin 1889:122; cf. Müller 1984:71f). In Denmark rods have been found at the Trans Church and Hørning Church, Jutland, and at the Franciscan Monastery in Svendborg on Funen (Krogh 1965:13ff; Kristensen 1994:94; cf. Müller 1984:72).

1. Excavation sites for burial rods in Norway, Sweden and Denmark. This map was created by Executive Officer Trond Lerstang, University College of Southeast Norway.

Most of these sites were archaeologically excavated in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s.

I will not claim that this list of finds is complete and exhaustive. But the amount of available excavated burial-rod material is so extensive that it provides a sufficient basis for discussing the formulated questions.

The Number of Graves with Rods

The number of excavated graves with rods vary considerably between excavation sites.

The table demonstrates that most graves with rods are found in Lund in Sweden. In the three cemeteries of St. Stephen's Church, Kattesund Church and the Holy Trinity Church, rods were found in respectively 52, 139 and 111 graves. In Norway, however, the number is significantly lower. Most graves with rods are found at the St. Gregory's Church in Trondheim with

Table 1. The number of graves at each of the churches and with the proportion of graves containing rods.

Excavation site	**Number of graves with rod finds**	**The total number of excavated graves**	**Percentage of graves containing rods**	**Source**
Norway:				
St. Clement's Church, Oslo	3	152	2.0	Eide 1974:198 and 205
St. Gregory's Church, Trondheim	21	253	8.3	Christophersen and Nordeide 1994:108f
St. Olav's Church, Trondheim	3	389	0.8	Anderson and Göthberg 1986:1 and 12; cf. Christophersen og Nordeide 1994:97 and 108
St. Peter's Church, Tønsberg	3	24	12.5	Brendalsmo 1989:23 and 26
Heddal Stave Church, Telemark	4	34	11.8	Brendalsmo *et al.* 1990: 16f
Guddal Church, Sogn og Fjordane	1	?	?	BMKS Christie 1970:2
Sweden:				
St. Stephen's Church, Lund	52	Ca. 2140	Ca. 2.4	Mårtensson 1980:25, 56, 65 and 107; Jonsson 2009:271ff
Kattesund Church, Lund	139	332	41.9	Jonsson 2009:275ff; Mårtensson 1980:57f
Holy Trinity Church, Lund	111	1103	10.1	Cinthio 2002:88f
Lund Cathedral, Lund	?	?	?	Mårtensson 1980:58
Skara Cathedral, Skara	2	?	?	Welin 1889:122
Denmark:				
Trans Church, Jutland	Several findings, but no exact number is available	?	?	Krogh 1965:13
Hørning Church, Jutland	Minimum 1	?	?	Krogh 1965:14
Franciscan Monastery Svendborg, Funen – layman's cemetery	3	144	2.1	Kristensen 1994:85 and 94

21 finds, followed by the Heddal Stave Church with four finds, whereas in a total of three sites; the St. Clement's Church, Oslo, the St. Olav's Church, Trondheim, and the St Peter's Church, Tønsberg, rods were found in only three graves. At the Guddal Church in Sogn og Fjordane only a single excavated grave contained a rod. Also in Denmark it appears that there are particularly few graves where rods were found. Three burial rods were found at the Franciscan Monastery in Svendborg. Beyond this, there is only uncertain information about the seemingly few number of finds at the remaining two Danish cemeteries.

The different statistics concerning finds can partly be explained by the scope of each of the archaeological excavations. Whereas, in Norway, from a few dozen and up to about 250 gravesites are excavated, in the abandoned cemeteries of Lund, Sweden, 332, 1103 and approximately 2140 graves are excavated.

Although the total number excavated graves containing rods are interesting, the percentages, i.e. the percentage of the total examined graves containing rods, is even more interesting. With the exception of material from Kattesund Church in Lund, variation between the proportions of 0.8 percent and 12.5 percent exists in those cases where there is sufficient data for calculations. At the sites St. Clement's Church in Oslo, St. Olav's Church in Trondheim, St. Stephen's Church in Lund and the Franciscan Monastery in Svendborg, the proportions are between 0.8 percent and about 2.4 percent. Whereas at St. Gregory's Church in Trondheim, St. Peter's Church in Tønsberg, Heddal Stave Church in Telemark, and the Holy Trinity Church in Lund, the range is between 8.3 percent and 12.5 percent. In other words, it was on these sites a predominant minority of graves contained rods. In relation to this result, the proportions from Kattesund Church differ significantly by 41.9 percent, though this ratio remains well below half of the graves.

The Number of Rods in the Graves and their Placement

The number of rods in the graves vary, but 1–2 rods seem to have been the most common. Even 3 rods were not unusual. 4, 5, 6 or 7 rods also occurred in some graves. Furthermore, rods were found in both graves without coffins and in graves with coffins. The rods were of varying lengths and often lay individually, though sometimes also in bundles.

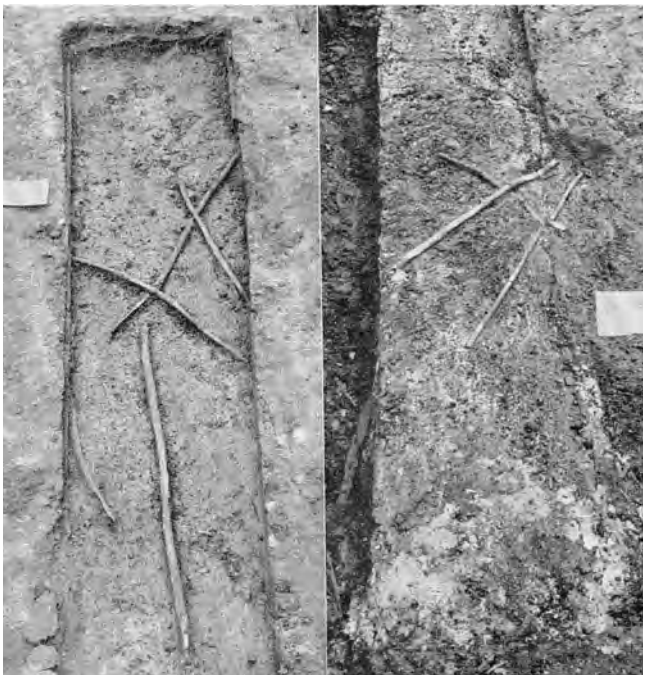
The rods lay in different places and in varying positions within the grave, as well as in varying relationships to the skeleton. The placements from grave to grave have varied greatly. In graves with coffins the rods have been placed both under the coffin, in the coffin, or on top of the coffin. In graves without coffins, the rods have been placed under, on top of, or next to the deceased. The rods lay sometimes on the right side of the skeleton, sometimes on the left, and they could be placed on or by the upper body, or on or

2. Rods lying in a coffin, which in this case is a wooden trough. The photograph is from the cemetery at the Holy Trinity Church in Lund (from: Cinthio 2002: III).

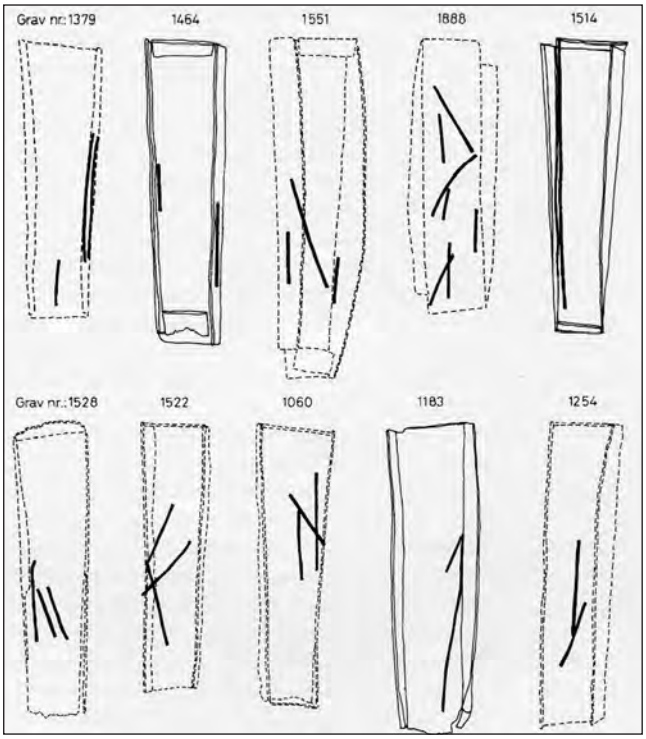
by the feet (Eide 1974:205; Jonsson 2009:271ff; Anderson and Göthberg 1986:12; Brendalsmo 1989:23; Brendalsmo *et al*. 1990:16f; Mårtensson 1963a:48ff and 55ff; Mårtensson 1963b:92ff; Mårtensson 1976:105ff; Mårtensson 1980:56f; Krogh 1965:13ff). In the Heddal graves most rods lay on top of the dead who held them under their forearms, pressing the rods close to their chests. One of these graves however stands out from the others; the deceased was found gripping the rod with both hands (Brendalsmo *et al*. 1990:16).

Sometimes the burial rods were placed in a cross formation. This was the case for two rods found in a grave at Hørning Church, Jutland (Krogh 1965: 14). Also at excavation sites in Lund, several graves revealed such crossed rods (Mårtensson 1963a:48f and 51f). In two graves – one at Lund and one at St. Clement's Church in Oslo – the rods lay in cross formation on the deceased's legs. Whereas in a grave in Lund the rods were found lying over the deceased's thigh and shin (Mårtensson 1963a:49), in a grave at St. Clement's Church in Oslo, the rods lay over the deceased's feet (Eide 1974:205).

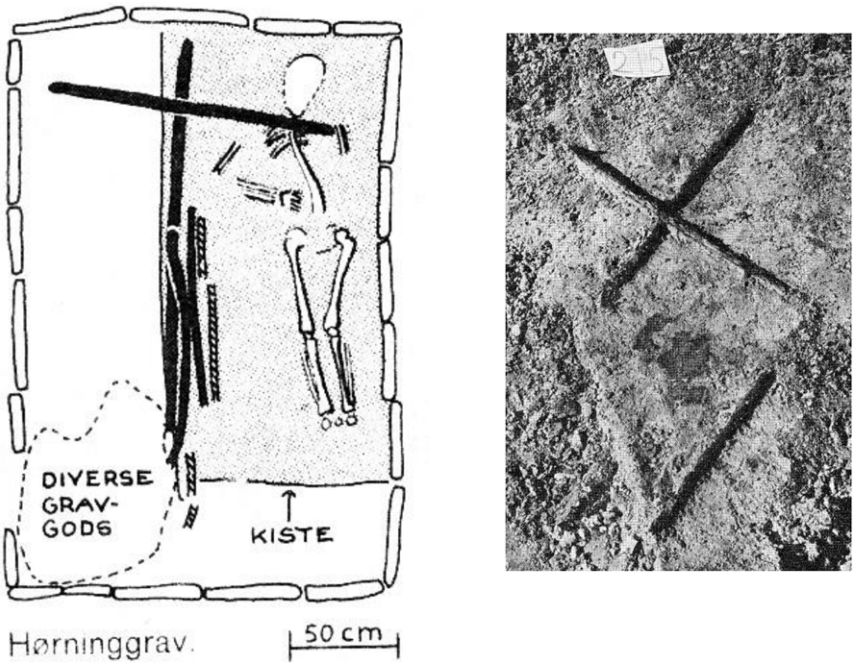
Based on available descriptions, it is difficult to determine with complete certainty if the cross formations are the result of a deliberate act. There is a



3. Examples of how hazel rods lay under the coffin. The photographs are from archaeological excavations in Lund. Photo by Anders W. Mårtensson (from: Mårtensson 1963a:55).



4. Sketches illustrating how rods were placed in 10 of the graves at St. Stephen's Church in Lund. Drawn by Maria Cinthio (from: Mårtensson 1980:57).



5. A drawing and photo showing graves with rods in a cross formation. The drawing on the left shows the grave from Hørning Church, Jutland, and the photo on the right shows the grave from Lund where the crossed rods lay under the skeleton. The drawing and the photo are taken from respectively: Krogh 1965:15 and Mårtensson 1963b:95. The photo from Lund is by Anders W. Mårtensson.

possibility that these cross formations happened randomly. But based on the present information about the context of the findings, several of the rods may have been placed in a cross formation on purpose at the time of the burial. In some cases, the rods lay inside the coffin, in other cases, at the bottom of the grave, i.e. under the corpse (Krogh 1965:14, Mårtensson 1963a:48f and 51f, Eide 1974:205).

Wood Species

As mentioned initially the rods found in Heddal, Telemark, were made from the hazel tree. Also rods from the other excavation sites in Norway, Sweden and Denmark are consistently made from hazel (Eide 1974:205; Long 1975: 16; BMKS Christie 1970:2; Mårtensson 1980:57 and 138; Bartholin 1976: 164; Krogh 1965:13f; Kristensen 1994:94). From 132 samples of rods with identifiable tree species, taken from the Lund excavations, 83.3 percent of them turned out to be hazel rods. The others were of oak, birch, linden, viburnum, rowan, euonymus, ash or willow, but the occurrence of these wood species were very few (Bartholin 1976:164). Furthermore, according to

Norwegian sources, a rod of pine was found, and from Swedish sources, one of juniper (Eide 1974:205; Welin 1889:122). Though not all burial rods are made of hazel, it is without doubt the wood species that strongly dominates.

Dating

Burial rods are mainly dated by the dating of the graves. In most cases they are dated on the basis of archaeological criteria, but also by using C-14-dating. For the dating in Heddal, Telemark, written sources were also used.

As mentioned in the introduction, hazel rods have long been associated with the earliest Christian period and especially from the eleventh century. But this assumption has since proven not to be quite so clear-cut. True enough, many burial rods originate from this early Christian period. Hazel rods from Hørning Church on Jutland are dated to possibly the tenth century, while rods from St. Clement's Church, Guddal Church, Kattesund Church, the Holy Trinity Church, and with the highest numbers from St.

Table 2. Dating of burial rods from each church.

Excavation Site	**Dating**	**Source**
Norway:		
St. Clement's Church, Oslo	Early 11th century	Eide 1974:230
St. Gregory's Church, Trondheim	Probably 14th century	Jonsson 2009:109
St. Olav's Church, Trondheim	Ca. 1175–1275	Christophersen og Nordeide 1994:97 and 108
St. Peter's Church, Tønsberg	Ca. 940–1265	Brendalsmo 1989:23 and 25
Heddal Stave Church, Telemark	After 1808, probably from the period 1809–1835	Nøstberg 1993:30 and 33f
Guddal Church, Sogn og Fjordane	Ca. 960–1020	Vedeler 2007:82 and 156
Sweden:		
St. Stephen's Church, Lund	Most of the finds are from ca. 1050–1100, two cases from 1300–1536	Jonsson 2009:119; cf. Mårtensson 1980:57
Kattesund Church, Lund	Ca. 1050–1100	Jonsson 2009:118; cf. Mårtensson 1980:57f
Holy Trinity Church, Lund	Ca. 990 – ca. 1050	Cinthio 2002:88f
Lund Cathedral, Lund	?	
Skara Cathedral, Skara	Probably 12th century	Welin 1889:122 and 125
Denmark:		
Trans Church, Jutland	Before ca. 1200	Krogh 1965:13
Hørning Church, Jutland	Probably 10th century	Krogh & Voss 1960:14
The Franciscan Monastery Svendborg, Funen – The layman's cemetery	Late Medieval, one of the rods is dated to 1410 $\pm$ 65	Kristensen 1994:94

Stephen's Church, are dated to the late tenth or eleventh century. The remaining rod material, however, is younger. Burial rods from Skara Cathedral probably originate from the twelfth century, and the rods from Trans Church on Jutland from roughly before the year 1200. Among the Norwegian material, burial rods have been found from around a similar time. Rods from St. Peter's Church in Tønsberg have been given a generous dating from the timespan of ca. 940–1265, while rods from St. Olav's Church in Trondheim are dated to around 1175–1275. However, among this material are also burial rods from after the end of the High Middle Ages. Two of the rods from St. Stephen's Church in Lund are dated to the Late Middle Ages, i.e. from 1300 to 1536. Furthermore, all 21 burial rods from St. Gregory's Church in Trondheim are dated to probably the fourteenth century. Also one of the rods from the Franciscan Monastery in Svendborg derives from the Late Middle Ages. After these occurrences, there is a jump forward in time to the beginning of the nineteenth century, where the hazel rods from Heddal in Telemark originated. This dating review clearly shows that the burial-rod custom is not solely connected within the timespan of the earliest Christian period. We can instead follow the burial-rod custom from the whole Middle Ages until it petered out in the early nineteenth century. The lack of burial-rod evidence though, from after the Reformation, may simply be related to lack of archaeological investigations of cemeteries from recent times.

Summary

This review of burial-rod material demonstrates that with one exception, a relatively small percentage of graves have contained rods. This exception is the Kattesund Church in Lund with its 41.9 percent. Most burial rods are made of the tree species hazel. The number of rods placed in graves have varied, but 1–2 has been most common. Moreover, the rods had no established or standardized placement in graves, but were instead, placed in graves with great variation. When it comes to dating, most rods originate from the early Christian period. But burial rods also occurs in both the High Middle Ages and in the Late Middle Ages and with offshoots into the early nineteenth century.

Discussion of the Rationale

The Danish archaeologist Knud Krogh suggests hazel rods in graves symbolize rebirth. The reasoning behind this is that the hazel trees and the hazel nuts in medieval allegories of Southern Europe were venerated as a symbol of rebirth (Krogh 1965:14). "Den er den kerne, hvoraf det uddøde liv stedse spirer frem påny; i det grønne æg ligger borgen for et nyt liv" (ibid.). ("From the kernel, extinct life will continuously sprout anew; in the green egg lies

the castle of a new life.") This suggests Krogh connects hazel rods to a religious context. But this explanation involves a methodological problem and weakness. It is by no means obvious that symbolic meanings from two different areas, with large geographical distances such as Southern Europe and Scandinavia may be equivalent.

Others have suggested that burial rods may have been walking canes, or real or symbolic pilgrimage canes (Hodder 1991:111ff, cf. Daniell 1997: 167). These two explanations, however, have two or three issues associated with them. Firstly, the rods show no traces of use or wear, secondly, they are for the most consistently thin, and thirdly, undermining such a proposal, in many cases several rods have been found in one grave (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005:174; Kieffer-Olsen 1993:165).

The Swedish archaeologist Maria Cinthio has studied burial-rod material from the Holy Trinity Church in Lund. Based on depictions of funeral processions in which some of the participants carry ceremonial rods, batons, or wands, as ceremonial insignia – such as the Bayeux Tapestry from the late eleventh century, Cinthio believes that burial rods are such ceremonial batons, placed with the dead in their grave. Furthermore, she claims that the rods may have had a dual function in that tree sort hazel symbolized a new life through death (Cinthio 2002:84ff). This explanation on burial rods is weakly substantiated, and in the least can be associated with the same methodological weakness as that of Krogh's explanation by relying heavily on the French Bayeux Tapestry to explain a cultural phenomenon in Scandinavia.

The most founded explanation has been delivered by the Swedish archaeologist Kristin Jonsson. Her hypothesis is that at least some of burial rods were used to measure the body of the deceased or the coffin in connection with digging the grave. Jonsson bases her argument on the publication, *Festial* from 1483 by the English Augustinian author John Mirk. In the publication he refers to a measuring rod in connection with funeral rituals. Furthermore, she supports this hypothesis by combining a Nordic tradition dictating the use of a rod for measuring the coffin of the deceased, with the practice that everything that had been in contact with the deceased should be avoided, burned or buried. To test this hypothesis, Jonsson compared the length of the burial-rod material from four selected archaeological investigations – the Holy Trinity Church, St. Stephen's Church and Kattesund Church in Lund and St. Gregory's Church in Trondheim – with the sizes of the graves they were found in. She points out that there are certain source-critical problems related to such comparisons, as the exact measurements of both the rods and the graves are difficult to determine on the basis of field drawings. To compensate for this, she allowed a deviation of 15 cm. The result of her investigation demonstrates that of the 200 graves where the rods and the graves were preserved sufficiently enough to make measurements, 36 percent of the

graves contained rods that fit the length of the grave or the skeleton. Furthermore, 16 percent of the graves contained short rods that corresponded with the width of the grave, and 15 percent had rods which were half of the grave's length. Though 12 percent exceeded the length of the grave, in several cases the collected length of the rods coincided with grave length and width. In 21 percent of the cases, the rods neither corresponded with the grave's length or width (Jonsson 2009:113ff).

One objection to Jonsson's investigation is that she accepts such a huge discrepancy as 15 cm when comparing the length of the rods, and the size of the graves they were found in. This may have led to a larger percentage of consistency than there is in reality. Nevertheless, Jonsson's argumentation and explanation in many ways remain plausible. I will therefore not exclude that her hypothesis may explain the presence of some of the rods found in graves. But Jonsson's analysis and explanation does not take into consideration the wood species of the rods, i.e. that the vast majority of them are made from hazel. Moreover, she does not problematize that only some of the graves contained rods. In the following discussion, I will therefore take a closer look at these considerations. By examining the use of hazel and the beliefs attached to it, one may be able to get another step further in explaining why rods were placed in graves.

As an introduction to the discussion I will refer to a tradition from southern Sweden where hazel rods were used as a protection against ghosts or the dead who returned to haunt. Stories about privateer captain Lars Gathenhielm, or Lasse i Gatan as he was called, from Onsala in Halland tells that his corpse lay buried under a stone mound, on an island in the Kloster Fjord, just north of Varberg, Sweden. But there were many ghosts resulting from the drowned sailors that bothered him terribly. He then wrote to his surviving wife Ingela about sending him forty hazel rods "för gasterna ä så svåra här". ("because the ghosts are so difficult here.") He would use the hazel rods in the fight against them (DAG: IFGH 1786:52f). Also a legend from Bottnafjorden in Bohuslän, Sweden, tells about a giant who would "flog" or whip, ghosts or spirits with hazel rods (DAG: IFGH 1598:5f). But the reason for placing hazel rods in graves can hardly be for the dead to whip and fight with ghosts. But perhaps there may be another link between the wood sort hazel and spirits who return to haunt.

Belief in ghosts, or spirits in other words the dead who haunt, returning to show themselves for the living, is well documented in the Norse world of literature. In the *Soga om Svarvdølane*, for instance, which probably stems from the mid thirteenth century (Kristjánsson 1972:468), we hear about a man called Klauve, who was fatally stabbed with a sword. After his wife had gone to bed, he appeared at her bedside. She then summoned some men who cut off Klauve's head and then lay it down at his feet (*Svarfdæla saga* 1956:174). The short saga *Þorstein þáttr bœjarmagns* tells of a man called Thorstein who

settled at Gnipalund after Earl Agdi had returned from the dead as a ghost, and destroyed the farm. One night Thorstein saw Agdi wandering about, as he continued to haunt the farm. Agdi did not dare to go through gates and doorways since there were crosses on all of them. Thorstein went into his burial mound and fetched the drinking horn *Hvitinga*. When Agdi also arrived inside the mound, Thorstein ran out and passed by him, and placed a cross above the doorway. The burial mound then closed, and since then nothing has ever been seen of Agdi (*Saga af Þorsteini Bæarmagni* 1827:197f).

Also in newer tradition, notions about haunting are well documented. Legends about this phenomenon occur in all three Scandinavian countries. From Bø in Telemark, the neighbouring village to Heddal, it is told that once upon a time there was:

ein som laut av stad nottes tider å hente jordmora, som i den tida budde på Bergane og heitte Inger. Da dei kom til kyrkja, var det nottes tider, men noko måneljost, so dei såg seg fyre. Da kom det ein høg, myrk mann ut frå kyrkjegarden og gjenom kyrkjeporten og gav seg i fylgje med dei, gjekk ved sida. Det var so ljost at dei såg han vel og kjende han godt. Det var ein som var død. Skysskaren slo på hesten, men hin fylgde, køyrekaren jaga på enda fortare, men det mona ikkje, hin heldt fylgje. Det var ein uhyggeleg fylgjesvein å ha midt på natta. Men dei blei ikkje kvitt han korleis dei køyrde. Han var stødt ved sida. Da dei kom til ein gard som låg ved vegen, gjekk han inn der og blei borte. Da blei dei kvitt han (Nordbø 1945:84).

(someone who left in the night to fetch the midwife. In those days she lived in Bergane and was called Inger. When they came to the church, it was night time, but because of some moonlight, they could see their way. A tall dark man appeared from out of the cemetery, came towards them through church gate, and began walking by their side. It was so light that they both saw and recognized him well. He was someone who was dead. The carriage driver whipped his horse, but the man still followed, the carriage driver pushed his horse even faster, but without results, he still kept following. It was a grim companion to have in the middle of the night. But they could not get rid of him no matter how fast they drove. He was solidly by their side. When they arrived at a farm situated by the roadside, he went in there and was gone. Then they were rid of him.)

In his *Hiterdals Beskrivelse* – Hiterdal is an older term for Heddal – Chr. Glükstad claims:

Endnu troes der meget paa "Gjengang" efter Døden, og Mange paastaa at have seet Gjengangere, […] (Glükstad 1878:64).

(There is still a strong belief that 'people return' after death, and many claim to have seen such ghosts or spirits, […].)

Ghosts could also be directly violent. In Björksta in Västmanland, Sweden, there was once a ghost, who ran after a man several times. Finally, the ghost got a hold of him and beat him to death (Hagberg 1937:565). In traditional material we also find a recurring belief in notions such as *utburden, mylingen, deildegasten, draugen, lyktgubben, Åsgårdsreia*, and ghosts or the dead attending a church service.

Far from all the dead became ghosts, in fact very few did. According to beliefs some vicious people or demonic people became ghosts after their death (Ström 1960:252). The Swedish historian of religion, Solveig Almquist has categorized ghosts or spirits in five groups:

1. Dead without status, i.e. dead who had not received a funeral in accordance with tradition and normal practice, or who had not been properly outfitted, and therefore were not taken up in the society of the dead. Among the dead without status were people who had died a "bad death" and had been buried in special ways – such as no coffin, no ceremonies, within the north side of the church, or that they had not been buried at all.

2. Those who during their lifetime consciously had committed violations, for example, murderers, thieves, those who broke oaths and those who committed suicide. The punishment for these violations was to return again to the living.

3. Those who were troubled about something, dissatisfied with something, or wanted revenge after being badly treated while they were still alive, or after they had been murdered.

4. Those who died an early death – before the destined day of their death.

5. Those who unknowingly committed violations in their life, or a violation was committed by a survivor after his or her death (Almquist 1984:25ff).

As shown in the descriptions above, ghosts could be bothersome, create fear, and even kill. Furthermore, they could inflict the living with disease, and commit damaging activities of various kinds (Ström 1960:252). It was therefore important to try to protect or guard oneself against them.

The two previous references to sagas, not only depict ghost activity, but also indicate protection against them. In the first case, the head of the corpse was cut off and placed by his feet, in the second case a Christian cross was used. But the sagas also contain several other safety precautions against haunting spirits, for example, that the body could be thrown into water or be burned, or that high walls could be built around the grave. Candles or fire are also mentioned (Boberg 1966:97f). In recent tradition other safety precautions are mentioned. Some of these precautions include misleading the deceased when leaving home, such as taking the dead out through a hole in the wall (Hodne 1980:102). Other advice was to tie the big-toes of the deceased together or stick pins into the deceased's feet (ibid.:63; cf. Kragh 2003:42). But some of the advice included putting objects in the coffin or in the grave. From Sweden it is known that one could throw a knife in the grave, but also salt, grains, or seeds were placed in the coffin (Hagberg 1937:622f and 627). In particular, flaxseed has been placed in coffins or graves, and this has been documented in Norway, Sweden and Denmark

(ibid.:626 and 628; Hodne 1980:63). The question is whether or not hazel rods have had a similar anti-evil or anti-demonic effect?

There is a considerable amount of tradition about hazel (see e.g. Brøndegaard 1987:256ff; Tillhagen 1995:129ff), but it falls outside the framework of this article to go into all the details. I will therefore only concentrate on traditions that may shed light on this last question.

Information about the use of hazel rods occur in several places in the sagas. *Egils saga*, which is dated to the thirteenth century (Sigfússon 1958: 522), tells about a council at the Gulatinget:

þar er domriN var settr var vaıllr sléttr. En settar niðr hesliss stengr i vaılliN i hring. En laıgð um snǫri utan allt um huerfis. Voro þat kaılloð uebaınd. En fyr iNan i hringinum sáto domeNdrnir .xii. or Firða fylki. oc .xii. or Sygna fylki .xii. or Haırða fylki. Þęr þreNar tylftir Manna skylldo þar dǫma um mál maNa (Egils saga 2001:94).

(Where the court was seated, was a smooth mound, and standing hazel-poles were set in a ring around the embankment and with a taut rope round about. This was called a "vebånd". Inside the ring sat the judges, twelve from Firda county, twelve from Sygna county, and twelve from Horda county. These three groups of twelve men were to judge in matters between people.)

Why where exactly hazel rods used to mark the area for the jury, is not explained in this saga. But along with the rope they formed a *vebånd*, i.e. an enclosure that marked a place of truce (Fritzner 1973:882). The prefix *vé* denotes, in the Old Norse language a sanctuary or sacred place (ibid.). This implies that hazel rods or hazel poles were used in a juridical-religious context, and may have been attributed magical-religious characteristics.

To *hasla vǫll*, i.e. to mark a spot with hazel poles, is also mentioned in other sagas, but with a different purpose. In e.g. *Kormaks saga* and *Sagaen om Olav Tryggvason*, we hear about battle arenas marked with hazel poles (*Kormáks saga* 1939:237; *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar* 1958:102 and 217).

Tradition from all three countries, Norway, Sweden and Denmark, states that one can use a hazel stick to keep snakes away or cause them to die (Bang 1901–1902:259; Törner 1946:98; Brøndegaard 1987:266). This suggests that hazel has been assigned properties that offer protection from evil. Explicitly, this is reflected in one of Eva Wigström's Swedish writings: "Hasselkvistar nedstuckna i åkrar en viss dag skydda den växande grödan mot mycket ont" (Wigström 1898–1914:436, cf. Wigström 1896:14). ("Hazel cuttings thrust into the fields on a certain day protect the growing crop against great evil.") Furthermore, there is a tradition of using hazel branches on horse harnesses to protect against witchcraft from fairies and evil spirits (Nedkvitne & Gjerdåker 1999:132). A very interesting piece of information is that hazel batons can be used to expel both *Lygtemænd og Troldkjæringer* (Schübeler 1886:514). This clearly shows that hazel rods could be used as protection against evil spirits and ghosts. In Swedish tradition *lyktemenn* or *lyktgubbar* are spirits of surveyors who had measured with error in their life-

time, or farmers who had moved boundary stones (Hagberg 1937:571). According to Germanic continental tradition, hazel wood gave protection against angry supernatural beings (*Handwörterbuch*, vol. 3:1528). These referred to records of tradition, demonstrate that hazel rods have been used as protection against evil beings, spirits, and ghosts.

Based on the above, there must be a reasonable inference that hazel rods were placed in graves to prevent the dead from returning – to haunt – to harass the living. This conclusion is built on a reasoning that has so far not been supported by an explicit source. However, there is such evidence among the Danish folklore collector Evald Tang Kristensen's collections. "Lægger man en kjæp ved siden af ligkisten, efter at den er sat i graven, går den døde ikke igjen" (Tang Kristensen 1897:261). ("If one places a rod beside the coffin, after it is put in the grave, then the dead will not return again to the living.")

The previously cited cases of rods lying in a cross form, also indicate such a purpose for grave rods, even in such cases where the crosses lay on the deceased's legs or feet. According to tradition, the Christian cross has a strong effect for warding off evil, and as previously referred to, used as protection from ghosts and evil spirits.

That hazel rods should prevent the dead from haunting, explains why – in most cases – only a small percentage of the graves contained rods. As I have stated above, only some individuals were potential ghosts capable of haunting. Thus it should not have been necessary to place hazel rods for protection in all the graves.

A parallel to the placing of hazel rods in graves as protection against evil spirits, can be found in the custom of "offerkast". This custom of sacrificial tossing was, as a rule, along roads or thoroughfares, and was practiced in places where someone had died or been murdered. The sacrificial tossing or sacrifice mounds consisted of branches or stones (Erixon 1988:15). If the mound comprised only branches, this could then in the Norwegian tradition be called a *kvistvarp* (i.e. a pile of branches) (see e.g. Grimstad 1948:12). It was believed that those who had lost their lives in these locations came back to haunt. By throwing branches or twigs on these sites, protection was created against the returning spirits (Erixon 1988:16f and Solheim 1973:12).

Let me reflect a bit about why hazel in certain traditions may have gained such evil-warding effects. As mentioned earlier flaxseeds were sometimes placed in the coffin with the dead. Both – hazelnuts and flax – were plants or crops that helped contribute to primary human needs such as food and clothing. Hazelnuts have been used as food both in the Middle Ages and in modern times, and hazelnuts were also found in the Oseberg ship (Høeg 1961:241; Nedkvitne & Gjerdåker 1999:94f). Likewise, the use of flax and linen textiles can be traced far back in time (Hoffmann 1965:579f). Furthermore, within tradition, grain has had an important position. It contributed also as food for the people, and was often called *Gudslånet* (the loan from God) (*Norsk Ordbok*, vol. 4:1026). Grain was also attributed properties for

driving away evil, and for example, as a protective agent against an aggressive *utburd* (Bø *et al*. 1981:257). Based on this information, it appears that tradition has given plants and crops that provided food and clothing, a special status and attributes them anti-demonic properties.

The conclusion I have reached as a results of this discussion, is largely based on traditional material recorded in the nineteenth century or early twentieth century. Although I also include evidence from the thirteenth century concerning the use of hazel rods, it is still questionable whether the results may have validity back to the late Viking times and Middle Ages. Generally, the chronicled traditional material reflects beliefs and customs in use before the recorded time-frame. In this discussion we have also seen that the notions of spirits and ghosts are documented as early as the Middle Ages. In addition, studies have shown that traditional behavioural patterns can persist for many centuries, at least for 700 to 800 years (Baklid 2015). It is therefore reasonable to assume that the results discussed above are also applicable from the time when the oldest graves with hazel rods originated.

Conclusion

I have found, through the descriptions and analysis of the burial rods, that most of them occurred in graves from the early Christian period, but also in graves from the High Middle Ages, the late Middle Ages and the early nineteenth century. Most of the grave rods were of the tree sort hazel, and with one or two sticks in a grave as an average. With one exception, hazel rods occurred in a relatively low proportion of graves.

Traditionally, hazel has been assigned properties capable of driving away evil and was used as protection against evil supernatural beings such as ghosts and evil spirits. This information, combined with the Danish tradition that explicitly says that a rod could be laid down in a grave to prevent the dead from returning to haunt, makes it possible for me to claim that many of the hazel rods found in graves were placed there to prevent the spirits of the dead from coming back to haunt. This also explains why only a portion of the graves contained hazel rods, as only some of the dead could be potential ghosts or spirits returning to haunt the living.

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Batting "Runders" on the Island of Runö

The Incorporation of English Bat-and-Ball Games into a Traditional Easter Celebration (or How the Shoal of "Donkom" Got Its Name)

Isak Lidström

Abstract

The article sheds light on how the stranding of an English cargo ship in 1845 led to the introduction of English bat-and-ball games (i.e., rounders and feeder) on the secluded island of Runö. These were incorporated into preexisting traditions of playing ball games at Easter. During this process, the ball games were adapted to local customs and were, so to speak, transformed into the "new" practice of *leik mjul* (play ball). A conspicuous fact is that feeder existed and was still practised on Runö in the 1940s, apparently long after the game had become extinct in England.

Keywords: Traditional games; baseball games; rounders, Runö, Estonian-Swedes, Easter celebration

Introduction[1]

Leik mjul is a good example of an extinct and – it may justifiably be argued – a forgotten bat-and-ball game. It was played only at Easter on the secluded island of Runö, situated in the Gulf of Riga in the Baltic Sea.[2] Until 1944 Runö was inhabited by a Scandinavian population who spoke an archaic, and for an outsider almost incomprehensible, Swedish accent. Due to cultural and linguistic ties, as well as certain privileges based on the residents' right from 1341 to live in accordance with "Swedish law" (*svensk rätt*), the affinity with Sweden characterized life on Runö for decades (cf. Hedman & Åhlander 2006:32–36).

How and when the island was settled by Scandinavians is still unknown. Written records can trace their presence back to the fourteenth century. The small community, consisting of approximately 300 individuals, was characterized by a traditional livelihood, and an old-fashioned culture which can largely be explained by the geographical location that isolated the islanders from surrounding populations – among them the other Estonian-Swedish communities that existed on islands and on the coastal mainland of north- western Estonia. In the wake of Second World War, the

Scandinavian settlement on Runö was abruptly terminated when almost the entire population was evacuated to Sweden under dramatic circumstances.

The intention with this article is to study continuity and change within the tradition of playing ball games at Easter on Runö. A specific aim is to retrace the introduction and incorporation of a new ball game into a preexisting and apparently old tradition. This is the story of *leik mjul* – from the cradle to the grave. Such an objective entails several methodological challenges. First, available sources are exceedingly scarce. Second, few people with experience of the games on Runö are alive today. However, very useful information has been provided by interviews with Elsa Steffensson, born on Runö in 1926. The written sources consist of records kept in the Institute for Language and Folklore in Uppsala, anecdotal information from the relatively extensive literature on Runö, and, finally, newspaper articles.

Priests, scholars and others who have written about the history and culture of Runö have not primarily been interested in the traditional games of the community. A few sports historians showed the ball games *leik mjul* and *pass-mjul* some interest in the 1940s, but no systematic investigation of the origins and developments of the games were ever made. This is rather remarkable because of historians' otherwise great passion for tracing the roots of bat-and-ball games (cf. Henderson 1947/2001; Gillmeister 1998), especially considering the astonishing interest that traditional games of other island communities have given rise to. The origin of *knattleikr* in Iceland – a ball game which appears in the Old Norse saga literature – has triggered the interest of scholars for a long time (cf. Thurber 2015). In a Swedish context the focus on Gotland has been outstanding, primarily because of the old sports *varpa* and *pärk*, which are still practised according to traditional customs and rules. Linguists, ethnologists and historians have, with different approaches, investigated the Gotlandic sports (Säve 1946; Götlind 1933; Yttergren 2002a, 2002b). Some scholars have also launched or discussed theories on the origin of the ball game *pärk* (Hellspong 2000; Gillmeister 1988, 1998).

There are, however, several reasons for not letting the ball games of Runö fade into oblivion. The first reason is the same for both Gotland and Runö, namely, that islands appear to be relict areas where traditional games have had the potential to be preserved longer than on the mainland (Gillmeister 1988:21; Møller 1990:33). The second reason is that the ball games on Runö can pinpoint the sometimes ostensible condition of the concept of "traditional games". What at first glance appears as an archaic practice, inherited from one generation to the next over the centuries, is in fact relatively young, and a result of an accident at sea. Thus, what distinguishes *leik mjul* from other traditional ball games such as *pärk* on Gotland and *knattleikr* on

Iceland is that the circumstances surrounding the origin of the game on the island can be retraced.

Traditional Games and Modern Sports

Among historians and ethnologists, a distinction has been made between traditional games, with roots in the old agrarian society, and modern sport, which originated in industrial society (Hellspong 1997:23; Stejskal 1954: 21; Yttergren 2002b:28–29, 2002b:457). The survival of the traditional games on Gotland can thus be interlinked with the late arrival of industrialization on the island, but also with other important factors such as cultural resistance and a strong regional identity (Yttergren 2002a:29; 2002b:464; Møller 1990).

To distinguish modern sport from traditional games, some typological differences are usually mentioned. The former is characterized by its focus on competition and results, as the sporting activities are organized, institutionalized and formalized in a constant quest for development (Guttmann 1978). Modern sports emphasize competition whereas traditional games emphasize recreation, socializing and amusement (Yttergren 2002b:36). Modern sports are also characterized by uniform rules and standardized equipment (Dunning 1973:228; Yttergren 1996:22). The equipment of a traditional game is usually homemade, and its rules tend to change from place to place and through time (Dunning 1973:228; Hellspong 1990:14). According to the historian and sociologist Henning Eichberg, traditional games are related to festivity, not seldom with connections to pagan or old Christian traditions. Consequently, they tend to be performed at certain times of the year. Modern sport, on the other hand, is entangled with the labour organization of everyday life. A dichotomy arose between work and leisure, and sporting activities came to belong to the latter. Finally, the emphasis on amusement and recreation within the traditional games provides a predominant energy of laughter, whereas modern sports require an energy of discipline and seriousness in the quest to become faster and stronger and reach higher (Eichberg 1990).

In Sweden, the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century have been identified as a take-off in the process of "sportification", as the competition logic emerged simultaneously in the organized sports movement and the industrial society (Yttergren 2002a:28–29; 2002b:463). However, international research indicates that the time span for the emergence of modern sport is considerably longer. Traditional games are still practised today, and elements of what can be classified as modern sport are to be found in pre-modern times (Holt 1989; Ljunggren 2016:40f).

An Isolated Island Community

As already mentioned, life and culture on Runö, until the mid-1940s, were conspicuous in several ways. Agriculture was an important livelihood, but not as prominent as seal hunting or fishing (Hedman & Åhlander 2006:109). Unlike the rest of the Baltic region, the inhabitants of Runö never submitted to serfdom. Throughout history, the population, at most just under 400 individuals, and at least about 80, were freeholders. When decisions were to be made, the People's Assembly, *loandskape*, was gathered. Runö was thus a kind of mini-republic whose odd shape of political government often attracted attention. Under the heading "Runö. Socialist-Communist state under the scepter of Russia" a series of articles were written in 1846, long before these political orientations had become the governmental ideology in any state (Hedman & Åhlander 2006:143).[3] Gunnar Schantz, who served as priest on Runö from 1923 to 1930, emphasized the uniqueness with the following statement: "Runö was […] not a village nor a parish among others, it was a realm, a country of its own" (Schantz 1967:70).[4]

The historiography of Runö is strongly coloured by the exotic imaginations that scholars and visitors have attributed to the island and its people. Around 1900, when national romanticism was at its peak, there was heightened Swedish interest in the small but odd society, not least because it was perceived as a representation of an ancient "Swedishness" that had been preserved through the isolation. "From the people of Runö we learn what we have lost of our forefather's strength and virtues, and what it is that has to be restored among us, in order to become a strong nation," August Zetterqvist, the Swedish priest on Runö from 1907 to 1915, once declared (1907:71).[5]

Although the small village on Runö was an isolated community, it was nevertheless affected by entanglements between great powers. From 1605 to 1710 the island belonged to the Swedish empire. It was somewhat paradoxically a dark period, characterized by poverty and oppression. Thereafter, the island came to belong to Tsarist Russia until 1918. After the collapse of the empire, both Estonia and Latvia claimed dominion over the island, while the residents of Runö preferred to live under Swedish supremacy. However, the lack of interest on the part of the Swedish state foiled these plans, and the island came to belong to the newly independent republic of Estonia in 1924. The Second World War had dire consequences for Runö. First, Estonia was occupied by the Soviet Union. Then the Germans took power for a few years in the early 1940s. The turbulence was particularly significant during the war period inasmuch as both the great powers intervened in how the island was to be ruled and how the community was to be organized. Before the Soviet Union regained power in the final stage of the war, the entire population of Runö, except for six persons, had been evacuated to Sweden. The island was thereafter populated by Estonians (Hedman & Åhlander 2006).

Games in Calendar Traditions

For as long as the Runö Swedes inhabited the island, modern sports were never established. Runö was thus never affected by the rapid emergence of modern sport that took place in other Estonian-Swedish communities in the late 1930s. Athletics, volleyball and other sports were introduced among the Swedish-speaking minority on the Estonian mainland and other islands, partly as a result of financial and organizational support from Sweden (Lidström 2016). Despite the lack of modern sport, several traditional games existed which were connected both to holidays and to everyday life (e.g. Klein 1924:329–330, 339–343; Ekman 1847:76–77).

Traditional games in Sweden have, unlike the rest of Europe, to a relatively small extent been linked to calendric holidays (Hellspong 2000:330). On Runö, however, some traditional games had a certain place in the year's festival cycle. Ernst Gordon, the priest on the island from 1920 to 1922, mentioned a certain tug of war, *dra staka*, which was practised indoors only at Christmas. The battle was fought not with a rope, but with a stake (Gordon 1921:54).

The most detailed description of the ball games of Runö has been provided by the Swedish ethnologist Ernst Klein, who stayed on the island as part of the Nordic Museum's explorations of Swedish folklore. In 1924 Klein published an extensive work on the culture and traditions of Runö. Klein states that the oldest ball game on Runö that could be associated with Easter is called *pass-mjul*. It is described as a rather simple and very old game in which both boys and girl participated. The game involves the boys throwing or batting a ball up in the air, while the girls have to catch (*pass*) it with their aprons (Klein 1924:329). The second game, *leik mjul*, is a typical bat-and-ball game and can be compared to modern baseball and Swedish *brännboll.* However, this game only included boys and in certain circumstances younger married men (i.e., the girls were excluded).

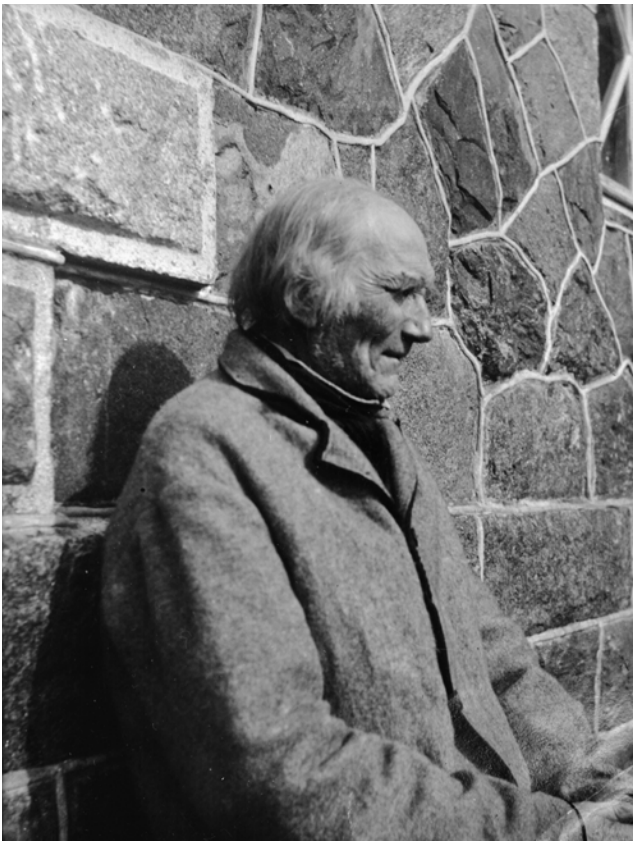
Mjul is an old Swedish word that simply means "ball" (Franzén 1959: 77).[6] The name of the game *leik mjul* is thus a description of what is performed. It literally means "play ball". Gunnar Schantz (1967:114) and his wife Adelaide Schantz (1937:48) refer to the ball games by the term *hurr mjul*, in which *hurr* is the local word for "throw". In the same way traditional Swedish bat-and-ball games have been called for instance *knela bol* or *slå myl*, which are two examples of dialectal names with the same significance: "bat ball" (Hellspong 2000:71).

The Legend of the *Dånkåm*

Although Klein provided a very detailed description of how to play *leik mjul,* he was not well-versed in the characteristics of bat-and-ball games. Therefore, he could not see the conspicuous similarities between the game

he described, and the game of rounders which is very popular in England. The resemblance of the games was however obvious to the Austrian sports historian Erwin Mehl, who in the late 1940s came across a copy of Klein's book. Particularly one of the phrases in Klein's description (1924:328) – *"Nu slår jag runders"* ("Now I shall bat runders"), which the last man of the batting team would cry before taking the "rounder" – highlights a procedure that Mehl not surprisingly recognized from the English game. After this disclosure, Mehl wrote a two-page note about it in the journal *Western Folklore* (Mehl 1949).

To fully understand how and why the game of rounders arose on Runö, a deep dive into the archives is needed. The first clue is given in a footnote where Klein (1924:328) states that one of his informants, the former sexton on Runö, Matts Bisa, mentioned that the game was introduced in 1846, when a three-masted ship from London, in the local accent called *Dånkåm,* stranded off the island. Since no one with that name of "Matts Bisa" has ever lived on Runö, Klein's informant is by all accounts Andreas Bissa (1840–1926) who from the age of 24 to over 80 served as a cantor and sexton on



1. The sexton and cantor on Runö, Andreas Bissa (1840–1926), was the one who told the ethnologist Ernst Klein about the origin of the ball game *leik mjul*. Bissa was five years old when the ship *Duncombe* stranded on a shoal south of the island – an accident that subsequently led to the introduction of English bat-and-ball games on Runö. Source: Svenska Odlingens Vänners bildarkiv.

the island. According to the information given to Klein by Bissa, the whole crew of the stranded ship spent the winter months on the island. The master of the ship stayed at the vicarage while the rest of the crew lived in the village where they taught the inhabitants the game. Although Klein proposes that the name of the ship might have been *Duncan*, only the dialectal name, *Dånkåm* has been left to posterity.

The accuracy of the information given by Bissa is strengthened by the fact that the shoal where the ship stranded seems to have been named after the accident. According to the Swedish linguist Gösta Franzén, *Donkomsåsen* (Donkom Ridge) is an "oblong shoal about 4 km south of Runö", which, according to several of Franzén's informants was named by "a boat" that "stranded on the shoal in old times" (Franzén 1959:31).[7]

This story of a ship that runs aground is indeed surrounded by a mythical glow. The incident has left its mark, partly in Runö's traditional culture of games, partly in the name of a shoal that consequently is a dialectal transformation of the hitherto unknown name of the English ship. The *Runö kyrkokrönika* (Runö Church Chronicle), in which the priests took notes on the life of Runö, is nowadays held at the Swedish National Archives in Stockholm. This handwritten source can give some clarifying information about *Dånkåm*:

> On 4 December 1845 a large English ship with planks [in the cargo] stranded at the southern side of the island. The captain and the officer stayed at the vicarage and the sailors resided in the village. (*Runö kyrkokrönika*: 2)[8]

The note can thus confirm the information given by Bissa, although the incident occurred in late 1845 and not in 1846. The final piece of the puzzle, which make the picture clear, was found in the English journal *Lloyd's List* where an account was published in 1846, revealing the elusive name of the ship as well as the name of the master and the cause of the stranding:

> Riga 26th Dec.
> The *Duncombe*, Howling, from Riga to London, was driven on the Island of Runo, 16th inst., during a gale from the Southward and has become a complete wreck; Crew and part of cargo saved. (*Lloyd's List,* 17 January 1846)

After gathering these scattered and fragmentary data, we can now draw the following conclusion: *Dånkåm* (also pronounced *Domkom or Donkom*) was actually *Duncombe*, a sailing ship under the master Howling's command. It had recently started the trip from Riga to London where the cargo of planks was supposed to be delivered. After the ship had been driven aground by a gale, it was abandoned by the crew in a deplorable condition, four kilometres south of Runö, on the shoal that afterwards was named after the ship. During the months that the crew was evacuated on Runö, the sailors taught the younger generation of the island population how to play rounders.

Rounders on Runö

The traditional English game of rounders is still today organized on national and (to a small extent) international level, but it has not nearly reached the same stage of fame as *baseball* – its sibling in the family of bat-and-ball games. For the purposes of this article, it is very gratifying to note that the oldest detailed descriptions of rounders were published in the decades that preceded the introduction of the game on Runö. In 1828, William Clarke published the first edition of *The Boy's Own Book: A Complete Encyclopedia of All the Diversions, Athletic, Scientific, and Recreative, of Boyhood and Youth.* The book became very popular in England and the United States and was rapidly published in new editions. Moreover, *The Boy's Own Book* provides the oldest description of the rules of rounders. A somewhat different description of the game is given by J. L. Williams in *The Every Boy's Book: A Compendium of All the Sports and Recreations of Youth,* published in 1841. All in all, the available literature enables us to make some comparisons between English rounders and *leik mjul* on Runö. Klein describes the playing field in *leik mjul* as follows:

> On the field a ring[9] is marked, in which the pitcher and the batter stand. About 7 m diagonally upward to the right from their place, a rod is set into the ground, "fårst stakan" [the first stake]; 35 m further away stands "ân stakan" [the second stake]. As far away as the "fårst stakan", but to the left, stands "trejje stakan" [the third stake]. (Klein 1924:327–328)[10]

The procedure appears similar to the description of rounders presented in *The Boy's Own Book* from 1829, although some differences can be noted. The three stakes (bases) in *leik mjul* form an isosceles triangle in front of the ring in which the pitcher of the fielding team and the batter stand. In the 1829 rules of English rounders, three bases, marked for example by stones, form an equilateral triangle which also makes the distance from the home base where the batter stands to the first base longer than in *leik mjul* (Clarke 1829:20).

In *The Every Boy's Book*, it is stated that when all the players have been divided into two parties, the teams are to "toss up for innings" (Williams 1841: 23). This procedure is also included in Klein's description of *leik mjul*, although in a quite odd and noticeable way. The two teams choose one side of the *mjulskovel* (the bat), which is then thrown in the air. Since the *mjulskovel* is flat, the visible side after touching the ground determine which team will start batting. At the moment the *mjulskovel* is in the air, the players cry: "*egge boande låven*", an expression that, according to Klein, "the Runö inhabitants themselves do not understand" (Klein 1924:328). Although *låven* seems to refer to the playing field, the meaning of the phrase remains unknown.

When the game of *leik mjul* has started the batter has three attempts to bat the ball outside the circle. If he hits the pitcher with the ball he is "out". After a successful hit, the batter runs to the first base and further on to the second

and the third, avoiding getting "burned" (hit with the ball) by the fielding team. The batter is "out" if someone from the fielding team manage to "burn" him or catch the ball before it touches the ground. If that occurs, the batter has got *skräwling*.[11] A difference between rounders – as it is described in *The Boy's Own Book* – and *leik mjul,* is found in the direction that the batter runs; clockwise in rounders and counterclockwise in *leik mjul*. The disparity is in fact peculiar and somewhat paradoxical since there was otherwise a strong taboo on performing anything counterclockwise on Runö. Whether a boat or a horse was to be turned in some direction, it had to be done clockwise.[12] However, no standardized base running direction seems to have existed in England at the time when rounders was exported to Runö. In *The Every Boy's Book* (1841), the base running is, unlike the description in *The Boy's Own Book* (1829), performed counterclockwise.

The procedure for taking the rounder underlines how unchanged the game on Runö seems to have been after all, although the time span from the introduction of rounders on Runö in the 1840s to the time when Klein observed the game in the 1920s was nearly 80 years. The description in *The Every Boy's Book* reads:

> In most places it is usual when all the players but one have been caught or struck out, for him to take the 'rounder' – *i.e*., strike the ball so far that he can run around to all the bases and then home before the opposite party can get the ball, and 'ground' it, or throw it down on the 'home'. (Williams 1841:23)

The similarity between the quotation above and Klein's description below is striking, especially when we keep in mind that Klein apparently never had heard of the game of rounders:

> The last man of [the batting] team has a special opportunity to save the game. He can, before he bats, say: "Now I shall bat runders." Having batted, he has to run to the second stake and back into the ring, before anyone has managed to throw the ball there. (Klein 1924:328)[13]

The only difference between the descriptions seems to be that the players of the Runö game did not bother to pass the first and the third base when taking the "*runders*", while those who followed the English rules endeavoured to pass all the bases. On the whole, though, it can be claimed that *leik mjul* on Runö to a large extent preserved the rules of rounders over the years.

Feeder on Runö

My informant Elsa Steffensson, who lived on Runö until 1944, has provided an alternate version of the game.[14] Her description of the playing field corresponds to Klein's, but differs insofar as the distance is equal between the bases on the field. The home base and the three bases thus form a square diamond, a description equivalent to that of rounders presented in *The Boy's*

Own Book (1829), and also to modern *baseball*. Further on, my informant states that the game was not played between two teams, although the batting and base running procedure seems rather similar to rounders. A pitcher bowls the ball to the batter, who after a successful strike performs his base running without any stops at the bases. Meanwhile, the pitcher runs after the ball, and then tries to hit the base runner with it. If the runner gets struck before reaching the home base, he is out of the game. As my informant describes it, there are only two players on the field at the same time, while the others stand in line behind the home base, waiting for their turn to bat. This game was also played only by boys and men.

After a comparison with the contemporary English literature of games, sports and pastimes, it is clear that the game, as it is described by Steffensson, has its counterpart in the game of feeder, a simplified version of rounders played in England and New England in the early nineteenth century (Dickson 2009:315). It first appears in *The Boy's Own Book* where attention is given to its similarities to rounders: "In the west of England [rounders] is one of the most favorite sports with bat and ball. In the metropolis, boys play a game very similar to it, called Feeder" (Clarke 1829:20). In later editions the game was listed separately, with a description almost identical to the one given by Steffensson:

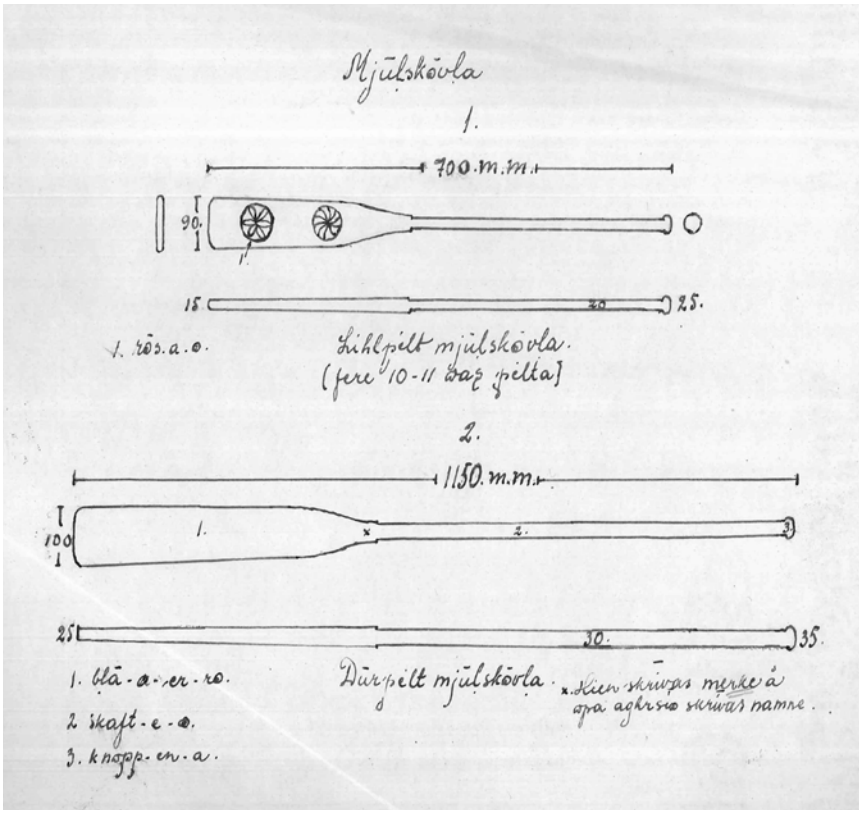
> This game is played with three bases only, and a player takes the place of feeder, who remains so until he puts one of the others out, by catching his ball or striking him while running from base to base, as at Rounders; the one that is put out taking the place of feeder to the others, and thus the game goes on. There are no sides at this game. (Clarke 1861:29)

The game of feeder appears with somewhat different rules in the game literature of the nineteenth century. Just as in rounders, the number of bases varied (e.g.: Elliott 1868:53–54; *The Boy's Book of Sports* 1869:56–57; Williams 1844:17–18). In *The Little Boy's Own Book*, feeder is simply just an alternate name for the game of rounders (Charles 1850:50). As pointed out by baseball historian Block (2006:139) it is "hard to know how to categorize this simplified pastime", due to the lack of further information. The version of the game given by Williams (1841:22), Block further argues, "harks back to earlier, more primitive forms of ball play, and is actually more reminiscent of pastimes children played during the eighteenth century, such as tut-ball and varieties of cat" (2006:139). However, since rounders as well as feeder seem to have been introduced on Runö, the indication is strengthened that feeder was a "modification of Rounders", as stated by Thomas Ekins Fuller in *The Boy's Holiday Book*. It was "more suitable", Ekins Fuller argues, "when there are few players, as there are no sides, all playing against one another" (1865:28). In any case, it appears clear that the game of feeder survived in silence, though not somewhere in the Anglosphere but on an isolated island in the Gulf of Riga.

Pass-mjul – with or without a Bat?

As previously mentioned, the ball game tradition at Easter on Runö did not arise when *Duncombe* stranded at the island in 1845. The game *pass-mjul* had been performed annually long before. The oldest description of the game is found in *Beskrifning af Runö i Liffland* (A description of Runö in Livonia), which is an extensive ethnographic work, written by Fredric J. Ekman. Although the book was published in 1847, the information provided in it stems from the time when Ekman served as priest on Runö, from 1841 to 1842. In that way, rounders and feeder were still a few years away when Ekman collected his data. Under the title "The Easter game", Ekman writes the following:

During the Easter holiday and the Sunday afternoons for some time thereafter the whole country's youth gathers, lads and girls, old and young, on a specific, grassy and mossy sand mountain in the woods. Here in the calm of the surrounding pine forest, they amuse themselves with a sort of ball game, called *play mjuula* [spela mjuula]. The function of the girls is to receive in their aprons, with a unison scream, the small ball sailing through the air that the strong arms of the youngsters throw towards the height. (Ekman 1847:79)[15]



2. The design of the *mjulskovel*, as described by Tomas Dreijer. Source: ULMA 17744.

No account provides any indication of how old the ball game practice might be. However, the phenomenon of playing ball games at Easter was common in several parts of Europe back in old times. In the 1940s, the librarian Robert W. Henderson (1947/2001) developed a theory on the origin of ball games, with an explanation of the vast array of Easter ball games in history. According to Henderson, ball games originated in ancient Egypt as religious fertility rituals. As such the phenomenon was spread around the Mediterranean, and eventually became incorporated in the Roman culture, where it was performed during the Saturnalia festival. Moreover, ball game rituals took a new shape and were differentiated, for example by Persian and later Islamic cultures. Although the ritual was adapted to local customs it had some consistent characteristics insofar as it symbolized rebirth and resurrection. With two teams competing, the conflict between winter and summer became ritualized. In the wake of Christianization, a new shift in the development of ball games occurred. The expanding religion adapted pagan rituals in order to give them new meanings that harmonized with the Christian message. In this way, from being pre-Christian fertility rituals connected to springtime, ball games were transformed into Christian festival practices, now performed at Easter to celebrate Christ's resurrection. The popularity of tennis among the clergy and monks in pre-modern times thus has, according to Henderson, its logical explanation.

Henderson would most likely have found the practice of *pass-mjul* – a ball thrown by the boys and caught by the girls in their aprons – as a triggering example of how old ball games are interlinked with ancient fertility rituals. But before we ascribe the game such an origin, it must be emphasized that the theory has been severely criticized and dismissed as a "highly speculative idea" that completely lacks empirical evidence (Gillmeister 1998:4). Although Henderson's theory is outdated and dismissed, numerous counterparts of Easter ball games, for example in Auxerre, Poitiers, Rheims, Hanover and Denmark, have been traced back to the medieval or the early modern period (Eichberg 2006:38; Henderson 1947/2001; Hellspong 2000: 315; Maigaard 1941:71; Mehl 1948:157–158). We can thus assume that *pass-mjul* on Runö is a very old practice.

Notwithstanding the age of *pass-mjul*, even an old traditional game can be changed in the way it is performed. This becomes apparent when comparing Ekman's quotation above with Klein's description of the game eighty years later:

> One boy bats, another is pitcher. The girls stand together in a tight group to seek to catch the ball in their aprons. The one who gets the ball now becomes pitcher until someone else has the same luck. (Klein 1924:329)[16]

Unlike Ekman's description in which the ball solely appears to be thrown, a bat and a pitcher is present in Klein's. The conclusion must therefore be that at least the pitching procedure, and probably even the bat, were innovations

introduced in the very old game as a result of the stranding of the *Duncombe* in 1845.

A Bat with Roses Painted on It

The tradition of playing with bat and ball on Runö reflected to a certain extent a couple of turning points in the life of the younger people. This becomes evident when one reads a record kept in the Institute for Language and Folklore in Uppsala (ULMA 17744). The record was written in 1946 by the former Runö resident Tomas Dreijer who at the time was 27 years old. The text, which is written in the local dialect *runska* and translated into Swedish, gives detailed information on how the play with bat and ball transformed as its practitioners grew older. It also makes visible the sharp gender division which characterized the society. Only a boy could be the owner of a ball and a bat.

As previously mentioned, the ball games were played only at Easter. The manufacturing of balls and bats started therefore a few days before. The ball was made of five leather ovals of either sealskin or calfskin and stuffed with straw, pigs' bristles and rags (ULMA 17744; ULMA 17126). With needle and thread a cover was then sewn around the ball. This cover was not on the

3. *Mjulbacka* in 2016, when 72 years had passed since *leik mjul* was played for the last time. Photo: Leif Strömfelt.

balls that the smallest boys owned. But if a ball lacked this cover and the boy was older than eight, he was discredited as a *lihlpilt* (little boy). The same was true for the bat (*mjulskovel*) which was flat, made of pine wood and shaped like a shovel. The smaller boys played with a 70-cm-long bat, compared to the bat of the older boys which measured 115 cm. The former was also decorated:

> Opa lihlpiltas […] mjulskovlo ritas e evit roso mä fergo ote. […] Bara opa maghr piltas ritas e eng roso. Merke å pilt'ns fost ode oller namne skiras opa hare pilt'ns mjulskovla. (ULMA 17744:14)
>
> On the little boys' […] bats, roses are always painted in colour. […] But no roses are painted on the other boy's bats. The house mark [*merke*, in Swedish: *bomärke*] and the first letter in the name of the boy is carved on each boy's bat.

The older boys made their own balls and bats, while the little boys had their equipment manufactured by their fathers. If the father did not have the time, someone else in the village could do it against payment which consisted of a couple of Easter eggs. When a boy had reached the age of 13 or 14 he was no longer supposed to own a *mjulskovel* as at that age he would go through the confirmation process and take the step from being a *lihlpilt* to being a *durpilt* (big boy).

As we now know that only older boys and sometimes even young married men took part in the more advanced English ball game, we can now draw the conclusion that the games of rounders and feeder got a new function after being incorporated into the Easter festival on Runö. They were the final stage in a ball game ceremony which gradually took new forms as the children grew older. *Leik mjul* (i.e. playing rounders and feeder) was a final rite of passage, symbolizing boys' transition into adulthood. A boy who had grown old enough to play these games was no longer the owner of either a ball or a bat. The equipment was instead borrowed from the younger boys (ULMA 17744).

Mjulbacka

Henning Eichberg has criticized sports historians for their tendency to separate traditional sports and games from the context in which they took place. The specific function that games have had in festivals and feasts has thereby largely been ignored (Eichberg 2006:15, 23). With the ball games of Runö in mind, it is striking how intertwined these games were with the celebration of Easter. Therefore, the function of the games must be understood within the context of festivity.

The sporting activities at Easter were closely connected to a particular place, which was named after the games played on it. *Mjulbacka* (Ball Hill, in Swedish: *Bollbacken*) was located east of the village, by the "grassy and

4. This is probably the hill, mentioned by Ekman (1847) and Schantz (1937), where the boys and the girls played *pass-mjul* at Easter. Photo: Leif Strömfelt.

mossy sand mountain in the woods" that was mentioned in Ekman's quotation above. The events on *Mjulbacka* were a central part of a couple of rituals during the Easter holiday. Early on the morning of Easter Day (*poaskdajen*) it was for a long time customary to go to the eastern side of the island to see the "sun dance" – a sign of the Saviour's resurrection (Steffensson 1976:126; Klein, 1924:326). After a service in the church, the afternoon was spent on *Mjulbacka*. In the evening people gathered at *Magasinshlete* (the plain by the depository) to sing, play and dance. The procedure was almost the same on Easter Monday. A visit to the church was followed by ball playing for the rest of the day, while Easter Tuesday was devoted entirely to this activity (Österman 1934:211). At *Brebacka* (Bread Hill, in Swedish: *Bröd-backen*) located next to *Mjulbacka*, housewives in the neighbourhood used to serve *Kako-bre* (unleavened bread), while the games were performed (Björk & Dreijer unpubl.). Easter Tuesday was also the day when boat own-

ers and young men were gathered on *Mjulbacka* to "*laga skipalao*" – to organize boat crews (in Swedish: *båtlag*) for the coming fishing trips (Klein 1924:266, 330).

The ceremonial character of the ball games on *Mjulbacka* was reinforced by a number of elements which distinguished the event from the mundane. Not least, Klein provides a highly detailed account of an extensive dress code (Klein 1924:327). In short terms, the girls carried a particularly festive apparel used only during these three days. Married women wore regular church-skirts and their best clothes, whereas the men were dressed in suits and wore scarves around their neck.

Another example of the occasion's solemnity is found in the pastor's wife Adelaide Schantz's soulful contemplations of the life on Runö. With empathy, she depicts the girl Dorothea's meticulous preparations before the beginning of the event on *Mjulbacka*. All on her own, Dorothea got dressed in her finest clothes, and she also put on her dearest possession – a necklace given to her by a sea captain from Sweden. When her little brother suddenly fell ill, the girl was faced with an ethical dilemma. She was forced to choose between helping her mother to care for the sick, or to indulge in the long-awaited ball game with her friends. On this occasion, however, the girl made a tremendous sacrifice. Consequently, on this particular day Dorothea never did experience what Schantz recounts in the following way:

> The girls are shoving each other, they laugh and giggle at the boys, who have gathered in a huddle on the other side of the ditch. The boys pretend not to see them, they have turned their backs to the girls. The boys look perky so far, they have their hands in their pockets. But after a while you would see. When the games finally got underway. Then the balls fly over the wet ditch, the boys beat them with their bats, and the girls are holding up their beautiful aprons to catch the balls in them. (Schantz 1937:50)[17]

As already mentioned, the events on *Mjulbacka* also reflected the sharp gender division of labour that characterized everyday life on Runö. The home chores were linked to femininity, while livelihood, hunting and fishing belonged to the men's domain. According to Jakob Steffensson, born on Runö in 1924, a man would never perform "women's work" (Steffensson 1976:15). This dichotomization between the sexes appears in *pass-mjul* through the distinctive tasks that the boys and girls had in the game, and in the English imported ball games through the exclusion of women and girls. While the men were playing, the rest of the village gathered in the audience. The young girls came together at *Grâbas Backan* (Björk & Dreijer unpubl.), where they showed each other the eggs they had painted at Easter.[18]

The Ball Games of Runö in Sweden

In the final stage of the Second World War, Runö was emptied of its population. Some fled in boats over the Baltic Sea to Sweden, while others were evacuated by transports that Swedish authorities organized in collaboration with German officers (Hedman & Åhlander 2006:363–392). In 1943 and 1944 approximately 7,000 Estonian-Swedes, among them 305 individuals from Runö, were assigned new homes in Sweden. There were plans to establish certain colonies in the archipelago so that the former inhabitants of Runö could continue to live and work in a geographical environment similar to the one they had left across the Baltic Sea. Swedish authorities had plans, for example, to make the island of Singö the new home for them. However, these plans were never realized. Instead they were spread over different parts of Sweden. Thirty-six individuals did indeed get Singö as their new domicile, but 38 settled on Lidingö outside Stockholm.

The former inhabitants of Runö had suddenly become a scattered minority in Sweden – a country to which they had expressed a strong sense of belonging, but whose society significantly differed from the one they had left. To maintain cohesion in exile, gatherings were often organ-

5. Former residents of Runö playing their traditional ball games on Lidingö, outside Stockholm, as reported by *Aftonbladet* (1 November 1945).

ized. At these events the people from Runö continued to practise the games and the pastimes that had been connected to feasts and daily life on the island. On Lidingö, the women continued to sew special outfits for the ball games, while the men crafted the bats (*Borås Nyheter,* 8 July 1946).

The Runö ball games gave rise to a great interest in the new host society, as evidenced by some Swedish newspaper articles. Without knowing that *leik mjul* was a descendant English rounders, the journalists described it as an exotic relic of an ancient Swedish practice. Under the title "Sports from time immemorial among Runö residents on Lidingö", an article in the newspaper *Expressen* (4 November 1945) stated that "[o]n Runö, ancient ball games have been performed for centuries. One of these is 'Leik mjul'. It is quite complicated and it would take too long to describe it in more detail."[19] *Aftonbladet* (1 November 1945) described *leik mjul* as follows: "[T]hey play an ancient ball game reminiscent of our Swedish brännboll."[20] Another article, published in *Borås Nyheter* (8 July 1946), also described the ball games as "ancient Swedish sports". It may also be fruitful to mention that Johan Götlind, who was the first scholar to conduct extensive research on traditional games in Sweden, incorrectly assumed that *leik mjul* was a variant of *långboll* (1933:47), which at the time was thought of as a game of Nordic origin (Maigaard 1941:72), although it has become clear that the game has been spread all over Europe and outside.

From the Swedish point of view, the culture of Runö was long perceived as static and unchanged, and the former inhabitants of Runö were considered to represent a remnant of an old-fashioned Swedishness that had otherwise been lost in modern times. With this way of thinking in mind, it is obvious why it was mistakenly taken for granted that the Runö version of English rounders – *leik mjul* – was thought of as a centuries-old practice of Swedish origin.

A Changeable Tradition

When considering the initially presented definitions of traditional games and modern sport, the ball games of Runö predominantly fall in the category of the former. The games were the peak of a festival that had a certain place in the calendar of a non-industrialized society. Competition and performance had a slight impact on the event and the equipment was the result of the islanders' craftsmanship. People did not gather on *Mjulbacka* to witness extraordinary achievements. No specialization or rationalization was considered to improve the game. One of the most talented players was asked whether he devoted himself to training to keep up his skills. His negative answer reads as follows: "No [...] that is not customary on Runö. We train

while working, when fishing and in the seal hunting. It strengthens the muscles more than ball games" (*Borås Nyheter,* 8 July 1946).[21] The quotation is noteworthy; because of the lack of wage labour on Runö, there was no clear division between working time and leisure time. Playing ball games was thus not a leisure activity of the everyday life, and it required no rational training with specific goals in mind. Making improvements as an athlete was not really an issue on Runö. The ball games were rather surrounded by a ritualistic framework with the overall purpose of celebrating Easter and the shift of season from winter to spring. Joy and recreation thus weighed considerably heavier than the quest for competition.

Usually, the concept of traditional games has been treated in previous Swedish research as a relatively stable phenomenon over time. The extent to which changes occurred has revolved around variations of rules in time and space. Scholars have depicted traditional sport in Sweden as a "timeless excitement" (Hellspong 1997) or a phenomenon where preservation is the ideal and change is undesirable (Yttergren 2002b:121–148). The problem with the concept of "traditional" in "traditional games", I would argue, lies in its connection with something unchanging, deeply rooted in a premodern and non-industrial society where everything is as it always has been. "Modern", in the concept of "modern sport", on the other hand, refers in a positivistic way to constantly ongoing processes such as change, development and improvements.

The ball games on Runö, although traditional, do not provide a picture of a static as much as an adaptable and a changeable phenomenon. We have seen how the content and function of the ball game tradition on Runö changed over time, due to unexpected incidents as well as radical changes within the community. The Easter festival on Runö was affected in several ways by the stranding of the sailing ship *Duncombe* in 1845. English bat-and-ball games were introduced and added to the presumably very old game *pass-mjul* in the annual event on *Mjulbacka*. It is conspicuous how the English games were adapted to local customs: for instance the dress code; they came to function as a local rite of passage into manhood; they were played only at Easter; and the English terminology was replaced with new terms in the local accent. Apart from these adaptations, the English rules were preserved. The old game of *pass-mjul* even incorporated new elements from the English pastimes, such as the pitching procedure and probably even the bat. Hence, the English ball games affected and transformed the tradition of playing ball at Easter on Runö.

Finally, it has also been shown that the ball games underwent a shift in terms of the function they served for the Runö community before and after the evacuation to Sweden. From being a yearly tradition on an isolated island, they turned into a heritage that would keep and strengthen the collective identity in the diaspora. The Runö ball games in Sweden seem to have

lasted only a few years. As the former population of Runö was incorporated into Swedish society, it is likely that the games lost their function and therefore ceased to be performed.

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[2] The Estonian name of the island is *Ruhnu*.

[3] Original quotation: "Runö. En socialistisk-kommunistisk östat under Rysslands spira." The translations from Swedish to English are made by the author.

[4] Original quotation: "Runö […] var icke en by, en socken och församling bland många andra, det var ett rike, ett folk för sig."

[5] Original quotation: "Af Runöfolket få vi lära, hvad vi förlorat af fädrens kraft och dygd, och hvad det är, som måste återställas hos oss, för att vi skola blifva en kraftig nation."

[6] Still today, the word occurs in some Swedish dialects, among them *kalixbondska* (*möyl*). Jan-Erik Larsson, personal communication, 27 October 2017.

[7] Original quotation: "Donkomsåsen […] avser ett avlångt grund c:a 4 km. söder om Runö. Enligt vad flera sagesmän uppger, har en båt strandat på grundet i gammal tid. Det anses allmänt, att det är båtens namn, som ingår i förleden." According to the former residents of Runö Bertil Björk and Tomas Dreijer (unpubl.), the shallow is called "Domkoms uas'n" in the local dialect.

[8] Original quotation: "Den 4 December 1845 strandade ett stort Engelskt skepp med plankor vid södra sidan af ön. Capten och styrman bodde å Pastoratet hela vintern och matroserna vistades i byn."

[9] The "ring" corresponds with the circle that appears in *The Boy's Book of Sports* (1869:57): "Those who are 'in' take up their positions in the circle called 'home'."

[10] Original quotation: "På planen är en ring markerad, i vilken uppgivaren och den som slår stå. C:a 7 m snett fram åt höger från deras plats är en stake nedslagen i marken, 'fårst stakan'; 35 m, längre bort står 'ån stakan'. Lika nära ringen som 'fårst stakan', men åt vänster, står 'trejje stakan'."

[11] *Skräwling* is the local term for the rear fins of a seal. *Hloa skräwling* was also the name of a simplified ball game on Runö (Klein 1924:329).

[12] Elsa Steffensson, personal communication, 8 June 2016.

[13] Original quotation: "Den siste av sitt parti har en särskild möjlighet att rädda spelet. Han kan, innan han slår, säga: 'Nu slår jag runders'. Så fort han slagit, skall han springa till andra staken och tillbaka in i ringen, innan någon hunnit kasta dit bollen."

[14] Elsa Steffensson, personal communication, 8 June 2016, 17 June 2016.

[15] Original quotation: "Under Påskhelgen och söndags-eftermiddagarna en tid derefter församlar sig hela landets ungdom, ynglingar och flickor, kldre [sic] och yngre, uppå ett särskildt, gräs- och mossbeväxt sandberg i skogen. Här i den öfver allt omgifvande höga tallskogens lugn roa de sig då med ett slags bollspel, som kallas *spela mjuula*. Dervid är flickornas sysselsättning den, att, under ett samfälldt, gällt glädjeskri, i sina förkläden emottaga den lilla luftseglande bollen, som ynglingarnes starka arm uppdrifvit emot höjden." The game is mentioned briefly by Sohlman (1853:18). According Carl Russwurm (1855:108) the game was simply called *mjûl'n*.

[16] Original quotation: "En pojke slår, en annan är uppgivare. Flickorna stå i en tät grupp tillsammans att söka fånga bollen i sina förkläden. Den som får bollen, blir nu uppgivare, tills någon annan har samma tur."

[17] Original quotation: "Flickorna knuffa varandra i sidan, de skratta och fnissa åt pojkarna, som ha samlat sig i en klunga på andra sidan diket. Pojkarna låtsas inte se dem, de vände ryggen åt flickorna. Pojkarna se bara morska ut än så länge, de ha händerna i byxfickorna. Men om en stund skulle ni se. När lekarna äntligen kommit i gång. Då flyga bollarna över det våta diket, gossarna slå dem med sina bollträn, och flickorna hålla ut sina vackra förkläden för att fånga bollarna i dem."

[18] Elsa Steffensson, personal communication, 8 June 2016.

[19] Original title: "Idrotter från hedenhös hos Runöbor på Lidingö." Original quotation: "På Runö har sedan sekler tillbaka bedrivits urgamla bollspel. Ett av dessa är 'Leik mjul'. Det är rätt komplicerat och därför skulle det föra för långt att närmare beskriva det."

[20] Original quotation: " [M]an spelar ett urgammalt bollspel som påminner om vår svenska brännboll."

[21] Original quotation: "Nej, […] de bruks äte soa på Run – det brukas inte så på Runö. Vi öva oss i arbetet, på fisket och på säljakten. Det stärker allt musklerna litet mer än bollspel, de."

Folk Culture at the Interface between Emerging Public Health Care and Older Forms of Healing

Health and Illness in a Coastal District of Western Sweden in the Nineteenth Century

Anders Gustavsson

Abstract

This study is regionally demarcated to two West Swedish islands, examining how state-employed district physicians, along with pharmacists and trained midwives, became established in rural Sweden in the nineteenth century. Up until the early nineteenth century state physicians, pharmacies, and midwives had only been found in the towns. When doctors, along with pharmacists and midwives, were stationed in the countryside, they had to bring about a cultural change. This meant that they had to gain the confidence of the rural population and replace the unqualified folk healers, or initially at least provide an alternative to them. It is this process of cultural adaptation that this essay concentrates on. It is a study of encounters between qualified and unqualified healers. An important question is how the rural population handled and perceived different illness situations. This requires studying both those who had the task of delivering health care, whether they were trained or not, and those who received the care, that is, the country people. The development was thus that what doctors called quackery was widespread in the middle of the nineteenth century but had almost ceased by the end of the 1890s. That is how long it took for the doctors to gain the confidence of the common people through their efforts and their enlightenment. They could then be consulted as a rule in cases of illness, thus largely taking the place of folk healers. This radical cultural change had parallels in Norway.

Keywords: public health care, folk healing, qualified midwives, cultural adaptation, district physicians, pharmacy, epidemics

Introduction

The Problem

This study is regionally demarcated to the West Swedish islands of Orust and Tjörn in Bohuslän, examining how state-employed district physicians, along with pharmacists and trained midwives, became established in rural Sweden in the nineteenth century. Up until the early nineteenth century state

physicians, pharmacies, and midwives had only been found in the towns. When a new order was introduced, a rural culture governed by established values and practices was confronted with a new culture of officialdom arriving from the towns. The new professional groups had higher education and medical experience, unlike the tried and tested experience of folk healing in the countryside. Folk healing had not had any competition from qualified people in the countryside, with the exception of the efforts made by certain priests, until the trained doctors and pharmacists began their work. Nor was it obvious for the rural councils that they should employ trained midwives when the local people had been used to the services of untrained but experienced women.

When doctors, along with pharmacists and midwives, were stationed in the countryside, they had to bring about a cultural change. This meant that they had to gain the confidence of the rural population and replace the unqualified folk healers, or initially at least provide an alternative to them. It is this process of cultural adaptation that this essay concentrates on. It is a study of encounters between qualified and unqualified healers. How did the peasantry handle these two potential sources of help in times of illness?

One category in my study consists of physicians, pharmacists, and trained midwives, and a separate category comprises healers and local midwives, as well as certain priests who engaged in healing. It was the rural population who could engage whatever healing and care was available. An important question is how they handled and perceived different illness situations. This requires studying both those who had the task of delivering health care, whether they were trained or not, and those who received the care, that is, the country people. In this way the overall problem links the various themes examined in the different sections. A historical processual perspective is applied, and as a cultural scholar I abstain from any personal evaluation of the trained doctors' healing versus folk healing.

Previous Research

There are opportunities for comparisons with the development in Norway during the nineteenth century. A decree in 1804 required annual reports from district physicians (Schiøtz 2017:14). The folklorist Olav Bø in Oslo conducted a special study of rational folk healing, the kind that has nothing to do with superstition, magic, or witchcraft medicine, but is instead based on tested experience. He viewed this healing in relation to the school medicine represented by the doctors. They cited and enlisted the help of a law from 1794 that was applied throughout Norway and Denmark (Schiøtz 2017:307ff). In Norway this law was revised and relaxed in 1871 (Alver *et al*. 2013:74). Bø studied a large number of court trials of what he calls local doctors, in preference to the term "quack" (Norwegian

kvakksalver) which he found offensive (Bø 1986:7ff, 38f). Bø's studies have subsequently been developed with new perspectives by the Norwegian folklorists Bente Gullveig Alver and Torunn Selberg in Bergen. They argue that folk healing was in harmony with the world of folk beliefs which differed radically from that of the trained doctors. There was both a cultural divide and a class divide (Alver & Selberg 1992; Alver *et al*. 2013). A detailed history of medicine focusing on Norway has been written by Aina Schiötz (2017).

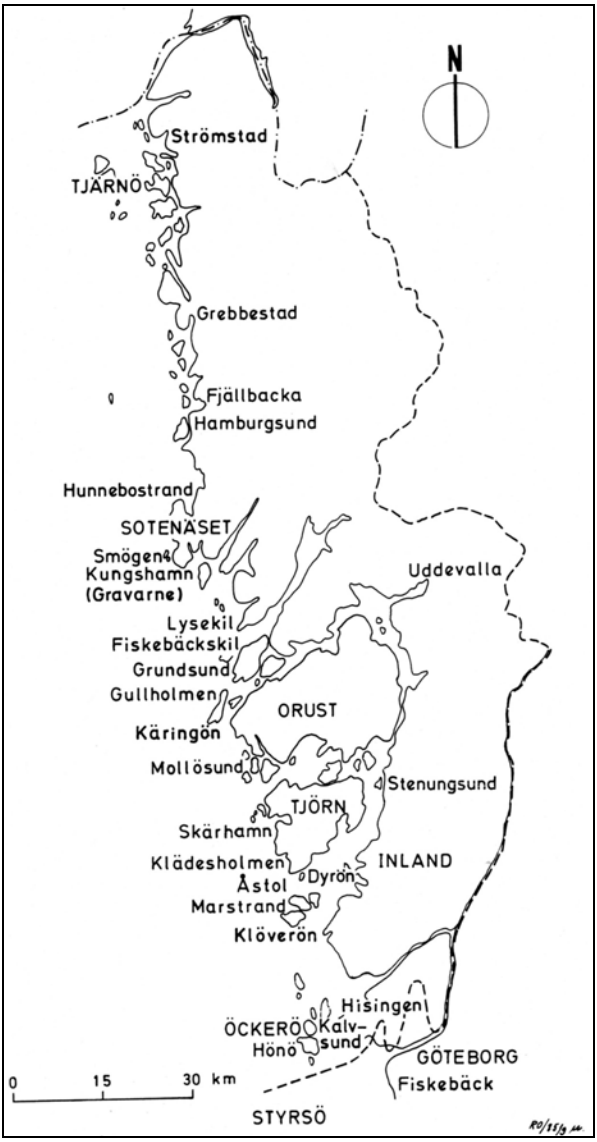
In my study I have also made comparisons with earlier studies of folk healers in other parts of Sweden in the nineteenth century (Tillhagen 1962; Gustafson 1980; Ljungström 1984; af Klintberg 1985). The Swedish folklorist Carl-Herman Tillhagen, in his epoch-making book *Folklig läkekonst* from 1962, mainly examined the use of magical folk medicine and only to a small extent rational folk healing (Tillhagen 1962:142).

The Investigation Area

The island of Orust had a population of 18,490 in 1850, while Tjörn had just less than half that number, 7,875 (*Tabell-kommissionens underdåniga berättelse* 1857). Tjörn also has a much smaller area. At the end of the nineteenth century the population on both islands had grown slightly. Orust had 20,964 inhabitants and Tjörn 10,263 (*Statistiska centralbyråns underdåniga berättelse* 1901). On these islands there were striking economic differences between the agricultural population who managed their small farms (7–12 hectares) in the inner parts of the islands and the people who lived by fishing, shipping, and boatbuilding on the coast.

Material

A central source for this study is the district physicians' annual reports which make it possible to follow changes as they took place during the nineteenth century. All district physicians in Sweden had been obliged since 1755 to submit annual reports to the national board of medicine Collegium Medicum, and from 1813 to its successor Sundhetskollegium and from 1878 to Medicinalstyrelsen (www.ne.se Sundhetskollegium). In the instructions for these annual reports the district physicians were required to describe the state of health and the services they had performed in their district. The reports give a good picture of the diseases that had been most prevalent during the year and how they had been treated. Infectious diseases, in several cases followed by epidemics, receive special attention. The doctors often reflect on the causes of the diseases, for instance about possible paths of dispersion for infectious diseases. Doctors report on the preventive measures they have taken and the information they have given to the common people. This con-



1. Map of Bohuslän.

cerned greater cleanliness in the home, better protection of water sources, vaccination against smallpox, an improved pharmacy system, the use of qualified midwives, bath houses, etc.

For this study it is particularly important that the doctors were tasked with declaring any occurrences of quackery and measures they had taken to prevent it, stating their views on this as a competitor or a complement to the doctors' work. The historian Sofia Ling, in her doctoral dissertation from 2004, has studied the relationship between doctors and people accused of

2. Map of Orust drawn in 2009 by Kirsten Berrum, Oslo University.

quackery in the period 1770–1870 and has followed a large number of court cases (Ling 2004). Quackery here means performing medicine without having had any medical training or permit. An ordinance on this was included in the law on quackery which in Sweden goes back to the medical statutes of the seventeenth century (Ling 2004:41).

The annual reports of the Swedish district physicians (*provinsialläkare*) have been published digitally in a database on the history of medicine at Linköping University (http://www.ep.liu.se/databas/medhist.sv.asp).[1] In this study I have consulted all the available years from 1836 to 1900. The only gap is from 1868 to 1877. For these years I have gone through the original reports which are in the archive of Sundhetskollegium at the National Archives in Stockholm, class mark E5A.

The crown bailiff (*kronofogde*) in charge of a local administrative area submitted five-year reports to the county administration. These reports contain data on the state of health and medical care. Orust and Tjörn constituted

one bailiwick. Every six years the clergy sent reports on their parish to the bishop of the diocese. These contain accounts of the current state of the parishes. Important information for this study can also be found in the records of episcopal visitations to the different parishes at intervals of ten to twenty years. All this archival material, both secular and ecclesiastical, reflecting the outlook, attitudes, and measures of the authorities, is stored in the provincial archives at Göteborgs Landsarkiv, abbreviated GLA.[2]

The Dialect, Name and Folklore Archive in Gothenburg, abbreviated DAG, has a considerable number of folk narratives collected from many informants about folk healing and the use of untrained healers and midwives. There are also some narratives about doctors. The farmer Jakob Jonsson's diaries from the years 1866–1879 are also valuable for the insight they give into everyday life in the country in connection with ordinary illnesses and epidemics. There are references to visits to doctors and folk healers alike. These diaries have been published in two volumes printed in 1991 and 1997 (*Jakob Jonsson's dagbok* 1–2, 1991, 1997).[3] All this material reveals the outlooks and practice of the peasantry as an important complement to the reports of representatives of authority in the form of district physicians, crown bailiffs, priests, and bishops. Books on the local history of Orust and Tjörn have also been consulted (e.g. Tjörne 1970; Pettersson 1978).

Outline

The first section deals with the question of how district physicians and pharmacies were established in the area under study. The second section looks at how the frequent epidemics were managed and experienced by the rural population as reflected in peasant diaries. How did people use doctors and unqualified healers in situations of severe illness? The third section analyses oral narratives told by the rural population about some folk healers who were consulted and who used both rational and magical healing methods.

Section four shows that even doctors were the subject of stories in the folk narrative tradition. The clearest example is Doctor Emil Olsson, showing that a doctor's behaviour and bedside manner were crucial for making whether or not the local people put their confidence in him.

Section five investigates how the doctors relate to and report on the unqualified folk healers. This can be compared with the folk narratives about the same healers in section three. The doctors were instructed to report on what they knew and how they handled quackery in their district. Besides the doctors, some churchmen were also critical of unqualified folk healers.

Section six takes up the issue of certain priests who engaged in rational healing. This is reported both by doctors and by rural informants in the folklife records. As educated men, the priests occupied an intermediate position between the doctors and the folk healers.

Section seven sheds light on economic aspects of the consultation of doctors compared with folk healers and how conditions changed in the late nineteenth century as a consequence of the new doctors at the bathing resorts on the coast.

Section eight deals with the tough struggle that the doctors, ably assisted by churchmen and crown bailiffs, waged to get the parish authorities to employ qualified midwives and then to make sure they were accepted and used by the local people.

1 Establishing District Physicians and Pharmacies in the Countryside

District Physicians

Physicians were state officials whose cultural foundation was in the urban bourgeoisie (Schiøtz 2017:291). They represented the scientific experience and standpoints of the time. The first Swedish instructions for district physicians were issued in 1744 (www.ne.se Provinsialläkare; Ling 2004:84).

The first district physician who was to live on Orust and also serve the people of Tjörn began his work after the great cholera epidemic that struck both Sweden and Norway in 1834. The state authorities understood that work for public health had to be improved, especially in the countryside (Alver *et al*. 2013:52ff). Annual reports by district physicians for Orust and Tjörn survive from 1836 onwards. Johan Boustedt (1802–1868) was the first doctor in the years 1836–1840. He lived at Kårehogen in the parish of Morlanda on western Orust, although there was no official residence for him there.

The matter of a residence for the district physician was discussed from the 1850s onwards, encountering opposition at several parish council meetings. Niklas Olof Gammelin, who was district physician 1853–1863 is said to have expressed discontent with the fact that he did not have a decent dwelling. The bailiff Oscar Warmark, in his five-year report dated 1862, warned of the consequences of this discontent. "It is also beyond doubt that, if the district physician Gammelin seeks and obtains a transfer, another doctor will not be acquired unless a residence is provided by the people of the district" (GLA Göteborgs och Bohusläns landskansli DVb: 8). The following year, 1863, Gammelin left Orust and Tjörn to become district physician in Hässleholm, where he died in 1867.

The doctor continued to reside at Kårehogen until 1870 when the new district physician Uno Helleday (1834–1904) took up residence in the little village of Henån on northern Orust. There had been hot baths since 1857 (*Henån* 1997:25), which were also served by the district physician. The location of the doctor's residence was not optimal in view of the distance both to Tjörn and to the pharmacy in Kårehogen, some twenty kilometres away.

3. Niklas Olof Gammelin was district physician on Orust and Tjörn 1853–1863. Photo: Carl Curman, Lysekil, *c*. 1860. After Larsson 2015.

The crown bailiff Oscar Warmark wrote in his five-year report for 1871 that "the unsuitability of this is generally understood, and measures will therefore be taken as soon as possible to acquire, at the expense of the district, a residence for the doctor" (GLA Göteborgs och Bohusläns kansli DVb: 11). In the next five-year report for 1876 Warmark was able to announce that municipal councils in the parishes of Tegneby, Stala, and Myckleby on Orust and all the municipalities on Tjörn had decided to build together "a dwelling with necessary outhouses" for the district physician. Over three years, each registered person was to pay 25 öre and 3 öre for each *fyrk*[4] (GLA Göteborgs och Bohusläns landskansli DVb: 13). In 1876 the new doctor Johan Walfrid Pihl (1833–1902) moved into the first official district physician's residence built on Orust. It was at Hårleby in the parish of Stala, a more central location in the district than both Kårehogen and Henån. For the people of Tjörn, Hårleby was much closer (Emanuelsson 1973:63).

In 1885 Orust acquired an extra district physician, stationed on the coast at Nösund, for the western parts of the island where all the coastal settle-

ments were. In this area there was a boom in fishing and shipping in the last decades of the nineteenth century (GLA Göteborgs och Bohusläns landskansli DVb: 16, Hasslöf 1949).

It was not until 1892 that Tjörn received its own district physician, John Emil von Wachenfeldt. The first time a vet is mentioned on Orust and Tjörn is 1865, when J. C. Schedin lived in the little community of Varekil in Stala parish on Orust, close to Tjörn. He was paid by the county agricultural society (GLA Göteborgs och Bohusläns landskansli DVb: 8). Both before and after this, folk healers were engaged to cure diseases in animals (IFGH 5358:12ff).

Pharmacies

The pharmacy system was regulated through royal ordinances. In 1786 it became illegal for anyone but apothecaries to sell poisons. In principle a doctor's prescription was required to be able to obtain medicines from a pharmacy. Any apothecary who provided drugs to unauthorized people risked having to pay a fine or lose the right to run a pharmacy (Ling 2004:49). Through a royal edict of 1838 the first pharmacy was established on Orust and Tjörn in 1840. Like the doctor's clinic, it was at Kårehogen in Morlanda parish. The first owner of the pharmacy was Carl Fredrik Schugge (born 1808), who served there until his death in 1861. He also sold "retail goods and notions on a rather large scale", according to a critical report in 1850 by the physician Sven Kellberg (1784–1863), who worked on Orust 1850–1853. It was not until 1846 that legislation on freedom of trade made it

4. The pharmacy in Kårehogen, established in 1840. Postcard. The buildings are still standing.

possible to establish country shops, on condition that they were at least thirty kilometres from the nearest town (Ejdestam 1943; Brattö 2002:123ff). Doctor Kellberg complains that Schugge "has retail business as his main pursuit" and is "without the slightest assistance for the pharmacy business". Kellberg wanted Schugge to realize the need to employ "a provisor (bachelor of pharmacy) or at least a student of pharmacy for the apothecary business".

Schugge was succeeded by the pharmacist Alexis Anders Christofer Widell (born 1825), who served until his death in 1905. Besides the pharmacy he ran a shop and was head of the post station from 1866 (*Sveriges Apotekarhistoria* 2, 1918–1923:1183ff).

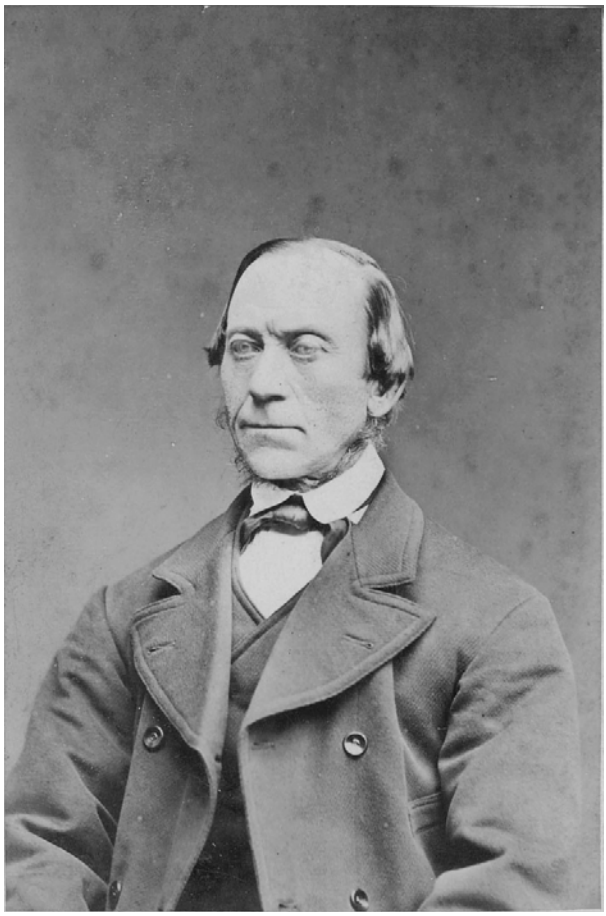
Through a royal edict of 1894 a store of medicines was established on Tjörn, with the pharmacist in Marstrand in charge. Tjörn's first district physician, John Emil von Wachenfeldt, complained in 1892 about the long distance the people of Tjörn had to travel to get to a pharmacy. It was either ten kilometres by steamer to Marstrand or thirty by land or sea to Kårehogen on Orust. The pharmacist Richard Abraham Indebetou (1855–1934) came to Tjörn in 1896. In 1900 this medicine store was transformed through a new royal edict into an independent pharmacy for Tjörn. Indebetou became the first owner until 1909 (*Sveriges Apotekarhistoria* 2 1918–1923:1202f).

5. Richard Abraham Indebetou was the pharmacist on Tjörn 1896–1909.

2 Epidemics and Other Diseases Considered from a Folk Perspective

Epidemics occurred frequently in the nineteenth century. It was after the great cholera epidemic in Sweden in 1834 that the first doctor and pharmacist came to Orust. How these epidemics were managed and perceived by the common people is a topic about which little is known in research on the history of medicine. To shed light on such aspects, extant peasant diaries and letters will come in handy here. In what way did people use doctors or folk healers?

The farmer Jakob Jonsson was born in 1795 on the farm of Prästbacka in Röra parish on Orust. In his detailed diaries from the years 1866–1879 (Gustavsson 2009) there are many statements about serious diseases and epidemics and how they were experienced and handled. Religious interpretations are part of the picture. The epidemics he mentions are scarlet fever, typhoid fever, and cholera.



6. The farmer Jakobsson 1795–1879. Photo in private ownership.

Scarlet Fever

A severe epidemic of scarlet fever occurred in Jonsson's home parish of Röra during the summer and early autumn of 1870. This disease is a troublesome throat infection that strikes children especially, caused by a group of A-streptococci (www.ne.se Scharlakansfeber). In the latter part of the nineteenth century scarlet fever was the infectious disease that caused most deaths in Sweden. Mortality was as high as 30 per cent among those who caught it. According to the register of deaths and burials, 67 people died in Röra in 1870, 33 of them from scarlet fever, within a limited period from 10 May to 6 October. The children who died were aged from three months up to 14 years. Only three of them were over ten (GLA Röra F 1).

Several parents lost more than one child in the epidemic. Jonsson's nephew and tenant farmer Olle Olsson lost three children during the time from 20 August to 11 September.[5] On 6 August Jonsson wrote that "here at my tenant Olle's almost all the children are sick, and in them and others it begins and persists with swelling in the throat – the smallest of Olle's boys is now so sick that it is questionable whether he will recover, it is worst or most difficult with the small ones, since it is impossible to get them to take medicine because they do not understand that it is curative, for it has been tried and found to help those who have taken it" (part 1, p. 163). On 29 August Olle Olsson went to "the doctor or physician August Westerberg" to seek help for his eldest daughter Mathilda, "who is very weak and sick in the chest and head or with a sore throat and swelling" (part 1, p. 167). She died on 11 September having been confined to bed for two months (part 1, p. 169).

August Westerberg was the son of a cousin of Jakob Jonsson and described by him as "assistant physician, otherwise as parish clerk and organist in Morlanda" (part 1, p. 306). He thus had two completely different occupations although he had no education, having first been a shoemaker. In Norway too, it could happen at this time that untrained folk healers were popularly known as *bygdeleger* or *bygdedoktorer*, that is, "local doctors" (Alver *et al*. 2013:219).

Jonsson gives us insight into his experiences of grief, while simultaneously describing several and protracted courses of disease. Some of his grandchildren were also struck by suffering and later death. On Sunday 24 July 1870 there were prayers in the church "both b. [before] and a. [after] the service for Abraham's [one of his sons-in-law] eldest daughter in Göksäter who has long been in bed seriously ill". She passed away two days later (part 1, p. 160).

Faith in doctors and the curative effect of medicines is striking in Jonsson. The parish clerk August Westerberg was not the first choice, however, perhaps because he lacked medical training. When a brother-in-law of Jons-

son's son-in-law Per Olausson went to consult the ordinary doctor in Henån in 1875, he was not available. Consequently, August Westerberg "was engaged out of necessity" (part 2, p. 94).

Child mortality was very high in Jakob Jonsson's time, but soon new children were born in families that had lost one or more children in epidemics. The tenant Olle Olsson and his wife, who lost two children to scarlet fever on 20 August 1870 and yet another child on 11 September the same year, then lost a newborn daughter on 28 July 1871 (part 1, p. 219). On 23 November the following year Olle Olsson's wife had yet another child, a boy (part 1, p. 296).

Typhoid Fever

Another disease that caused many deaths was typhoid fever. This is caused by aggressive salmonella bacteria, giving rise to inflammation in the walls of the small intestine and then spreading through the body and the blood (www.ne.se Nervfeber). In early July 1871 Jonsson's daughter Anna Britta caught this disease. He understood that her life was in danger when he wrote that it is "such a grave disease that will either put an end to her bodily life, or else, judging by what has happened to other such patients, she will be bedridden for an uncommonly long time and more likely than not have some weakness for the rest of her life". He wrote that this situation caused him "distress" and that "for me it is more than vexatious" (part 1, p. 217). Three times his tenant Olle Olsson had to take his horse and cart to the coastal hamlet of Henån to bring the district physician Uno Helleday (1834–1904), who worked on Orust 1870–1875, home to the Prästbacka farm. Then he also had to go to the pharmacy in Kårehogen to get medicine. Olsson's maid Maria Larsdotter had also contracted this disease. Jonsson had to pay almost five riksdalers for the medicine, of which he says that it is "certainly very costly to pay for medicine". He consoles himself, however, with the fact that he did not have to pay Doctor Helleday's fee, which would have been many times more expensive than the medicine. For infectious diseases like typhoid fever the doctor received his payment from the state (part 1, p. 217f).

Cholera

During the summer and autumn of 1866 a cholera epidemic raged in Sweden. This is a bacterial stomach disease with diarrhoea and vomiting, and the mortality was about 50 per cent (www.ne.se Kolera; Schiøtz 2017:237ff). Cholera was prevalent chiefly in coastal places and only in sporadic cases inland on Orust and Tjörn. This was because the infection was spread by sea. The parish of Röra, inland on Orust, was spared this epidemic but the

disease ravaged the shipping city of Gothenburg (Fredberg 1 1921:475). On 25 June 1866 it arrived there by ship from abroad; 1,237 people caught it and 638 of them died. On 9 October the epidemic was considered to have ended in Gothenburg (Arvidsson 1972:87).

The disease also devastated several places on the coast of Bohuslän, which had seaborne contacts with Gothenburg. In the coastal settlements of Rönnäng and Klädesholmen on Tjörn, no fewer than 116 people died in this epidemic. In the inland parishes of Valla and Klövedal on Tjörn there were just a few cases of cholera (Pettersson 1978:18). Also hard struck was the fishing hamlet of Gullholmen on Orust, with which Jonsson's family had contacts through purchases of fish. In an account of his childhood on Gullholmen, the author Olof Hansson, born 1914, retells narratives from his grandmother and grandfather. In 1866 they were thirteen years old, and they "spoke of how dreadful it was; of how everybody lived in fear. No one knew in the morning what had happened during the night. There were people sick in nearly every house, and 36 people lost their lives. Many were seized by panic, and in one of the houses a woman locked herself in alone out of fear of infection. … Yet she ended up one of the first victims" (Hansson 1983: 45). Jonsson noted at the end of August that year that the cholera "in certain places was very serious, especially in the fishing hamlet of Gullholmen". The infection is said to have been brought there by people from Gullholmen who had visited the St Lawrence fair in Gothenburg on 10 August (part 1, p. 25; about this market see Skarin Frykman 1993). Women on Gullholmen were known for travelling by boat to Gothenburg in the summer to sell the fish the men had caught. The market was an important time for selling fish (Hasslöf 1949:396).

At the end of August 1866 a man from Röra parish died in Gothenburg (part 1, p. 26). On 28 August a 23-year-old crofter daughter from Röra died of cholera on Gullholmen (GLA F 1 Röra). On 1 September the first and only death in Röra parish occurred. It was the wife of a crofter, aged 72. Jonsson noted that "the infection had come there through a person arriving from Gullholmen" (part 1, p. 27). At the start of September he expressed "double sorrow and worry now, for it is not enough that the weather is unfavourable and hopeless for rescuing" here in Röra, "but the ravages of the plague of cholera are so widespread that all trade between towns, especially Gothenburg, and the archipelago must be almost completely curtailed – in some places completely" (part 1, p. 27).

In a letter posted from Gothenburg to the peasant Lars Andersson on the farm of Naveröd near Jonsson's farm at Prästbacka on 8 September 1866, his brother Nathanael Nordborg informs him that "here in Gothenburg the cholera is seriously rampant – it was said today that in Haga alone 22 people died in one day, I believe it was the day before yesterday. Yesterday I heard that the schools here are closed until further notice or until the plague is

7. A wooden cross from Gullholmen on the grave of the widow Inger Johansson, born 1816, and her son Carl Johan Andersson, born 1849. They died of cholera on the same day, 4 September 1866. An angel with wings is holding a cloth with the names and dates of the deceased. Photo: Berth Kullholm.

alleviated". The letter writer had been thinking for the last two weeks of coming home to Naveröd to eat the apples that were ripe in the garden there at this time, "but as you perhaps are afraid of me now because I could bring the disease, I shall probably stay here". He had also heard that "the unpleasant plague of cholera has now also been ravaging Orust for a while, and Tjörn and Klädesholmen too, so now I want to send information about how you should behave in the time of cholera" (letter in private ownership). He therefore enclosed a transcript he had made of the instructions issued by "The Swedish Medical Society and conveyed to the printer by The Gothenburg City Board of Health" in July 1866. These instructions, which are preserved among the papers left by Lars Andersson, bear the title "Information for the public about the characteristics of the cholera disease, about preventive measures against it for healthy people, and about the medicines that should be used for sick people until a doctor arrives or when no doctor is available".

Jonsson viewed the situation with profound concern, worrying about the consequences for the people on the coast beyond his own home place, and

he wrote: "It seems as if all these poor or pitiable coast dwellers will go together into eternity at one and the same time – we shall see how far the angel of death is allowed to go or how much he has been commanded to kill." He gives a religious interpretation when he talks of the angel of death, an idea going back to the Old Testament stories about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt (www.ne.se Mordängel).

According to Jonsson there was a religious way out of the difficulties. "Serious penance and prayers to be spared could serve as a reason not to afflict people any more" (part 1, p. 27). On 26 October he was able to note, with some relief: "God be praised, the cholera has generally and noticeably declined in towns and fishing hamlets, where it has been most serious" (part 1, p. 30). We are reminded here of the religious interpretation of diseases and their healing. Christian ideas set their stamp on his life and provided him with spiritual solutions to various situations of illness. At the same time, he trusted the doctors and their ability to help and cure.

The medical profession was highly esteemed by Jonsson, as we see clearly from his account of the sudden death of Doctor Dalin in Henån on 7 February 1875. On a very cold winter's day with a severe snowstorm, this doctor had to go to visit a sick person on the farm of Holm in Tegneby parish. Because of the bad weather it was impossible to clear the road of snow, so he had to spend the night there "and rumour has it that he was placed in cold bedclothes". This is said to have led to the cold that caused his death. Jonsson describes this doctor as "the one who has long been an instrument in the hand of the Supreme Being to cure and relieve sickness in others" (part 2, p. 92). The medical profession is viewed here in a religious context. Medical science is not independent of religion but subordinate to it, assisting people in situations of illness.

Cures in Newspapers

Jakob Jonsson read both a regional newspaper, *Bohusläns Tidning*, and a national paper, *Svenska Weckobladet*. These gave him information about medicines that could be used. An example is a "general healing and house plaster" which, according to Jonsson, was for sale at the Svanen pharmacy in Kristianstad. This plaster could be used against several injuries and ailments, listed in eight points, and "hereby along with God's help many people who have suffered from old injuries and unbearable torments have been completely restored to health". Jonsson believed that one should take advantage of the available medicines while simultaneously relying on God's help. He is open to assistance both from "wise people" (folk healers) and physicians.

From articles in *Svenska Weckobladet* in 1870 Jonsson has copied recipes against ague and dysentery. Ague refers to quick, uncontrolled

muscle contractions in connection with high fever, for instance caused by bacteria in the blood or influenza (www.ne.se Frossa). Dysentery is an infection in the large intestine and was for a long time one of the most feared infectious diseases (www.ne.se Dysenteri). The cure against ague, according to Jonsson, "has already been tried with great success by a doctor in Helsinki".

Jonsson has also copied other information about cures which he read about. One heading reads: "New medicine against dropsy". This is a morbid accumulation of water in the body (www.ne.se Vattusot). In Jonsson's handwritten text he tells of a 63-year-old woman who had long suffered from dropsy. A "wise woman" advised her to crawl into a meal bag, which she did. This is folk magic, not rational healing, yet Jonsson does not suggest any criticism of it. He goes on to write: "Day by day the swelling decreased and within a few weeks the patient had fully recovered enough to leave her sickbed." Jonsson also noted a decoction of lungwort leaves, which is said to have helped many people with pulmonary diseases. This is rational folk healing. Jonsson himself had "experienced a marvellous effect from it". He therefore recommended this drink for "everyone with lung disease; it is mild, does not cost much, and certainly helps".

3 Tales of Folk Healers

The farmer Jakob Jonsson gives examples of how folk healing could be used alongside doctors and the curative methods about which he read in newspapers. We do not notice any suspicion of rational folk healing (see Bø 1986:44ff; Alver *et al*. 2013:14ff) in his diaries. One such form of healing was cupping, which could also be performed by trained health personnel. This was a form of bloodletting in which the blood flow was increased with the aid of a cup, which in older days consisted of a horn, known as a cupping horn (Tillhagen 1962:80ff; Alver *et al*. 2013:69f). On 29 April 1876 Jonsson's son-in-law Per Olausson, who had incurred a back injury, set off for the farm of Björfjäll in Röra parish "to use cupping horns and 4 were set on the place that hurt by Anders Rasmusson's wife there" (part 2, p. 183).

Several narratives about folk healing, which could also be practised on livestock before there were rural vets, can be found in the records of the folklore archives. Here I quote stories of some folk healers who are often mentioned. The first is the crofter **Abraham Jakobsson Sluger** (1805–1876). One measure applied by folk healers was "staunching blood". This way of stopping the blood flow is a magical method that is not recorded as frequently as the rational methods. An informant born in Långelanda parish in 1860 tells of how Abraham Sluger in his youth staunched blood, dressed wounds with a home-made ointment, and splinted fractures.

When somebody had injured himself so that it bled a lot and they could not make it stop, they just had to go to him and tell him about it, and the bleeding stopped at once. … Sluger cooked up a special kind of salve that he used to put on all kinds of wounds and external injuries. He never revealed what he had made this salve from. … For he was always a bit secretive in all his cures and did not answer if they asked him what kind of medicine he used. … If someone had broken an arm or a leg, he splinted it.

This informant had visited Sluger in his childhood when he had injured a hand. Sluger "patched it together as best he could and then he wrapped a bandage around the hand. Outside this bandage he then put some of his ointment and on top of that yet another bandage". After three days the informant was to come back to have the bandage changed. After a few more visits the hand was "pretty good again" (VFF 1327, pp. 1f). Unlike some other healers, Sluger did not treat animals. According to oral tradition in his own family, Abraham Sluger was known for growing medicinal plants, and his two daughters continued with this (*Släktlänken* no. 2, 2014). Growing herbal and medicinal plants is a characteristic feature of other folk healers. The same applies to the secretive trait, the healer's refusal to disclose the ingredients in his cures (af Klintberg 1985:14f).

From Tjörn as well, there are records of several healers who, according to the folk narrative tradition, were able to staunch blood. One of these was Matilda Johannisdotter of Sumpen, born in 1847, and another was Kristian at Oset. When someone came to him for help they had to say: "Staunch blood on this or that" without speaking Kristian's name. He then disappeared into the kitchen and came back after a while and said: "Now it's

8. Abraham Jacobsson Sluger's cottage. After Svanesund 1985.

finished". "And at the same moment the blood stopped flowing at the part where you had asked for it to be staunched" (Pettersson 1978:142). These two healers from Tjörn are not mentioned in the doctors' reports, nor is a man named Jonsson in Valla parish (IFGH 4975:11). Perhaps the doctors who were stationed on Orust did not know so much about what happened further away on Tjörn. It was actually not until John Emil von Wachenfelt (1861–1931) came in 1892 as the first district physician on Tjörn, where he worked until 1907, that there are more details of folk healing on Tjörn in the doctors' reports. The belief in folk healers' ability to staunch blood is also recorded from Norway (Bø 1986:96f).

Another healer on Orust was the wife of a crofter in Röra parish who went under the name **Finnskotte-Tilda**; her real name was Matilda Samuelsson (born 1852). She specialized in healing *finnskott*, equivalent to "elfshot", in folk belief a sudden pain believed to be caused by a secret shot fired by a magic-working Finn (Honko 1959; www.ne.se Trollskott). A man born in 1864 tells of how this woman used to "boil an ointment consisting of spruce resin, pitch, tallow, wasp's nest, and something from the pharmacy although no one knew what it was. To all this she then added honeycomb [*biskott*]" (IFGH 3467:48f). A female informant born in Röra parish in 1883 collected wasps' nests in her childhood which she sold for one crown apiece to Finnskotte-Tilda. She prepared an "elfshot mixture" which was to be swallowed to cure all manner of pain in the body. A male informant born in 1863 recalls: "My mother had a sore leg. And she went to the old elfshot woman in Basteskår and got something that was supposed to be good for the bad leg; it was in the knee she was sore. But she also went to a quack called Västerberg, who was parish clerk in Morlanda. He wasn't so bad because he had read a lot in medical books. Well, mother got better" (Bergstrand 1962:158; IFGH 5353:3). People came from far away to visit Finnskotte-Tilda (Johansson 2001:63ff).

The informant, a woman born in 1883, said that doctors tried to have Finnskotte-Tilda imprisoned for quackery, but there was never any trial. She collected many references from people testifying that she had healed them, and went to visit Doctor Carl Adolf Riber Blume (1869–1934), who worked in Lysekil 1905–1934. He is said to have accepted her plea not to be charged and declared: "You need not be afraid. I shall sign my name to confirm that most of the medicine was bought at the pharmacy and that Tilda has helped many people that we doctors were not able to help". She is also said to have cured the son of a Doctor Ahlström of Uddevalla who was consulted by an inhabitant of Orust. The doctor's son had pains in a leg that his father had not succeeded in treating (IFGH 5238:13ff, IFGH 5353:3ff). Folk healers helping members of doctors' families, either wives or children, is a familiar narrative motif elsewhere in Sweden (Gustafson 1981:102f; Ljungström 1984:73; af Klintberg

9. Finnskotte-Tilda. Photo in private ownership.

10. Finnskotte-Tilda's cottage. Photo in private ownership.

1985:10). Such stories helped to improve the perception of folk healers and their ability to help.

The stories about Finnskotte-Tilda reveal a conflict or competition between doctors and folk healers, and that these healers could have strong support and trust among the common people. It was exactly as in Jakob Jonsson's case, not a matter of either/or when it comes to the relationship to doctors and folk healers. People were prepared to visit both. The important thing was the belief that one could be cured. A person would then use whatever opportunity was available. This applied equally to the new methods that doctors brought and the traditional cures of the folk healers.

On Tjörn there were also women who sold medicine against elfshot. Elisabet of Tådås took 50 öre for a mixture of sulphur, gunpowder, fly wings, and snakeskin. There is no mention here of the wasps' nests that Finnskotte-Tilda used. Another woman was Maria Nilsdotter who lived on Herrön. She employed the same kind of ingredients as Elisabet in Tådås. "Small, square loaves were hollowed out and the elfshot was put in. Then Maria spread butter on it and gave it to the person who was to be cured. People came sailing from both north and south to get help from her" (Pettersson 1978:140f). These two women from Tjörn are not mentioned in the doctors' reports.

The local collector Hulda Tjörne (1889–1976), who grew up on Tjörn and worked as a teacher there, describes "Olle of Tjärtången" (died 1909) as a "wise old man" (*klok gubbe*). He worked as a foreman in house construction.

> He was a good and kindly man, very religious. He had a long beard and looked like a patriarch. … He spoke of "the vital force of nature". He often prayed to God for the patient. I cannot recall hearing tell of any case where only his prayer helped, but his water treatments made many sick people well. He was also called the water doctor. He prescribed water compresses for nearly all diseases. Compresses on the chest, compresses on the head. Sit-baths, cold rub-downs, neck-baths. Many people came to him from far afield. A couple of patients came all the way from Stockholm. … It is known that he cured many cases of pneumonia, for example, by means of compresses that drove out sweat. He also knew about herbs for which he wrote prescriptions. With the herbs I know a couple of cases where, for example, severe eczema was healed.

Here again we have an example of how important the use of different herbs was for the folk healers. This healer is unlikely to have accepted payment. He is mentioned in the 1890s by the first doctor on Tjörn, John Emil von Wachenfelt (see below). Powerful religious conviction as a background or a motive force for the healing is also seen in other folk healers. An example is the Danish peasant Peder Kragsig (1812–1895), who underwent a dramatic religious conversion in 1860 (Rørbye 1980:85ff).

Obviously rumours spread over large areas about folk healers who were

considered reliable and able to exert a curative effect. When people were in need of help for pains and other ailments, they had to use the means that were available and familiar in the folk tradition.

4 Folk Narratives about Doctors

The folk narrative tradition mentions not just folk healers but also doctors. Some of them generated more stories than others. These were doctors whose way of life was criticized through the narratives. This shows that doctors' conduct and the way they encountered patients was important if they were to establish trust among the people. The clearest example is the doctor **Emil Olsson** (1842–1914), who worked on Orust and Tjörn 1879–1893. He then moved to become district physician in Oskarshamn, and he remained unmarried all his life. He is said to have been highly outspoken and known for "his provocative behaviour". Olsson could be downright unpleasant towards people who consulted him. There was a farmhand, for example, from the farm of Vräland who asked for a certificate of physical eligibility to be able to apply for a position as boatswain in the Swedish navy. The farmhand was instructed to undress in front of the doctor, who rose suddenly, kicked him on the backside, and exclaimed: "Hanging shoulders, crooked legs, and flat feet. Damned if such a man can defend the fatherland!" (Olsson 1967:21). One may wonder how the farmhand reacted to this brusque treatment. It is understandable if people hesitated to visit a doctor who was known for his unpleasant behaviour towards patients. It reinforced the class difference between the doctor as a public official and the peasantry. In such a situation it may have felt more natural to visit a folk healer of whom one had prior experience.

Another statement ascribed to Olsson is: "I don't care so much about old women and small children" (Emanuelsson 1973:66). He is alleged to have made distinctions between people when practising his profession, devoting less attention to children and elderly women. According to the folk tradition, he consumed a great deal of alcohol, which could also be noticed when he was in service. A male informant born in 1872 said that Olsson once visited a man on the farm of Näverkärr in Röra parish who had contracted pneumonia "and he was drunk, as he was most of the time". He wrote a prescription which made the pharmacist at Kårehogen suspicious. The pharmacist said to the person who collected the medicine: "Give him just half the dose of what it says!" The next day when the doctor woke "from his drunken stupor", he realized that he had made a mistake when writing the prescription. He went back to the patient's home and asked at once: "Is the old man alive?" and "Has he taken the medicine I prescribed?" When the answer to both questions was yes, he exclaimed: "My God but he's a tough old geezer" (IFGH 5352:1).

11. Emil Olsson was district physician on Orust and Tjörn 1879–1893.

Olsson's way of life and his behaviour towards patients probably explain the statements that people on Tjörn had no confidence in him and refused to consult him. In a priest's report from Tjörn to Bishop Carl Daniel Björck in 1884 we read: "the people can put no trust in the person who now has this responsible vocation." Instead the people of Tjörn, at their own expense, arranged for a different doctor to visit the island once a month (GLA GDA F IIa: 22). It must have been Olsson's unusual and unpredictable attitude to patients that led to so many folk narratives being told of him and then passed down for many years.

5 Doctors' Narratives about Folk Healers

In their annual reports doctors were required to state what they knew about quackery in their district, and how they dealt with it. Abraham Sluger, August Westerberg, and Finnskotte-Tilda are mentioned several times. Quackery was widespread and trusted by the common people in the mid nineteenth century, as is clear from Josef Albert Carlson's (1815–1871) report for 1846: "I was engaged only by those living closest to me, which is not surprising in view of the fact that the number of so-called 'wise women' and quacks here is immense and the common people place unlimited trust in

such persons and this will take a long time to eradicate." Both the geographical and the social distance to the doctor and the long-accustomed folk experience were impediments to the establishment of medical practice. It is far from being an optimistic picture the young doctor paints. The question is what happened later in the nineteenth century.

In 1858 Doctor Olof Niklas Gammelin (1815–1867), who worked on Orust 1853–1863, mentions the crofter Abraham Jakobsson Sluger (1805–1876) with some respect because of what he accomplished with external ailments. "This man would not be so bad if he contented himself with treating external ailments, but when he also deals with internal ailments he causes damage". For that reason Gammelin had reported him to the district court. Sluger was nevertheless allowed to continue, and Gammelin mentioned his activity in 1859 and 1862. In the latter year he reports that Sluger "causes much damage with bloodletting but is not so bad at splinting broken legs". It was not uncommon for other district physicians in Sweden to accept that folk healers dealt with external ailments such as fractures and wounds, but they were not supposed to treat internal diseases (Ling 2004:148).

In 1866 "old man Sluger" is said to be the most frequently consulted quack. He is also described in 1867 as "now aged". The 1869 annual report states that he "appears to have good experience of bandaging fractures, and besides the bandaging he performs only perfectly innocent washing and rubbing with spike oil". Doctor Johan Walfrid Pihl, who came to Orust in 1875, described Sluger in that year as "a quack of the old school" who was consulted occasionally for external ailments. In 1876, the year that Sluger died, he is also mentioned in Pihl's report. It was evidently not easy to prevent folk healers who had gained the trust of the people over a long time.

August Westerberg is mentioned for the first time in a physician's report for 1868. He was a shoemaker who had passed an examination that qualified him to vaccinate against smallpox "but he seldom practises his profession". In the 1870s there is no record of Westerberg among the vaccinators working on Orust and Tjörn, but he is mentioned once in 1885. In Sweden the vaccinators were mostly parish clerks or midwives after the introduction of smallpox vaccination in 1805 and when it became compulsory in 1816 (Ling 2004:52).[6] The vaccinators on Orust and Tjörn, who were almost all parish clerks, are highly praised in several physicians' reports in the late nineteenth century, and were rewarded for their diligence and their success in having the children of the common people vaccinated.[7]

The report for 1869 mentions "a shoemaker who engages in quackery", referring to Westerberg (IFGH 5354:15). The farmer Jakob Jonsson mentions Westerberg's medical activities in 1870 (see above). The 1873 report states that Westerberg the parish clerk copies prescriptions from medical

books "but without putting his name under them". This is also reported by an informant born in 1858 in the fishing hamlet of Stocken in Morlanda (IFGH 5354:17). Doctor Johan Walfrid Pihl (1833–1902), who came to Orust in 1875, described Westerberg's activities thus: "he performs cupping, extracts teeth, and is often consulted in the first instance before a doctor is called for". The latter agrees with what Jakob Jonsson stated in the same year, 1875 (see above). Pihl had no criticism of Westerberg, merely noting that "his measures are rather harmless". In the following year, 1876, Pihl appears to take an even more favourable view, describing Westerberg's actions as "rather sensible". In 1879 Pihl's successor Emil Olsson (1842–1914), who came to Orust that year (see above), wrote that Westerberg was particularly engaged by "poor unfortunates". He is said to have written prescriptions copied from books or doctors' prescriptions, which agrees with the 1873 report. These prescriptions were accepted by the pharmacy in Kårehogen where Westerberg lived. Other folk healers in both Sweden and Denmark were known for copying prescriptions from medical books which were accepted by pharmacies (Gustafson 1981:31f; Rørbye 1980:85).

Emil Olsson, unlike his predecessor Pihl, was sceptical of Westerberg; in his opinion it was Westerberg's fault that people did not consult the qualified doctor in time. Olsson states that "as a result of his intervention many have neglected the period of grace[8] and contributed to an increase in Westerberg's considerable death list". It is a harsh judgement passed by this doctor, who according to local tradition was severe in his behaviour towards people (see above), implying that Westerberg was indirectly responsible for many deaths. According to Olsson, in 1886 he was still "a frequently consulted quack".

Olsson's attitude to Westerberg, initially very critical, may have improved after a few years. Westerberg's niece Eva, born in 1865, was recorded in 1948 speaking about this. As a shoemaker and the son of a shoemaker, August Westerberg could not afford to study or obtain any qualification. Eva Westerberg said that Doctor Emil Olsson "was angry at my uncle because so many sick people went to him instead". Once Olsson came driving in a horse and carriage and met Westerberg on the road. Olsson stopped the horse and cried out to Westerberg: "Come here and hold the horse while I get off and kill that so-called 'doctor'!" Westerberg replied calmly that he could hold the horse. A conversation arose between him and Olsson. "And that conversation was the start of a real friendship between Doctor Olsson and my uncle" (IFGH 5354:15f). Another informant, born in Morlanda in 1865, said that if Westerberg was uncertain whether one of his prescriptions would be accepted at the pharmacy, "then he took the patient to Doctor Olsson" (IFGH 5354:23).

In 1892 confidence in Westerberg had declined noticeably. This was explained by Doctor Johan Magnus Rhodin (1857–1928), who became extra

district physician on Orust in 1891 and worked there until 1904, as a consequence of "his drunken way of life". In 1894 he is said to have "been sick in bed with delirium", which made him even more disqualified to perform his healing.

Finnskotte-Tilda is mentioned for the first time by the physician Johan Walfrid Pihl in 1877 as "a woman whose name I never found out, living somewhere on the Basteskår lands in Röra parish". She "gives cures for elfshot" and is said to be consulted "by no few people from other districts as well". In 1885 the extra district physician Harald Sörman (1853–1916) came to the newly established western district of Orust. He was the son of Johan Sörman, rector of Tegneby parish 1861–1877 and describes Finnskotte-Tilda as an old woman in Röra parish who was not infrequently consulted and sold her mixtures for elfshot for 50 öre. She continued her work into the early 1890s, but to a decreasing extent. In 1892 Doctor Johan Magnus Rhodin reported that, although she was less active, it was due to her that many skin and hand infections and swellings had come "far too late for treatment". This is the same type of criticism that Doctor Emil Olsson levelled at Westerberg in 1879.

In 1894, however, Rhodin took a more favourable view of the development in that quackery was increasingly viewed as superstition by the local people. All "suddenly arising pains" are now understood differently "on account of the growing experience of the benefit of medical treatment and the disappearance of superstitious notions about their origin". Patients come much earlier to the doctor's surgery with infections and inflammations in the hands and the lymphatic vessels "because the people's trust in the elfshot crones is greatly reduced". In the past it had been unusual for patients to visit the doctor without first having contacted some "elfshot woman". In 1897 it was "rare, at least for the local people" to consult Finnskotte-Tilda, or "a seaman's wife from Röd in Röra parish" as Rhodin calls her. Carl August Ahlgren (1857–1909), who was the doctor for western Orust 1898–1906, was able to observe in 1898, with noticeable satisfaction: "There is no longer any known or consulted quack in the district". The doctors on Orust had thus, at least in their own opinion, finally managed to eliminate the various forms of folk healing that they regarded as quackery.

On Tjörn it appears that quackery virtually disappeared at roughly the same time. The first district physician, who served from 1892 until 1907, **John Emil von Wachenfelt** (1861–1931), does not say anything about quackery until 1897. He reports on a certain person "at Tjärtången in Valla parish, although his activity has not been of such a nature that I have found reason to have him prosecuted". Olle Berntsson, living on a croft at Tjärtången (see above), is mentioned the next time in 1900. "It is difficult to prove any direct damage from his treatment. Indirectly, however, the evil effect appears all the greater, especially as regards infectious disease and par-

ticularly consumption". We notice here the doctor's suspicion of the healer even if he cannot produce any concrete evidence of his harmful effect on patients.

A conflict arose between "Olle of Tjärtången" and the pharmacist Richard Abraham Indebetou (1855–1934) who came to Tjörn in 1896. He went under the name "The Evil Bite"[9] and "was furious about the water doctor and gave a violent scolding to anyone who came with a prescription from him" (Tjörne 1970:116). The pharmacist's negative view of prescriptions from a folk healer reveal a stricter attitude than in the past when prescriptions from folk healers could be accepted at pharmacies. This was the case, for instance, with August Westerberg (see above).

Besides doctors, some churchmen also criticized the untrained folk healers. In a report to the bishop on the eve of his visitation in the parish of Myckleby in 1882, the priest Anton Wilhelm Nordblom wrote: "In Långelanda there is a person who does not appear to be willing to refrain from his attempts to cure blindness through unnatural arts". Bishop Gustaf Daniel Björck urged the priest to "try by legal means to curb the abuse that, according to the report, is carried on by a superstitious person in Långelanda parish" (GLA GDA F IIa: 22). This is evidently magical folk healing which was regarded as superstition. The rural dean, Carl August Heüman (1814–1883), rector of Morlanda parish 1849–1883 (Norborg 1949:173f) "did not like how Westerberg the parish clerk healed sick people", according to an informant born in 1867, whose mother was confirmed under Heüman. He is said to have complained to "higher authorities" about Westerberg's healing activities. Later, however, the priest and the parish clerk were reconciled (IFGH 5321:10f).

6 Priests as Healers

Alongside the folk healers, some priests engaged in rational healing. This goes back to the time before doctors were stationed in the countryside. As educated men, the priests had quite a different social position in the rural community compared to the uneducated folk healers who were far down on the social ladder. The priests occupied an intermediate position between the doctors and the folk healers. Both doctors and rural informants mention three nineteenth-century priests on Orust and Tjörn who practised rational folk healing.

One of these priests was the dean and order member **Carl Ulric Ekström**, born in Stockholm in 1781. He came to Tjörn in 1839 and stayed there until his death in 1858 (Holmberg 1867:3, 35). An informant born in Stala parish on Orust in 1857 said that his father visited Ekström when he had pains in his chest and was afraid that he had consumption. Ekström had been able to allay his fears. When the question of payment came up, Ekström answered:

12. Dean Carl Ulric Ekström 1781–1858 in a lithograph portrait from some time between 1853 and 1858. After Pettersson 1978.

"I never charge because I don't do it for profit, only to help people in need". When a woman came for help against gout,[10] Ekström told her that he too had severe gout which he could not get rid of. He nevertheless promised to prescribe some medicine to alleviate the woman's gout, "but I can't take the gout away" (VFF 498:34f). He went under the name "the trinity doctor" because the people thought he was a doctor of theology, philosophy, and medicine (Pettersson 1978:21ff; Larsson 2015:9ff).

On a visitation on Tjörn in 1845, Bishop Anders Bruhn praised Ekström for his healing activity and for having established a private parish pharmacy in the vicarage, "from which medicine is issued free of charge to the poor people in need thereof" (GLA GDA F IIa: 12). Ekström appears to have been impelled in his medical activity by a social pathos. This, and the fact that the help he gave was free, may have been important reasons why Ekström enjoyed the confidence of the people regardless of the social class of the patients.

The first time a doctor refers to priests as healers is in 1853. The district physician Olof Niklas Gammelin (1815–1867) had just started his practice on Orust (Emanuelsson 1973:65) and commented on Dean Ekström's medical competence. "As well read in the natural sciences, especially in medicine, as in the theological discipline, this venerable old man spends his time alternating between pastoral care, which he still manages by himself, and giving advice and often medicaments to poor parishioners and others who come in large numbers from the inland and also from Orust". Ekström was a member of the Royal Academy of Sciences in Stockholm and was in-

volved in several scientific endeavours. This higher education may explain Doctor Gammelin's positive assessment of him.

In 1855 Gammelin wrote about the assistant rector **Anders Fredrik Wetterquist** (1817–1892), who worked in Tegneby parish and lived in Stala parish 1855–1862 (Holmberg 1867:2, 142, 307; Skarstedt 1948:591). Gammelin's opinion was negative: "a man who, with no understanding of the medical profession, has nevertheless succeeded in gaining a certain trust." Gammelin and the pharmacist Carl Fredrik Schugge (1808–1861) in Kårehogen reported this assistant rector for quackery. He was acquitted by the district court and the doctor and the pharmacist were ordered to pay the witnesses' expenses. The court of appeal later reversed this judgement and sentenced Wetterquist to pay a fine for pursuing medical activities and to compensate witnesses, plaintiffs, and prosecutors for their expenses.[11] Gammelin wrote in 1857 that Wetterquist's "punishment was unsuccessful" since he announced a special collection in church so that the parishioners would "pay for these his intentional sins". The doctor's critique against Wetterquist is thus very harsh, even after he was convicted. It is not certain, however, that the offering Wetterquist requested brought in so much, for an informant in Stala, born in 1846, stated that "they didn't give him [Wetterquist] much because he was so severe" (IFGH 5162:14). It should be noted that the collection was voluntary. Wetterquist was not only severe but also wise. "He was almost omniscient", according to an informant born in Stala parish in 1845 (IFGH 5754:28).[12] A great-grandchild (born 1927) of his has reported that she had heard from the grandmother and her brother, who was Wetterquist's son, that he was interested in people's ailments and wanted to help. This reminds us of Dean Ekström's social pathos. In 1858 Gammelin noted that Wetterquist "has almost stopped his quackery" after the sentence in the court of appeal. In 1862 he became rector of Tossene parish in Bohuslän, where he worked until his death in 1892 (Norborg 1949:199f).

The next time a priest is mentioned in a doctor's reports is in the 1880s, concerning the assistant rector **Johan Alfred Gullbring** (1845–1927) on Gullholmen, where he served 1880–1892 (Norborg 1949:126f). He began to study medicine in Lund but then switched to theological studies for want of financial means, and thus became a priest. He later continued studying medicine on his own and performed minor operations such as cutting abscesses on the neck (*Göteborgs stifts herdaminne* 2, 2014:644ff). In 1885 he was harshly criticized by Doctor Harald Sörman (1853–1916), who was responsible for the western district of Orust 1885–1886 including the fishing hamlets in Morlanda. The criticism concerned the way Gullbring "with rather shameless audacity in word and deed rarely if ever feels called upon to recommend summoning a physician". He thus obstructed patients who wished to consult a doctor. Voices had been heard calling for his prosecution, but this never happened. Sörman's interpretation of this was that "the

easily led populace (particularly the fishing people)" usually put complete trust in the priest's statements and "fantastic explanations". Sörman was himself the son of a priest from Orust and engaged in the church all his life, mostly serving in Malmö (see above). In an obituary we read (*Sveriges läkarehistoria*, 4:552f): "Fearless by nature, he never hesitated to intervene, even if it could cause personal discomfort".

Doctor Johan Magnus Rhodin (1857–1928), who came to Orust in 1891, uttered a somewhat more positive judgement on Gullbring that same year. "He treats all ailments, external and internal, with equal confidence, albeit not always with the greatest success". Gullbring relied on his medical competence. There is nothing to suggest that he used magical methods; just as in the case of Carl Ulric Ekström his work can be described as rational folk healing according to the terminology of the Norwegian folklorist Olav Bø (1986:7ff).[13] In 1892 Rhodin reported that quackery had declined significantly and that the main reason for this was that Gullbring had left the district. He then became rector of Torslanda and Öckerö outside Gothenburg, where he worked until his death in 1927 (Norborg 1949:127; *Göteborgs stifts herdaminne* 2, 2014:644ff).

13. Johan Alfred Gullbring was priest on Gullholmen 1880–1892. Photo: Kristina Gustavsson.

7 Economic Aspects of Consulting a Doctor

An economic factor may have been relevant when people hesitated to consult a doctor and instead contacted a folk healer or the priest. For a long time financial reasons also lay behind the parish councillors' opposition to the employment of trained midwives (see below).

The farmer Jakob Jonsson pointed out the difficulty of finding money to visit the doctor or buy medicine at the pharmacy. On 29 December 1874 the crofter Abraham Johansson paid 8 riksdalers of his croft tax for that year. Jonsson noted that this sum "now came in handy because now we have to consult the doctor for Anna Britta [his daughter], which costs money, and buy medicaments which also cost money, all of which is no little expense and troublesome". The fee for the doctor in Henån was one riksdaler and the medicine cost two riksdalers (part 2, p. 83).

It was much cheaper to visit folk healers. They often had no fixed rates, charging whatever a person could afford or accepting payment in kind (Tillhagen 1962:93f), unlike the pecuniary fees demanded by the doctors. Dean Ekström took no payment whatever (see above). This was something the poor people could take advantage of. In view of the fact that the folk healers primarily belonged to the lower stratum of the population and often were crofters, healing could be an important source of income for them, which they did not willingly give up, or simply could not afford to.

In the 1880s a new development began in places on the coast furthest out in Morlanda, especially Käringön, when the summer visitors, or as they were called then, "bathing guests", came to bathe in the healthy salt water (Gustavsson 2013). This was possible because new steamboat lines had opened. This also brought doctors who set up clinics in the seaside resorts. One of these was Fredrik Lindskog (born 1870) from Stockholm, who was the physician at the Käringön resort 1896–1900. These doctors could help to reduce the use of folk healers. Doctor Emil Olsson wrote in his report for 1884: "For it is due to the frequent and cheap steamboat connections and the competition between doctors to perform services cheap and practise virtually free of charge that it is no longer necessary for anyone to turn to quacks". This situation can also explain what the district physician for western Orust 1885–1886, Harald Sörman, wrote in the following year, 1885: "the people of the archipelago are far more inclined to engage doctors when need arises than is the case with the district's farming population". A similar observation was made by Doctor Johan Magnus Rhodin in 1900 when he noted that "the rural population, for reasons of thrift, only consult doctors in serious cases".

8 Qualified Midwives in Competition with Unqualified

Another tough nut for the doctors to crack in the nineteenth century was getting the parish councillors to employ qualified midwives and then gaining acceptance for these among the country people. They were accustomed to engaging local women known as *jordemödrar* or *jordegummor* who had tried and tested experience but no formal training. The first national regulations for midwives, detailing their training and tasks, were issued in 1777. Only trained midwives would be allowed to practise the profession (Höjeberg 1991:99, 102; Höjeberg 2011:87). The struggle that was waged in the nineteenth century to establish qualified midwives was similar in Norway after a law on midwives was passed there in 1810 (Schiøtz 2017:366ff; Alver *et al*. 2013:31).[14] The struggle in Sweden was rendered easier when more training places were created for student midwives. This training was introduced in Gothenburg in 1856, having previously only been available in Stockholm.

Childbirth was a critical situation in the nineteenth century. It entailed a threat to the lives of the mother and the baby (Höjeberg 1991:120f). Puerperal fever was a grave danger for the women (Höjeberg 2011:133f). The farmer Jakob Jonsson noted several cases of death in childbed. In the 1870s he recorded several cases where the woman had died after a doctor had used forceps to extract the baby. On 31 August 1875 the church bells were rung for a wife who had died "when the deputy district physician had drawn out the child with an instrument". Jonsson's comment on the unfortunate consequence of the use of forceps by Doctor Johan Walfrid Pihl (1833–1902), the new district physician on Orust in 1875 (Emanuelsson 1973:66), is that it was "rather sad" (part 2:136). A similar case is mentioned in June 1875 (part 2:117f) and another in 1878. On 28 March that year a woman was buried "having passed away as a consequence of the foetus being removed with an implement by Doctor Pihl" (part 2:257). In his report for 1878 this doctor gives several examples of having been summoned to difficult deliveries, four of which took place in March and two of the mothers died. On 16 March he was called to "a 35-year-old multiparous woman with a transverse lie and left-hand prolapse. The foetus was turned with no particular difficulty. No bleeding to speak of. The foetus died. The woman in a poor state. She died 20/3 of endometritis". It is this woman who died in 1878 that Jakob Jonsson mentions. One may wonder what it meant for the trust that people placed in this doctor when he failed several times in the course of a few years to save the life of women in childbirth.

The very first district physician on Orust and Tjörn, Johan Boustedt (1802–1868) (Emanuelsson 1973:63), pointed out in 1836 that the clergy at parish councils had urged the parishes to employ qualified midwives. Despite that, "the common people have not been persuaded to contribute to this; instead women in childbed are assisted by unqualified *jordegummor*".

14. Johan Walfrid Pihl was district physician on Orust and Tjörn 1875–1879.

The following year he was summoned to a highly problematic birth where an untrained woman was helping. The foetus had water on the brain (hydrocephalus) and could only be extracted after three hours' work, by which time it was dead. There was not enough space to insert forceps.

On a visitation in Tegneby parish in 1839 Bishop Carl Fredrik Wingård urged the parishioners to employ qualified midwives "as a means to prevent the premature death of many mothers and children alike" (GLA GDA F IIa: 11; Olsson 1967:25). There was still no qualified midwife in 1847; the district physician Josef Albert Carlsson stated that instead he had to assist "innumerable times". In 1846 he had performed three deliveries with forceps. In 1851 Doctor Sven Kellberg (1784–1863) complained that all the motions proposed at several parish meetings on Orust "have stranded in the face of the peasants' unanimous refusal to allocate the smallest amount to pay a midwife". On a visitation to Myckleby parish in 1852 Bishop Anders Bruhn lamented that the parishes refused to see the benefit of being able to engage a qualified midwife for a small fee, "through whose help protracted and dangerous illnesses could be prevented at the right time for both the mother and the child – perhaps the lives of both could be saved" (GLA GDA F IIa: 14). Olof Niklas Gammelin (1815–1867) found the same negative situation in his first physician's report in 1853. He viewed it as "a great blessing" if a

school could be established in Gothenburg to train midwives; this did happen in 1856. He thought it would then be easier to recruit midwife candidates who hesitated, for economic reasons, to go to Stockholm to train. The situation got brighter in 1855 when all three parishes on Orust (Morlanda, Tegneby, and Myckleby) decided to grant salaries for one midwife each, which Tjörn had not yet done. In 1857 Gammelin stated that "the people of Tjörn will not undertake to pay for a midwife on any conditions". In 1859 he arranged a meeting with all the parishes of Tjörn to get them to employ a midwife. The response, however, was that "until the Government obliges them to pay a midwife they shall not procure one". Economic reasons evidently lay behind this attitude to qualified midwives. It was not until a meeting of parliament in 1908 that each municipality was obliged to employ a qualified midwife (Höjeberg 1991:178).

The parish councillors on Orust and Tjörn stood their ground, refusing to bend to the wishes of any state officials, whether it was doctors, clergymen, or bailiffs. In 1860 it is reported that the people of Tjörn "still stubbornly refuse to acquire a midwife". Bishop Gustaf Daniel Björck brought up the matter on a visitation to Tjörn in 1860 and found it "highly necessary to employ a midwife in the parish" (GLA GDA F IIa: 16). A breakthrough came in 1861. The crown bailiff of Orust and Tjörn, Oscar Warmark, wrote in his five-year report on 12 February 1862: "Following one parish meeting after the other, last year the people of Tjörn were finally convinced to pass the decision to employ a midwife, at an annual salary of 100 riksdalers and a special fee of 1 riksdaler for each delivery on a freehold and 50 öre on a croft, the person in question being a woman from Tjörn who is taking the course in Gothenburg and is expected to complete it by the end of this year" (GLA Landskansliet i Göteborgs och Bohuslän DVb:8). According to the physician's report for 1864 there was then a midwife on Tjörn. A higher fee for farmers than for crofters remained in force on Tjörn but not on Orust during the remainder of the nineteenth century.

In 1867 there were four midwives in all on Orust and Tjörn, two of whom were also qualified in instrumental delivery, meaning that they had the knowledge and authority to use forceps. The physicians' reports each year state how many midwives, after three months' special training, had gained the right to perform instrumental deliveries, which was possible starting in 1829. Before this, only doctors had that right (Höjeberg 2011:128ff; Schiøtz 2017:369). At the end of the nineteenth century virtually all midwives on Orust and Tjörn had gained that additional qualification. Untrained "wise women", however, were engaged just as often as midwives. None of them used forceps because only qualified midwives and the district physician had the authority to do that. In Morlanda 65 out of 124 deliveries in 1867 took place with the help of "wise women", according to a statement by Doctor Herman Theodor Nyström (1825–1890) who worked on Orust and Tjörn

1866–1868. He wanted the assistance of the clergy to put an end to "such an abuse" practised by these "so-called wise women".

In 1878 there was still only one midwife on the whole of Tjörn. In 1884 that number had increased to two midwives, one for the inland parishes and one for the coastal areas. One of the new midwives, Emma Persson, had "obtained unusually fine grades from the midwife training college in Gothenburg". Doctor Gustaf Assaf Sjödahl (born 1857) worked in the western district of Orust 1886–1891. He took a great interest in bacteriology and hygiene and had undertaken special studies in Germany in the 1870s and 1880s, the period regarded as the international breakthrough of bacteriology (Schiøtz 2017:69ff). Sjödahl was not satisfied with the midwives' cleanliness during deliveries. "They do not bring any antiseptic solution with them, but arrive with a little oil, iron chloride solution, and their enema syringe". This doctor gave the midwives instructions on how to work with disinfection, and he hoped for an improvement. Having clean hands became extremely important for midwives in the late nineteenth century. This was stressed in a circular from the Royal Board of Medicine in 1881 (Höjeberg 2011:143ff).

In his first physician's report from Orust, Johan Magnus Rhodin stated in 1891 that a certified midwife "is generally engaged for all deliveries". He had gone through the journals where they recorded their activities. Midwives were obliged to keep journals starting in 1881 (Höjeberg 2011:160, 199ff). In both 1892 and 1894 Rhodin mentions that midwives are generally engaged on Orust with the exception of Röra parish "where the *jordegummor* are still called on". When the doctor had criticized this, the people of Röra explained that the midwife lived too far away. Citing distance as a reason for engaging untrained midwives happened elsewhere in Sweden and was not uncommon in Norway (Alver *et al*. 2013:61).

In 1894 Tjörn had acquired a third midwife and a fourth was employed in 1895. In the 1890s all the midwives in Orust and Tjörn were certified to perform instrumental deliveries. As in 1894, the parish of Röra on Orust was an exception in 1896 as well in that untrained women were used. This happened at as many as 49 out of 59 births. In 1898 there were 236 deliveries on Orust, where qualified midwives served at 157, or roughly two thirds of the cases. The remaining third "almost certainly represents the work of so-called *jordegummor*", according to Doctor Carl August Ahlgren (1857–1909), who served on Orust 1898–1906. At the same time 78 per cent of women in childbirth in Norway were assisted by qualified midwives, who there go under the designation *jordmødrer* (Schiøtz 2017:100).

During the late nineteenth century midwives devoted some of their time to general health care (cf. Höjeberg 1991:225), although this was not so well received by the rural people. Doctor Robert Wilhelm Malmgren (born 1853), who served in the district of Orust and Tjörn 1894–1897, wrote in 1896: "A practising midwife has repeatedly offered to take care of sick people in their

homes, but not once have her services been utilized, and therefore I consider the whole idea to have no prospect of success in the future here, at least not in this century". Malmgren also complained that the provisional cottage hospitals had not been used during epidemics. The suggestion to employ a nurse was even more difficult to implement "because the public have not the slightest sympathy for the proposal". By 1900 there was still no qualified nurse serving on either Orust or Tjörn (cf. Emanuelsson 1991).

Conclusion

During a fifty-year period in the latter half of the nineteenth century there was a gradual change in the way the common people consulted district physicians, pharmacists, and midwives, in contrast to the older practice of turning to folk healers and certain priests. The oral narrative traditions recorded in the folklore archives and in extant peasant diaries have given important insight into the way people handled illness and epidemics. Both folk healers and doctors as well as pharmacists are mentioned in this oral tradition which provides information about the outlook of the rural people. There are also religious interpretations.

It was no easy matter for doctors to change old established patterns. When doctors came to the countryside the people were faced with the choice between consulting trained personnel and sticking to their former habit of using untrained healers. How could the doctors build up trust and thus transform folk practice? During a transitional period that lasted several decades it was possible for people to combine the old and the new. This suggests that it took time to break down strong cultural patterns which the peasantry believed had functioned well enough. Both economic reasons and geographical distance thwarted the efforts of the doctors. The folk healers and the untrained midwives were much cheaper to consult and they lived much closer. In childbirth it is natural to want help to come quickly. Women should not feel that help is too far away; it is better if a helper is close at hand, and moreover a person one already knows.

The development was thus that what doctors called quackery was widespread in 1846 but had almost ceased by the end of the 1890s, at least as far as the doctors knew and believed. That is how long it took for the doctors to gain the confidence of the common people through their efforts and their enlightenment. They could then be consulted as a rule in cases of illness, thus largely taking the place of folk healers. At the same time, some tried and tested experience represented by rational folk healing was lost. This radical cultural change had parallels in Norway. Folk healers certainly did not disappear in the early twentieth century. In Norway they found new niches for their activity, for instance in curing rickets (Alver *et al*. 2013:114ff).

Some doctors were more eager and critical than others in their battle against

folk healers. A clear example of this is the very different statements by the doctors Johan Walfrid Pihl and Emil Olsson about the healing activities of the parish clerk August Westerberg in the 1870s and 1880s. On the one hand there was some understanding and on the other hand a total rejection of this healing. It is not possible to see any general development which meant that the district physicians became more critical or more understanding in relation to folk healing as time passed in the second half of the nineteenth century. The attitudes appear to have been more individual in character.

Doctors received solid support in their endeavours from priests and crown bailiffs. It should be noted that the number of doctors increased gradually in the late nineteenth century. This is noticeable in that Tjörn received its own district physician in 1892 and that the district physician stationed on Orust from 1885 had an assistant doctor to help him; the latter was responsible for western Orust, where the fishing hamlets were located. These external changes, which came very late in the nineteenth century, helped to reduce the geographical distance to doctors.

There was a similar effort on the part of district physicians, priests, and crown bailiffs to persuade the parish councils to grant funding to employ qualified midwives. The people of Tjörn resisted a few years longer than the inhabitants of Orust. The local people invoked the economic aspect and also the geographical distance when they were urged to stop consulting untrained midwives.

The aim of this study has been to focus on a specific geographical area, which has not been done before, to get at a historical process that went on in both Sweden and Norway during the nineteenth century. It took place when the then prevailing medical knowledge in the form of district physicians, pharmacists, and trained midwives was to be established in the countryside and gain the trust of the people there. It was necessary to bring about a change in people's outlook and behaviour. What had previously been tried and tested practice could not be eliminated at a stroke, even though the doctors could invoke a law against quackery. There were several obstacles of an economic, geographical, and cultural kind. This study seeks to add further aspects to an existing discussion on medical and cultural history. My study can be followed up in other districts to see whether similar patterns made themselves felt there at the same time.

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[1] http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/publikasjoner/histemne-02.html#P909_26538, cf. Ruud 2016: 55.

[2] Biographical data on the doctors comes from *Sveriges Läkare-Historia* 1873; *Svensk Läkare-Matrikel* 1–3, 1886–1901; *Biografisk matrikel över svenska läkarkåren 1924*, 1924; *Svenskt porträttgalleri* XIII, 1899, and *Sveriges Läkarehistoria*, 1930–1935. Details of pharmacies and pharmacists come from *Sveriges Apotekare-Historia*, 1878; *Svenskt porträttgalleri* XVI II, 1907, and *Sveriges Apotekarhistoria*, 1918–1923.

[3] In source references I state part 1 or 2 plus page number(s) in these publications. Jonsson's letters and other private documents cover a larger part of the nineteenth century than the 1860s and 1870s and are in private ownership.

[4] *Fyrk* or *fyrktal* was a unit of taxation and suffrage when there were graded voting rights in the countryside during the period 1862–1909 (www.ne.se Fyrk).

[5] Olle Olsson was a *hälftenbrukare*, a tenant to whom the landowner granted land, seed corn, and livestock; the tenant himself did the work on the farm and the yield was divided equally (www.ne.se Hälftenbrukare).

[6] In Norway a law on smallpox vaccination was passed in 1810. Alver *et al*. 2013:28.

[7] The district physician Robert Vilhelm Malmgren (born 1853), who worked on Orust and Tjörn 1893–1897, wrote in 1894 that the parish clerk Isak Rutgersson in Stala parish "has discharged his duties with such zeal that there is not a single overaged person in the parish who is not vaccinated. He has therefore also been remembered with remuneration in the form of awards and cash, most recently in 1890, but I also recommend that he receive a medal for his exceeding diligence". There is no mention of either vaccinators or the local people's reactions to vaccination in the folklore archives.

[8] The term for "period of grace" is *fatalietid*, a legal term denoting the time within which an action is to be taken; www.ne.se Fatalietid.

[9] "The Evil Bite" (*Onda bettet*) was the name of a morbid ailment consisting of purulent sores and redness around the nails. Tillhagen 1962:77ff.

[10] Gout is a disease caused by deposits of crystals of uric acid in the joints. It can cause acute attacks of pain and swelling in a joint. www.ne.se Gikt.

[11] In the period 1857–1878 Swedish courts tried 337 charges of quackery, of which 275, or roughly 80 per cent, led to conviction and fines. Ling 2004:77f.

[12] The term "omniscient" (*allvetande*) was applied to several folk healers. Ljungström 1984: 69f; af Klintberg 1985:19ff.

[13] Olav Bø has noted that many priests in Norway likewise had a great deal of medical knowledge in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Bø 1986:23.

[14] In Norway the untrained women who assisted women in childbirth went under the name *hjelpekoner* or "help-women"; these were women with experience but no formal qualifications, who lived nearby (Alver *et al*. 2013:60ff).

Óðin stoyttist í jörðina niður

Magic and Myth in the Faroese Ballads

Lucie Korecká

Abstract

This article is a case study of motifs in the Faroese balladry and their relation to the Old Norse literary tradition. The main objective is to study motifs rather than storylines, and the initial hypothesis is that while storylines can remain relatively little changed through the centuries, specific use of motifs can show the development of the perception of the stories more distinctively. The study of motifs connected to magic and myth illustrates how such motifs go far beyond being simple borrowings or remnants, how they became independent of their original Old Norse sources and continued to develop as a living part of the Faroese folklore tradition. The above-mentioned hypothesis proves true, as the present method of study reveals substantial differences between the ballad tradition and its Old Norse sources, even in cases when the storyline is clearly related. On the other hand, the method emphasizes the consistency of the ballad tradition and the close relation of motifs and ideas in ballads whose storylines are otherwise unrelated.

Keywords: Faroese ballads, legendary sagas, Eddic poetry, magic

Introduction

The supernatural has fascinated the poets, singers, and storytellers who created folklore traditions, and has been an important part of the cultural background and popular belief that formed these traditions. It also plays a significant role in Old Norse literature, especially in the genre of *fornaldarsögur*, which in turn influenced and contributed to the development of Nordic folklore.

In this paper I would like to analyse the magic and mythological motifs as they appear throughout the Faroese ballad genre, but an attempt to treat the supernatural in Faroese ballads as a whole would be beyond the scope of one paper. I therefore do not include stories about giants, trolls, dwarfs, and elves; a study of these supernatural elements could bring results that would make for an interesting comparison with the conclusions of the current essay, but it remains to be undertaken elsewhere. Here I concentrate on magic performed by humans and on the magic and supernatural attributes connected to the Old Norse heathen gods. The study does not claim to give a full account of these motifs either, it is rather an attempt to illustrate some

ideas about the motifs with a few relevant examples. These ideas may then serve as a basis for a further investigation of the topic.

The Distribution of Motifs

In the first part of the paper I would like to study magic and myth within the Faroese ballad genre to see whether the individual motifs are unique and specific to particular ballads, or whether some of them can be seen as standard themes expressed by stereotyped formulas. My hypothesis is that the former would suggest that such motifs are likely to be direct borrowings from – or remnants of – an older, mostly forgotten tradition, while the latter would mean that they had become a living part of the ballad tradition. Examples of isolated remnants of Old Norse traditions will be discussed in the section about Scandinavian balladry, where we can find solitary mentions of Norse mythological elements, such as the heathen god Þórr. In the Faroese ballad tradition, on the other hand, a larger number of supernatural motifs that can be related to Old Norse sources seem to have acquired an independent life of their own, because they not only appear in a wide array of various ballads with unrelated storylines, but at the same time they are expressed by stanzas with the same wording. Three distinctive motifs will be studied here to illustrate the matter.

The most frequent magical motif in the ballads is that of a magic storm sent by the villain against the hero (Thompson D2141. "storm produced by magic"). It can be found for example in *Artal kongur í Atlandi* (TSB E 161)*, Álvur kongur* (TSB E 58)*, Einars tættir* (TSB E 120)*, Grimmars kvæði* (TSB E 98)*, Grímur á Bretlandi* (TSB E 106)*, Guttormur í Hattarmóti* (TSB E 39)*, Jústinjalls kvæði* (TSB E 107)*, Tiki-Álvs kvæði* (TSB E 22)*, Sigmundar kvæði* (TSB E 30), and *Jómsvíkinga vísa* (TSB E 15). The structure of the motif is very similar in all the aforementioned examples: the villain performs his magic, the sea becomes stormy, the storm is commented on by the sailors and described as being caused by magic, the steersman steers well and saves the ship through hard toil, the hero casts protective runes to calm the sea, the storm subsides. The wording of the stanzas is also almost identical in all the ballads in question. Let me give a few examples:

a) the villain performs magic (Thompson D2141.0.7. "storm raised by incantation"; D1545.0.1. "magic runes control sea")

Jústinjall A216[1]
Kongurin gongur í grasagarð við tregan og tunga sút, ramar ristir hann illgerningar, sendir í havið út.
The king walks in the grassy yard with distress and heavy sorrow, he carves strong evil arts, sends them into the sea.

Grimmar A174
Grimmar gongur í grasagarð, reyðargull bar á hendi, ristir ramar illgerningar, út í havið sendi.
Grimmar walks in the grassy yard, bore red gold on his hand, he carves strong evil arts, sent them into the sea..

b) the storm is commented on by the sailors

Artal 72
Svaraði ein, á bunka stóð, av so miklum vanda: "Hvat er hetta fyri hestarið, sum eftir havi hanga?"
There answered one who stood on board in great distress: "What is this horse-ride going over the sea?"

Álvur D12
Til svaraði Álvur kongur av so miklum vanda: "Hvat er hetta fyri hestarið, sum eftir havi ganga?"
Then answered King Álvur in such great distress: "What is this horse-ride going over the sea?"

Grímur D72
Svaraði ein so lítil svein, bak við róðrið stár: "Hvat er hatta fyri hestar, eftir havinum gár?"
There answered a little boy who stood by the rudder: "What is this for horses that go over the sea?"

Grimmar A175
Svaraði tá tann lítli svein, tóktist komin í vanda: "Hvaðani eru hesir avrekshestar, ið eftir sjónum ganga?"
Then answered the little boy, he seemed distressed: "Whence come these mighty horses that go over the sea?"

Guttormur B12
Tí svaraði skeinkisvein, reydligt er hans hár: "Grimir eru teir hestarnir, eftir havinum gár."
To that answered the servant boy, red is his hair: "Wild are those horses that go over the sea."

c) a reply to the comment, explaining the magic origin of the storm

Artal 73
Hatta eru eingir hestar, ei heldur nøkur ross, hetta eru illgerningar, reistar eftir oss.
Those are no horses nor any steed, these are evil arts raised against us.

Álvur D13
Hatta eru eingir hestarið, ei heldur onnur ross, tað eru ramar illgerðir, sum reistar eru eftir oss.
Those are no horse-rides, nor other steed, these are strong evil arts that are raised against us.

Grímur D73
Tað eru eingir hestar, ei heldur nøkur ross, tað eru Grimmars illgerningar, hann setir móti oss.
Those are no horses nor any steed, those are Grimmar's evil arts that he sets against us.

Grimmar A176
Hatta eru eingin hestar, tóast tað sýnist tær, hatta eru Grimmars illgerningar, sendar móti mær.
Those are no horses, even though it seems so, those are Grimmar's evil arts sent against me.

Guttormur B13
Tað eru eingir hestar, tað eru eingi ross, tað eru grimar illgerningar, ristar móti oss.
Those are no horses, those are no steeds, those are cruel evil arts carved against us.

d) the storm is described as being caused by magic

Artal 81
So var veður á sjónum hart, aldan reistist úr sjó, tað voldi hann Artal kongur, við illgerningar stóð.
So hard was the weather on the sea, a wave rose from the sea, it was caused by King Artal who performed evil arts.

Álvur A8
So var veður á sjónum hart, grótið reis frá grunni, voldi tað óndi Ásmundur kongur, sum illgerningar kundi.
So hard was the weather on the sea that stones rose from the bottom, it was caused by the evil King Ásmundur who wielded evil arts.

Grimmar A177
Tá var veður á sjónum hart, bylgjan reisti frá grunni, voldi tað vándi Grimmar kongur, so vánda gerning kundi.
So hard was the weather on the sea that the wave rose from the bottom, it was caused by the evil King Grimmar who wielded evil arts.

e) the steersman saves the ship through hard toil

Artal 79
Átjan dagar Hákun ungi í eysturmála stóð, tá ið hann stýrdi tí breiða knør, úr skjúrtu vant hann blóð.
For eighteen days the ships of Hákun the Young were flooded, when he steered the broad ship, he wrung sweat out of his shirt.

Álvur D18
Átta dagar Álvur kongur í eysturmáli stóð, so stýrdi hann Justan jall, úr skjúrtu vant hann blóð.
For eight days the ships of King Álvur were flooded, Justan jarl steered so that he wrung blood out of his shirt.

Grímur D74
Átta dagar Grímur í eysturmáli stóð, jallurin stóð við stýrið, úr skjúrtu vant hann blóð.
For eight days the ships of Grímur were flooded, the jarl stood by the rudder, he wrung blood out of his shirt.

Grimmar A180
Tríggjar dagar Gormundur í eysturmála stóð, so stýrir hann buðlungsson, úr skjúrtu vant hann blóð.

For three days the ships of Gormundur were flooded, Buðlung's son steers so that he wrung blood out of his shirt.

f) the hero calms the sea by casting protective runes (Thompson D2141.1. "storm magically stilled"; D1388.1.3. "runes protect from storm and shipwreck")

Grímur D76
Grímur tók sítt rúnarkelvi, kastar út for borð, ikki mátti ódnin vaksa, mennilig vóru hans orð.
Grímur took his runestick, throws it overboard, the storm could not rise, manly were his words.

Jústinjall A46/A220
Hann tók upp tað rúnarkelvi, kastar út for borð, ikki mátti gerning vaksa, megnaði vóru hans orð.
He took the runestick, threw it overboard, the arts could not rise, mighty were his words.

Grimmar A182
Gormundur tók sítt rúnukelvi, hann kastar út fyri borð, ikki mátti illgerning vaksa, megnað vóru hans orð.
Gormundur took his runestick, he throws it overboard, the evil arts could not rise, mighty were his words.

Guttormur B17
Guttormur tók sítt rúnukelvi, kastar út for borð, ikki mátti illgerning vaksa, magnaði vóru hans orð.
Guttormur took his runestick, throws it overboard, the evil arts could not rise, mighty were his words.

The similarity of the wording – the use of stereotyped formulas – shows that the motif has received a standard form. Since the motif is found in so many ballads with otherwise unrelated storylines, it is obviously a case of an independent motif that could be implemented into various stories at will: it had become one of the optional components of the frequent and diverse sailing theme.

The wording suggests that the storm is both created and calmed by carving runes. The fact that runes as a means of performing magic are directly or at least indirectly mentioned in the ballads implies that the motif of rune magic was considered important and specific and was given considerable attention. The part about casting protective runes is missing in two cases, in *Álvur kongur* and *Einars tættir*, where the storm is overcome only by the physical strength and capability of the hero steering the ships, but that is only a minor difference. The only significant difference occurs in *Jómsvíkinga vísa* and *Sigmundar kvæði*, where the magicians are successful in hindering their opponents' journey with the storm. This is in keeping with the prosaic tradition, *Jómsvíkinga saga* and *Færeyinga saga* respectively. The wording in these stanzas also differs considerably from the examples

listed above, which means that in these cases we are not dealing with the stereotyped formulas normally used for the motif of magic storm, but rather with a retelling of particular scenes from the prosaic tradition with the use of other poetic formulas:

Jómsvíkinga A38
Eitt kom æl av Kingilsvág, haglið vá eitt oyra, voldi tað Guðrun illgerðsbrúður, at allur herurin doyði.
There came a storm from Kingilsvágur, the hailstones weighed an ounce, Guðrun the evil woman caused the whole army to die.

Sigmundur A 19
Sjógvurin gerst nú gulur, nú blá, sandurin uppi á tilju lá.
The sea turns now yellow, now blue, the sand lay on board.

Sigmundur A 20
Tekur at rúka sandur og sjógvur, "Nú er Tróndur vorðin óður."
The sand and the sea begins to whirl, "Tróndur has now become furious."

Another distinctive motif, although rather less frequent, is transformation into wild beasts while fighting (Thompson D659.2. "transformation to animals to fight"). This motif plays an important role in the ballads *Finnur hin fríði* (TSB E 83) and *Grimmars kvæði* (TSB E 98). In version A of *Finnur hin fríði*, the protagonist is simply killed by an opponent who turns into a dragon and spits poison onto him. In version C, however, Finnur also transforms himself, in this case into a wolf, in order to be able to better fight the dragon. This same structure is found in *Grimmars kvæði*, where the evil magician Grimmar transforms himself into a flying dragon, and the hero turns into an eagle in order to face the dragon in the air. Their duel is described, then both opponents rest a while and transform again, in version A this time into a wolf and an eagle. There are also considerable similarities in the wording of the stanzas:

a) the magician transforms himself into a dragon (Thompson D199.2.1. "magician fights as dragon")

Finnur C126
Rólant hvarv á nesi burt, fáir finnast slíkir, hann kom aftur uttan borgar í flogdreka líki.
Rólant disappeared on the ness, there are few men like him, he came back outside the town in the form of a flying dragon.

Grimmar A206
Grimmar hvarv úr sessi burtur, fáir finnast slíkir, hann kom aftur uttan borgar í flogdreka líki.
Grimmar disappeared from his seat, there are few men like him, he came back outside the town in the form of a flying dragon.

b) the magician shoots arrows out of his body (Thompson D2091.14. "magician shoots an arrow of each finger against enemy")

Finnur C127
Skapti seg í flogdreka líki, hann fleyg í loft við veingjum, pílur fleyg af hans hvørji fjøður, hann feldi reystar dreingir.
He transformed himself into a flying dragon, flew into the air on his wings, arrows flew out of his every feather, he felled valiant men.

Grimmar A219
Hann brá seg í varglíki, hann fleyg í loft við veingjum, pílur fleyg av hans hvørji fjøður,[2] hann feldi reystar dreingir.
He turned into a wolf, flew into the air on his wings, arrows flew out of his every feather, he felled valiant men.

c) the hero transforms himself into a beast in order to oppose his enemy (Thompson D659.2. "transformation to animals to fight")

Finnur C128
Hagar ið Finnur hetta sær, mannspell var at meini, skapti hann seg í varglíki, hann feldi allvæl fleiri.
When Finnur sees this, the loss of men was sorrowful, he transformed himself into a wolf and felled even more men.

Grimmar A220
Hagar ið Gormundur hetta sá, vænti spell var á meiri, skapti seg aftur í ørnalíki, hann feldi hálvæl fleiri.
When Gormundur saw this, he expected even more loss, he transformed himself again into an eagle and felled half as many men again.

The storylines of the ballads are otherwise unrelated, so the motif seems again to be freely implemented into the stories. There is only an unclear mention of the means by which the magicians manage to perform the transformation: *Grimmars kvæði* says that the hero put on a magic glove (cf. Thompson D530. "transformation by putting on skin, clothing, etc."), but it is not explained further. Anyway, even the fact that the means of the transformation are mentioned at all seems to indicate a special interest in the magic as such, beyond its role in the story. This will be further discussed later.

In my opinion the most interesting, and also rather frequent, magic motif is that of the villain sinking into the ground while fighting, and reappearing behind his victim's back (cf. Thompson F942. "man sinks into earth"). This type of magic is described as being performed either by humans or by the heathen god Óðinn.[3] In *Torsteins kvæði* (TSB E 110), the king's daughter Ingigerð fights two brothers and in each fight she magically disappears underground, reappears behind her opponent and wounds him. In *Sniolvs kvæði* (TSB E 8 etc.), the evil magician Ásmundur asks one opponent after another to a duel, in every fight he sinks into the ground and those who do not have magic sight die by his sword, but the hero Hildibrand can see him

even underground. In *Álvur kongur* (TSB E 58), the evil Ásmundur calls on Óðinn for help. Then there comes a one-eyed man and nobody recognizes him. Óðinn sinks into the ground, reappears behind Álvur and kills him. Rókur the Black wants to avenge him, Óðinn dares not face him, disappears underground and gives him victory. In *Hilmars tættir* (TSB E 78), the evil king calls on Óðinn for help and the hero is then devastated by bad weather. The evil Gunnar calls Óðinn for the second time and he appears out of the ground. When Óðinn starts fighting, Hilmar prays to God and slashes Óðinn's armour. Óðinn sinks into the ground and gives Hilmar victory. In *Jústinjalls kvæði* (TSB E 107), the evil King Gormund calls on Óðinn for help in battle. There comes a one-eyed man and kills many warriors. Jústinjall hews the armour off Óðinn and hurts his jaw. Óðinn disappears underground and gives Jústinjall victory.

The magic is described in the same way, whether it is performed by Óðinn or by a human magician. The only substantial difference is that the human magicians only sink into the ground in order to reappear and attack, whereas Óðinn does so both to attack and to escape from the fight. There is no great difference in the wording of the stanzas:

Torstein A162
Stoyttist hon í jørðina niður undan sínum faldi, snarliga upp á baki hans, sjálvan Torstein feldi.
She cast herself into the ground out of her linen hood, quickly up behind his back, she felled Torstein himself.

Torstein B154
Frúgvin stoyttist í jørðina niður undan brynju blá, hon kom upp á baki hans og gav honum banasár.
The lady cast herself into the ground out of her blue armour, she came up behind his back and dealt him a deadly wound.

Sniolvur B321
Ásmundur fór í jørðina niður undan brynju blá, Sniolvur stóð í tímar seks, hann kundi hann ikki síggja.
Ásmundur went underground under his blue armour, Sniolvur sat for six hours, he could not see him.

Sniolvur B322
Tað var hin ungi Ásmundur, gjørdi verri veldi, hann kom upp á baki hans, tann sterka Sniolv feldi.
There was the young Ásmundur, he made his power worse, he came up behind his back and felled the strong Sniolvur.

Álvur D59
Óðin stoyttist í jørðina niður undan brynju blá, hann kom upp á baki hans, gav honum banasár.
Óðinn cast himself underground out of his blue armour, he came up behind his back, dealt him a deadly wound.

Álvur D60
Óðin hvarv úr sessi burtur undir brynjubelti, hann kom upp á baki hans, Álvin kong hann feldi.
Óðinn disappeared from his seat under his armour belt, he came up behind his back, he felled King Álvin.

The ballads are otherwise independent of each other, so the motif seems to have lived its own life in the Faroese poetic tradition. The comparison of the ballads where the same kind of magic is performed by humans and by Óðinn implies that they do not make much distinction between Óðinn and other magicians. This idea will be discussed again in the second part of this paper. The conclusion of the first section is that neither of the motifs studied here appears to be a mere borrowing from or remnant of the prosaic tradition, rather they all seem to have become standard themes in the ballad tradition, frequently expressed by formulas. They developed independently of their original sources, reflecting the late medieval and early modern Faroese perception of the matters in question. It remains to be considered to what extent such development is specifically Faroese. First, it is necessary to take the Scandinavian ballad tradition into account in order to fully evaluate the position of magic in the Faroese balladry. After that, the possible original sources of the motifs will be discussed and an attempt will be made to determine how the ballads relate to them.

Magic and Myth in the Scandinavian Ballad Tradition

In the folk poetry of the other Nordic countries, there are fewer mentions of magic and myth than in the Faroese tradition, and they are mostly inconsistent and lack formulaic expressions and standard themes that would appear in many unrelated poems. An illustrative example is the Norwegian ballad *Åsmund Frægdegjæva* (TSB E 145, *Norske folkeviser*: 3–21), where a giantess says that "Þórr with the heavy hammer" is the mightiest in the land. The idea of Þórr with his specific weapon is well known from Old Norse mythology, but the phrase with this wording does not, as far as I know, occur in other ballads. Similarly, the ballad *Torsvisa/Torekall* (TSB E 126), known in various Scandinavian versions (e.g. *Danmarks gamle folkeviser I:* 1–6), is a paraphrase of the Old Norse *Þrymskviða,* and its motifs are not repeated in unrelated ballads. In these and similar cases, the isolated existence of the mythological references in single ballads implies that they should be explained as a remnant of an older, forgotten tradition, rather than as a living part of the Norwegian balladry.

There are examples of magic motifs that appear repeatedly in various Scandinavian ballads; among them are notably the same ones that occur extensively in the Faroese ballads: magic transformation of persons, sinking into the ground, and the use of runes.

Magic transformation of persons into animals occurs in Scandinavian ballads in other contexts than that of battle: most frequent is transformation against a person's will by an evil witch, typically a stepmother (TSB A 16, 19, 21, 23, 24, 27); the other option is transformation of a man with the purpose of winning a maiden's love (TSB A 43, 44). In all of these cases the magic transformation marks a story type and can hardly be regarded as an independent motif that could be implemented into various unrelated stories at will.

The motif of sinking into the ground is connected to evil supernatural beings at the moment of defeat: the giantess in *Åsmund Frægdegjæva* when she is sprinkled with holy water, and the water-spirit in the ballad *Nykkjen* (TSB A 48, *Gamle norske folkeviser*: 66–71) when the maiden pronounces his name:

Ásmund 42
Deð fornam eg pá lándo deires, eg átte der ingjo freð, sá sprette eg beltið af kongins rygg og sokk i jorði neð.
This was my experience in their land: I had no peace there, so I undid the belt from the king's back and sank into the ground.

Nykkjen B11
Der hó kom í rósenslund, hó nemde nykkjen, hann sokk í grunn.
When she came into the grove, she called the spirit by name, it sank into the ground.

Both the situation and the wording are so different that we cannot speak of a standard theme, but in light of the Faroese variants of this motif it can be considered to have been shared by the Scandinavian traditions. However, it continued to develop further in the Faroe Islands.

Runes often appear in Scandinavian ballads only as a means of casting lots, such as in the Norwegian *Hermod Ille* (TSB E 85, *Norske folkeviser:* 196–220), or as a means of gaining a woman's love, as in the ballad of Stíg, which is known in Denmark, Norway, and Iceland (TSB A 4, *Danmarks gamle folkeviser II:* 301–316; *Gamle norske folkeviser*: 76–79; *Íslenzk fornkvæði*: 52–59). Love runes (Thompsen D1355.19. "magic writings produce love") are indeed by far the most usual kind of magic mentioned in Scandinavian ballads (TSB A 1–10). Comparison of DgF 74–80 shows that there are certain similarities in the wording of some stanzas in different ballads, though not as strong as in the Faroese motif of the magic storm. In any case, these ballads cannot be regarded as unrelated, as the motif of love magic forms the basis of their storyline, which may or may not have ancient roots. It is of some interest that, as Stephen Mitchell has pointed out, a magic rod (*gambanteinn, tamsvöndr*) appears in the context of seducing women in sources as ancient as the Eddic lays *Hárbarðsljóð* and *Skírnismál*; in the latter the carving of magic signs is explicitly mentioned (Mitchell 2007:209). In both cases the seducer is a heathen god, Óðinn and Freyr respectively, ei-

ther performing the magic himself, or sending a servant to undertake the task; the desired women also bear supernatural features: the seven sisters seduced by Óðinn are witches, the woman desired by Freyr is a giantess. The transformation of the motif in the ballads, where the magic is used by human lovers or their assistants to seduce ordinary human women, may coincide with the above-mentioned idea that the ballad singers – in this case Scandinavian – did not make much difference between heathen gods and humans as performers of magic. It is, however, not certain that the motif in the ballads actually reflects these Eddic poems (cf. Mitchell 2007:210). Regardless of that, the main point here is that although love magic is frequent in Scandinavian ballads, it can hardly be seen as a standard theme: it is a story type, although variations occur in different ballads.

The use of runes for protective magic against an evil eagle is found in the ballad of *Rådengår* (TSB A 32, *Gamle norske folkeviser*: 11–13), but here again we cannot speak of a standard theme, only of an individual occurrence in a particular story. It is obvious that runes were connected to magic in the whole Scandinavian cultural region, but only in the Faroese poetic tradition did rune magic develop into standard themes, as in the motif of magic storms.

The Swedish ballad *Stolt Herr Alf* (TSB E 58, *Sveriges Medeltida Ballader* 206), with a storyline based on *Hálfs saga*, features Óðinn, although he does not appear in person and helps the evil king only with advice. Stephen Mitchell has presented a convincing argumentation for the Swedish ballad being a variant of the Faroese *Álvur kongur*, derived directly or indirectly from it, that is to say that it did not develop from the saga independently (Mitchell 1985b). In the Norwegian ballad *Sigurd svein* (TSB E 50, *Norske folkeviser*: 111–133), which is a loose parallel to *Sjúrðar kvæði*, Óðinn is not even mentioned at all and Sigurd receives advice only from his mother.

In general it can be concluded that the mentions of magic and of pagan gods in the Scandinavian balladry can be either specific story types that do not make standard themes, or inconsistent remnants of forgotten traditions, or borrowings from the Faroese tradition. The Faroese emphasis on magic that pervades a wide array of different stories has no parallel in the Scandinavian ballad tradition. The question to be asked then is to what extent it is dependent on the Old Norse literary tradition.

Fornaldarsögur as Sources of the Motifs

Earlier in this paper I concluded that the ballad motifs connected to magic had developed independently of their sources. Nevertheless, that is not to say that these motifs do not have any original roots in the saga genre. In the following I will focus on the origin and possible sources of the magic and mythological motifs, particularly the *fornaldarsögur*, and on their trans-

formation in the Faroese ballads. The major question is how these motifs in the ballads relate to their Old Norse models, to what extent they depend on them, and to what extent they are transformed; the focus will be on runelore and on the depiction of the heathen god Óðinn. The same motifs as in the previous section will be used to illustrate the ideas.

The motif of transformation into wild beasts is certainly very ancient in the Germanic cultural tradition, as it is known from the Eddic lays of the Völsungs as well as their German counterparts (for other examples see Boberg 1966:55). Transformations into dragons can also be found in other Old Norse texts, such as *Gull-Þóris saga* and *Jómsvíkinga saga*. In some of these cases the transformation is more lasting and does not occur in the middle of a battle where the protagonist suddenly decides to change form. There are, however, also instances of magicians transforming into dragons momentarily for the purpose of fighting: in *Bósa saga, Göngu-Hrólfs saga, Hálfdanar saga Eysteinssonar, Sturlaugs saga starfsama, Sörla saga sterka*, and others (Boberg 1966:56). In *Sörla saga sterka*, chapter 18, there is even a combination of the magician transforming into a beast and sinking into the ground:

> Högni […] hjó til hans með sínu sverði, en Sverrir brást í jörð niðr. Ríðr nú Högni um þverar fylkingar ok fellir hvern um annan. En sem hann er ákafastr at höggva niðr liðit, kemr svá mikit león upp ór jörðunni, at öllum stóð felmtr af ógn þeiri. Snerist leónit þá brátt í móti Högna ok laust sínum hala á hest hans svá hart, at Högni hraut langt í burt ok í einn skógarrunna. (Fornaldarsögur Norðurlanda, electronic source. The English translation is my own.)
>
> Högni […] hewed at him with his sword, but Sverrir sank into the ground. Högni rode through the troops and felled one after the other. But while he was hewing at men most fiercely, a lion came out of the ground, so huge that everyone was scared of the horror. The lion turned quickly against Högni and slashed his horse with his tail so violently that Högni was cast far into some shrubbery in the forest.

Although the combination of both kinds of magic is not found in the ballads, this is definitely a close parallel to both motifs. There is also an instance of Óðinn turning into a bird in a scene in *Hervarar saga* and its Faroese counterpart, *Gátu ríma* (TSB E 34), but both the situation and the wording are very different, and the scene will be discussed later in another context. It cannot be determined whether the motif of transformation came to the Faroese ballads from any of the sagas in particular, but we can tell that it existed in the prosaic tradition and was adopted by the poetic tradition, where it continued to develop.

The motif of magic storms at sea, which is extremely widespread in the ballads, is not very frequent in *fornaldarsögur*. There is a mention of a magic storm in *Örvar-Odds saga*, chapter 5, where the Finns punish Oddr for plundering them by sending a storm against him. Only when he throws the loot overboard is he able to reach land. This particular motif is not re-

flected in the ballads. In *Hálfs saga,* which seems to have been a direct model for the storyline of *Álvur kongur*, King Hálfr encounters a storm on a voyage in chapter 11 (*Hálfs saga*: 98–99), but not on his way to Ásmundr, and there is nothing in the saga to suggest that the storm was caused by magic. It thus seems that the motif of magic storm was added into the story. The same is true of *Sigmundar kvæði* and its source, *Færeyinga saga*. In the saga, chapter 24 (*Færeyinga saga*: 105–116), Sigmundr encounters a storm while trying to sail to Eysturoy to capture Þrándr. However, there is no indication of the storm being caused by magic. On the second attempt in chapter 31 (*Færeyinga saga*: 144–150), Sigmundr also encounters a storm, but it is emphasized in the saga that the storm is natural, common for that time of the year. Sigmundr finally gets hold of Þrándr and in chapter 31 he attempts to take him to Norway, but every time he tries to sail with him, there is a terrible storm that destroys his ship. Þrándr says that it will always be so until he lets him go, and when Sigmundr does so, he sails off in fair weather. This scene implies use of magic more than the previous ones, but still the saga does not directly mention the magic. When the same story is retold in the ballad, it is said very clearly that the storm is a result of Tróndur's magic, and the use of the verb "*rista*" implies that he caused it by carving runes:

Sigmundur A11
Hvørt heldur er hann tann kappin reysti, ella er hann í gandi treystur?
Is he a valiant fighter, or is he strong in magic?

Sigmundur A12
Ikki er hann tann kappin reysti, heldur er hann í gívum treystur.
He is not a valiant fighter, but he is strong in magic.

Sigmundur A24
Vær náum ei á Gøtu sand, Tróndur ristir mót oss gand.
We cannot reach the shore of Gøta, Tróndur is carving magic against us.

Again, it is clear that the storyline is taken from the saga, but the element of magic is added into the ballad, or at least strongly emphasized in the ballad. What does it say about the position of magic in Faroese balladry? Before reaching any conclusions it is necessary to look at the other motifs, but there seems to be a greater emphasis on magic in the ballads, as they add magic elements into stories where they are not present in the saga tradition. There is a special emphasis on the use of runes for magic purposes, and in some cases the ballads even offer a rather detailed insight into the development of the perception of runelore. In the ballad *Artal kongur* (TSB E 161) it is explained how the protagonist achieved his knowledge of runes: the evil king visited a witch in order to learn magic to get better chances against his opponents. The stanzas mention that the witch was "wise and clever" and that she owned a runebook which she used when teaching the king:

Artal 9
Hoyr tú, kelling, vís og klók, vilt tú meg nakað læra av tí stóra rúnarlisti, eg skal tær gott betala.
Listen, old woman, wise and clever, if you want to teach me something of the great art of runes, I can pay you well.

Artal 10
Lær meg til at rúna, lær meg til at fljúga, mikið skalt tú fáa í verð, meir enn mannamúga!
Teach me rune magic, teach me to fly, you will get a lot in reward, more than common people.

Artal 11
Kellingin fer eftir rúnarbók til Artal kong at læra, lærði hann bæði illt og gott av sínum kunstri harða.
The old woman brings a runebook to teach King Artal, he learned both the bad and the good of the difficult art.

This passage suggests how the ideas about runelore were perceived in society: although rune magic was hidden lore that was known to few people, it was not given "from above" – it could be learned. The connection to books and literacy is interesting, as it further develops the idea of magic as an intellectual rather than a mythological trait. That is a significant change in comparison to the Old Norse sources, where runelore is most often connected to the high god Óðinn, such as in the Eddic poem *Hávamál*, and humans usually learn runelore from mythological beings, such as the valkyrie Sigrdrífa in the poem *Sigrdrífumál* and the valkyrie Brynhildr in chapter 20 of *Völsunga saga* (*Fornaldar sögur Nordrlanda I*: 165–171); both valkyries are said to have decided about victory in battle together with Óðinn himself. Such emphasis on mythology is lost in the ballads and replaced with a perception of magic as a learned human ability. Furthermore, it must be noted that other mythological motifs from the sagas are transformed in the ballads in a similar way.

The most interesting example is the use of the motif of magic storm in *Jómsvíkinga saga* and its variation in *Jómsvíkinga vísa* (TSB E 15). In the saga, chapters 32 and 33, Jarl Hákon is fighting the Jómsvikings and invokes his protector, Þorgerðr Hölgabrúðr. She rejects all of his offerings until he offers to sacrifice his little son. Then clouds cover the sky, soon followed by a storm with lightning, thunder, and hail. Þorgerðr shoots arrows out of all her fingers and the vikings have a hard time facing the storm, so they lose the battle. The saga implies that Þorgerðr is not a person of flesh and bone, as only men endowed with second sight can see her;[4] she seems to be some kind of a mythological creature. In *Jómsvíkinga vísa*, on the other hand, the magician appears to be a human woman: in the text she is called an evil witch. The ballad thus downplays the mythological element, but strengthens the theme of magic performed by human magicians.

Such a transformation, also interesting in itself, deserves attention in connection with the transformation of the character of the heathen god Óðinn. If we compare the image of Óðinn in *fornaldarsögur* and in the ballads, we can trace a similar loss of mythological quality: he loses his divine character and turns into a demon, similar to Þorgerðr as she is portrayed in the saga. With a certain degree of simplification it can be said that in the ballads the god is transformed into a demon and the demon into a human witch, so that each of them loses one "level" of mythological quality. This will be further discussed in the following.

Fornaldarsögur often give a picture of Óðinn that is rather close to how he is known from Eddic poetry: his divinity is clearly denoted, he is portrayed as all-knowing and invincible, the ruler of Valhöll and of human fate. The connection to fate is strongest in the story of Starkaðr the Old as it is known from *Gautreks saga*, where Óðinn directly ordains Starkaðr's destiny. In the story of Víkarr, which is told in *Gautreks saga* and foretold in *Hálfs saga*, Óðinn requests a human sacrifice. According to *Hálfs saga*, Óðinn chose the sacrifice of Víkarr even before he was born, and in *Gautreks saga* he receives it when Víkarr is hung on a tree. The sacrifice is meant to be only symbolic, but Óðinn's magic makes it real. This kind of magic is clearly connected to the high principle of predestined fate. Although the *fornaldarsögur* are among the youngest saga literature, they only very scarcely reflect the Christian ideas of transforming Óðinn into a demon (Mitchell 1985a: 777).

In a few of the Faroese ballads, the pagan gods retain their ancient traits in a similar way as in *fornaldarsögur*, but such cases are rare within the ballad corpus. The four main examples of gods clearly keeping their divinity, although with certain moderations, are *Regin smiður* (TSB E 51)*, Jatvarðs ríma* (TSB E 40), *Lokka táttur* (TSB E 114), and *Gátu ríma* (TSB E 34).

Regin smiður, the first táttur of *Sjúrðar kvæði*, tells the story based on *Völsunga saga*, chapter 18, following it almost exactly. When Sigurðr is about to kill Fáfnir, he meets an old man who tells him that Regin is a traitor and advises him to dig more trenches, so that the poison can flow into the other ones while Sigurðr kills the serpent from inside the last one. Sigurðr follows his advice. In both cases, Óðinn is portrayed as the all-knowing adviser of the hero, who knows the hero's fate and assists him in fulfilling it. His divine character can hardly be doubted in this case.

In *Jatvarðs ríma*, a maiden tells Jatvarð that it would be an honourable deed to avenge his father. Jatvarð bemoans his lack of kinsmen. In stanza 13 there comes a one-eyed man:

Ein kom maður á víðan vøll fram, vegur við eggjateini, eygað hevði hann eitt í heysi, knepta brók á beini.

There came a man on the wide plain, he hewed with a blade-sprout, he had one eye in his head and buttoned trousers on his legs.

He names Jatvarð's kinsmen for him, tells him who killed his father and advises him that his ring can recognize poisoned drinks. Although this particular story is not known from Old Norse sources, the motif of Norse gods enumerating someone's kinsmen for a particular purpose is ancient and is known from Eddic poetry. In *Hyndluljóð*, the goddess Freyja wants to help Óttarr, who has sacrificed to her, and she forces the giantess Hyndla to name all of his ancestors for him. In *Jatvarðs ríma*, Óðinn is also presented as all-knowing, as he knows every man's ancestry and can foretell the dangers that await Jatvarð on his journey.

Lokka táttur is obviously based on an otherwise unknown old myth, as the gods have retained their mythological role: to protect humans from giants. A farmer loses a game with a giant who then wants to take his son as a prize, unless he can hide him three times. Óðinn, Hönir, and Loki help the farmer hide the boy by magic: by transforming him into a grain of corn, a feather on a bird, and a fish scale. In the end Loki kills the giant. As Axel Olrik has pointed out, the main non-mythological trait is that in *Lokka táttur* a person calls on the gods for direct help, which is a fairytale trait. Moreover, the motif of threefold hiding is common in Scandinavian and Indo-European fairytales (Olrik 1908:196). Olrik therefore doubts whether the ballad reflects the mythological perception of gods (Olrik 1908:197), but in my opinion, the gods' power over evil forces joins the story strongly enough with Old Norse mythology.

Óðinn as a mortal man's helper appears also in the ballad *Gátu ríma*, which follows its model story from *Hervarar saga*. In chapter 15 of the saga, Gestr the Blind is worried because he has been summoned to his enemy, King Heiðrekr. He makes a sacrifice to Óðinn. There comes a stranger to him, calls himself Gestr and offers to go to the king instead of him. There he can choose either to be judged or to give the king a riddle he cannot solve. The king can solve all the riddles until the stranger asks him what Óðinn whispered in Baldr's ear. Then the king understands that Óðinn himself stands before him and wants to hew at him, but Óðinn transforms himself into a hawk, curses the king and flies away. *Gátu ríma* follows the story closely, although the ballad is obviously incomplete. Gestur the Blind is unhappy because he will die if he fails in a riddle contest with the king. There comes a grey-haired old man and Gestur promises him twelve marks of gold if he competes instead of him. The fragment of the ballad ends with an answer to a riddle, the answer being that Óðinn rides his horse on land and water by day and night, but the riddle itself in missing. This is followed by two stanzas in which Óðinn flies away in the form of a wild bird while the king is burned in his hall:

Gátu ríma 26:
Óðin gjördist villini fuglur, fleyg sær út úr höll, brendist inni Heiðrik kongur og harhjá hirðin öll.

Óðinn turned into a wild bird, he flew out of the hall, King Heiðrik was burned inside and with him all his retainers.

Gátu ríma 27:
Óðin gjördist villini fuglur, fleyg sær út í hav, brendi inni Heiðrik kong og alt tað lið, har var.
Óðinn turned into a wild bird, flew away to the sea, King Heiðrik was burned inside with all the people who were there.

The ballad does not make it clear whether Óðinn appeared of his own will or was called, but in any case he accepts a direct material reward, which weakens his mythological position a bit as compared to the saga where Óðinn accepts a sacrifice. Nevertheless, the ballad still presents Óðinn as an all-knowing, invincible divine helper who uses his supernatural wisdom to assist his favourites.

With the exception of *Lokka táttur*, which does not have a parallel in extant Old Norse literature, all of these motifs are based directly on well-known episodes from *fornaldarsögur* or Eddic poetry. They depend on their sources and are retellings, rather than interpretations, of the ancient motifs. This is proven by the fact that each of them appears only once in the ballad corpus, which means that they have not become a living part of the ballad tradition.

Apart from these exceptional cases, the portrayal of Óðinn in the Faroese ballads lacks the air of divinity. He does not appear in the human world of his own will, but is summoned by magicians, specifically evil and dishonourable ones:

Hilmar A41
Gunnar gongur í grasagarði, úr skjúrtu vindur hann sveita, visti sær eingi svinnari ráð, enn tá var á Óðin at heita.
Gunnar walks in the grassy yard, he wrings sweat out of his shirt, he knows of no wiser advice than to call on Óðinn.

Álvur A42
Ásmundur gekk í grasagarð, hann vindur skjúrtu í sveita, hann sá sær ikki svinnri ráð, enn nú er á Óðan at heita.
Ásmundur walked in the grassy yard, he wrings sweat out of his shirt, he knows of no wiser advice than to call on Óðinn.

Jústinjall A243
Kongurin gongur í grasagarði, úr skjúrtu vant hann sveita, visti sær eingi svinnri ráð, enn tá var á Óðin at heita.
The king walks in the grassy yard, wrings sweat out of his shirt, he knew of no wiser advice than to call on Óðinn.

Álvur A43
Ásmundur gekk í grasagarð, tað gekk so víða av sagn, tríggjar reisir í lúður blæs, hann heitir á Óðans navn.
Ásmundur walked in the grassy yard, that story is widely known, he blows the trumpets in three rounds and calls Óðinn by name.

Álvur A44
Sjey merkur í reyðargulli vil eg geva tær, um enn tú, Óðin nasagrái, dugnað veitir mær.
Seven marks of red gold I will give to you, if you, Óðinn nasagrái, grant me your assistance.

Hilmar A49
Gunnar stendur á grønum vølli í ein kyrtil blá: "Hjálp nú, Óðin, tað ið kann, tí nú er hann verri enn áður!"
Gunnar stands on a green plain in a blue shirt: "Help me, Óðinn, if you can, for now he is worse than before!"

Furthermore, Óðinn is not depicted as invincible, as he frequently loses courage in fights against excellent opponents and escapes by sinking into the ground. Thus, although he certainly has abundant magical abilities, he can hardly be perceived as a mythological divine being, rather as an evil demon. Demons are also present in *fornaldarsögur*, but they are clearly distinguished from divine forces, representing a lower level of mythological creatures. In the ballads these two categories seem to have merged into one, which has definitely come closer to demons than to gods. In the depictions of Óðinn in the ballads there are indeed as many as three direct connections to the demon Þorgerðr from *Jómsvíkinga saga*: Óðinn harms the opponent by causing bad weather, he is summoned by the promise of human sacrifice, and he shoots arrows from his fingers:

Hilmar A42
Eitt kom æl av útnorðri við hagl og harðar nøtur, niður fullu Hilmars menn sum leyv fellur mest um vetur.
There came a storm from the North with hail and hard hailstones, down fell Hilmar's men like leaves in winter.

Jústinjall A244
Við kropp og sjel, við búk og bein, tað vil ek tær geva, drepur tú tann sterka her og skilur meg við tann trega.
Body and soul, trunk and leg I will give to you, if you kill the strong army and divide me from that trouble.

Jústinjall A247
Ódin reikar um grønan vøll snart og ikki leingi, píl fleyg av hans hvørji fjøður,[5] hann feldi reystar dreingir.
Óðinn wanders on the green plain, swiftly and not too long, an arrow flew out of his every feather, he felled brave men.

Although the divine Óðinn in ancient tradition also requests human sacrifice, there is a significant difference: in *fornaldarsögur* the sacrifice is connected to fate and it is the victim's destiny to be given to Óðinn, whereas in the ballads it is rather a matter of a wizard's direct reward to the demon. The motif of shooting arrows from fingers is interesting because it also appears in the previously discussed stanzas about transformation into wild beasts in

Finnur hin fríði (TSB E 83) and *Grimmars kvæði* (TSB E 98), where it is connected to magicians. Furthermore, it can also be found in other Old Norse sagas: *Hrólfs saga kraka, Ragnars saga loðbrókar, Sigurðar saga þögla, Sörla saga sterka, Örvar-Odds saga*, and others (Boberg 1966:91). Two of the examples can be quoted here for illustration:

Sörla saga sterka, chapter 20
Tveir bræðr váru með honum finnskir. Hét annarr þeira Falr, en annarr Fróðel. Þeir váru báðir vel menntir í kyngikröptum öllum ok forneskju, svá at nær þeim sýndist, váru þeir aðra stund í jörðu, en svá þótti mönnum sem ör flygi af hverjum þeira fingri ok fyrir hverri ör maðr til dauða kjörinn.
There were two Finnish brothers with him. One was called Falr and the other Fróðel. Both were learned in all magic powers and ancient sorcery, so that they could instantly disappear underground anytime they liked, and it seemed that arrows flew out of all their fingers, so that each felled one man.
(Fornaldarsögur Norðurlanda, electronic source. The English translation is my own.)

Sigurðar saga þögla, chapter 24
Sigurður þykist þekkja, að hér er kominn Nýpur, vinur hans, og er eigi töfralaus. Hann sér, að ör flýgur af hverjum hans fingri og kemur á skip þeirra bræðra og verður maður fyrir hverri.
Sigurðr thinks he recognizes his friend Nýpr, who is not without magic. He sees that an arrow flies out of his every finger, arrives on the brothers' ships and each hits a man.
(*Riddarasögur*: 173. The English translation is my own.)

That way the ballads relate their image of Óðinn to Finnish magicians as well as to lower mythological beings, such as the dwarf in *Sigurðar saga þögla* and the demon Þorgerðr in *Jómsvíkinga saga*.

As for the last motif to be discussed here, the motif of sinking into the ground, it has already been pointed out that the ballads in this case make little distinction between wizards and Óðinn, thus turning Óðinn into little more than one of the magicians. The sagas of ancient times are in perfect accordance with this, as they repeatedly depict this ability as a trait of magicians, not of deities. In *Sigurðar saga þögla*, chapter 23, there are two brothers who "for their wickedness and witchcraft can hardly be called humans" and "walk underground just like on the ground".[6] In *Sörla saga sterka*, chapter 18, there is a magician from Finnmörk who sinks into the ground to avoid his opponent's sword, reappears in changed form and attacks the opponent. In chapter 20 of the same saga, two Finnish brothers are fighting a man; the first brother sinks into the ground to avoid his sword, while the other brother jumps out of the earth behind his back and stabs him to death (for other examples see Boberg 1966:134). However, in *Hálfs saga*, from which the ballad *Álvur kongur* is derived, there is nothing about Óðinn assisting Hálfr's opponent, nor about sinking into the ground. Just as in the case of other magic motifs, this one has been implemented into the ballad.

It is notable that in sagas and ballads alike, magicians are rather stereo-

typed figures who are characterized by a standard set of features. It is well known that Finns are always denoted as magicians in the sagas, but in the ballads this role is given to evil kings or Óðinn. Thus Óðinn has received a new stereotyped role which in the sagas, where Óðinn had more or less retained his mythological position, was occupied by someone else.

It then seems that the only ancient trait of Óðinn which is retained in the ballads is his appearance. His description in the stanzas is firmly formulaic and follows the image known from *fornaldarsögur* rather closely. The following stanzas can be compared with *Völsunga saga*, chapter 11:

[…] þá kom maðr í bardagann með síðan hatt ok heklu blá; hann hafði eitt auga ok geir í hendi […]
(*Fornaldar sögur Nordrlanda* I: 145).

Hilmar A53
Ein kom maður á víðan vøll, spjót bar hann á nakka, tekur at fella Hilmars menn sum villini djór for rakka.
There came a man on the wide plain, he bore a spear on his shoulders, he started felling Hilmar's men like wild animals before a hound.

Álvur A45
Tá kom ein maður á leikvøll fram, hann vá við eggjateini, eyga hevði hann eitt í heysi, knept var brók at beini.
There came a man on the battlefield, he hewed with a blade-sprout, he had one eye in his head and buttoned trousers on his legs.

Álvur A46
Tá kom ein maður á leikvøll fram, sum eingin av teim kendi, eygað hevði hann eitt í heysi, knept var brók at lendi.
There came a man on the battlefield, nobody knew him, he had one eye in his head and buttoned trousers on his loins.

Jústinjall A245
Ein kom maður á víðan vøll fram, eingin ið hann kendi, eittans eyga í heysi bar, ein finskan boga í hendi.
There came a man on the wide plain, nobody knew him, he bore one eye in his head and a Finnish bow in his hand.

Jústinjall A246
Ein kom maður á víðan vøll fram, vá við eggjateini, eittans eyga í heysi bar, knept var brók at beini.
There came a man on the wide plain, he hewed with a blade-sprout, he bore one eye in his head and buttoned trousers on his legs.

Regin 94
Har kom maður á völlin fram, eingin ið hann kendi, eyga hevði hann eitt í heysi, finskan boga í hendi.
There came a man on the plain, nobody knew him, he had one eye in his head and a Finnish bow in his hands.

The allusion to a Finnish bow may emphasize the connection between Óðinn and the Finnish magicians from the sagas. Apart from the outward

description, the ballad tradition indeed transformed the mythological figure of the god Óðinn into a much less divine being that bears features of an evil wizard and of a demon who serves magicians. It can therefore be concluded that it seems advisable not to study the magic and mythological motifs only as remnants of the saga tradition, but rather as its interpretation.

Conclusion

The importance of motif studies was emphasized already by Stith Thompson, who pointed out that "a clear differentiation between type and motif is necessary, for the problems of arrangement are essentially different in the two fields" (Thompson 1946:415). He referred specifically to classification of folk narrative, but since then the significance of motif analysis for the interpretation of folklore has been widely recognized as well. Concerning the Nordic region, however, studies of relations between Old Norse traditions and ballad traditions have been dominated by the analysis of storylines. The present essay is based on the idea that a focus on motifs can shed new light on the problem of transformation and development of traditions.

I first studied the distribution of motifs connected to magic and mythology in the Faroese balladry. I concluded that, unlike in the Scandinavian ballad tradition, such motifs are not isolated remnants or borrowings, nor are they firmly connected to specific storylines, but they have become standard themes expressed by formulas and formulaic expressions, and they can be implemented into stories that are otherwise unrelated. Enough examples of formulaic expressions concerning magic have been mentioned, such as the stanzas about causing or calming storms by carving runes, comparison of the magic storm to a horse-ride, or sinking into the ground during a fight. As for formulas concerning heathen gods, the best example is the description of Óðinn's arrival and physical appearance.

Next I studied the relationship between the motifs as they appear in the Faroese ballads and their sources in Old Norse literature. Although there are some convincing cases of ballads taking over mythological motifs from *fornaldarsögur*, my conclusion is that the Faroese poetic tradition goes far beyond simple borrowings, and that it transformed the meanings of the motifs, which thus became independent of the original story – if they can be traced to one – and continued to develop as a part of the ballad tradition. The ballad tradition thus offers new interpretations of the ancient themes of magic and myth, shaped by the thoughts and beliefs of the people of late medieval and early modern times. The ballads allow us to trace the development of the perception of Old Norse mythology, especially of Óðinn gaining a new role in popular belief as his original mythological role was gradually forgotten. That means that although Óðinn is an important and frequently

mentioned figure in the ballads, we cannot really speak of remnants of heathen elements, only of magic motifs – because Óðinn's role is completely changed, with the exception of the specific cases mentioned above. In this respect the Faroese ballad tradition also seems to be unique within the Nordic cultural region.

The study of motifs rather than storylines has allowed me to focus on differences from the *fornaldarsögur*: even ballads that take their storyline from a saga add motifs that are not present in the saga, or significantly transform their meaning. On the other hand, the study of motifs has allowed me to fully appreciate the consistency of the Faroese balladry in spite of its use of various sources of inspiration. The distinctive features of the Faroese magic and mythological motifs, such as the strong emphasis on runes and the figure of the heathen god Óðinn as a demon or magician, offer a rare opportunity of insight into two cultural aspects: the development of ancient motifs in folklore tradition, and the late medieval and early modern popular perception of the supernatural. I have attempted the former in the present paper, while the latter must be left to further research.

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[1] All of the ballads are quoted according to the edition by Dánjal Niclasen, with the exception of *Sjúrðar kvæði*, which is quoted according to the edition by V. U. Hammershaimb. The English translations are my own. The codes refer to versions and stanza numbers in the edition, not to TSB; TSB references are specifically marked.

[2] This is clearly a discrepancy, as it is hard to imagine a wolf flying and having feathers. My hypothesis is that such discrepancies are typical of standard themes; the one concerning the feathers will be discussed in the second section of the present study.

[3] The names of the Old Norse deities Óðinn, Hönir, and Þórr have been normalized into standard Old Norse spelling in the text and the translations, but left in their Faroese forms in direct ballad quotes. Other personal names have been left in their Faroese forms if they refer to Faroese ballads, but normalized into standard Old Norse if they refer to Old Norse sources.

[4] "Hauarðr haugguanndi sa fyrstr Haulga brúði iliði Hákonar Iarls ok margir sa ofreskir menn." (*Jómsvíkinga saga*: 30)

[5] All the stanzas, both those about magicians and those about Óðinn, have the word *feather* (*fjøður*) where the sagas have *finger*. *Finger* would definitely make better sense in the case of Óðinn and probably also in the case of dragons, unless one imagines dragons as having feathered wings. It is possible that the wording in the ballads is corrupt and that they originally had the word *finger* – this would be in accordance with the hypothesis that also this motif has become a formulaic expression, as the change would have occurred in all the ballads that are otherwise unrelated.

[6] "[…] megu þeir varla menn heita fyrir illsku sakir og kynngi […] Þeir fara í jörðu ok á […]" (*Riddarasögur:* 169)

The Reformation and Rituals

Arne Bugge Amundsen

Abstract

The year 2017 is the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation. To mark the occasion, academic conferences have been held in all the Nordic countries, and books have been published on the history of the Reformation and the cultural significance of this major process of change. This article is an attempt to understand what happened in the area of ritual, which was of great importance both for the church as an institution and for the people. The main emphasis is on the situation in Norway, where most people were not prepared for these changes and desired them even less. Whereas Norwegian church historians have placed major emphasis on the fact that the Lutheran Reformation came as a response to "religious yearning" among the inhabitants, this article emphasizes the radical change that the Reformation entailed. The radical character of the transformation led to numerous and protracted processes and negotiations in the cultural sphere.

Keywords: rituals, liturgy, church history, piety, monasteries, clergy, saints, sacraments, death, burial, *Draumkvedet*, magic, folk religion

Unlike the case in parts of Germany and some towns in Denmark and Sweden, the Lutheran Reformation came to Norway quite unexpectedly. In practice there was no one who desired such a radical change to the church as the Reformation entailed. This applied least of all to the population in general, who found themselves the objects and – it may be said – victims of a fundamental change in the premises for their life and their culture. There was little use of outright force when the changes were introduced, although that did happen occasionally. Instead there was a more explicit type of structural violence which meant that a number of institutions and functions that were of great significance for ordinary people were simply removed or redefined beyond recognition (Amundsen 2017a, 2017b).

If we use this conclusion as a starting point, it is natural to ask the following question: What did this sudden and unexpected change mean for the majority of the people, for their piety and in their everyday life? If we are to find an answer to this, we have to follow three lines: The first concerns who was responsible in practice for the introduction of the Lutheran Reforma-

tion, the second is about the liturgical and ritual changes, and the third is connected to the theme of piety and religious practice.

Assessments by Norwegian Church Historians

Lutheran church historians have for generations tried to present the matter differently. Among other things, they have searched for traces of interest in Lutheran doctrine in Norway before 1537, but these traces are wholly insignificant and had no relevance whatever for the way people in general related to the new situation. For example, some historians have pointed out that a few priests were preaching Lutheranism in Bergen from the end of the 1520s, and that there was a certain interest in Luther's teachings in the environment around the rebellious nobleman Vincens Lunge (1486–1536), who had his power centre in Bergen and in Trøndelag (Seierstad 1965a: 149ff). There have also been church historians who have tried to describe the introduction of Lutheranism in Norway and the rest of Scandinavia as a historically necessary response to an increasingly degenerate Roman Catholic church and a decline in piety. There are in fact no clear indications that this is a correct or balanced description. Even before the Reformation, of course, there were antagonisms, conflicts, and criticism against and between the different units of the complex institution that the Roman Catholic church constituted. But it had always been like that.

A good example of such opinions can be found in the church historian Andreas Seierstad (1890–1975), who had to admit in an anniversary article from 1937 that the Reformation in Norway – as in Finland and Iceland – was introduced by force from outside and from above, but "among people who are not spiritually awakened and not of age, such an educational drive need not appear like coercion" (Seierstad 1965a:143). In other words: Because the Norwegian people did not know any better, being brought up in true Lutheran Christianity was necessary. And Seierstad thought that what happened was not wholly unexpected. There was serious degeneration and depravity among priests and convent people, who were more concerned with satisfying their lusts and administering secular affairs than about tackling "the spiritual and ecclesiastical matters that ought to have been most important to them" (Seierstad 1965a:144). Seierstad was highly ideological in his outlook, and he was not alone in this. Several of his colleagues likewise assessed the Reformation from a Lutheran point of view.

If we turn to the sphere of pious practice, however, we find nothing to suggest any great decline in Norway in the time before the Reformation. Pilgrimages were a living tradition, people made donations to churches and monasteries, the cult of St Olav was flourishing, and new traditions of piety from the Continent also found their way here (Schumacher 2005). And even Andreas Seierstad in his day had to acknowledge that "the late medieval pe-

riod was in reality very religious" (Seierstad 1965a:146). But even if there was no broad desire for changes in the church in Norway, the Lutheran Reformation nevertheless happened as a political and organizational fact. It was for other reasons than any decline within the Roman Catholic church.

Who Implemented the Reformation in Norway?

There is no easy answer to the question of who introduced the Reformation in Norway. On one level it looks simple: As a result of the Lutheran prince Christian (1503–1559) winning the Danish civil war known as the Count's Feud in 1536, a Lutheran church organization was introduced in Denmark. When he later ascended the throne as Christian III he also claimed Norway, and when he did become king of Norway, the change in the church was implemented at the highest political level. In practice this was not realized before 1537, when the Catholic archbishop, Olav Engelbrektsson (*c*. 1480–1538), fled the country on 1 April that year. The military and political power behind the existing church regime was thereby gone. The archbishop realized that the situation was moving towards a political and military confrontation that he could not win. The other Norwegian bishops were either sick, passive, or suffered military defeat in 1537. The Norwegian Council of the Realm was abolished by Christian III as king of Norway, and so the reform of the church was a political fact.

The Catholic bishops were gradually replaced by so-called superintendents with much less power than their predecessors and under the direct control of the king; they were appointed by him, received their instructions from him, and were expected to defend the new church regime. These superintendents were supposed to be the agents for change in the new system (Imsen 1982). Their most important tasks included performing visitations and inspecting the local congregations. The purpose was to ensure that the new church doctrine was respected and that practices of piety and ritual were not explicitly contrary to the new regime. The new superintendents were a mixture of turncoats, opportunists, and convinced and schooled Lutherans. And it did not end with the transformation of the Catholic office of bishop into a royal Lutheran post as superintendent. The office of dean (*prost*) was retained, but deans were also supposed to spread the new doctrine and check that the Reformation was actually implemented. On paper, an efficient new ecclesiastical hierarchy on two levels was in place after a surprisingly short time. But this was not the whole reality.

As late as 1583, when the superintendent of the diocese of Oslo and Hamar – Jens Nielsen (1538–1600) – visited the parish of Bø in Telemark, he gave the congregation a long explanation of what a Lutheran visitation involved: the superintendent had to examine how the priests and the laity related to each other in behaviour and knowledge, he had to tell the congrega-

tion how they could "improve in religion", and advise them to serve God and obey and serve the king. According to Jens Nielsen, this had been different under the papacy, when visitations were full of useless nonsense and rubbish, "firmations and other fantasies" (Erichsen 1898:17). This is interesting for several reasons. First of all, Jens Nielsen shows how he understood his role as supervisor and agent of change. He had to ensure that the laypeople adhered to the new doctrine and obeyed God and the king. Secondly, it is clear that it could still be envisaged – fifty years after the Reformation – that there were some among the common people who remembered how the Catholic bishops had visited them in a manifestation of splendour, power, and ritual. For Jens Nielsen it was thus important to point out that had had just been stuff and nonsense. But if everyone was convinced of this, why did he have to state it so clearly?

In many cases the reality must have been rather different from what the superintendents, the laws, and the king wanted it to be. For the local clergy had not been replaced. There simply was no one to replace them with. How the parish priest was supposed to act, what he should think and do, was not described in detail in the new legislation. This meant that negotiations with and adaptation to local conditions and expectations were necessary. The individual priest had to make a number of choices. And the circumstances of the priests varied greatly. A few of them had years of university studies behind them and were well able to follow the currents of the new age. But most of them had limited theoretical and theological schooling, and thus they had more than enough to do in their work with everyday pastoral matters and in the tension between new theological and judicial norms and their parishioners' expectations of what a priest could and should do for them.

The Fate of the Monasteries after the Reformation

Another matter that the new church regime had to handle was the situation of the Catholic nuns and monks. The monasteries had already been considerably weakened as institutions in the 1520s and 1530s. Both Christian II (1481–1559) and Frederik I (1471–1533) had granted monastic property to secular owners, and many monasteries had ceased to function in practice because of fires and as a result of conflicts between king and church (Seierstad 1965a:145). In a few cases, however, the monks and nuns went on living in the monasteries during the first years after the Reformation. This was the case, for instance, with the Benedictine nuns of Gimsøy convent at Skien and Nonneseter convent in Oslo. Presumably it was difficult to find any reasonable livelihood, especially for elderly nuns. The monks, on the other hand, appear to have been forced out of their monasteries in the years 1536–1537.

What happened to the monks and nuns is something we know very little about. From having been people who concentrated on pious deeds, preaching, hospital activities, or learned studies, they ended up in practice on the roads or went back into the local communities they had previously served or dealt with. According to Lutheran thought, monastic life was not useful or Christian service, so they were probably encouraged to get married and earn their living like other people, responding to their Christian call in the everyday world instead. But the transition was scarcely simple and painless. In contrast to all the Catholic priests who remained in office, started families, and had a rectory and a regular income on which to live, the monks had nothing to fall back on. Perhaps they could make a living by helping people with writing or medical treatment, or perhaps some of them carried on religious protests in secret? They may have done things, for example, which the parish priests could not allow themselves to do, such as saying the occasional blessing or curse, curing a horse, or interceding with prayers to the Virgin Mary when asked.

The point here is that precisely because the Norwegian Reformation was introduced from outside and from above, the apparatus of change was imposed quickly at the top level, but at the local level there were no sweeping changes in the personnel or the organization. It was the men of the old regime who were expected to implement the changes, and the monasteries were emptied of people who still actively supported the old regime.

The king's only means to bring about a new ecclesiastic regime was thus a combination of military and political power, agents of change who saw a personal benefit in backing the king, and the introduction of new legislation. For Norway the latter would take a very long time. In Denmark the necessary legislation was introduced quickly (the Church Ordinance came in Latin in 1537, in Danish in 1539, and in its final form in 1542), but it paid no attention whatever to the situation in Norway. One consequence of this was that the old Norwegian church laws remained in use for rather a long time (Kolsrud 1917:93–98). The balance between old and new laws, in other words, was tricky.

Distinctive Norwegian Conditions

Despite this, the leaders of the Lutheran church in Copenhagen were aware that the situation in Norway was different from that in Denmark. Exactly how it differed is not so easy to pin down, but much of it had to do with the fact that Norway was geographically far bigger than Denmark, but more sparsely populated and with a different social composition. This made ecclesiastical and political control harder to enforce. It is possible that the leaders in Copenhagen also imagined that Norwegian peasants and fishermen were "wilder" than their Danish counterparts. From 1537 onwards,

their watchword in Norway was thus that the authorities should use "caution and reason" to reform the Norwegian people into Lutherans, as Christian III wrote to the feudal lord Eske Bille (1480–1552) of Bergenhus Castle in the year of the Reformation (Seierstad 1965b:162).

It would take as much as seventy years before Norway received an ecclesiastical law of its own. When it was finally approved by King Christian IV (1577–1648) in 1607, the differences from the Danish Church Ordinance of 1539 were actually very modest. More interesting is the proposal drawn up by the Norwegian superintendents in 1604. Here we find more details that tell us something about the "Norwegian differentness", as viewed through the eyes of the Lutheran church regime. We shall return to some of these below.

Again we must return to the question of who actually implemented the Lutheran Reformation in Norway. In practice it was all the Roman Catholic parish priests and deans who remained in office, some of them for many decades after 1537. We may assume that they did not oppose the new religion. Nor did their external conditions change very much. The priests retained their income from the rectory and its properties; the king had no other way to pay the clergy. It was thus the local priests who were left holding the Reformation. So what happened to these priests as a consequence of the coup in 1536–1537?

They remained in office, but they were encouraged to marry. And it looks as if many of them actually did so. They thereby accomplished in the local community one of the new religion's important ideals, namely, the Christian household. This meant that the priest and his family had to be good examples for all the parishioners in performing the religious call: they had to serve God in their given social functions as husband, housewife, children, or servants (Amundsen 1990a). This did not mean, however, that the Lutheran parish priests became "democratic"; they were to be role models and exempted from control by their parishioners. For example, they retained their own courts, they were counted as a separate social group with distinctive codes, with their own honour and – as regards their ecclesiastical office – the right to make settlements among themselves without intervention from the parishioners or any other local civil authorities (Amundsen 1993).

The local priests also retained their status as knowledgeable scholars. They could read, they could sing the mass, they knew the laws, they had spiritual insight, and they had power over souls in that they could speak on behalf of Our Lord. They still held St Peter's keys to heaven. The local clergy thus had their social and cultural capital intact, as the representatives of the church that most people encountered and related to.

Cultural Revolution and Cultural Encounter

This introduction is intended as a presentation of the political, social, and cultural conditions for the introduction of the Lutheran Reformation in Norway. The situation was in fact rather unusual: the Reformation was implemented in Norway as a result of a political coup in Denmark, and the organizational possibilities and ideological support had weak support among the population affected by the coup. How then is it possible to understand this as a historical change?

It may be fruitful to see the change in a dual perspective, as both "cultural revolution" and "cultural encounter". "Cultural revolution" here means attempts by the elite to change people's behaviour and mentality in a radical, poorly prepared, and all-embracing manner. The theme here is change, with the emphasis on how prohibitions and directives, control, punishment, and incentives tried to establish norms and motivation for radical transformation. "Cultural encounter" means, if anything, the opposite process, namely, how the Reformation brought new groups into play with and against each other. When the Reformation was imposed by the prince, the consequence was that the Lutheran nobility, the feudal lords, the town councils, and the state officials became loyal servants of the civil authorities. At the same time these groups had to relate to and also negotiate with peasant farmers and the rest of the common people. This raises the question of how radical the Reformation actually was, what the conditions for it were, and – not least – how much time was needed to implement cultural changes in reality. The latter question makes it necessary to follow some lines all the way down to the folk traditions collected in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which perhaps tell a different story about both cultural revolution and cultural encounter.

The cultural revolution and the cultural encounter had one important common denominator, and that was the church rituals. Through rituals associated with the sacraments of the church, and through rituals related to everyday life, the Roman Catholic church had established an intricate system by which divine grace and power were conveyed and communicated to the people. Baptism, confirmation or firmation (*ferming*), holy communion, confession, marriage, the ordination of priests, and extreme unction – these were the seven sacraments involving rituals that most people – perhaps with the exception of ordination – had a practical and everyday relationship to. In addition there were all the rituals – known as sacramentals – associated with the power of the clergy, on behalf of the church, to dispense grace or set limits to evil: inaugurations and benedictions of people and livestock, houses, homes, crops and food, and cursing witchcraft, disease, evil, bad will, and other menacing negative forces. These were rituals which to some degree could also be performed by lay people. In practice the sum of all these the rituals embraced the whole human life-world.

The rituals performed inside the church buildings were likewise of many types and had different functions. The priests, of course, had the responsibility for holding the various services (still called masses in Norwegian), but lay people could also perform rituals at the church's side altars and during the actual masses, for example saying prayers and making the sign of the cross. These ritual acts gave ordinary people things to do during the holy masses, and put them in contact with the saints of the church to whom the side altars were dedicated. Saints represented an extensive religious and ritual repertoire for believers: they were examples, they gave protection in different life situations, and they interceded in heaven on behalf of the faithful. And the images of the saints were important identifications of the church's message.

This shows that a complex relationship had been built up during the Middle Ages between rituals, norms, and beliefs, and this relationship described how God related to and dispensed his grace on people.

The Break

Most of this ritual apparatus and repertoire disappeared as a consequence of the Lutheran Reformation. The number of sacraments was reduced from seven to two (baptism and communion), all the sacramentals were abolished, and veneration and rituals connected to saints and side altars were prohibited. The Lutheran rhetoric expended a great deal of energy explaining how important it was to break with "tradition" and everything in the church's teaching and rituals that had no explicit foundation in scripture. The work of reform involved eliminating abuses and misunderstandings that popes and bishops had accumulated over the centuries. But in reality this was about something much bigger; it was a matter of changing the premises for the relationship between God and mankind. Divine grace was no longer understood as a substance or force that the sacraments and sacramentals transferred to the believers. Strictly speaking, believers did not need rituals at all. Many of the old rituals were quickly defined as unnecessary or pernicious.

Even though there were important theological and liturgical changes to *baptism* and *communion*, most people managed to perceive continuity from the past. The same probably applied to *confession*. I cannot find any traces of people calling for or missing the sacrament of *confirmation*. Yet the superintendent Jens Nielsen, as late as the 1580s, had to tell the congregations that it was just stuff and nonsense.

When *marriage* was no longer a sacrament, however, it looks as if this created considerable uncertainty, and in part indifference, among people. The superintendent in the diocese of Oslo and Hamar, Frans Berg (1504–1591), therefore issued a severe letter to the priests in the diocese in 1571,

warning that they must put an end to the decay that had set in. No couples were to be allowed to go to bed together and enter into matrimony before the banns had been read from the pulpit and they were formally married at the church door. What often happened now, Frans Berg wrote, was that couples said yes to each other in the evening and immediately went to bed together. He did not know of any place in either Germany or Denmark where the like occurred, and now it had to be stopped (Erichsen 1898:7)! Frans Berg was not the only church superintendent who complained about this development, but it was not until the 1580s that the formal demand came to put an end to this abuse (Baklid 2015:126ff).

Relating to the Dead

Administering the last rites to dying persons disappeared completely as a ritual, but it must have had an even stronger effect that the Lutheran priests – who before the Reformation had been central figures in a series of ritual acts before and during the funeral – appeared to have vanished from most actions to do with *death and burial*. The relationship between the living and the dead had been an important topic, both theologically and in practice, before the Reformation. The souls of the dead ended up in Purgatory, where they were to be cleansed of their sins. The living should show respect for the dead and concern for their fate in the afterlife (Duffy 1992:338ff, 348ff). One expression of this respect was the requiem masses where the priest prayed for the dead soul during its time in Purgatory. The dead, for their part, became models for the living: through their happy fate they showed the cycle that all believers followed from birth and death to eternal bliss in Heaven (Amundsen 2001:10ff). The actual sacrament associated with death – extreme unction – involved the priest anointing the dying person with holy oil, a final grant of divine grace before the soul set off on the journey to Purgatory. In addition the priest said prayers, made the sign of the cross, and held a vigil over the dying person. After death came, the priest and lay people gathered around the deceased and held a wake where toasts were drunk to the departed soul as a last send-off. As soon as the person died, moreover, the church bells were rung to mark the start of the journey of the soul. Many rituals were also performed with the dead body and the grave (Amundsen 1991:106f).

Martin Luther rejected the doctrine of Purgatory and the notion that there was any way to influence the fate of the dead. His was a radically new idea as regards both theology and ritual. Anything that could evoke any other belief was regarded as an "abuse". The Lutheran church therefore abolished all the central rituals associated with death and burial, with not much to take their place (Amundsen 1991:107f). Lutheran church law stipulated that the sole duty of the new clergy was to throw earth on the coffin. The Church Or-

dinance from 1539 actually had to require priests to continue officiating at funerals. To underline that the old death rituals had no sacramental significance, some priests may have gone so far as to stay away from anything that had to do with funerals. The Church Ordinance and other new ecclesiastical laws insisted that burial observances were not intended for the sake of the dead. No one should believe that it was possible to affect the fate of the dead soul in the afterlife. The church bells were rung, not to assist the soul of the deceased but "to awaken the living". The priest, for his part, was supposed to preach penitence and repentance to the survivors (Rørdam 1883:85).

The effect must have been powerful. The whole religious and moral universe that tied the living and the dead in a form of eternal community of fate was suddenly torn apart as the living and the dead were separated and all the rituals and external forms associated with this community were removed through the Lutheran Reformation. A large share of the churches' economy, and the design and decoration of the church buildings, had been a part of this community of fate. For centuries there had been donations of land, altars, liturgical objects, and church interiors as reflections of the moral duty the living had for the dead. In one blow, the value of these investments and actions was reduced to nothing.

The Saints

Yet another important set of rituals and moral and religious identifications was formally removed with the Lutheran Reformation, and that was connected to the saints. The act of venerating and performing ritual acts in front of images of holy persons and altars dedicated to them was also rejected by Lutheran doctrine. Divine grace, according to Lutheran thought, was not transmitted by such external objects. Lutheranism did not wholly dismiss the idea that pious dead persons could serve as religious and moral examples, but neither saints from the early days of the church nor saints from the Bible story (Mary, Joseph, Anne, etc.) communicated anything over and above this. Saints' images and altars were removed from the churches or neutralized in Norway, although there are not many sources to inform us of how this happened.

Here the reformers evidently tried to proceed carefully, following the strategy already drawn up by Christian III: things were to change, but not in such a way as to provoke general uproar. A couple of examples can show how this happened.

In 1557 the diocese of Bergen acquired a new superintendent, Jens Pedersen Schjelderup (*c*. 1510–1582). He was a pupil of one of the foremost Danish Lutheran theologians of the century, Niels Hemmingsen (1513–1600). As a result of these influences Schjelderup was profoundly sceptical of all external forms that could disturb the true faith. The nobleman and

councillor of the realm Jørgen Lykke (1515–1583), during a diet of the nobility in Bergen in 1568, had asked Schjelderup to have some "idolatrous images and statues" removed from the cathedral in the city. The weight attached to Lykke's words can be explained by the fact that he was a man with close connections to the royal family. This led to a major conflict with the urban authorities, who felt that these fine sculptures graced the cathedral. Schjelderup finally had his way. After the matter was concluded he published a small book where he argued that it was a correct and important strategy to remove images and sculptures that could be a reminder or a continuation of old rituals and old beliefs (Gilje & Rasmussen 2002:155–164; Lindøe 2000). The superintendent emphasized that images and statues did not mediate any contact with the divine, and that they were dangerous because they encouraged "abuse". Schjelderup claimed that there were many "old women and crones" who literally worshipped the images in Bergen, and that was the most important reason why they had to be removed. They were not just finery and adornment, but represented "abuse".

This case tells us a great deal. It was not until slightly more than a generation after the implementation of the Reformation that a Lutheran superintendent tried to remove the last traces of Roman Catholic piety. The images and sculptures had been allowed to remain in Bergen Cathedral that long, and there had been believers who venerated them as if the Reformation had never happened. The opposition from the local authorities in Bergen is harder to interpret. They scarcely argued that the veneration of the images was correct, but the pleaded that at least their aesthetic and economic value should be respected. The case also shows us a Lutheran superintendent who is pressured from above to discharge his duties, and this simultaneously gave him a chance to implement his own opinions: Schjelderup was not only following orders, but also agreed with them.

Yet even if the superintendent thought that images and sculptures should be removed from all the churches in the diocese, this case appears to have remained an internal drama concerning Bergen alone. The churches in western Norway were allowed to retain many of their pre-Reformation interior adornment even after the events of the 1570s.

The other example concerns Trondheim Cathedral, the most central scared place in Norway and the power centre of the Catholic church in this part of Christendom. In figural, material, and symbolic terms it was associated with St Olav, whose body was kept on the high altar of the cathedral. St Olav's shrine contained the most important relics in Norway, which made it a major place of pilgrimage. People had been coming to this holy place for centuries to do penance for their sins and to be healed of their diseases (Seierstad 1930; Daae 1879:61–66). Quite soon after the Reformation St Olav's reliquary casket was confiscated, melted down, and sent to Copenhagen. But this material greed was one thing, another was that the new au-

thorities did not simply take the opportunity to remove Olav's body. Archbishop Olav Engelbrektsson had taken St Olav's casket to his castle at Stenviksholm, but even after the plundering of the casket, the king's body appears to have been left in place. The new authorities were thus reluctant to go the whole way and destroy the remains of the saint-king. In 1564 the king's body was "buried" in the cathedral, but in a clearly marked grave. Many people came to this burial place, and again Councillor Jørgen Lykke appeared. In 1568 he also visited Trondheim, held a diet of the nobility there, and gave orders to fill the saint's tomb with earth to put a stop to all the visits and "abuses" (Lysaker 1973:16–23).

These two examples clearly show that acts of Catholic piety and pre-Lutheran rituals did not let themselves be abolished just because the Reformation had been implemented in Norway. The church historian Andreas Seierstad's claim that "the people had so little spiritual independence and so little personal engagement in the question of religion that the new religion was not a provocation to them" seems completely meaningless (Seierstad 1965b:163). It was rather the other way around: many people stuck to the old ways and took advantage of the possibilities that still existed, to maintain their faith and their rituals. The speed with which church interiors and saints' relics were cleaned out appears to have been due to renewed pressure from above – one generation after the Lutheran Reformation had been formally introduced.

This pressure persisted, and demands for control from the church superintendents were intensified.

The Reactions

In Bergen it was "old women and crones" who actively venerated the images and sculptures in Bergen Cathedral. We know less about who visited St Olav's grave in Trondheim. Around 1570 the "old believers" lost many of their places of refuge from the increasingly suspicious civil and ecclesiastical authorities. These had formerly been patient and followed Christian III's instructions to proceed with caution. But that ended, and the grip was tightened. During the reign of Frederik II and with Councillor Jørgen Lykke taking action, heavy pressure was imposed on the superintendents in Norway to put an end to the old religion.

The superintendent in Bergen, Jens Schjelderup, was keen to associate "the old piety" with "old women and crones". This was a rhetorical device to show that it was only the uneducated and the inarticulate who stuck to the old ways. Things were not as simple as that, of course, but it worked well as an argument with King Frederik II.

It need hardly be said that the Lutheran rulers and superintendents were not concerned about preserving the historical remains of the Roman

Catholic church or documenting the rather massive resistance provoked by the Lutheran Reformation among so many people. Despite this, some sources are preserved with evidence of intensive and vehement symbolic protest.

We can begin with some concrete examples. In the 1550s a couple of peasants on the west side of Oslo Fjord claimed to be Saints Olav and Nicholas, and the message they proclaimed was that Saturdays should still be a holy day in honour of the Virgin Mary. The authorities reacted forcefully against these men, who were burnt at the stake as heretics (Daae 1879:79f). In the 1570s a woman in Skiptvet, east of Oslo Fjord, had visions in which she saw the Virgin Mary seated on her heavenly throne and asking the people in her district to maintain the old faith. The senior judge in Oslo, Nils Stub (died 1580), sent the woman home with orders to desist. And she was to be whipped (Huitfeldt-Kaas 1895:50f)! There is a great deal to suggest that these three individuals were just the tip of the iceberg of concerted opposition to the new regime which – as they quite correctly observed – had imposed a new religion on them. They did not believe the new rulers who claimed that they had merely accomplished a reform but had not broken with the Christianity that the subjects had known until then. Of course the subjects were right, but those in power prevailed.

The woman in Skiptvet and the men on the other side of the fjord were easy to deal with – it took only a burning at the stake and a sound whipping. What was more important historically was the slow, silent resistance. We shall look at a few more examples.

It was naturally impossible in one swoop to remove people's beliefs in Purgatory, in the soul being cleansed after death, and in the responsibility of the living for the dead. The strength of these beliefs is obvious from the "Dream Poem", *Draumkvedet*. This visionary poem first became known to the Norwegian public in the mid nineteenth century. It tells of the farmer Olav Åsteson and his journey through the realm of the dead, where he sees sinners being punished and the virtuous receiving their reward. This is set in the time before the final settlement of accounts on Judgement Day, when the archangel St Michael undertakes the last judgement of souls according to their merits and deeds (Bø & Myhren 2002:7–35). There is no consensus on how old *Draumkvedet* is. It has mostly been assumed to date back to the Middle Ages (Bø 1975; cf. Amundsen 1999a:89ff), but a theory that is equally as interesting is that it was composed after the Reformation to preserve the old faith (Johannesen 1993; cf. Alver 1971). Whatever the truth, *Draumkvedet* was sung right up until the nineteenth century without being corrected by the Lutheran rejection of Purgatory.

Draumkvedet is an indication that it was precisely beliefs and rituals connected with death and burial that were most difficult to reform in a Lutheran

direction. It was also in this area that the new church refrained from interfering longest, and confined themselves to requiring priests to throw earth on the coffin. This was to ensure that no one was buried in the cemetery without the priest knowing about it. In addition, priests were expected to use the occasion to preach the word of God to the bereaved.

This was evidently not enough for most people. The ringing of church bells to mark deaths and funerals was an important part of the Catholic death rituals. Long after the Reformation, priests were heard to complain that the old custom of ringing the church bells as soon as a person died was virtually impossible to eradicate. The draft of a Norwegian church ordinance from 1604 condemns this use of the bells. It is "idolatrous" and an expression of heresy and error, because people believe that as soon as death strikes, one can ring "the soul into Heaven: and thereby make an immensely long fuss". The bishops therefore wanted the bells to be rung only when the deceased was being carried to the grave. This formulation was indeed included in the Norwegian ordinance of 1607 (Kolsrud 1917:79; *Kirkeordinansen* 1985: 55r–v).

Lutherans tested a new interpretation, namely, that the ringing was supposed to awaken the living to repentance, not to accompany the dead person through Purgatory (Fæhn 1994:149). But it was questioned whether this was enough to change people's attitudes to the matter. And while the ringing of the church bells was perhaps stopped in its old form, in many places the requiem bells were an important part of the funeral ritual. As late as the nineteenth century there were many who believed that the sound of the church bells at a funeral was an expression that the dead person was in bliss, that he or she had "fared well" (Amundsen 1998:60ff). And although extreme unction disappeared with the Reformation, people could attach great importance to communion as the last supper – a sign that the dead person departed in bliss. It was customary to summon the priest to a person who was seriously ill, but many people waited until it was obvious that death was close at hand. At the same time, nineteenth-century Norwegian folk tradition is full of beliefs about omens and signs observed in connection with a death, indicating whether the dead person was blessed or not (Amundsen 1990b:7ff. Hodne 1980:23–40).

Another ritual that incensed the Lutheran legislators was connected to the old tradition of watching over the body until the funeral. Before the Reformation this was a ritualization of the responsibility of the living for the dead person's soul, and it was one of the ritual acts with the deceased for which the priest was responsible. People held a vigil over the corpse, which was treated with respect and provided with everything necessary for the journey through Purgatory. Lutheran priests stayed away from wakes because they were associated with theological notions that they wished to combat, but this did not stop people from holding wakes. There were many legal prohibitions

of this "objectionable practice", which was viewed as an excuse for drunkenness, festivity, and ungodliness. The Norwegian church ordinance of 1607 forbade such "feasts, banquets, drunkenness, games, craziness, just like pagans, those who never considered the Christian outlook on death" (Fæhn 1994:149; *Kirkeordinansen* 1985:54v–55r). By their very existence these prohibitions demonstrate the powerlessness of the Lutherans. The words of the ordinance are strong, singling out wakes as an example of Norwegian religious error.

It still did not help: wakes remained common in many parts of Norway until well into the nineteenth century. The priests were still often absent, but those who had the responsibility for the rituals tended to be parish clerks, schoolteachers, or masters of ceremonies who were experienced and locally trusted. The ritualization was obvious and strict: candles were lit, hymnbooks were distributed, verses were sung, toasts were drunk for the "welfare" of the deceased, and people provided for the dead person to the best of their ability (Christiansen 1968; Hodne 1980:69ff).

These examples make the picture clearer: the protests against a new church that wanted to eradicate any notions to do with the moral and religious interaction between the living and the dead led the peasantry to privatize the old rituals, assuming responsibility themselves for handing them down. When the new regime removed the possibility to communicate about the fate of the dead, it must have been perceived as a significant, unwanted, and painful change (Duffy 1992:8). Much of the motivation to make use of the new church's services for the dead disappeared. For a long time after the Reformation, at any rate, there were complaints that many people did not seek help from the clergy for death and burial. The priests for their part began to complain that many people "drag their dead into the earth as if they were beasts" (Amundsen 1991:111f). Even as late as the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, complaints could be heard about peasants arranging their funerals themselves, thus leaving the clergy unaware of what had happened (Høgset 1990).

From Sacramentals to Magic

One last point that may be worth looking at has to do with the repertoire of ecclesiastical rituals that were called sacramentals. As we saw above, they were abolished by the Reformation – at least on paper. Of course this did not mean that people's everyday needs for prayer and other religious protection against attack from evil forces disappeared. The Lutheran clergy was not officially supposed to have anything to do with this. There is a great deal to suggest, however, that individual priests nevertheless had a certain repertoire of rituals and formulae that could be used in such situations. We have already mentioned the fate of the Catholic monks and nuns. It is not im-

plausible to imagine that they too continued the pre-Reformation sacramental traditions. They had access to ritual books and oral tradition, and many of them were no doubt trusted by the local people.

One example of how the tradition of sacramentals continued to have a life and a function after the Reformation is known as *Vinjeboken*, a manuscript that was found during the demolition of the old church in Vinje in Telemark in 1796. The manuscript contains texts ranging from hymns to the Virgin Mary and genealogical data to medical advice and charms used in veterinary and human medicine. The charms often invoke saints, Christian symbols, and liturgical prayers, and in one case also an evil spirit. Much of the matter is practical instructions for the use of herbs and other remedies from nature. Closer study has shown that the contents were written down in the 1480s, most likely in clerical circles. At any rate, the only known owner of the book, Hans Larensson (?–?), was a priest in Telemark in the 1480s and 1490s. Presumably these texts represent a repertoire that was not untypical of rural Catholic priests in this period, and the knowledge naturally did not disappear with the Reformation. It is interesting that the manuscript remained in Vinje after Hans Larensson died. Even though we do not know anything about who owned it or how it was used, it is not improbable that it was among the papers handed down from one parish priest to the next until it was stowed away under the floor of the church, perhaps not very long before 1796 (Garstein 1993:22f.43).

There are occasional examples showing how Lutheran priests in the time after the Reformation may have transformed and used similar medical, magical, or benedictory formulae and rituals. In the official archive left by the parish priest of Flesberg 1689–1705, Claus Jochumsen Hintz (1641–1705), who was otherwise known as a learned Latin scholar and a good and orderly state servant, there is a text that can be interpreted as a Lutheran variant of a benediction that the priest said when the cattle were sent to the mountain pastures for the summer (Flatin 1917:93f):

Prayer in the summer for the livestock and cattle driven to the wild forests to gather their fodder etc.
O eternal God, creator and preserver of all creatures; thou who helpest and feedest man and beast, and providest for small birds, and dost not let any sparrow fall to the earth without thy will and knowledge, thou who carest for cows, calves, sheep, and other livestock, and who lettest grass and hay grow to feed them. We entrust to thee all our livestock, both large and small, O gracious God and father of mercy, to protect all our livestock from wild and harmful animals, bears and wolves! Preserve them from the Devil's magic, and all people's evil eyes, and let our livestock and cattle (: which we have now driven out in this wild land): thrive and benefit, and not hurt each other, for the sake of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who was born in Bethlehem among the livestock, and was laid there in the manger on hay and straw, and in the young lambs he has designated and declared to us poor people his own offering. Hear, Lord, and heed our prayer and entreaty!!

Such texts and practices among the first generations of Lutheran priests were part of the background reality to the many folk legends about priests who knew more than the Lord's Prayer, who owned the Black Book, the sixth and seventh book of Moses, and could generally control the Devil and all evil forces (Eriksen 1992). Such clerical practices were not unproblematic, but it was not until the eighteenth century with its pietism and enlightenment that leading theologians seriously tried to prevent this by describing it as magic and superstition (Amundsen 1999b).

Some Concluding Perspectives

These final examples show that not even the rituals and ritual practices that were officially abolished by the Reformation automatically disappeared. There was some creative reinterpretation on the part of the laity, with partial support from the clergy. But how far the local priests went in following this folk creativity is harder to ascertain.

The Lutheran Reformation in Norway involved a wish on the part of the authorities to bring about a new understanding of human life and the ecclesiastical rituals associated with it. There is much to suggest, however, that the changes were not willingly accepted, and especially that ordinary people assumed control over what had officially disappeared. "Folk religion gradually began to become private," as the church historian Jan Schumacher puts it (Schumacher 2005:162).

Regardless of what the new ecclesiastic authorities imposed in the way of ritual revision and reduction, new scope was opened for interpretation, where continuity could be as common as discontinuity. It was not a total break, because the changes presupposed and almost confirmed the past. In many ways it is correct to say that a cultural revolution took place with the introduction of the Lutheran Reformation. Yet many of the external forms from the old days persisted. The English anthropologist Paul Connerton (1940–) has pointed out how revolutions develop new rituals, but simultaneously often copy the ritual language of the old regime. The new rituals can thereby involuntarily confirm the old ones (Connerton 1989:6ff). The rituals of the Lutheran Reformation sought to establish a distance from the Roman Catholic church, but the new and the old rituals still talked to each other, as it were. Without a knowledge of the old rituals, the new ones are meaningless; the revolution presupposed a knowledge of the time before the break. The break was only obvious to those who remembered and understood the past. This gave room for reinterpretations – of both new and old rituals.

These reinterpretations had their most important foothold among ordinary people, those who rarely had a voice in the contemporary source material. The pressure from below made itself felt so strongly that the Reforma-

tion, rather than representing a complete break in the field of ritual, established arenas and strategies for negotiation between the laity and the Lutheran clergy. This interaction was perhaps not challenged until the coming of the more totalitarian spiritual ideas of the eighteenth century – pietism and enlightenment – when the theological and ecclesiastical struggle against folk religiosity was heightened in earnest, and when increasingly forceful measures were taken to deny the value of this religiosity (cf. Malmstedt 2002).

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Book Reviews

Refugee Memories
Maryam Adjam: Minnesspår. Hågkomstens rum och rörelse i skuggan av flykt. Brutus Östlings Bokförlag Symposion, Höör 2017. 304 pp. Ill. English summary.

The title of Maryam Adjam's doctoral dissertation in ethnology means "Traces of Memory: Space and Movement of Memory in the Shadow of Flight". The explosive topicality of the subject – memories of war, departure, and escape over the sea – must have appeared increasingly obvious to the author in the course of the work. The sea of death that was the Baltic Sea during the Second World War is today the Mediterranean. Then as now, Sweden has been a place of refuge. After hazardous journeys across the Baltic Sea at the end of the Second World War, about 25,000 Estonians found a new homeland in Sweden. Behind them they left a turbulent time. Estonia's independence between the wars gave way to chaos during the war years, when the German and Soviet occupying forces replaced each other and subjected the population to forcible conscription and deportation.

In the dissertation, the aim of which is "to investigate how the individual lived memory relates to and articulates its experience and history" (p. 21), Adjam delves deep into exiled Estonians' memories of their flight. As regards her outlook on the nature of memory, the author positions herself clearly. Her phenomenological preunderstanding is based on the premise that memories are not static phenomena with which one can reconstruct events in the past, as it was there and then. Memory is rather a lived experience whose appearance, configuration, and function changes depending on the context in which it is expressed. As a consequence, the author elicits her informants', or co-researchers' (as she prefers to call them) memories using a wide range of methods, some of which are particularly innovative. Besides ordinary interviews, the author strolls together with her co-researchers. The places they visit are closely associated with memories of the flight. They turn things over, souvenirs and artefacts that can lead the recollection experiences in a particular direction. A piece of cloth cut from a uniform, for example, serves as both a bodily memory and a historic relic. The thing reflects both physical sensations of everyday life at a micro level – the wool against the skin – and the historical process that led towards war and militarization at the macro level.

Adjam's dissertation is in every respect an impressive piece of work, although the high level of abstraction makes the reasoning in the introduction somewhat impenetrable. With a language that is anything but academically formal, being more metaphorical, the author nevertheless manages to make the theoretical concepts concrete through well-informed analyses of quotations and transcriptions.

There are many parallels between this work and Sigrid Rausing's brilliant dissertation *History, Memory, and Identity: The End of a Collective Farm* (2004), which appeared in a highly readable

popular version recently. Oddly enough, Adjam does not refer to Rausing's work, despite the obvious points of contact. Both deal with people's memories and perception of history in the wake of the fall of the Soviet regime in Estonia. While Adjam focuses on people who fled from the country, Rausing considers those who stayed on in what became, in 1944, the Soviet Republic of Estonia. The conclusions of the two dissertations stand out more distinctly when they are compared with each other. We see clearly how memory experiences can differ so radically, as can the ability to perceive one's history, depending on which social system one finds oneself in. Rausing describes memories which are fragmentary in character – they are not placed in a larger historical context, which is evidently a consequence of the lack of history that an authoritarian regime creates in its subjects. We see the opposite in Adjam's account. The fragments of memory among the exiled Estonians in Sweden are joined together in a narrative where the uncertainty of the escape situation stands in relief against what happened later, and they are set in relation to overall historical events. The distant past changes and assumes new forms as new experiences are added.

With a cautious hand and with scholarly precision, Adjam explores the capricious elusiveness of memory: "Memories dig in layer after layer searching for traces, but at the same time adding new layers to the old experiences, through these returns and the new experiences they lead to, with new combinations of traces and interpretations, narratives and images" (p. 240). Elucidating refugee narratives in a historical context is a highly topical and urgent subject, and by all appearances this will help the dissertation to reach a broad readership, even outside the academic field.

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Senior Mobility and Migration

Anne Leonora Blaakilde & Gabriella Nilsson (eds.): Nordic Seniors on the Move: Mobility and Migration in Later Life. Lund Studies in Arts and Cultural Sciences, Lund 2014. 225 pp. ISBN 978-91-981458-0-9.

In a blog posting published in *The Guardian* in 2015 Mawuna Remarque Koutonin drew attention to the strange state of affairs that it is only white people who are described as "ex-pats" while everyone else has to be content with being "migrants". (https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2015/mar/13/white-people-expats-immigrants-migration). We live in a time characterized in every way by migration and mobility. The non-white and de-individualized "refugee flow" is often in the public spotlight, whereas other flows, at least as interesting, avoid this problematizing (and often, unfortunately, problem-focused) discussion. I have now read a book that reverses that perspective.

The volume *Nordic Seniors on the Move*, edited by the ethnologists Anne Leonora Blaakilde and Gabriella Nilsson, is a multifaceted attempt to assemble research on mobility, migration, and ageing (the field that is called in English International Retirement Migration Studies) from the Nordic countries (except Iceland). The authors come from disciplines such as ethnology, cultural and social gerontology, theology, and architecture. In geographical terms the book covers migration both within and between countries, and the topics explored range from food habits to church, lifestyle, housing, and politics. As regards age, the span is broad given the focus on "seniors", from disability pensioners just over 40 to energetic people in their eighties. The book consists of an introduction and eight chapters. In this review I shall pick some examples from this rich book, which can convey a pic-

ture of the diverse perspectives and questions it brings up.

In an introductory chapter the editors of the volume provide a general look at how we can use different culture-studies perspectives and concepts to understand ageing, generation, and mobility in our time. There are many simple but important points for the reader to bear in mind: mobility, in both a physical sense (we want to travel, but for the right reasons) and a metaphorical sense (we want a "life journey" that is just adventurous enough for us), which is virtually a moral imperative in our time, is not restricted solely to the wealthiest pensioners; the difference in living costs between different countries also makes it possible (to some extent) for less well-off Nordic pensioners to migrate. Older people in the Nordic countries, where both "older" and "Nordic" are rather diffuse categories, share experiences of living in welfare states with clear and in some respects generous pension systems. With a background in a similar climate and the charter tourism that arose after the war, today's Nordic seniors are also a generation who have lived with, at least, an imagined possibility of travelling to warmer latitudes. There is thus good reason, according to the editors, to look at Nordic seniors' migration as a whole, as is done here. To conclude with a view from outside, an American architect was invited to compare migration to the Costa del Sol in Spain with mobility and migration among American seniors. The introduction also presents differences and connections between forms of migration that sometimes overlap in the chapters of the volume, such as *lifestyle migration* or *voluntary lifestyle migration* (migration based on a choice intended to give better quality of life), *retirement migration* (moving when gainful employment ends), *rural migration* (the migration to the countryside that is described, for example, in Nilsson's chapter about Österlen), and *health migration* (where a perceived improvement in health is the reason for the migration).

The editors point out in their introduction that there is a widespread idea that migration in old age is something reserved for people with a lot of money, but several of the essays indicate that this need not be the case. As an example of the well-off senior migrants, Gabriella Nilsson devotes her chapter to a wealthy group who acquire new homes in Österlen in eastern Skåne in connection with retirement – sometimes before and sometimes after. Nilsson states that Österlen, in a Swedish context, "*more than any other area* is discursively understood as a rural retirement destination" (p. 30; here as a reader I would have liked to see some kind of evidence or reference for the statement since I am not so familiar with retirement destinations). The interviewed informants formulate several paradoxes and contradictions: on the one hand they emphasize the importance of being able to break away and do something new, and on the other hand they acquire new houses that require looking after, they stress the importance of activity and social networks while simultaneously moving to Österlen for the "peace and quiet", and they talk of freedom and the importance of being able to cast off from the old, at the same time as they give up their freedom by acquiring a new house, and the new home increasingly takes over objects from the old one. In Österlen they think that being close to the Continent will open new possibilities for travels and experiences, but this has to be balanced with planning for the future, as various details in the home are adapted for disability. Retirement triggers freedom and movement, but the new house forces a pause in this. These contradictions, according to Nilsson, can be viewed as an ongoing negotiation between expectations of activity and mobility on the one hand, and the need for security and a base on the other. Migration is thus not just a matter of freedom and movement

but also of creating continuity and security – which Nilsson sums up by saying that these migrants do the same thing but in a different place.

Establishing continuities is not infrequently a matter of sensory registers – recognizing familiar smells, tastes, consistencies, or the touch of different materials. This is discussed by the Finnish social gerontologist Antti Karisto in her chapter, based on diverse material – special diaries, conversational interviews, and questionnaires – which examines attitudes to food among Finnish pensioners on the Costa del Sol. Citing the British consumption sociologist Alan Warde, Karisto demonstrates four antinomies of taste (originally deriving from Kant's discussion of seemingly irreconcilable theses) in the way the migrants relate to food: novelty and tradition, health and indulgence, economy and extravagance, convenience and care (p. 77). It turns out that, whereas several other nationalities display a powerful need to eat their "own food", preferably served at special restaurants, this is not such a prominent feature of the Finnish pensioners. On the contrary, they joke about "meatball dependence" and about people who stick to Finnish cuisine. Spanish food is described as healthier than Finnish, but other food is also mentioned, and some people can instead emphasize how important it is to indulge in unhealthy extravagances (such as the Danish smorgasbord at one of the local restaurants). There is a special charge in rye bread, Finnish fish, and coffee. Karisto thus shows how a whole set of antinomies is handled with different strategies: by eating seasonal food, through mixtures, by separating healthy eating during the week from the more hedonistic weekends. The choice of food does not follow any clear social parameters; it is more an expressions of individuals' lifestyle choices.

The ethnologist Anne Leonora Blaakilde has done fieldwork and interviews among Danish pensioners on the Costa del Sol in Spain and in Alanya, Turkey. Several of them are health migrants, people who have moved to other places because the climate has a positive effect on poor health (e.g. rheumatism). The article shows how Danish legislation and the social insurance system collides with the migrants' life situation: on the one hand the authorities' image of health migrants as wealthy people exploiting the system, on the other hand migrants with scarce economic resources who only just manage on the state pension but are also forced to pay for private sickness insurance locally, on top of a tax from which they can never reap the benefits. Blaakilde succeeds in elucidating how a welfare state with social equalization as its guiding star instead puts a premium on the health of the most prosperous and undermines the health of the worse off. Their migration also raises questions about how the responsibility of the nation state for redistribution and for citizens' health can encounter and manage an increasingly mobile reality.

In the concluding chapter, the American architect and researcher Deane Simpson discusses forms of housing for seniors in the Villages of Florida, and elderly Americans who lead a nomadic live in recreational vehicles, and he makes certain comparisons with the Scandinavians who migrate to the Costa del Sol. Simpson views these different migrant lifestyles as a kind of utopian exploration of what Peter Laslett has called the Third Age (a historical phase when the Young-Old people, now freed from work, emerge as representatives of a special phase of life). As an architect Simpson not only engages in close-up studies of the physical design of "the vacation that never ends" but also how the housing is presented and marketed, based on detailed knowledge of the demography of the Third Age and its generational experiences. The Villages of Florida, for example, are linked to a long tradition of configurations of a kind

of "typical" American small-town street – Mainstreet USA – as shaped by Walt Disney and others, expressing a nostalgia for a time when everything was simpler. Simpson has a particularly interesting description of how the temporal gaps that arise between these communities and the surroundings not only move the residents back to a different time in life (childhood and youth); also, since the communities are relatively homogeneous in age, being inhabited exclusively by seniors, the residents do not feel old (because there are no younger generations to compare themselves with).

Other chapters discuss topics such as the significance of the church and religion among the migrant seniors, the transnational competences that are developed in different forms of unpaid voluntary work, and how lifestyle motives play a part in the move to senior housing.

This is a welcome book that I have read with great interest. The chapters have a solid empirical foundation without losing anything in analytical depth. I have no serious objections, but I would like to draw attention to some questions raised by the reading. This is a book that has brought together researchers united by an interest in ageing and migration as a cultural and social phenomenon. As a result, several chapters, despite a sometimes intersectional approach, are far too focused on age, or to be exact, age becomes a given interpretative framework for things that could just as easily be expressions of other processes in life that are interwoven with age. In her article Gabriella Nilsson links the quest for "peace and quiet" to old age (and Swedish mentality), but it could just as well be part of a class-related quest for exclusiveness. Kissing each other on the cheek among the Finns is described by themselves as Spanification, but could it not also be interpreted as staging the "continental" habits of the wealthy people (and Karisto actually describes the Finnish migrants as upwardly mobile)?

A reviewer should perhaps not bring up other things that a book could have been about, but it also strikes me that the book largely seems to be confined to (what at least appear to be) ethnically homogeneous groups of migrants. Do these migrants not also include people who migrated earlier in life to the Nordic countries, perhaps some of the "returnees", for example, to Latin America, should be regarded as senior migrants, and what would the inclusion of this kind of senior migration have done to the whole picture? And what is the meaning of the relative ethnic homogeneity within the groups for cultivating a distinctive ethnic identity in other countries (which is a recurring theme in some of the texts)? In short, the social parameters with which the articles operate sometimes become constraints and limitations.

But that is how it is with all good books, they engage people and provoke questions – which in turn can be a starting signal for further research. The book is a welcome contribution to cultural studies of age and ageing, and bearing in mind the pedagocial tone of the majority of the essays, they will be well suited as required reading in many disciplines. For the problem is, as pointed out in the book, that age and ageing are often blind spots in analyses in the social and cultural sciences, left to specialized disciplines to deal with (such as social gerontology). Collections of this type could remedy that deficiency.

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Sensitive Objects, Fleeting Atmospheres

Jonas Frykman & Maja Povrzanović Frykman (eds.): Sensitive Objects. Affect and Material Culture. Nordic Academic Press, Lund 2016. 285 pp. Ill.

The primary question posed by this edited volume, *Sensitive Objects: Affect and Material Culture*, concerns objects becoming "sensitive", the moment when they become affecting, loaded with affective value or feelings of various kinds. In the volume there are several examples of objects or things (not necessarily meaning the same) which become sensitive. One such text is Orvar Löfgren's inventive essay on how baggage, especially when women pack suitcases in movies, start to vibrate with a content which make both the pictures of them and the baggage sensitive, loaded with something quite special which becomes deeply moving to the viewer. Another example is from Jonas Frykman's essay "Done By Inheritance", which can be read as a Proustian display of how questions of inheritance might be handled in conjunction with the dispersion of a home, a detached house or a flat and the contents of this property being split up, for example, after the death of the heirs' parents. Frykman shows, in a way which is akin to Löfgren's method, how certain things are loaded with an especially strong affective value and can start to function as symbols, perhaps even as some kind of "memory icons" of the type the Polish cultural historian Krzysztof Pomian has named semiophor. Using as research material these kinds of breakups in the mundane world, Frykman is able to show how strong feelings of various kinds are put in motion in conjunction with a question of inheritance, problems which may serve as both foci for storytelling and entries into past worlds. In certain cases such inheritance disputes can lead to siblings becoming into foes who never again want to see each other or talk to each other.

What makes this book so fascinating is that the question of the sensitivity of the objects and their possibilities to influence and communicate is allied to some other questions with both an ontological and an epistemological bearing. The volume can be looked upon as an attempt, if not to answer the questions involved in a exhaustive way then at least to bring the questions into a current ethnological research practice, one which up till now has been dominated by a more textual, more discursive or intersectional and above all more constructivist perspective on the research methods and practices in this field. To see that this is indeed the case one need not look further than to some of the edited volumes produced in Swedish within the ethnological research field in this millennium with an ambition to answer questions of epistemology and in certain cases also ontology, such as Gösta Arvastson & Billy Ehn's *Etnologiska observationer* (2009), Lena Gemzöe's *Nutida etnografi: Reflektioner från mediekonsumtionens fält* (2004) or Barbro Blehr's *Kritisk etnologi: Artiklar till Åke Daun* (2001). But in *Etnologiska observationer,* for instance, one can note that it is possible to combine a discourse-theory perspective with what could be called a more phenomenological or performative approach, as in Anna Sofia Lundgren's essay "Störning på Holland Park Avenue" (Disturbance on Holland Park Avenue) which points towards contradictions in what she calls systematic observations – characterized by observations of events and persons and attempts to describe these – which easily take on rhetorical, metaphorical meanings. Lundgren notes that her approach has its basis in discourse theory, discourses being understood as materialized, as practices, with the addition that there is a turn taking place towards the observing subject, a turn which also problematizes the same subject. And what will be understood as causes of things happening are, in her view, against a discursive thinking, individuals, not structures or norms. A similar turn dominates the *Sensible Objects* volume, which makes it quite important above all as an example of how ethnological research could start to renew both its theoretical apparatus of con-

cepts and its way of studying the world, and indirectly not only the research objects but also the observing and written ethnographer.

Perhaps the most pressing question the volume poses – and tries to answer – is the one about how an existentialist-phenomenological approach grounded in Heideggerian categories such as

Dasein, *vorhanden*, *zuhanden*, *Befindlichkeit*, or in Kierkegaard's discussion about *Angst* and anxiety, presented and analysed in an excellent way by Nils Gilje in the book – could be used in mundane ethnographical research with a credible methodological approach. The fact that Jonas Frykman, who obviously has functioned as *primus inter pares* in the work on the volume – his earlier co-operation with Nils Gilje, in e.g. the volume *Being There* (2003) is an important point of reference, as is Frykman's own neo-phenomenological offering in the book *Berörd* (2012) with its subtitle *Plats, kropp och ting i fenomenologisk kulturanalys* (Place, body and thing in phenomenological cultural analysis) – so decisively connects material culture with affect, makes this a book of great interest and importance.

But the volume is perhaps even more interesting because the sensitive objects and the affects are positioned in a triangular field. The third side of the triangle is something which cannot directly be considered an object – if so it is a highly fleeting one – but not as an actual subject either, but more something in between, a kind of fleeting "ether" or indeed atmosphere, which is the sector where the affects emerge most clearly and the material aspect of the field evaporates and becomes, if not immaterial, then markedly intersubjective.

So, what is atmosphere if one reads this volume? There are many entries to the concept in the index to the book, roughly the same amount as there are to another other central concept in the volume: object. It seems as though atmospheres possess a rather dualistic nature: they have both a subjective and a collective and not least intersubjective side. In my reading the questions concerning atmosphere are the book's most important contribution when it comes to scientific advances. Frykman's own contribution in the essay on inheritance troubles is at the frontline here. But there are still questions to be answered in Frykman's text as well, and they concern the fleeting, quixotic nature of atmosphere, its moving positions, something which makes it epistemologically part of a kind of postmodern world in which the moving, fleeting aspects have priority over the static one, *stasis*. But the question concerning its character remains to be answered: if the atmospheric obviously is neither an interior nor an exterior quality of the objects in question, then what is it exactly, this element operating in the interstices between several different categories? The problem with Frykman's conception of atmosphere is that it is at the same time very vague – he sometimes equates it with ambience – as in much late modern or postmodern music, not least soundtracks, incidentally – and at other times closely binds it to affects, preferring to speak of affective atmospheres, as if this duo would always operate together. But this kind of conceptualization does not take into account that atmosphere might well operate without a clear affect attached to it or vice versa, the affect carrying the atmosphere. In a special issue on atmospheres in the journal *Emotion, Space and Society*, the editors, the Danish researchers Mikkel Bille, Peter Bjerregaard & Tim Flohr Sørensen, try to move behind this dualistic model of atmosphere into one which is staged and manipulated in different ways and researched even in historical contexts, then the complexity and ambiguity of the concept of atmosphere will gain strength and to my mind give it an even more pressing significance than it has in *Sensitive Objects*.

The question of atmosphere is also related to another issue which does not get

a wholly satisfying answer in this volume, the subject-object relation (the one which Lundgren was also interested in), a question which a radical phenomenological research approach must be able to give credible answers to. The question of the pre-subjective and the pre-discursive is linked to this and opens the field to the philosophical work being done in many different corners of the world today concerning realism versus idealism, materialism versus immaterialism, Kant versus Heidegger, and also questions of how phenomenology has been interpreted by thinkers such as Deleuze, Levinas and Derrida. By underlining the importance of the object in phenomenology, questions about subjects and subjectivities, either collective or individual ones, will have to be addressed, for instance questions of how such collectivities emerge, function and are maintained.

Methodologically a couple of the essays in the volume stand somewhat apart from the rest. One such text is Orvar Löfgren's research on what he calls "Emotional Baggage", to be more specific the importance of suitcases and baggage in film, especially Hollywood movies, an investigation based to a considerable extent on film, but not entirely since the study also combines the movie analyses with history and field observations and therefore might be considered a methodological *bricolage* in line with ethnographical analysis called *non-representational theory*, a field which cannot be equated with the kind of existentially accentuated phenomenology that Frykman represents.

Another essay which might feel a little bit peripheral but at the same time is very interesting is Nils Gilje's "Moods and Emotions: Some Philosophical Reflections on the Affective Turn". The peripheral nature of the piece in this case has to do with the strong emphasis on a history-of-ideas type of text which from an ethnographical point of view might be seen as an outsider in this respect, but it is executed with a penetrating inquiry into the works of Spinoza, Heidegger, Sartre and not least Kierkegaard as to what today might be called a new branch of doing ethnographic work, in an existentialist-phenomenological or neo-phenomenological way. Perhaps Kierkegaard's discussion of the problem of anxiety will in the end be the one which is most useful of the philosophers Gilje discusses as regards further research within his tradition in ethnology and cultural analysis. The fact that the negative affects seem to carry greater weight has been shown in the overall picture of affects provided for by Silvan Tomkins, one of the pioneers in this affective turn. Of the nine affects Tomkins has listed, two are positive (joy, interest), one is neutral (surprise), but six are negative (anger, disgust, dissmell, distress, fear, shame). As the observant reader will note, neither anxiety nor angst is listed among Tomkins' categories of affect. The step from affects to what the cultural historian Karin Johannisson describes in her book *Melankoliska rum* (2013), what could be called affective syndromes, is another story well worth pursuing further. Johannisson describes a range of phobias which in an overwrought way point towards threatening images of the life world we experience. It might be, she concludes, that agoraphobia, claustrophobia and vertigo, based on a traditional conception of space and attuned to the lucidity of planes, might be replaced by conceptions which relate to a new physical space, new technologies and virtual realities.

In the introduction to the volume, entitled "Affect and Material Culture: Perspectives and Strategies", Jonas Frykman & Maja Povrzanović Frykman note that the writers of the book are interested in practices and lived experiences which are always historically embedded. From this they conclude that objects are not to be understood with an independent affective charge. It is the practices, praxis,

when people use objects or become inspired by environments, which they research, and it is people who are telling the researchers about their practices as goal-oriented, meaningful and affectively charged, they note, with a reference to an earlier text by a contributor to the volume, Stef Jansen.

In the next step in the ontological grounding of their research method the editors refer to Martin Heidegger. Here his well-known thought that it is impossible to experience the world cognitively without being affectively attuned or in a certain mood is emphasized, but it seems that for the editors Heidegger's thoughts on affects and material culture are even more important in this context. Especially the questions of tools and instruments are, they hold, central to Heidegger's system. Tools, they write, are designed to be used by the owner of the tools at a given moment (they are *zuhanden*), but when they happen to break they are *vorhanden* and give the user a reason to contemplate their construction. A tool which is *vorhanden* is an object which gets a name, which can be pondered on and gets its cultural significance through an inventory of the rest of the tools. In this way the tool, the object becomes a symbol or a representation.

Heideggerian *Stimmung* or moods and feelings are in the editors' view always situated in a certain situation, and the person in question has to confront this situation where things such as affects are related to objects, as for instance when an upset woman (from Frykman's chapter on inheritance struggles) breaks a vase in anger. This is, the editors write, an example of what Heidegger meant with the concept of *Befindlichkeit*, a situation in which affects make things mean something, a complex chain of relations which can be experienced immediately and which become distinct.

This volume and its research objects cross boundaries in a geographical way too. There are three distinct geographical boundaries in the material. A bloc of texts – affectively the most charged here – deal with different aspects of the highly turbulent recent past of the Balkans, more specifically from the former Yugoslavia – these are Maja Povrzanović Frykman's "Sensitive Objects of Humanitarian Aid" (subtitled "Corporeal Memories and Affective Continuities"), Nevena Škrbić Alempijević & Sanja Potkonjak's "The Titoaffect: Tracing Objects and Memories of Socialism in Postsocialist Croatia" and Stef Jansen's "Ethnography and the Choices Posed by the 'Affective Turn'". Jansen's research object is located in Bosnia Herzegovina, although the text is above all methodologically cued and offers a phenomenologically oriented researcher several different possibilities for building up a robust methodology. There is a family resemblance between Jansen's essay and Löfgren's since both in their research use not only fieldwork but also movies as material. Of the texts focusing on the Balkans, perhaps the most illuminating as to the power of affective objects is the one by Maja Povrzanović Frykman on the emotional and affective charge which material goods handed out in humanitarian aid during the war 1992-95 still hold over those who were subjects of the aid rations. The links between affects, corporeal memories and storytelling here are quite strong and they also fill the essay with a powerful emotional charge.

No fewer than four of the essays here are based on research material from Norway. These are Britt Kramvig & Anne Britt Flemmen's "What Alters When the Traditional Sámi Costume Travels? A Study of Affective Investments in the Sápmi", Elisabet Sørfjorddal Hauge's "In the Mood: Place and Tools in the Music Industry with a Focus on Entrepreneurship", Kirsti Mathiesen Hjemdahl & Jonas Frykman's "Innovation and Embodiment in a Small Town Hotel" and Sarah Holst Kjær's

"The Performative Museum: Designing a Total Experience".

The third geographical area which the volume deals with is Southwest Texas. which is the place in which a probing phenomenological cultural analysis is performed by Lesley Stern and Kathleen Stewart (the latter known for her book *Ordinary Affects* from 2007), "Companion Pieces Written Through a Drift", performed in a spirit of experimental ethnography in the form of a travelogue of these peripheral and mostly desolate parts of Texas. A result of the experiment is a double report of how to take in and how to write about a trip which all the time is a performance and an opening to sensations and vibrations which the "ordinary" ethnographer or traveller does not necessary experience. The research method requires an openness to nature, atmospheres, feelings, anxieties, but also to symbols of various kinds and a certain staging (which interestingly enough links it to the findings of the Danish research group mentioned earlier in this review). The performance is akin to both a road movie and a form of writing associated with authors such as Rebecca Solnit or Georges Perec. With help from memory work and a situational performative logic, with special objects, above all a cardboard rooster, bought by one of the ethnographers and photographed in various positions in the landscape, the writers try to open up the ethnological field in new ways. This text concludes the volume and is well worth reading but at the same time points towards the methodological challenges facing the neo-phenomenological approach.

And there might still be something missing in this quite thorough and well-researched book on sensitive objects, affects and atmospheres, something which above all poses questions of temporality, above all those concerning the relationship between the contemporary, the moment of "now" in the objects and affects analysed and various aspects of the past and of the future. This problem is raised in some of the texts, especially the one by Frykman on inheritance troubles and those from the turbulent recent history of the Balkans in which questions of remembrance play quite a decisive role in the affectual history writing that takes place in these ethnographies. But there is still something lacking concerning the work to be done in affect studies of the kind this book is an example of. This is the question of the need for constant renegotiations, constant adjustments taking place in the affective field, an approach to affects seen in a temporal light, something one can find in writers such as Lauren Berlant in her important book *Cruel Optimism* or Michael D. Jackson in his *Minima Ethnographica*. What Berlant discusses in her book on emerging and waning affects has a lot to do with different genres other than the nowadays maybe too often evoked narrative of crisis. For Berlant genres such as melodrama, situation comedy and other older realist genres provide an affective expectation of the experience of watching something unfold, as she notes, whether that thing is in life or in art. Here she connects to both Giorgio Agamben's idea of a class-related production of characteristic gestures that cinema collects as they become archaic and to Raymond Williams's incitement to think about the present as a process of emergence.

Jackson for his part is particularly alert in his insistence that the intersubjective – which is also of great importance in *Sensitive Objects* – must not lead to a glossing of subjectivity in romanticism as a kind of intuitive, solipsistic or introspective mode of experience, and he emphasizes that we should not misconstrue intersubjectivity as a synonym for shared experience, emphatic understanding or fellow-feeling. Jackson's view is that intersubjectivity embraces both centripetal and centrifugal forces, and constructive and destruc-

tive extremes without prejudice. I am not quite sure that all texts in this volume can qualify for this kind of ambivalence. When reading the well-researched articles by Kirsti Mathiesen Hjemdahl & Jonas Frykman on innovation and embodiment in a small town hotel in southern Norway or by Sarah Holst Kjær on the performative museum and tourist attraction in Southern Norway called the Lindesnes Lighthouse, a feeling akin to watching a feel-good movie or a romantic comedy starts creeping in. This might have something to do with both these objects and clusters of objects being quite striking aesthetically, situated as they are in the tourist industry which by its very nature in many ways is adjacent to genres of entertainment in e.g. cinema, from detective stories to romantic comedies or melodrama. My question is simply one about emerging narrative genres and sentimental structures to be reckoned with in the ethnographic storytelling taking place. I think these types of often "minor" genres and aesthetic categories are constantly on the move today and might coalesce in ways we haven't understood well enough yet, not even in an otherwise quite impressive volume like this one.

This is also in line with the kind of thinking on affect found in Margaret Wetherell – a researcher who clearly is an important point of reference for the volume – when she considers the intertwining of vocabularies, bodies, contexts and actions in an emotion episode. She speaks about the open-ended flexible application of "skills" and the "routines, ruts and grooves" in brains and bodies acquired developmentally, the ways in which the embodied dispositions of emotion are carried into new contexts, how these become canonical and conventional, the relation to reflexivity, and variable degrees of conscious and non-conscious enactment. And from this position she moves on to question what these affect-laden social phenomena might be other than a canon of affective practices – triggered in familiar ways, with familiar patterns, too, of resistance.

To conclude: the enigma is still unsolved: when patterns of behaviour, genres from different media and art forms and registers of gestures are brought in into this type of study, will this move dissolve the possible pre-discursive and pre-reflexive aspects of these relations between what we have learned to call subject and that which we call object and undo this something which is more vague and elusive, such as the Heideggerian philosophical categories?

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The Power of Death

Louise Hagberg: När döden gästar. Svenska folkseder och svensk folktro i samband med död och begravning. Stockholm, Ersatz, 2015. Editors Anna Bengtson & Ola Wallin, preface by Jonas Engman. 734 pp. Ill.

When Louise Hagberg's *När döden gästar* ("When Death Calls") was published in 1938 death was an everyday matter in people's lives, and as such nothing very dramatic. However, the mystery of death has throughout times engaged man, and thus caused many beliefs, traditions and procedures about what to do and how to act when death occurs, the most important thing being that everything is done right; otherwise something bad is bound to happen to the persons close to the deceased. From 1891 to 1931 Louise Hagberg was employed by the Nordic Museum in Stockholm, and during that time she made numerous travels around the country interviewing people about these old beliefs. Even if the book does not meet the requirements of an academic study, her

work was acknowledged when she received the title of Honorary Doctor from the University of Stockholm in 1940. *När döden gästar* is a voluminous manual of the pre-industrial community's conception of death, and as such still today a valuable source of cultural history. In this new edition the language has been slightly modernized in order to help the reader focus on the stories. The book must be seen as a historical document and a product of its time, but it is an interesting, fascinating, fun, and sometimes even spooky, reading.

In chapters 1 to 21 Hagberg leads the reader systematically and in great detail through the process of dying, mourning, preparations for the funeral, the actual funeral and the funeral feast. These chapters can be said to represent traditions of what to do in order to guarantee the deceased a safe journey to the other side. Accordingly, chapters 22 to 31 can be said to represent beliefs in the supernatural power that dead people supposedly possessed, and used, when something in the procedure around their dying did not meet their approval. In chapter 32 Hagberg discusses rebirth by namesake, and chapter 33 focuses on Christmas Night. Every topic is vividly exemplified with statements or stories gathered through the interviews, and also supported by literature about the Old Norse religion, handwritten documents from the sixteenth century and publications of a later date.

Peasant society did not fear death, and to show anxiety was considered either a weakness or a guilty conscience. Death was God's will, and an uninvited guest, who (death was believed to be a living being) nevertheless did send omens. In fact everything out of the ordinary and threatening was considered an omen indicating who would be the next person to die and how he or she would die. Omens on special occasions were extremely powerful, for example, if someone sneezed on Christmas Eve the youngest member of the household would die within a year; if, on the other hand, someone sneezed on New Year's Day the eldest member would die. One can only imagine the stress this kind of superstition caused. Dying was not a problem, however, but dying in agony was, because it meant that the deceased had not been ready, or had done something bad, and therefore had to spend a considerable time in a gloomy place before coming to heaven. The deceased also bore omens; if the body was lying on its right side the next person to die would be a female, otherwise a male. Shutting the deceased's eyes and mouth was important to prevent a new death in the near future. To show distress could harm the deceased, and therefore manifestations of deep sorrow were not proper behaviour, and if, for example, a teardrop happened to fall on a dead child it prevented the child from being blessed. To the tolls of the death bell the soul finally departed from the body to eternity, and from the sound one could tell if the deceased was happy or unhappy. But it was also customary to let the death bells "heal" and burials "bury" for instance a wart and other disabilities.

It was wise to have one's coffin and shroud ready, and often the coffin was used as storage for everyday basic necessities, but it could also serve as a place for taking a nap. Being stingy with the shroud was considered disgraceful, and the deceased would feel uneasy when meeting the Lord. The deceased would also need the same things after death that were needed in life, so some money, food, even shoes could be placed in coffin so that the deceased did not have to come back for it. Viewing the corpse was a task of honour, and everyone in the village came to pay their respects, whereas after dark no one dared pass a house where there was a corpse. If one, however, took the deceased's hand or touched his forehead or feet, the deceased would leave him be. Watching over the corpse, especially the night before the burial, was essential, as

the deceased might be only apparently dead and wake up; furthermore one had to stop all attempts by demons to take over dead body. The whole village also gathered for the funeral procession, which, like everything else concerning death, strictly followed traditions; the corpse was "read over" before leaving home, the roads were decorated with evergreen sprigs, and it was more distinguished to carry the coffin than to use horses. Also during the funeral processions one had to be observant to omens: every detail, from whether the last person to leave the house of mourning was a male or a female to which foot the horse started with, gave information about the next death to come.

In the old days the funeral service was often held at the grave, not in the church. When the entombment was over, the male relatives threw a handful of soil, preferably from the deceased's estate, in order to prevent him from returning from death. Even heavy stones could be put on the lid of the coffin for this purpose. Also on the way back home one had to take precautions; it was necessary, for instance, not to walk in a procession, to take another way and to turn around when coming to a crossroads, and thus mislead the deceased should he try to follow. The funeral feast was normally held on the day of the burial, and it could last for days. The guests came with food such as pastry, eggs, chicken, porridge, roasts, and the festivity resembled a wedding reception without music and everything in black and white. Often the deceased had planned who should be invited, and the motto was the more magnificent the funeral feast, the deeper the grieving. The guests were given a "present", often a piece of bread, when they departed. Not everyone could afford such burials, and if the village had a "burial club" also the poor got a proper burial, although without a funeral feast. Sometimes the congregation stood for the necessary expenses. All the deceased's assets were sold and the proceeds were given to the poorhouse.

All these traditions served a purpose; they passed on knowledge and taught the proper behaviour when facing death. And it is fascinating to see that almost every one of these old tradition still exists. The form has changed; the most superstitious features have disappeared, but the essence remains. It is still essential that everything is done right, and according to the deceased's wishes. In the old days omens served as warnings about the unknown and dangerous as well as an acceptable explanation when something unexpected happened. We may no longer look for omens, or see a small misfortune as a punishment for something we did or did not do, but we still want to guarantee that the deceased will get a worthy burial, and in order to do so we engage experts on death, undertakers, florists and catering.

Prejudices such as being buried on the north side of the church do not exist; shameful burials for criminals, persons who have committed suicide or for stillborn and unbaptized babies are history. We do not classify our dead like this any longer, but in the old days stories of shameful deaths served as warnings to lead a decent life. However, we want to believe that our loved ones exist somewhere and either that they assure us in our dreams that they are fine or that they can be contacted through séances so that unfinished business can be finished. On the other hand, one way of keeping the deceased alive has always been to name a child after him or her. It is not uncommon to "see" the deceased on the street during the first weeks after the death, but ghosts are for ghost stories only. In the old days the deceased could, however, visit if for instance a promise to him had been broken or he had an urgent message to deliver, for example, where he had hidden money or important papers. The deceased could also appear as an animal, most often a bird, a horse or a

black hound, and this could bode both happiness and misery. What actually helped against these ghostly visits was to read Our Father three times while facing the wall, in some parts of the country even in three different languages. I'd like to think that praying as such had a calming effect on the person praying. On the other hand garlic was also considered a powerful protection for ghosts. One cannot, however, overlook the power of malevolence, and for instance soil from graves, skulls and bones of the dead was often used when one wanted to create discord between people or harm one's neighbours.

Christmas was for both the living and the dead, and during that night the dead came to visit their former home to make sure that everything was right with the living and that they lacked nothing. The dead could only be seen by a small child or a totally innocent person. The dead appeared at midnight, no doors could be locked, and there needed to be food on the table. On Christmas Night all graves were opened and the dead held a mass, lights from the church could be seen and singing could be heard, or rather felt. Most of the dead appeared without a head, and those few who still had a head on their shoulders were those destined to die within the year. If a living persons entered by mistake, which had happened, he or she needed to leave urgently but leave some clothing behind, because the dead had to have something to tear apart, a destiny that the person escaped when hurrying out. Early on the morning of Christmas Day relatives came to dress the graves of their loved ones with flowers and evergreen, a candle was lit on a child's grave.

This new edition of *När döden gästar* shows us the basis for the traditions we still nourish regarding death, but it also shows us how common people in the early nineteenth century lived and thought. Thus the book may open for a better understanding of the past and our ancestors. Death has played and will always play a major part in people's lives.

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Theoretical and Practical Tools for a Value Discussion – Basics of Value Research

Klaus Helkama: Suomalaisten arvot. Mikä meille on oikeasti tärkeää? Kirjokansi 60. Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, Helsinki 2015. 252 pp. Ill.

I suppose that every ethnologist identifies his/her studies – both through the perspectives of the research subject and the perspectives of the researcher's interests – via the presence of values. Sometimes, values resonate rather loudly and can distinctively be perceived, but sometimes they might be hidden, even at a secret level of our subconscious. In any case, values are something that ethnologists can identify during various research processes and are capable of analysing and interpreting chronologically in the past, present and future. Klaus Helkama, a professor in social psychology, has written a comprehensive book about the values of the Finns (*Values of the Finns: What is really important to us?*). The book examines Finnish values, especially at a national level, from the perspectives of political science and social psychology.

The word 'arv' (*value*) in the Finnish has typically referred to the idea of price value, also nowadays in other Finno-Ugrian languages, for example in Vepsian (*arv*) and Hungarian (*ár*). In Finnish, however, this word has had the ambiguous meanings of referring to both price and appreciation. Social psychologists understand values as abstractions and as general desirable goals for the ac-

tions taken by human beings. Typical values include, for example, freedom, equality and world peace as a desirable situation for the world. Also, such virtues as diligence, politeness and bravery are considered positive values. Values are essentially connected to the choices people make and they always affect the solutions found at personal, political or even business levels. Helkama provides straightforward interpretations of career choices and the values behind them. Humanists and social scientists are, for example, seen as carriers of universalistic values. According to Helkama, humanists appreciate global equity, the beauty of the arts and nature more than people in other fields. Dear fellow humanist – do you recognize yourself in this description?

It seems that generalisations fascinate social scientists. The first part of the book is concerned with our national self-image and the idea of common values. Helkama admits that Finns are not a consistent population, but suggests that at the level of mental images there are some basic shared values. Such mental images manifest themselves, for example, through art works; in this study, Helkama takes examples from Aleksis Kivi'–s classic novel *Seitsemän veljestä* (*Seven brothers*). This is a rather expected and not-surprising approach. More interesting is the section where Helkama begins to process personal values and the relation of values to actual operations. Helkama describes values such as equality, diligence, honesty, education and ambition to defend the nation. But the most interesting phenomena in these sections has to do with his descriptions of the backgrounds of different researchers and their value models in the field of value research. Helkama summarises in a fascinating manner the important research done by famous value researchers, such as Ronald Inglehard, Geert Hofstede, Shalom Schwartz and Helkama himself. At the same time, he talks about the principles of scientific research – how theories and models actually develop over the years.

In this review, I want to focus on the case of Shalom Schwartz, an Israeli American social psychologist who revolutionised the basics of value research by demonstrating that values form a psychological circle, a two-dimensional system with its own strong regularities. Schwartz identified 40 values that have essentially the same meanings in different cultures. Indicators in cross-cultural psychology go through a process of double translation; for example, first an indicator is translated from English to Finnish, and then another translator translates the indicator from Finnish to English – without ever seeing the original text. Then, the final indicator is developed by discussing the problems that arise during this translation process. In fact, the inside cover of the book shows a picture of the value model developed by Schwartz. There are in total ten value types and 40 value sections that help explain the value types. Schwartz's model consists of two principal dimensions: surpassing oneself, i.e. (over-)emphasising oneself, and maintenance, i.e. a readiness for change. Value types and all of the value sections occur inside these particular dimensions. As Helkama admits, this model is quite rough and statistically generalised. But in social sciences, value research is anyway somehow like that – quantitative and statistical. It is also good to remember that how well a theory works depends always on the research questions and purposes. The value model proposed by Schwartz highlights the big lines of study, and it could be useful also for humanists – at least as a starting point or as an inspirational theory to challenge in your own research.

Klaus Helkama argues that we easily overestimate the value changing process and underestimate the permanence of values. Almost every generation thinks that they are living at a time constituting a true turning point for values, even

though the real change in values is usually very slow. The most relevant change in values after the 1970s has to do with the fact that individuality has been strengthened, but after the year 2005 this value has been seemed to become more communal than before. I was especially excited by the knowledge that Schwartz's model can be used also to anticipate changes in values in the future. These changes can be traced from the system of values in Schwartz's model; when one value becomes more important in society, the values near this one particular value in the psychological circle will also be strengthened. For example, if safety becomes more important, then power and uniformity will also be strengthened according to the model. On the other hand, at the same time the importance of the values at the opposite end of the spectrum will decrease. Sometimes there can be pressures from different directions and values will change in different ways, which makes the anticipation processes quite challenging. There might also be changes in how values are distributed and in terms just of what cover. And naturally also the meanings of different values can change over time.

Anyway – it was very exciting to read about the model itself and its applications. Helkama thinks that in the field of value research, the role of ethnologists and researchers in other humanities mainly has to do with providing the historical and cultural interpretations of values. Helkama does not provide many examples from everyday life (with the exception of his own experiences of swimming and swimming pools). In most cases, he writes about experiences drawn from the academic working field and uses survey answers as examples of value choices and changes. Based on the perspective adopted in this study, I think that ethnologists have many possibilities to contribute to value research – not only in the sense of providing histories, chronologies and cultural meanings, but also at the theoretical level of the value models. How can Schwartz's model be used and modified in ethnological research? How can central value types be realised (or is it possible at all) in different ethnological cases? A very useful section at the end of the book is the one on literature tips – there are many current scientific sources available for anyone interested in value theories or specific topics (the national self-image of Finns, individual values, values regarding nature and equality, Finnish work and honour, integrity, ambition to defence, education and wisdom) dealt with in the book.

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A Life Story Project

Steven High: Oral History at the Crossroads: Sharing Life Stories of Survival and Displacement. UBC Press, Vancouver & Toronto 2014. 441 pp.

The Montreal Life Story Project studied experiences of violence and enforced migration based on life stories created in collaboration between historians and representatives of different diasporas in Montreal. The project ran from 2005 to 2012 and comprised over 300 participants. One aim was to achieve participant history writing which questioned the conventional division of labour between researchers, assistants, and the people being researched. The goal of the project was to generate and reflect on experiences of large-scale violence, personal and cultural meanings of migration, and the communication of memories. The project was thus devoted to history as an activity rather than an academic discipline, while simultaneously investigating history as a social form of knowledge. This generated dialogic work on memory and identity not only on the individual level but also within

and between the different participating groups, and together this illuminated and contributed to the development of Montreal as an identity and shared domicile.

In the book *Oral History at the Crossroads* the historian Steven High describes the project. The book is primarily aimed at people involved in oral history. It highlights the innovations of the project concerning the creation, preservation, curation, and dissemination of orally communicated memories. The book is equally relevant to anyone looking for perspectives on the historian's role in collaboration with both historical actors and the many actors in history production (other researchers, archivists, curators, educationalists, artists, and so on).

In the introduction to the book, High gives an account of the content, forms, and results of the project. It arose in encounters between researchers, partner organizations based in Montreal's Rwandan, Haitian, Cambodian, and Jewish groups and institutions for human rights, social media, artistic activities, and education. The project was organized through a number of working groups (both those based on cultural or geographical origin and those working with specific themes). These groups developed their own questions, aims, and activities.

The activities were geared to learning from each other and learning together. This meant, for instance, that all the participants in the project interviewed and were also interviewed themselves. High describes the project's tools for sharing knowledge among participants, including control over technologies and publication channels. He outlines how the project participants trained themselves and each other as interviewers, and the forms of support created for the interviews. Summing up: High describes a project that operated by intracultural, intercultural, intergenerational, and multicultural means.

In the first part of the book High applies perspectives on life stories and interviewing. A focus on life stories was what brought the project together. This meant that central themes for the project – including life as a refugee, living in exile, and the significance of being a survivor – could be investigated from an inside perspective. The life stories were used for studies of relations between biography and history.

In chapter one High writes about what the experience of having been interviewed meant for the participants in the project. In the second chapter he examines social and political aspects of the memory work that the project's Rwandan group have done, and how this integrates several generations of Rwandans in Montreal. The project's Jewish group created biographies of the participants' work communicating memories of the Holocaust in Montreal. They thereby highlighted concrete methods and perspectives on the role of witness. In the fourth and fifth chapters High writes about how the project became a seat for contacts and transmission of experiences between generations.

High points out that participation in interview-based is research often limited to what happens at the time of the interview but that it can benefit from being expended to the post-production of the interviews. In the second part of the book he discusses how participants in the project together processed and spread narratives. He examines different techniques and technologies – digital media, walking tours of the city, and performing arts. In the closing chapter of the book High discusses ethical aspects of participant history writing.

What remains with me after reading the book is the creative joy that characterized the project, but also the book's examples of how history in this case has been used as a social activity and a way to bring about change. The basic problem tackled by the book concerns the need to acknowledge both particular ex-

periences and the need for shared ideas of where we come from and where we are going. Throughout the book Steven High describes and relates to the anxiety that is provoked by going outside the traditional role of historian and its customary attitudes. This led to innovative research in the form of essays, dissertations, articles, and monographs, along with six international conferences and many local meetings.

By discussing the concrete project in Montreal, the book contributes to knowledge about history production in general. It shows how historians can defensibly relate to the individuals, collectives, and organizations we collaborate with, and still adopt a scientific attitude to their use of history.

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Cultural-Historical Methods in Ethnology

Lars-Eric Jönsson & Fredrik Nilsson (eds.): Kulturhistoria. En etnologisk metodbok. Lund Studies in Arts and Cultural Sciences 13. Lunds Universitet, Lund 2017. 162 pp. Ill.

When I was a student of folklore in Oslo in the 1990s I had the feeling that all important methodological literature was written in Sweden. This was probably not the case, but in a Nordic context it was indeed Swedish ethnologists, or more exactly some specific authors, who supplied the premises for the methodological perspectives used in Norwegian folkloristics and ethnology, determining the direction taken by our indigenous discussions on method. Books by Bo Eneroth, Karl-Olov Arnstberg, Billy Ehn, and Orvar Löfgren were among those that found their way to Norwegian reading lists, and all of them provided methods and interpretative tools for the cultural analysis of the present day. For it was the present day that Swedish ethnology seemed to be primarily studying. In other words, contemporary cultural analysis took priority over cultural history.

This book, "Cultural History: An Ethnological Method Book" evidently represents a counter to this present-oriented methodology. The editors themselves relate their project to the change in methodological focus brought by the cultural-historical turn. This means that the starting point is no longer contemporary questions about how to conduct interviews and observations – and subsequently how to interpret the material – but the infinite wealth of material objects and written historical texts and sources that can be explored with the aid of various methodological and theoretical perspectives. This return to the historical roots of ethnology is interesting, but more about that later.

Nine authors together consider sources and methods in interesting and partly differing ways. Newspaper articles, kitchen furnishings, outdoor clothing, archival series, and other things are tested against close reading, micro-historical perspectives, contrasting, bricolage, and perspectives on organization. In this context I will highlight three essays which particularly contribute to the overall methodological focus of the book. Rebecka Lennartsson's article "Mamsell Bohman's Tickets" describes in detail how methods are developed during the working process and how to work with sources; how one can understand the sources one reads, and how questions and answers constantly produce new questions. Oddly enough, basic descriptions like this, where we try to convey what we actually do, can be among the most difficult texts to write, but Lennartsson manages this in an exemplary fashion. The reconstruction of what fieldwork is like in the archive is of great epistemological value for anyone about to engage in this for the first time.

Fredrik Nilsson's article about "Distortions – Clues to Cultural Analysis" also provides a basic description of what the research process can be like. Here Nilsson uses various theoretical perspectives such as organization (Latour) and context (Darnton) which help a researcher to go through material and arrive at certain research questions, and to understand one's sources and finds and place them in their spatial and temporal contexts.

The aim of the book is to convey how knowledge comes into existence, and this is described in "Knowledge out of a Vacuum" by Karin Gustavsson from the perspective of close reading. What we do when reading closely – whether texts or images – is demonstrated here from a linguistic angle, through the meaning of the vacuum (the meaning of what is not there), what happens when something is given a name and is thus made visible, and the significance of the researcher's position. Given that it is such a widespread and frequently used method, far too little has been written about the methodology of close reading, which makes Gustavsson's article a welcome contribution.

The editors, Lars-Eric Jönsson and Fredrik Nilsson, introduce the book with a historical survey entitled "On Ethnology and Cultural-Historical Methods". This is interesting for several reasons, but what strikes me most is that it can be understood (putting it in extreme terms) as a plea for the reestablishment of cultural history in Swedish ethnology. Admittedly, the reestablishment has been in progress for some time in Sweden (and some people never abandoned the historical perspective), but the contemporary perspective has dominated heavily. For us neighbours who have grown up with the Swedish methodological literature it is therefore pleasing that Swedish ethnology is back on its old track. Since the editors themselves bring up the discipline-based methodological development of ethnology in Sweden, they could well have contextualized this by looking at neighbouring countries as a contrast. For the Swedish development has not taken place in a vacuum, but has also left its mark on the discipline in the other Nordic countries.

When I discovered this publication earlier this year, I quickly put it on my students' required reading list. The need for books that systematically discuss methods from a cultural-historical perspective is constant, so I was truly pleased to find a fresh example of the genre. Another reason why the volume is good as a textbook is that it has a wide embrace in the choice of materials, methodological tools, and theoretical perspectives. In my opinion, it is best suited to higher levels for students who are about to tackle research projects of their own and face large amounts of source material and thus can relate to the methodological challenges discussed in the book.

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Cultural Perspectives on Humour

Lars-Eric Jönsson & Fredrik Nilsson (eds.): Skratt som fastnar. Kulturella perspektiv på skratt och humor. Lunds universitet, Lund 2014. (Lund Studies in Arts and Cultural Sciences.) 195 pp. Ill.

The book begins with an introductory chapter by the editors which sets the nine essays in a shared framework in the history of research. The common approach, according to the editors, is a focus on the basic techniques of humour and its cultural, social, and political meanings, which are studied in different variations and contexts. They highlight the "supertheories" of humour, as formulated by Mikhail Bakhtin, Sigmund Freud, and Michael Billig, and they discuss the fundamental functions ascribed

to humour: as a safety valve or rebellion, as a critical voice or critique of power, as a tool for humiliation, and as a boundary marker or an instrument for socialization. At the same time, they stress the importance of problematizing the supertheories on the basis of the empirical material and grounding the analysis in a profound understanding of the context. As they point out, analyses of humour tend to seem like the application of ahistorical theories, which they are not. In the following I select a number of articles which I found particularly thought-provoking.

Anna Johansson and Angelika Sjöstedt Landén investigate the narrative of the ironic 1990s, partly based on Henrik Schyffert's stand-up show *The 90s – An Apology*, partly on press material. The intention is to understand the meanings ascribed to the form of irony associated with the nineties in Sweden, and how it is used to create a generation, "the ironic generation". With the aid of thematic analysis of the material, three dominant themes crystallize in the narrative of the nineties: generation protest, the will to make a stand, and the turn to the authentic. The irony is portrayed as subversive, a revolt by the younger generation with features of developmental psychology. By psychologizing the transformation of society that took place in the nineties, the blame is placed on the young people's attitude and lack of commitment. According to the narrative, this went hand in hand with a depoliticization which was regarded either as part of a rebellion against the parents or as cowardice.

When the turn came – towards authenticity, intimacy, and commitment – at the end of the 1990s, it is so surprising that it is forgotten at the expense of the dominant narrative. Is that not irony too? At any rate, Johansson and Sjöstedt Landén point out that the narrative of the ironic generation mainly speaks to a male, white middle class that is perceived as an elite in relation to women and rural people. In this way the irony is normative and conservative rather than subversive.

Lars Kaijser studies how humour is used to maintain and create boundaries between the fans, entrepreneurs, tourists, and other actors in Liverpool's Beatles industry. The starting point for the discussion is two companies that use humour in distinct ways to mark their own position in the network of relations generated by the shared interest in the Beatles, but also to stress their understanding of what the band members were like as people and as a group: absurd, amusing, laughter-inducing. The same characteristics were important constituents of the Liverpudlians' self-image, so these were features that the entrepreneurs themselves could identify with.

In the Beatles festival organized by Cavern City Tours, the arrangers balance between being Beatles fans engaging in an affective alliance with other fans, and being detached professionals, a detachment that is achieved through humour. The humour in the Beatles Shop was different, more ironic and not geared to building affective alliances; if anything, the opposite. Irony was used to correct the customers in different ways, which made the laughter uncomfortable and embarrassed. In other words, laughter could create both nearness and distance.

Sven-Erik Klinkmann analyses the limits of humour and its stigmatizing effects, based on two examples where Swedishness in Finland is ridiculed and exoticized: the folk celebration in Helsinki after Finland became world champions in ice hockey in 2011, and the advertising campaign by the Saunalahti telecom company with the filthy-rich fictitious Blingström family from 2012. Klinkmann asserts that the humour builds on the double bind that has long existed between the Finland-Swedes as a group that is at once privileged and marginalized, and examines how hu-

mour can become a weapon in the struggle for symbolic space. In the celebration for the hockey players there was a spot where a comedian spoke about punching the *hurri* (a Finnish pejorative term for the Swedish-speaking minority), which caused a sensation in the Finland-Swedish media, not least because at roughly the same time there had been threats against Finland-Swedish cultural personalities, while there were also Finnish speakers who expressed support for the Finland-Swedes. Klinkmann asks whether the statement was a means to stereotype the Finland-Swedes as a group without needing to take responsibility for what had been said.

The resonance of the advertising campaign came from the traditional scorn in the Finnish-speaking culture for the wasteful and snobbish way of life embodied by the Blingström family. In both cases there is stereotyping which is achieved in different ways but with the same fundamental function: to exclude the Finland-Swedes from the national Finnish discourse. This approach too has a relatively long history in Finland, since it was adopted as a condition for the shaping of the Finnish nation, as Pertti Anttonen has shown.

How humour can be used to create alternative meanings about overweight in Sweden is the topic of Fredrik Nilsson's article. Based on some examples from the newsletter of the National Association of the Overweight, he discusses how humour is used as a way to deal with real or threatened stigmatization. One way is through parody. In Nilsson's material this is exemplified in a description of enlistment in the Home Guard, when the uniform did not fit the person writing in the paper. Through parody the blame for this fact is shifted from the individual himself to the military structure, which has no room for overweight people. A similar process is visible in another example, where things – here turnpikes at the entrances to sports arenas and the like – do not admit overweight people without considerable difficulty. The situation comedy, which is actually not funny at all, is associated with cynicism, which makes the humour both a safety valve and a way to shape a critical consciousness.

The question whether humour is always amusing and laughter-provoking is raised both in the latter example and in witty come-backs to disparaging comments from people who are not overweight. The clever replies are a defence against attack, but according to Nilsson they also raise questions about whether it really is legitimate to answer in the same coin. Caricatures of the ideal body likewise function as a way to create distance through an aggressive disparagement of what is perceived as a sick ideal. The point of the humour is often aimed against the discrimination to which overweight people are subjected in everyday situations where a rebellious humour that challenges established norms and thus criticizes power becomes an important coping strategy that is also based on repetition; it is a recurrent strategy in the newsletter.

Ida Tolgensbakk discusses Norwegian jokes about "party Swedes", a negative nickname for the young Swedes who move to Norway to work. She observes that for many Norwegians these jokes are not problematic, since they are perceived as critique of power, picking on somebody stronger than yourself. Although the union between Sweden and Norway was dissolved more than a hundred years ago, the memory of Sweden's role as "Big Brother" has not faded.

Moreover, the wave of jokes about Swedes told in Norway in the 1970s (when comparable jokes were told in Sweden about Norwegians) have meant that a story about Swedes is almost automatically perceived as humorous and with no malicious intent; that is part of the concept, so to speak. Although this type of humour can be interpreted as an outlet for aggression, and thus can serve

as a kind of safety valve, it can also be regarded as the result of a close relationship, although it is perhaps a little one-sided: Swedes are more important for Norwegians to use as a mirror than vice versa.

The young Swedes that Tolgensbakk has interviewed find this humour offensive, picking on somebody weaker than yourself; at least they do not want to identify with the stereotype of the "party Swede". Some of them ignore the jokes and pretend that the stereotype does not apply to them, while others have adopted the Norwegian view and complain about "party Swedes" when they themselves have passed that stage (here the jokes have functioned as an instrument for socialization), and some protest, at the risk of appearing humourless.

What is striking about this book is (1) how constant the supertheories of humour still are, if you compare this book with *Humor och kultur* from 1996, a classic in ethnological-folkloristic humour studies against which *Skratt som fastnar* expressly positions itself, and (2) how the material that is studied has changed over time and how people choose to write about it. The references to high-culture humour that are quite prominent at least in the more theoretically oriented articles in *Humor och kultur* have largely vanished in *Skratt som fastnar*. Instead the focus is on contemporary popular culture, whether this is Muslim humour on the Internet, stand- up comedy, or Beatles nostalgia.

In other respects the topics in the two books are not so different: *Humor och kultur* deals with laughter in Western religion, *Skratt som fastnar* in Islam. *Humor och kultur* examines humour about local characters, while *Skratt som fastnar* explores laughter in the history of psychiatry; both consider deviants as a source of cultural understanding. In *Skratt som fastnar* there is an interesting effort to move beyond the established fields of humour research to tackle more insignificant humour; this approach could well be developed in future research.

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Ancient Scandinavian Cult Houses

Anders Kaliff & Julia Mattes: Tempel och kulthus i det forna Skandinavien – Myter och arkeologiska fakta. Carlsson Bokförlag, Stockholm 2017. 219 pp. Ill.

The title of this fine little book by the archaeologists Anders Kaliff and Julia Matte means "Temples and Cult Houses in Ancient Scandinavia: Myths and Archaeological Facts", and it deals with the sites and especially the buildings where religious rites were performed. The book is exquisitely designed, with beautiful photographs and drawings, some by the author Julia Mattes herself. The reader is taken on a journey covering more than five thousand years, from the Neolithic, via the Bronze Age and the Iron Age, to the Viking Age and the Early Middle Ages (4000 BC–AD 1200). Using new findings in archaeology and history of religions, the authors provide a vivid description of what we know about the temples, cult houses, and churches once found in ancient Scandinavia. There are also glimpses of temples and cult buildings in other cultures, particularly those observed by anthropologists and ethnologists in present-day south-east Asia. The rich contents of the book also comprise chapters about archaeological methods, the history of research and reception, especially the romantic nineteenth-century view of pre-Christian cult buildings and stave churches. With its supple, highly readable language, the text is aimed at both scholars and interested general readers. No great prior knowledge of the topic is

required. One could say that this book is at once learned and popular.

The book contains twenty chapters, and it begins and ends with a detailed discussion of what is perhaps the most famous of all pre-Christian cult buildings, namely, the "temple" that the German churchman Adam of Bremen calls "Uppsala" (*Ubsola*), as described in his major work *Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae Pontificium* (AD 1075):

"In this temple (*templum*), entirely decked out in gold, the people worship the statues of three gods in such wise that the mightiest of them, Thor, occupies a throne in the middle of the chamber (*in medio solium habeat triclinio*). Wotan and Frikko have places on either side." (Adam 4,26)

Kaliff and Mattes give an interesting account of the infected discussion provoked by Adam's information about the Uppsala temple, a debate that began as early as the seventeenth century, ultimately concerning the true location of the temple. Olaus Magnus had stated in 1555 that the temple stood on Domberget, the site of the present-day cathedral in today's city of Uppsala. The same view was held by Sweden's first Custodian of Antiquities, Johannes Bureus, and the learned professor Johannes Schefferus. Olof Verelius, who was the first professor of archaeology at Uppsala University, or "Antiquities of the Fatherland" as the subject was then called, thought that it was outside Uppsala, at Gamla Uppsala. He was supported by the famous professor Olof Rudbeck, who conducted studies and concluded that "the temple" was located near the royal burial mounds. That view has persisted until the present day.

The source value of Adam's statement about the temple and the Uppsala cult has been discussed in research. Kaliff and Mattes summarize this discussion in a lively way. For a long time many scholars regarded Adam's account as a reliable source for historical reconstructions. The text was trusted because it was contemporary with the events it describes. It was not based on personal observation – Adam never visited Uppsala himself – but his informants were eyewitnesses who had seen the sacrifices and ceremonies performed there. The most recent research, however, takes a much more critical stance. The historian Henrik Janson goes so far as to claim that Adam's text is totally without value as a source for the pre-Christian Uppsala cult and the Uppsala temple. Adam's purpose was not to describe the old cult. According to Janson, Adam's text is a satire in allegorical form aimed at the "Gregorian" church supported by the Pope, which had gained a foothold in Uppsala in the mid eleventh century. During that period the archbishopric of Hamburg-Bremen was involved in a bitter feud with the Pope in Rome. In the passage about Uppsala, according to Janson, Adam is engaging in polemic against Rome in symbolic form, with the *triclinium* of the Uppsala temple alluding to the Lateran Palace and its *triclinium majus*. The three gods mentioned by Adam are fictitious, serving as metaphors for the vices personified by the Pope and the Curia: Wotan (Odin) stands for rage (*furor*), Thor for pride (*superbia*), and Frikko (Freyr) for lust (*voluptas*). Adam's account is thus an allegory that does not seek to describe the pre-Christian religion of the temple in Uppsala.

Kaliff and Mattes wisely refute Janson's far-fetched interpretation. Although there is no direct archaeological support for Adam's description of a pre-Christian temple at Gamla Uppsala in the second half of the eleventh century, there is archaeological evidence that the place was an important cult site earlier, during the Vendel Period (AD 550–750). The archaeological excavations conducted at Gamla Uppsala between 2012 and 2017 have yielded new finds, including a large monument consisting of two rows of huge posts dated to the Vendel Period. In all probability

this monument had a religious function. There are also traces of a large banqueting hall at Gamla Uppsala, from the same period, and likewise with probable religious functions. This hall is also contemporary with the monumental burial mounds on the site. All the evidence indicates that later too, during the Viking Age, there was a ceremonial building at Gamla Uppsala.

The research discussion about the pre-Christian cult buildings has taken several different turns, as Kaliff and Mattes point out. Just as in the discussion about the Uppsala temple, scholars a century ago believed that there were temples in pre-Christian Scandinavia. The Icelandic family sagas mention such buildings (*hof*, *goðahús*, *blóthús*). An excavation at Hofstaðir, Mývatnssveit, in Iceland in 1908 corroborated these sources. The excavators there found a building that was interpreted as a temple (*hof*). In 1966 Olaf Olsen published the dissertation *Hørg, hov og kirke*, where he questioned the find at Hofstaðir. According to Olsen this was a banqueting hall which had many functions. It provided absolutely no support for the existence of pre-Christian temples in Scandinavia. He also questioned the historical source value of the saga accounts of cult buildings and claimed that these actually concerned medieval churches which the saga authors projected back to a vanished past. Olsen's dissertation would remain the *Stand der Forschung* for decades, and the interpretation that the ancient Norse lacked specific cult buildings prevailed. It was accepted that cult was performed in halls, as for example at Borg in the Lofotens, Gudme in Denmark, and Slöinge in Halland. These halls had several functions alongside the religious one and therefore could not be regarded as temples or exclusively cult buildings.

In one chapter Kaliff and Mattes stress the significance of contract archaeology in Sweden. According to the Heritage Conservation Act, archaeological excavation must take place before land is developed, for example, for the construction of roads or housing. In connection with these excavations there have been sensational finds in recent decades which have overturned Olsen's hypothesis. Alongside the large halls, traces have been found of more specific cult buildings from the Late Iron Age. One example was discovered at Borg, Östergötland, 5.5–7 metres in length. It was dated to the period 900–1000. In the stone-paved courtyard outside the house the excavation uncovered around 100 amulet rings and 75 kg of unburnt bones. Inside the house there was an altar structure with two amulet rings. The house was ritually closed around AD 1000. The cult house at Uppåkra, Skåne, has attracted considerable attention. It was bigger than the house at Borg, 13.5 × 6 metres. Four large posts supported the roof of the building. The house was rebuilt on the same site several times, from the Roman Iron Age to the Viking Age. The find context was highly unusual, indicating that the house had a religious function. There were over 100 gold foils (*guldgubbar*) with mythical motifs, ceremonial beakers of bronze, drinking vessels of glass, and outside the building there were copious quantities of deposited weapons. Kaliff and Mattes declare that this find should be regarded as a pre-Christian "temple".

The authors also think that there is support for the existence of pre-Christian cult buildings much earlier in ancient Scandinavia, all the way from the Neolithic to the Iron Age. The extensive documentation of all cult buildings from the different periods is perhaps the most innovative aspect of the book. Most previous studies on the topic, including my own book, *An Arena for Higher Powers* (2016), focused on the Late Iron Age (550–1050/1100). In my opinion, this broad documentation of archaeological finds from different periods is also one of the strongest arguments for the view that one can actually talk of specific cult

buildings in the pre-Christian North. There is thus a very long tradition of buildings of religious and ritual significance. However, these cult buildings, according to Kaliff and Mattes, had different functions and designs during the long period in which they existed.

Although a great many positive things can be said about this book, I have a few minor objections concerning the approach, especially the comparative method. One chapter presents a series of ethnographic analogies and parallels to the ancient Scandinavian cult buildings. The reader makes the acquaintance in particular of cult buildings in south-east Asia, including present-day cult houses in Indonesia. These have been documented by anthropologists, and according to Kaliff and Mattes they can be used as comparative material to interpret the mute archaeological finds excavated in Scandinavia. In Indonesia there is a kind of house dedicated to the spirits that are believed to exist at places where people live or pursue their activities, for example, at a petrol filling station. These "spirit houses" can take the form of miniature palaces. Among the Naga in north-east India the "spirit houses" are used as places of assembly. This is a people of headhunters who celebrate a spring feast in these houses when they bring food to the skulls. The Naga also have cult buildings with other functions, for example mortuary houses. All over the world there are houses used in the cult of the dead. There are also buildings for weddings, childbirth, initiation rites, and the like. Some cult buildings are gender-specific. In Papua, New Guinea, cult houses are used for tattooing girls who are regarded as ripe for marriage. Kaliff and Mattes argue that these ethnographical accounts can be useful when archaeologists seek to interpret the Scandinavian archaeological material. The rites and tattoos mentioned in the descriptions from New Guinea, for example, could be compared to certain archaeological objects found at the Nordic cult houses from the Bronze Age. I am somewhat doubtful about these parallels with their wide global and chronological spread. I wonder why the authors, when interpreting the archaeological sources from Scandinavia, have not searched more for comparative material in the cultures and religions that existed in pre-Christian Europe. This material is both chronologically and geographically closer to the archaeological finds. Among the Greeks, Romans, Slavs and Celts, for example, we have rich documentation of temple and cult buildings in written sources. The cult buildings of these cultures are also attested through archaeological material. Why favour temples from south-east Asia rather than this copious material in the quest for comparative sources? An important conclusion that can be drawn from the analogies cited by Kaliff and Mattes is that cult houses in general may have had different religious functions and that they can be linked to a series of different beliefs. One god or goddess, for example, can have had a separate building. There are special buildings for worship of the ancestors. Some cult houses may have been used for storing ritual objects, while other buildings could have been gender-specific, for ritual use only by women.

In one chapter Kaliff and Mattes point out that archaeologists often use the terms "cult building" or "cult house" in connection with archaeological excavations, perhaps "as a kind of precautionary measure". The authors use these terms themselves. At the same time, they ask "Why should it be wrong to speak of 'temples' in Nordic contexts?" and argue that in certain cases it would actually be warranted to use this term in the interpretation of the archaeological sources, for example in connection with the cult house at Uppåkra. Kaliff and Mattes laudably define "temple" as a sanctified building with a cosmic symbolism. It is perceived as an interface

with the divine world and is often regarded as an *axis mundi,* a central pillar in the world. People make offerings in the temple and also praise the divinity there. Temples contain cult images, altars, offering implements, etc. Secular activity can also take place adjacent to them, for example, trade. For me, however, it is a problem that the authors do not give as precise a definition of the term "cult house" and clarify the distinction between this category and the category of "temple". What is required for a "cult building" to qualify as a "temple"? Are these concepts synonymous? Nor am I wholly convinced when Kaliff and Mattes use Germanic/Old West Norse terms and linguistic arguments for the occurrence of pre-Christian temples in Scandinavia, for example the cognate of the Gothic term *alhs* "temple building, sacred space" found in Swedish place names. The meaning of the term **al* in Swedish place names has been discussed in the latest onomastic research debate, as we see from an article by Lennart Elmevik from 2004, "Till diskussionen om ett sakralt **al* i nordiska ortnamn".

These minor criticisms do not detract from all the merits of this book. The chapter on "Antiquity in Romanticism and Popular Culture – Images that Affect" is highly readable, as is the part about the relationship between the pre-Christian cult houses and the medieval churches, "Stave Churches and Cult Buildings". I recommend this book warmly to anyone interested in early Nordic history, culture, architecture, and religion.

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The Swedish Minority in Finland

Sven-Erik Klinkmann, Blanka Henriksson & Andreas Häger (eds.): Föreställda finlandssvenskheter. Intersektionella perspektiv på det svenska i Finland. Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland, Helsingfors 2017. 375 pp. Ill.

During the period 2010–2013 the Swedish Literature Society in Finland financed the research project "Pieces of the Same Puzzle? Intersectional Perspectives on Swedishness in Finland". Eight Swedish-language researchers took part in the project, most of them connected to the subject of Nordic Folkloristics at the Swedish-language university Åbo Akademi.

The results of the project are presented in the volume reviewed here. This is a text study which analyses ideas about and experiences of the Swedish-speaking minority in Finland, which constitutes about five per cent of the country's population. The Language Act of 1922 made Swedish an official language alongside Finnish in Finland. The authors investigate public debates in various media, especially in newspapers and on the Internet, but also literary accounts.

A central concept in the book is intersectionality. This means that identity and social positions depend on many different factors: class, gender, ethnicity, urbanity/rurality, education, sexuality, age, domicile, religion, mother language, etc. Being a Finland-Swede is not a uniform phenomenon; there are many different variations, partly depending on where in Finland one lives. In other words, the regional perspective is relevant. This is underlined in the title of the book, which talks of "Finland-Swedishnesses" or identities in the plural. Living in the northern province of Österbotten is culturally different from having one's home in southern Finland, particularly in the capital, Helsinki. This became very clear in an intensive debate in 2013 in the press and online. The people of Österbotten endeavoured to assert themselves against hegemonic features among the Finland-Swedish population in the Helsinki region.

Another important concept in the volume is the English word "coping". The authors interpret this as action strategies used by the Finland-Swedish population to strengthen the internal loyalty. This can make itself felt, for example, when an external threat is perceived, as in the question of whether oral snuff should be banned or not.

Blanka Henriksson and Andreas Häger have followed debates in readers' letters to Finland-Swedish newspapers in recent decades, as well as Internet forums. The Finland-Swedes feel a distinct threat to their continued existence.

The Swedish part of the province of Österbotten has been described in the media as a bible belt and thus as conservative and behind the times from a secular point of view. This debate is examined by Andreas Häger. He notes that the designation of bible belt does not correspond to the reality in Österbotten, which is more complex than this epithet suggests. Not all those who live in Swedish Österbotten follow a uniform religious practice; there are palpable differences.

Sweden has a dispensation within the European Union to permit the manufacture and sale of oral snuff (*snus*). This does not apply in Finland, however, where the Finland-Swedes are associated with oral snuff. Blanka Henriksson has analysed the lively Finland-Swedish debate in the media and on the Internet between 2008 and 2011 about whether oral snuff should be permitted in Finland. The advocates, many of whom lived in Österbotten, argued that the use of oral snuff had a tradition going back a long time in Finland and was not a recent product. They also felt that there was a power struggle in relation to the majority Finnish-speaking population which tried through political decisions to discriminate against the Finland- Swedish minority population.

Another media debate studied by Mikael Sarelin concerns how Finland-Swedes perceive outsiders who come to fish with spinners in their waters after a new Finnish law allowing largely free spinner fishing in 1997. People feel powerless in the face of the threat of urbanization and the spread of Finnicization along the Swedish-speaking coast.

In 2007–2008 there was an intensive discussion in the newspapers about Finland-Swedish place names and their age, which Sofie Strandén-Backa elucidates in her chapter. One camp in the debate assumed the existence of very early Germanic/Scandinavian settlement in Finland that yielded place names dating back to the Iron Age. The other camp was represented by onomastic scholars. They argued that Swedish immigration came much later, in the twelfth century, and claimed that a great many Swedish place names in Finland were of Finnish origin. The coping strategy here consisted of calling the view of the opposing camp unscientific or pseudo-scientific.

One way of studying the position of the Finland-Swedes in Finland is to investigate what is written about this minority in Finland-Swedish history textbooks. This is the subject of Johanna Björkholm's contribution. She has found that the Finland-Swedes, at least the common people consisting of fishermen, farmers, workers, and those without property, are mentioned seldom or not at all. Two periods are exceptions, when the educated upper-class Finland- Swedes are described. These concern the first settlement in Finland, the date of which is disputed, and the national revival from the 1860s onwards.

An expression that has occurred in the Finland-Swedish political discourse is tolerance. Andreas Backa discusses the debate that has been conducted about this concept. He has studied how the Swedish People's Party of Finland campaigned for openness and tolerance in the election to the Finnish parliament

in 2011, and a pop song "Our Time – Our Land". It was performed in the same year by the group "Artists for Tolerance and Openness" on the initiative of the Swedish Assembly of Finland. The aim was to create a positive image of the Finland-Swedes as a linguistic minority. There must be linguistic tolerance between Finnish and Swedish in Finland.

In the last chapter of the book Sven-Erik Klinkmann discusses the saying "Swedish speakers are better people". They are described as being particularly rich or well off compared to the Finnish-speaking majority. Klinkmann has investigated texts in newspapers, blogs, books, and audiovisual media during the period 1994–2010. This saying goes back to the nineteenth century, before the concept of Finland-Swedish had arisen in the 1910s. In recent times the saying has acquired an ironic and stereotyped meaning in view of the fact that the Finland-Swedes no longer have the same upper-class position as in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

The book ends with an afterword by Lena Marander-Eklund and an exhaustive index of names.

Finally: In theoretical terms the concept of intersectionality, along with action strategies, has functioned well as an analytical tool for understanding complex processes and connecting the different chapters. The point is that it is not possible to single out one or just a few explanatory factors. Instead one must find out how different factors can interact in historical processes. The book has an important message to all readers interested in ethnic and linguistic minorities and their attitudes to a majority society with a different language and a different ethnic composition.

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The Woman Who Didn't Want Children

Bengt af Klintberg: Kvinnan som inte ville ha barn. Sagotypen ATU 755, "Sin and Grace", i muntlig tradition och litterära verk. Kungl. Gustav Adolfs Akademien för svensk folkkultur, Uppsala 2016. 306 pp. Ill. English summary.

The first half of the twentieth century was the heyday for the monograph about fairy tales. Based on as many variants as possible, and inspired by the Finnish historical-geographical school, efforts were made to identify the fairy tale's distribution, migration routes, places of origin, and its original format. But the difficulty in determining the native origins of such source material eventually led fairy tale research in other directions. Several researchers abandoned the wider perspective of investigation, for the benefit of studying the storyteller's local, traditional environment, repertoire, and artistic narrator abilities. The most significant of these studies is Linda Degh's *Folktales and Society: Story-Telling in a Hungarian Peasant Community* (Bloomington, 1969). For Degh, though, it was impossible to unite a close study of the storytellers and their environment with a wider geographical and historical perspective. In addition to this, the appearance of literary fairy-tale research , investigating the format, style and structure of the fairy tale, opened up possibilities for extensive new interpretations of the fairy tale's symbolic language. This investigation was strongly represented by the researchers Max Lüthi, *Das europäische Volksmärchen: Form und Wesen* (The European Fairy Tale: Form and Essence, 1947) and Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale* (translated into English in 1958), and research by Alan Dundes and Bengt Holbek, *Interpretation of Fairy Tales* (1987). This sketch of the historical research is part of the introduction to Bengt af Klintberg's monumental thesis, *Kvinnan som inte ville ha barn* (The

Woman Who Didn't Want Children) recently published by the Royal Gustavus Adolphus Academy for Swedish Folk Culture. This work demonstrates that many analyses, perspectives and ways of seeing the written material can be combined with the monograph format, which thus obtains a new and expanded content. According to the introduction, the author has previously written several articles about this type of folktale, and this thesis has benefited from his work on these articles. Furthermore, the purpose of writing this thesis is clearly formulated: with his choice of subject, he wants to "impact a research which for decades has been completely abandoned within folkloristics: the monographic study of an individual fairy tale (sago-type)" (p. 17).

The precise folktale he analyses is thus the fairy tale ATU 755: *Kvinnan som inte ville ha barn (Sin and Grace*). But he restricts his investigation to the Nordic text material, which together forms a group of variants with unique characteristics that distinguish them from the rest of the European tradition. For none of these kind of stories from the European tradition have "a plot with the theme of sin, corruption and the grace of God that we otherwise encounter in Nordic fairy tales" (p. 15). Besides the story being about a woman who is childless by choice and who then meets her unborn children, the text for such a type of tale is required to contain some of the Nordic fairy tale's specific genre, such as the woman making herself childless through a magical rite, being married to a priest, losing her shadow, and that a flower miracle (flowers sprout from a table made of stone) eventually demonstrate that she has received the grace of God. The author claims that he has accumulated 152 variants of these kinds of texts that meet these requirements, with 148 from the Nordic countries. Among the remaining four are one Estonian, one East Prussian and two from the Dutch province of Friesland. The Nordic varieties are distributed accordingly among different countries and areas of language: Denmark 22, Finland 27, Faroe Islands 3, Iceland 1, Norway 13, the Sami-speaking areas of Norway, Sweden and Finland 1, Sweden 73, and the Swedish-speaking part of Finland 8.

The book's first major chapter, "Källorna" (The Sources), pp. 20–87, reviews in detail this abundant source material, the primary records and written adaptations, the identification of the collectors and the informants, and the geographical distribution of these variants. At the same time this work demonstrates a wider perspective, and "can therefore be read as a historical record of fairy tale collecting from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in the Nordic countries" (p. 20). Of particular importance to the tradition, and as emphasized by af Klintberg, is Svend Grundtvig's eleven-page compilation that was printed with the title *Synd og Naade (Sin and Grace)* in the second volume of *Danish Fairy Tales* (1878), a version "that has had a major repercussion in the latter tradition and also gave the fairy tale its name: *Sin and Grace*" (p. 22).

When it comes to the Norwegian source material, the author provides also 13 relevant variants of these texts, i.e. four fewer than registered in the Norwegian Fairy Tale Directory (Ørnulf Hodne, *The Types of the Norwegian Folktale*, Oslo, 1984, pp. 166–167). In other words, the author has as a principle, disqualified three fragments from the county of Telemark as well as two printed versions from the district of Hardanger in Th. S. Haukenæs' collections: *De ufødte Sønner* (The Unborn Sons, 1885) and *Egteskab uden egteseng* (Marriage without a Marriage Bed, 1891). On the other hand, he has accepted a variant from the municipality of Velfjord in Nordland by Knut Strompdal: *Jenta som selde seg til den vonde (The Girl Who Sold Herself to the Devil)* (AT 810+ 755), though there is no denial

of the conception of children in this version, the girl's lust for money motivates her to make a pact with the devil. Furthermore, the flower miracle that concludes the story has been given the most weight, and therefore the choice of this variant is at best debatable.

The book's next, longest, and most innovative chapter (pp. 88–165) is a detailed examination of single motifs within fairy tale variants, and with the purpose of showing that the analysis of these motifs "can be used for much more than determining the oldest type of fairy tale, and its migratory routes. Through this analysis, one can examine the mixed forms of narrative that have arisen between the fairy tale and other related types of narratives with similar motifs, and one can identify connections between the fairy tale motifs and popular beliefs and rites. A comparative motif analysis can also shed light on episodes in the story that can be interpreted symbolically" and "last but not least, the motif-analysis offers an opportunity to exemplify the rich variation of the fairy tale narrative step by step. One can only be impressed at the many different versions that storytellers have been able to create from the one simple fairy tale plot" (p. 88).

After having gone through all the specific motifs from this fairy tale, the author summarizes the results of the investigation in several important conclusions. There is no one individual mastermind behind all the motifs. Instead, we can imagine a cumulative (accelerating) process in which different narrators have contributed to the fairy tale from the oldest preserved nineteenth-century variant to the fairy tale as we know it today. Although we do not know when and in what order of procedure these components emerged, we can conclude that an analysis of the motifs gives us an approximate perception of the final narrative content. With the support of the motifs' age and frequency, we can conclude that the fairy tale of the older tradition, often had the following ingredients: (Numbers in brackets indicate number of variants) 1A: A young woman does not wish to marry because she does not want to give birth to children (70). 2A: The woman destroys her unborn children by grinding seeds in a grinder (45). 2AA: For every child who is destroyed, a scream can be heard (50). 3A: She is married to a priest. (103). 4A: The husband discovers that his wife has lost her shadow (84). 5A: The woman confesses that she has made herself infertile through the practice of magic (admits her crime) (89). 6B: The husband condemns her: It is just as impossible that she is blessed as that flowers miraculously grow from a floor (34). 7A: The husband banishes his wife from their home (79). 8A: The woman wanders around like a beggar (a healer) (62). 9A: She meets a priest who leads her (advises her to go) into a church at night (53). 10A: The woman's unborn child reveals him/herself to her (89). 10Ab: The children accuse her of not having borne them (41). 11A: The woman asks the children for forgiveness and receives it in the end (36). 12A: The woman returns (without being recognized) to her husband's house (86). 13A: She is allowed to sleep on the stove. (34). 14A: She dies at night (93). 15A: The flowering miracle occurs (108). 16A: The husband recognizes his wife and understand that she has received God's forgiveness. (68)

These highly frequent motifs constitute the fairy tale's dominant pattern of narrative. "Since the number of variants is greatest in the Baltic countries, Sweden, Finland and Denmark, it is not surprising then, that the early growth [of the fairy tale] can be pinpointed in the Baltic Sea region" (p. 163), and that this happened after the Reformation, when the practice of celibacy for priests was removed in Scandinavia. At the same time, the analysis shows that the tradition contains a series of alternative and less frequent motifs that carry various forms of action. For example, the witchcraft that makes the woman childless is

expressed in different ways. The most common and oldest example of such a witchcraft motif is that the unborn children are eradicated by grinding seeds in a (hand-driven) grinder. However, other versions of this story tell how the woman killed them by throwing pebbles into the water, drowning them in a water bucket, letting a witch destroy them by tying a knot, or that the woman simply waits to marry until she is no longer fertile. Most variants about her final place of rest after returning home tell how she slept on an elevated ledge above, or over the oven, which in Finland was a regular sleeping accommodation for beggars and servants. But when Southern Scandinavian variants dictate that the woman slept on a baking oven, this was no real practice, but a conversion of a subject the storyteller did not know the origin of. Otherwise, a story might tell how she slept her last night in the garden, or in one of the farm's outbuildings. The story also has several different endings for the priest/husband: He recognizes his dead wife by their wedding ring that has his own name engraved on it, and gives her an honourable burial. Three versions conclude that he is insane, and in one variant he dies of a stroke.

The author himself believes that perhaps the most interesting result of the motif analysis is "the knowledge it conveys about a traditional symbolic language concerning fertility and impotence" (p. 163). There are four elements especially in this fairy tale that express such symbolism. The woman's witch-like destruction of their children inspired by real magical rites practised by the wise "old wives" within farming communities to expel diseases, but in this context with added sexual overtones when the seed thrown into the grinder's eye symbolizes unborn children. "The association between seeds for sowing and unborn children would have been a known phenomenon within an older peasant population, which in the language of the Old Testament, metaphorically merges the word seed in the sense of 'offspring'. Similarly, traditional medicinal remedies and beliefs have a special meaning when they appear in the context of the story. Because the water-well and the water-source have been well-known traditional symbols of female sexuality, the narrative of the stones is given a sexual veil. In both of these fairy tale motifs we encounter a very effective compilation of fertility symbols (seeds, water) and death and impotence (millstone, pebbles)." Also inspiration can be traced from the motif of the shadowless woman to a Christian symbolic language; there are many examples where the sun is used as a picture of God's grace and salvation, while darkness and shadow symbolize sin and damnation. "When the subject has been transformed into a woman that lacks her shadow, not only has the subject gained increased visibility, it can also be linked to the folklore that shadowlessness means losing one's soul." Some storytellers, though, have wanted to further underline her serious sin by introducing other motifs, such as the grass withering where she walks, or that she stays dry during rainfall. "The woman's voluntary infertility has been translated into symbols of drought." The flowering miracle is the motif which most clearly can be traced back to a Christian tradition. The most frequent motif in ATU 755, that the roses sprout from a stone table, is not however known from any other story. But the miracle is not only a sign of God's grace, it is also a symbol of fertility, which emphasizes the sexual aspect, for example, when the flowering miracle occurs in a shoe, or from a crack in the floor. The motif of the woman creeping into the baking oven opens an opportunity for the audience to make associations, through traditional folklore, with the oven as a symbol for childbirth. "There is something deeply meaningful in that a woman who commits sin to prevent the birth of her predestined children and who has suffered this sin, meets

death (= the birth to eternal life as blessed) in the baking oven" (p. 165).

The next chapter, "Saga eller sägen?" (Fairy Tale or Legend?) (pp. 166–197) discusses, in terms of genre theory and the history of research, the relationship between legend and fairy tale, in which ATU 755 is given a central place. Above all, it can be stated that early on, mixed narrative forms, appeared between the fairy tale and thematically related myths, a tendency that can be seen already in the nineteenth-century variants, but became more common in the younger variants. This applies, for example, to various tales about witches, in which the main role is held by a minister's wife, the legend of the woman who gives birth to seven (twelve) children at one time, and to this version of the flower miracle: green leaves sprout from the priest's cane. But no other story has had such a profound effect on ATU 755 as ATU 810: *Kontrakt med den onde (Snares of the Evil One)*, one of the most prevalent fairy tales in Scandinavia during the nineteenth century. Some variants of *Sin and Grace* consist of almost the whole narrative borrowed from *Snares of the Evil One* (p. 191). But the oldest example and the point of departure for the development *Synd og nåde (Sin and Grace)* is from some of the short legends that previously existed in Europe, and which were about a woman who was childless by choice and who then meets her unborn children. "Once in the seventeenth or eighteenth century, when the art of telling long tales was established in the Nordic countries, folktales were further developed into legends where Christian problematizing of the concepts of sin and grace were formed. When, however, the oral folktales died out in the early twentieth century, the short form of the folktale continued into the next generation as fairy tales" (p. 197).

Chapter 4 (pp. 198–221), with the heading "Berättarnas ställningstagen" (The Storytellers' Standpoint), is in my opinion an outstanding part of the thesis. The question asked is whether any subjective sympathies and antipathies can be detected among the storytellers concerning the two main characters of the fairy tale: a priest's wife and her husband; it would then, if detected, generate more knowledge about how they themselves dealt with the moral problematizing policy concerning childbirth and infertility, by choice or otherwise. The ideal within society was for a woman to marry and bear children, but preferably not too many. Infertility was often perceived as demeaning, and there was broad consensus that birth control was sinful. But not all children were welcome; as an unmarried mother, one was socially stigmatized, and many such mothers tried to rid themselves of the foetus. Besides this, it was dangerous to bear children; death during childbirth affected women of all social classes. "The fatalistic perception that the number of children was predetermined for each woman was widely spread in Nordic peasant communities" (p. 201). "In view of this background, it is hardly surprising that attitudes towards the voluntarily childless wife of a priest in our story have varied" (p. 204). Most narrators seem to agree that the priest's wife committed a sin by choosing to be childless. But descriptions indicating that they distance themselves from her are surprisingly few. Variants of the story depicting the priest's wife with empathy and forgiveness are considerably more numerous than those showing a negative attitude to her, and have given the stereotypical image of her as a sinner with mitigating features. The most common reason she does not want children is her fear of childbirth (38 variants), and it is especially the female informants who have emphasized the pain and dangers of childbirth; but men too have shown some understanding for this (p. 205). The priest has also been described from a perspective of varying attitudes, though the majority of narrators have a neutral or positive attitude towards him.

"The variants that make the whole fairy tale give a negative image of the priest are very few" (p. 209). At the same time, a detailed analysis of two major variants shows how storytellers can have each their own perspective. The first storyteller is the Swedish-speaking Finn, Berndt Strömberg (1822–1920), blind, impoverished and "a faithful churchgoer", but at the same time "one of the most prominent oral storytellers within the Swedish language" (p. 209). He allows the priest to stand out in a positive light, both at the beginning and at the end of the story, while the woman's motives are thoroughly selfish. The second storyteller is the Faroese Johanna Maria Skylv Hansen, wife of a lighthouse keeper (1877–1974), the last known person in the Nordic countries who could perform fairy tales within the oral tradition. Her version "is unique in the preserved variants of this material by its emphasis on male brutality and female suffering" (p. 216). She describes the priest's wife with warmth and sympathy – she is good as the day is long, and no person goes inconsolable from her side. Her reluctance to bear children is due to fear of childbirth, and she does not feel grown up enough to marry the priest. "It's no persistent sinner we meet, but an unhappy, afraid and wild young woman, who commits the mistake of following advice from an old woman" (p. 218). The priest, on the other hand, is presented as a representative of male self-righteousness and oppression. The analysis shows that the narrators have solidarity with the fairy tale's main characters who are of the same sex as themselves. Their attitudes are expressed by the subjective characteristics of the characters. "But above all, it is through the actions of the fairy tale characters that we can form an opinion of how the two storytellers have chosen sides. The apparently objective narrative style turns out to be not as objective as it may seem" (p. 219.). "The array of attitudes we encounter in the different variants now appear as a piece of women's history from a taboo-laden area: voluntary infertility" (p. 221).

Like many other fairy tales, ATU 755 has inspired poets to create literary versions. This is what the book's fifth chapter is about. Here are eight poems, six of them from the nineteenth century: The poem *Det dræbte Barn* (The Murdered Child, 1816) by the Danish poet and playwright Carsten Hauch, the prose *Den sköna Cunigunda* (The Beautiful Cunigunda, 1828) by the Swede Julia Nyberg, under the pseudonym Euphrosyne, the ballads *Anna* (1838) by the German poet Nicolaus Lenau and *Die Kinderlose* (The Childless Woman, 1863) by Ludwig August Frankl, a fixture in H. C. Andersen's novel *Kun en Spilmand* (Just a Fiddler, 1837) and the 40-page poem *Præstens Hustru* (The Priest's Wife) from the Danish priest and author John Fibiger's book *Nogle Sagn* (Some Legends, 1865). During the twentieth century the fairy tales received a new literary rejuvenation by the Austrian Hugo von Hofmannsthal, both as an opera (1919) and as a narrative with the title *Die Frau ohne Schatten* (The Woman without a Shadow). Furthermore, the Swedish-speaking Finn, the author Arvid Mörne's novel *Kristina Bjur* (1922) is based on a similar fairy tale. The latest are based on printed versions, and the earliest on oral traditions.

By comparing literary texts with fairy tale material, Bengt af Klintberg has made several interesting discoveries, such as: In Carsten Heuch's and Lenau's poem, and in Euphrosyne's narrative, the original Nordic commoner-and-rectory milieu has been transformed into a medieval knight-and-castle milieu, in line with romanticism's reveries of the Middle Ages and the retelling of folklore material. But the most striking difference between the popular fairy tale tradition and the literary expressions are found in the reasons for the young woman's actions. Why would she not want to bear children? In the commoner versions it is of-

ten said that she was afraid of dying in childbirth. "In the literary nineteenth-century versions, however, it is said that the woman wants to remain childless in order to maintain her beauty; her motives are few. (Vanity.) For the male poets Hauch, Lenau and Fibinger, this is the only foundation for actions; Euphrosyne (Julia Nyberg) provides a more integrated, imaginative picture. Here, only one moral stance is possible: the woman is a sinner" (p. 247).

The book finishes with a concise summary of conclusions (pp. 248–255), an excursus about a topical anthroposophical version from 1978 (pp. 256–258), a lengthy English summary (pp. 259–268) a motif index (pp. 269–271), a complete record of variants (pp. 272–293) and an extensive list of relevant sources and literature (pp. 296–306). But I miss one important book on this list, and any reference to it, namely Bjarne Hodne, *Personalhistoriske sagn: En studie i kildeverdi* (Legends: A Study in the Value of Source Material, Oslo, 1973). In this doctoral thesis, the main topic is precisely attitudes seen from the perspective of the narrators. Otherwise, the length of this review does not allow me to go deeper into more of the details concerning the motif analyses and assessments that Bengt af Klintberg puts forward in his thorough and monumental research work on ATU 755. I believe, nevertheless, to have shown that the depth and perspective of such a full-bodied and detailed reading of an individual type of fairy tale, as here submitted, represents nothing less than a renewal of the folktale monograph and should inspire other researchers to conduct similar studies. At the very least, among fairy tales there are narratives containing many motifs that are rich in content and moral issues – to be offered to a forward-thinking and future-oriented folklorist.

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Fast, Slow, Undetected and Explosive Change

Niina Koskihaara, Maija Mäki & Kirsi Sonck (eds.): Osumia – Kansatieteellisiä avauksia muutoksesta, sen hallinnasta ja sopeutumisesta. Turun yliopisto, Turku 2014. 116 pp. Ill.

Osumia – Kansatieteellisiä avauksia muutoksesta, sen hallinnasta ja sopeutumisesta (Hits – Ethnological approaches to change, controlling it and adapting to it) is a book about cultural change. The authors include several ethnologists who encounter and deal with change and its effects on a daily basis as a part of their studies. The book is edited by the doctoral candidates Niina Koskihaara, Maija Mäki and Kirsi Sonck from the University of Turku's Department of European Ethnology. The publication focuses on the inevitable motion of all cultures and on continual change. Without it, a culture will diminish; with it, a culture will slowly turn into something else.

As Professor Helena Ruotsala says in the preface of the book, Finnish ethnology today concentrates on three dimensions: time, place and social limitations. In other words, ethnology is a way to research the ever-changing culture of a society, and the University of Turku has been doing this recently in a number of fields. The book *Osumia* is a showcase of the latest results from recent studies conducted by various doctoral candidates and staff members at the Department of European Ethnology. The book is divided into four sections, which deal with future and locality, surroundings and places, jobs and working milieus, and family within everyday life.

In the first section, Maija Mäki analyses tourism and the travel industry by focusing on ancient relics and wonders how the situation might be different in the future. In her article, she also reflects on how the methods of Future Studies work in such a case. The main reasons for change in ancient relics' tourism

would seem to be the warming climate and the fact that more and more people living in Finland do not feel that the relics are part of their own past. As such, they may no longer consider the relics valuable or worth saving.

Similar issues can be discovered in many rural areas of Finland. Niina Koskihaara, who studies the modern Finnish countryside, points out that volunteer-based associations, relations and personal ties are what the public need today. As the population continues to grow and new people are moving into rural areas, they will not feel at home unless they get to know the new area. Here, the associations create a bridge between place and people, a site where people can gather together and get to know one another in a relaxed setting. Maija Lundgren has also concerned herself with the same issue. She is studying local authorities and village representatives. She has found that when the connections are not in place, the village will suffer and people will move away. The main duty of village representative is to build a network between people, place and authorities and to support the participants in times of conflict. If successful, they can offer local people ways to build a strong sense of identity and community, one where it is possible to have a well-balanced life.

Identity problems are also the main topic of discussion in the article by Kirsi Sonck, who is doing her research on winter seining in Rymättylä. Similar to Maija Mäki, Kirsi Sonck has also discovered the effects of climate change on local culture. With the winters becoming increasingly warmer, there are fewer possibilities to fish in traditional ways. She has also studied the traditional jobs now being mechanised and how this affects the identity of the villagers. She has realised that there are financial, social and psychological costs to losing a traditional way of life.

Timo J. Virtanen, in his article, discusses changes at the remote Bengtskär Lighthouse Island. The main point in the article is the process of modernisation that has occurred with respect to historical buildings, which are no longer used for their original purpose. Bengtskär Lighthouse, for example, has been renovated and become a tourist attraction; it receives thousands of visitors every year. In this way, a building and place that was used for many purposes, and already once abandoned, has now found a new life and way of keeping its history alive.

Place is also a point of discussion in the article by Karri Kiiskinen, who focuses on the question of visible and invisible borders. He analyses the subject through the role of a cyclist who moves across various spaces. Bicycles nowadays are a mode of transportation that, in Kiiskinen's words, can transcend invisible borders, especially for the people crossing them every day on their way to work. They can also be a way to attract tourists, as many cities organise festivities to tempt people to come visit and cycle around. As Kiiskinen's study shows, what you do and how you get around significantly changes the way you see and experience places.

The third part of the book concentrates on working milieus, and it begins with Maria Vanha-Similä's discussion of the Forssa textile industry. Changing culture has had a major effect on the industry and the textile factories in the town of Forssa, so much so that factory work is no longer available as it used to be previously. In the past, it was typical for all family members to end up in the same factory working together, and no education was needed, as new recruits were taught on the job and by family members. In the 1990s, a new generation of young people broke with tradition and sought work elsewhere. Also, the nature of the work has become more professional and effective, and many factories have closed down in recent decades.

The same influences are evident in prisons, as we can read in Marja-Liisa

Räisänen's article. She has studied the shutting down of Konnunsuo prison as a way to lower public costs in Finland. The prison was given two years to close down, and in the end the remaining personnel felt that it was a burden to continue doing a job that should have required more employees. Decision makers felt that by slowly shutting down operations, people would have enough time to find new jobs and homes, but in the end the remaining personnel seemed to think that a quick end to operations would still have been better for everyone.

The fourth part of the book deals with change within families and ordinary life. Päivi Roivainen has studied ongoing discussions about clothing and how to treat small children. The change in attitudes has been quite dramatic in less than 100 years: in previous centuries, the main focus was on advising mothers on how to decrease the number of childhood deaths. Now, much more attention is paid to dressing children in the latest fashions. According to Roivainen, this tells us a great deal about how attitudes regarding how to act in a proper manner have remained in present until the present, only the ways of doing it have changed.

Last but not least, Hanneleena Hieta deals with multicultural families in her article. She has discovered that nowadays it is easy to stay connected with your friends and family, even when living in a foreign country. Children can talk with grandparents through social media and it is easy to send parcels by mail. With digitalisation, the change involved in moving away from one's home country is no longer so radical, and it is now easier for immigrants to maintain a hold on their own culture, too. So here the circle closes, and we are brought back to the beginning and Maija Mäki's article on cultural heritage.

All in all, *Osumia* is a book that addresses the current situation of Finnish culture in the 2010s. It covers topics such as personal relationships to places and history, modernisation and the breaking of traditions, moving and multiculturalism. It is not written so much for the general public as much as for other scholars. This is evident in the chosen points of view and in the ways of discussing the results; for that reason, some of the articles still contain a certain amount of ethnological jargon. Also, the broader theme of the book — cultural change — may not be very interesting to everyone in the general public, whereas some of the more specific topics, like the history of children's clothing and a family's historical view of changes in a textile factory, might also generate interest outside academia. The book is most useful for those interested either in recent studies in the field of ethnology or in ways to cope with cultural change. The many good examples of the successful adoption of new methods to deal with change can be seen as an advice for those in need of ideas. Perhaps later the same issues and results will also be found in articles aimed for the general public.

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Journal of a European Tour

Jouni Kuurne & Märtha Norrback (eds.): Mikael Hisinger. Resedagbok från Europa 1783–1784. Svenska Litteratursällskapet i Finland/Bokförlaget Atlantis, Stockholm 2016. 390 pp. Ill.

In 1783 a 24-year-old lieutenant at the Royal Fortification Board, Mikael Hisinger, began a large-scale tour of Europe to improve his education and enhance his knowledge and skills in fortification and factory management. The journey was financed by Mikael's father, Johan Hising, owner of an iron-

works at Fagervik in the Finnish province of Nyland, where the would-be traveller lived and worked. Mikael Hisinger's travelling companion was to be Lieutenant Carl Råbergh, who had obtained a two-year travel grant from the Royal Fortification Board.

The Board, with responsibility for the country's defensive structures, would for a long time be the only institution where it was possible to pursue studies in architecture. Moreover, the only conceivable way to acquire a knowledge of the art of fortification was by travelling to different places in Europe. These travels were thus a natural part in the education of fortification officers. The education also included military tactics, arithmetic, geometry, theory of perspective, mechanics, hydraulics, and cartography.

The journey that Hisinger and Råbergh would make in Europe, lasting a year and a half in 1783–84, was thus an expected part of the education of a noble officer, with the aim of learning advanced professional skills and foreign languages, establishing contacts, and acquiring better general knowledge. In addition Hisinger himself was particularly interested in draughtsmanship and wash-drawing and in civil and military architecture, and there would be ample opportunity to pursue such studies on his tour.

The educational tour was an old tradition going back to the Middle Ages, with pilgrimages to holy places and peregrinations to continental universities. In the eighteenth century the universities were no longer the main attraction for travellers, as the classical educational tour had been differentiated. Serving with a foreign regiment, pursuing studies, and learning about culture and amusements were important reasons for these travels. They were undertaken not only by the sons of the nobility, like Hisinger himself, but also by noblewomen, artists and academics. The main destination was often Italy, where ancient works of art and ruins could be studied. In France a traveller was expected to engage in conversation with a *philosophe* and in England he could study how parks were designed.

Preparations for the journey involved reading the wide range of travel literature available at the time, giving practical advice. Through this literary genre the would-be traveller could become acquainted with culture, nature, and history in distant countries, chiefly in Europe. The accounts could be full of scholarly detail and descriptive, but they could also be entertaining, providing diversion in the form of exotic adventures. During the eighteenth century, however, the genre underwent a specialization, with works dealing specifically with culture, art, or nature.

Preparations also included securing finance for the journey, which had to cover the cost of hiring a horse and carriage or paying coachmen, expenses for accommodation, purchases on the journey, and tips. Hisinger took out cash with the aid of bills of exchange from bankers in Strasbourg and Dresden. The educational tour was generally expensive, and could therefore only be undertaken after proper economic consideration.

The primary aim that the noble officers Hisinger and Råbergh had for their journey was to study various fortifications in Europe. They would also, of course, acquaint themselves with culture, history, and art. The art of fortification appealed to the two officers so much that they were occasionally suspected of espionage. A crucial condition if they were to be able to visit many of the places was that they had letters of recommendation from important persons; this was particularly important in France. They also had the task of observing the military manoeuvres of Fredrick the Great at Potsdam in the summer of 1783, which the two gentlemen documented in the form of drawings and sketches.

But it was not only military defences that the two travellers were interested in. They also examined ancient monuments and works of art. Originally there were plans, as with other educational tours on a grander scale, to go to Italy and visit the Roman monuments, but for various reasons they chose in the end to study monuments elsewhere on the Continent, for example, the Saxon kings' collection of ancient sculptures in Dresden or the aqueduct in Lyon. Great interest was devoted to urban architecture in the metropolises of Berlin and Paris during the tour, and for Hisinger the strongest experience of that kind was the Ermenonville park outside Paris, designed in the new philosophical-romantic style.

Another purpose of the journey was to collect certain art objects, the most distinctive of which was the Chinese pavilion which later ended up at Fagervik, which was, and probably will remain, a unique example in Finland.

Hisinger's travel diary is introduced here with an eighty-page account of Hisinger as a person, his family and professional life, along with a description of the preparations for the journey and how the tour was actually implemented. The book contains a wealth of beautiful illustrations, as befits the genre, and it is not difficult to imagine the travellers' fascination with the places they visited. The notes here are exhaustive too. After the introductory part comes the transcription of Hisinger's travel diary, where the reader is given good assistance in understanding archaic and technical expressions and the many gallicisms, the eighteenth-century counterpart to today's anglicisms in Swedish, although these were used, by and large, only by the upper class. Unsurprisingly, Hisinger uses French idioms in nearly every sentence, which can strike a modern reader as rather tiresome and coquettish. On the other hand, Hisinger's language conveys the documentary feel that a reader today expects of a text from the late eighteenth century.

As is customary with travel diaries, the writer's interest and energy can fluctuate as regards how much should be noted down on the journey, and this is true of Hisinger. Not everything is of equal importance, and at times the records are sparser. In the main, however, the reader gets a detailed and fascinating picture of the places and people Hisinger and his friend visited and met along the way, and here and there he provides rather racy descriptions of his experiences.

The publisher of this work, the Swedish Literature Society in Finland, has issued yet another lavish and beautifully illustrated work, and if one is interested in learned Finland-Swedish culture and history in the eighteenth century, Mikael Hisinger's travel journal can definitely be recommended.

Henrik Brissman
Lund, Sweden

With Sigurd among Serpents and Dragons

Agneta Ney: Bland ormar och drakar. Hjältemyt och manligt ideal i berättartraditioner om Sigurd Fafnesbane. Nordic Academic Press, Lund 2017. 360 pp. Ill.

This book has a very broad approach, and Agneta Ney, associate professor of history, stands on firm ground as she investigates this warrior myth, how the hero Sigurd Fafnisbani is portrayed. The study is penetrating and nuanced. Ney begins with a brief account of oral narrative in the Migration Period, considering the audience and the storytellers, masculine in both cases, and goes on to examine the outlook on the individual and family ties, the kindred and homosocial relations in later centuries, right up to the Middle Ages.

We have myths of Sigurd both in the *Edda* and in the Icelandic sagas, as well as in Old English and Germanic heroic

poetry. Ney goes through what these traces tell us, and the book is built up of sections that are short but solidly substantiated.

There are several features that often occur in the myths about Sigurd Fafnisbani. In the Norse myths he kills the dragon Fafnir, through which he acquires the dragon's treasure, including the ring Andvaranaut, which gives its owner great wealth. But the ring also causes sudden, tragic death. When Sigurd roasts the dragon's heart he burns his finger which he sticks in his mouth. This gives him the ability to understand the language of all living creatures, and he can comprehend what the birds say. This image is often seen in pictorial representations: a man with an over-dimensioned thumb is often interpreted as Sigurd.

Sigurd marries the shield-maiden Brynhild with whom he has a daughter, Aslaug. Brynhild later contrives to have her husband killed, but at the last minute she regrets this and throws herself on his funeral pyre.

Through his music Wagner has taken the medieval German myth cycle *Nibelungenlied* and through it made Sigurd known all over the world. There he is called Siegfried, but the features are largely the same as in the Norse sagas.

In the Middle Ages the tradition concerning Sigurd changed, as he developed from a warrior hero into a courtly knight, and Ney points out how changes in society inevitably left their mark in literature.

Then Ney turns to the masculine ideal, and the book ends with the iconography: what Sigurd looks like in rock carvings and wall hangings, on picture stones and gravestones.

The author is tackling a topic that is not always regarded as academic: myths, sagas, stories, which are intrinsically difficult to quantify and use as evidence. For how can we know exactly? We can do close reading, compare, and analyse, but we cannot find out what a story was like further back than the first version recorded in writing. And Scandinavia during the Viking Age, and earlier, was a culture without a written language. Many analyses and studies have to stop there: the Viking Age is not a historical period because it lacks written sources.

When she talks about ideology Ney refers to Lars Lönnroth, who "declares that ideology can be conceptually defined as myths, but without being about gods. The myths steer the selection of actors and what they do and say, all of which together can be said to constitute the universe of the text" (p. 13). With this Ney concludes that it can be fruitful through a text to attempt to decipher the society in which the text was written.

The author says that Icelandic society had distinct gender boundaries and that masculinity there was rather rigid; it was all about honour, which was the ultimate goal of the masculinity we see in the sagas. This is not to say that this masculinity was all-prevailing, only that it was considered valuable for those who listened to, and told, the tales that are studied.

If we return to the non-Norse sources that Ney has used, we have the Old French *Chanson de Roland* and the Old English heroic epic *Beowulf*. *The Song of Roland* is a *chanson de geste*, that is to say, a medieval song describing heroic actions connected with the origin of present-day France. They are often narratives with a core concerning male friendship, comrades in arms who are subjected to trials. There is often an inter-generation problem, father against son, which Ney sees as a possible reflection of the society. In these stories it is often the sons who die while the fathers survive, this too perhaps a trace of the reality.

At the same time as *chansons de geste* were being written, the more famous courtly romances arose. The two genres differ but they are regarded as complementary, and one of the major

differences is that, whereas the younger generation dies in the former, they survive in the chivalrous romances. Ney thinks that this reflects a change in the way society viewed kinship: from the horizontal outlook seen in *chansons de geste* to a vertical one, based on the importance attached to the father's kin, at the expense of the mother's. In *chansons de geste* the father and the mother are equal in status as regards their family background, but not in the chivalrous romances. Another difference between the types is the outlook on adulthood, as the courtly romances show heroes becoming adults rather early, often with the aid of friends. The mother is also more present in these texts, especially in the theme of generation conflicts. The chivalrous romance is based to a large extent on the idea of inheritance: the son who would not inherit anything left home to serve as a knight, and this is an important motif. It is about reaching adulthood, growing into a man, in a setting where the father is not the only influence.

In *Parsifal,* a German courtly romance from the thirteenth century, there is a theme that is crucial in all these tales, according to Ney: breaking away from the mother (the father is dead) and becoming a knight, which Parsifal does by liberating himself from his mother and instead seeking the company of his uncle, who can lead the hero on the right path.

These narratives reflect a military organization that is strictly hierarchical, like the society as a whole. It is also a matter of class, according to Ney, as the warrior class had guidelines of its own for how its members should behave. Military masculinity in France and England is the kind that we have the best evidence for, and with that as a foundation Ney looks towards Scandinavia and the Viking Age.

Aron Gurevich is a Russian historian who has studied the emergence of the individual in a context where the family had previously been everything. He has the Nordic lands as his example, the Icelandic sagas as a foundation, and he (and Ney) believe that society in the Viking Age became more medieval with a greater focus on the individual: there was a shift from a kin structure to a culture based on the individual. Power had to do with which relations were considered most important, and in the Viking Age there was a culture of kinship and honour.

In the courtly romance the new man became visible: an individual with his own desires, his own will, and free to make his own choices. Gurevich argues that traces of this can also be found in the pre-Christian society of the Viking Age.

This is the premise of Ney's book. By studying the individual, in this case Sigurd, and looking at what makes him an independent, distinct person, the picture becomes broader and more detailed. Through the study of the individual and what distinguishes him (for here it is a man) we can catch sight of details that previously escaped our attention. Does Sigurd view himself as a man, Ney wonders, and do other people? Does he have access to a household of his own, to political power, and *if* he does, what does it look like?

Here we have Ney's starting point. Through Gurevich's way of attaching importance to the individual as the most important factor in studies of larger matters, she seeks to capture the period, and the view of masculinity, everywhere stories and images of Sigurd Fafnisbani were spread.

This is a very interesting book. As a historian of religion I can occasionally have doubts about the author's outlook on facts, and where it ends: we can only study factual traces of something, never thoughts. But Agneta Ney does just that: she searches for, and finds, thoughts in the factual and concrete traces we have. Narratives are thoughts, and ideologies, that have been passed on. Narratives are traces of the life that once was. Narra-

tives can also be adjusted and corrected – wishes rather than mirror images.

But through Ney's methodical approach, her huge amount of material, I am captivated. The question one should ask oneself is perhaps not whether Sigurd stands out more clearly after one has read this book. Perhaps the question should instead be: have I, as a reader, acquired a broader picture of the time and the people who wanted to hear stories about Sigurd? And the answer to that question is certainly: Yes.

Elisabeth Östnäs
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Thinking through Narrated Communities and Individual Life Stories

Ulf Palmenfelt: Berättade gemenskaper. Individuella livshistorier och kollektiva tankefigurer. Carlsson Bokförlag, Stockholm 2017. 352 pp.

What is folklore and what is not? In this new and quite intriguing book on narrated communities, individual life stories and collective thought figures, the Swedish folklorist Ulf Palmenfelt advocates for a conception of the folkloristic field which leaves older signposts such as anonymous informant, oral tradition and narrated variants aside and instead looks, in this case, at life stories collected on tape of 132 inhabitants of the Gotlandic city of Visby, from the point of view of narrative analysis. The persons interviewed in 1995 were all pensioners, born between 1901 and 1932, a large portion of them born in Visby, with an almost even distribution by sex, and they were also chosen to represent all kinds of living milieus in Visby as well as consisting of persons from different social groups. They were explicitly not chosen for their possible skill as storytellers; instead they were supposed to give the interviewers a summary of their lives and also give their views on the way society had developed during their lifetime.

What Palmenfelt is doing in his book is a painstaking close reading of these life stories, often with rather extensive and quite interesting outtakes (transcriptions) from them. The method he applies to his study is an analysis of oral narratives mainly taken from the sociolinguist William Labov's model of elementary building blocks in life stories, which he has combined with the approach Katharine Galloway Young has chosen in her work on what she calls taleworlds and storyrealms, i.e. what happens on a microlevel phenomenologically in oral storytelling. Young is concerned with how storytellers frame their stories, how they can move in the realm of conversation to the taleworlds and then mentally move further into a kind of in-betweenness between these two realms into a third realm, the storyrealm which is really where the story of the teller is taking place. But there are other important inspirations theoretically here, e.g. the concepts of keying and framing in conjunction with storytelling, something we associate with the folklorist Erving Goffman.

Another inspiration for Palmenfelt is the folklorist Sandra Dolby Stahl's insight that the dualism of tradition and innovation need not be absolute in these kinds of stories, but should be seen as a constant re-negotiation of traditional elements and innovations in the performance situations.

An important move Palmenfelt makes as to his theory and methodology is to introduce two concepts: One concerns the point of view of the storyteller, the positionings of the storyteller in relation to his or her life story or different parts of the story. The other concept is a kind of middle ground concept between the storytelling event, the linguistic level, and the mental structures being activated. The second one he calls thought figures, a concept he has picked up from the sociologist Johan Asplund.

Both concepts make the analysis more fine-grained. Especially the question of positioning is of great help in Palmenfelt's able hands.

But it is the second one, the question of thought figures, that I find the most intriguing in the book and also possibly the most problematic as to his conception of life stories and life-story tellers. The storytellers' way of forming their life stories is shaped, he notes, both by linguistic conventions, not least established narrative patterns, and by collective cognitive structures.

This resonates quite well with a view of folklore as a formal mechanism under the control of a given community (in contrast to the rules of literature of a more conventional type where the formal freedom of the writer/storyteller is much greater). In the folkloristic storytelling format, if we follow the linguists/folklorists Roman Jakobson and Petr Bogatyrev in their take on folklore as a special form of creation, the restrictions on the storyteller are meant to serve the preservation – or constant recreation – of certain traditional forms of storytelling, simple forms such as those identified by the literary scholar André Jolles (legend, saga, myth, riddle, saying, case, memorabile, fairy tale and joke).

Palmenfelt goes on to propose that the narrative patterns and the thought figures seem to have an agency of their own. They pop up in the life stories almost beyond the storyteller's control. But there is at the same time a certain difference in scale involved, he maintains. Certain narrative structures and thought figures seem to have force fields which are so strong that they propose themselves even with individuals who in their lives have not been directly touched by them.

But what are these thought figures so eminent in his Visby material, how frequent are they, how many in numbers? If one follows Asplund's original conception of thought figure there is not an infinite number of them. Instead they tend to be rather few and also especially insistent as to their power to hold attention. He names some of these thought figures in his essay "Utkast till en heuristisk modell för idékritisk forskning" (Draft of a heuristic model for idea-critical research) from 1979 in which he introduced the concept. Among Asplund's chosen thought figures, especially pertinent ones are the idea of childhood, individuality, madness and catastrophe, also the seven lean and the seven fat years of Genesis, the great chain of being, *mundus senescens* (the ageing world) and the idea of progress. Asplund's view is that the number of thought figures during a certain epoch is limited. In comparison with the countless number of ideas on the discursive level the thought figures are few, something he thinks that research on the history of ideas will be able to show empirically.

But if we follow Palmenfelt's research on the life stories of these Visby dwellers the picture looks quite different. The thought figures abound in numbers. Palmenfelt makes a summary of recurring thought figures in his material, something which he calls a subjective, rhapsodic and non-comprehensive enumeration which he has grasped when listening several times to the tapes. The list of thought figures is several pages long, with separate paragraphs on children and young people, working life, household, social care, infrastructure, leisure time, money and prices, violence, and, as a kind of summary of this summary of thought figures, the idea among the life-story tellers of a general ambiguity concerning past times. This most prominent of all his thought figures is the one about earlier times being both better and worse than today: work was hard, painstaking and was performed in difficult circumstances. But at the same time it was equal for all, people helped each other and work was meaningful.

As for the rest of the extensive list of Palmenfelt's thought figures, in my opinion they should rather be seen as

discursive orientations steering the transport of yesterday to now in the memory work of these Visby dwellers, rather than as thought figures in Asplund's sense.

And what about Visby and the place it holds in these life stories? Since a key concern for Palmenfelt seems to be to find a navigating point between the individual and the collective, and between the specific and the general, the question of place and sense of place is in his own meta-storytelling something which pretty much conforms with what the geographer Doreen Massey has called a double articulation, a kind of two-way street between the general and the explicit, in which places like villages or cities by way of social, economic and cultural processes are produced as communities, or senses of communities. In this way a place includes, besides its physical extension, also social and temporal relations and subject positions, as the folklorist Seppo Knuuttila has noted when discussing Massey's concept. This is also quite obvious in Palmenfelt's analysis, which focuses on the embedded character of the tendencies in these stories of also being counter-narratives which give their speakers an option of different positionings on a multidimensional map. When these Visby dwellers tell their life stories, in Palmenfelt's view they might be using idiomatic words, dialect and general narrative structures and other collective patterns and thus positioning themselves with their stories of their lives in Visby of the twentieth century (mainly before 1965), using a wide array of thought figures. The stories in Palmenfelt's view have created certain thought figures and at same time the storytellers have been able to position themselves in relation to these thought figures.

But what remains as something of a mystery in the book is the question of community concerning the stories and storytellers Palmenfelt is referencing. Are there not, as the philosopher Avishai Margalit would have it, at least three main types of communities when we think of the communities of memory which Palmenfelt is dealing with here? There is a difference between a collective memory, a shared memory and a common memory, a difference between an open community and a closed one, and there is something which might be called an encompassing community, that is, a community which will make claims to identity formations of different sorts. But the question of these different kinds of communities, how much they might be already given and/or constantly renegotiated, re-invented is crucial here and unfortunately also very difficult to get a grip of.

It is not therefore really surprising that Palmenfelt's well researched, extensive and quite sympathetic take on these life stories will end on a rather tautological note. He concludes by saying that with stories we are able to give form to our memories and make our experiences tangible. Stories can help us understand abstract concepts such as time and place and community. Stories can give meaning to our own lives and the lives of others. By writing the book he finds that he has taken some steps towards an understanding of how all of this is possible. Such an admirably unassuming notion is an apt endnote to this book which is so full of interesting and moving, also sometimes shocking stories, stories everyone who has shared something of the "period's eye", so to speak, is able to relate to. Theoretically speaking the book might not break that much new ground, but it is methodologically sound and quite well written. It is a book full of life stories both extraordinary and quite common, a book which this reader found both charming and an excellent focal point for trying to think through the central concepts referred to above.

Sven-Erik Klinkmann
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Norwegian Women's Migration to the USA

Siv Ringdal: Kroppens transformasjoner blant unge Agder-kvinner i New York, 1945–1965. Det humanistiske fakultet, Universitetet i Oslo. Oslo 2016. 370 pp. Ill. Diss.

Siv Ringdal defended her doctoral dissertation in cultural history at Oslo University in 2016. She has studied young, unmarried Norwegian women who moved to New York in the period 1945–1965 to look for work. They emigrated from the two southern Norwegian provinces of Aust-Agder and Vest-Agder.

The problem tackled in the dissertation is how the women's views of and attitudes to their own body were affected by the migration to the USA. Material culture, for example, in the form of clothes and jewellery, is important in this context.

The migrants largely came from small rural farms and in a few cases from big towns. They knew no English and ended up in an unknown urban environment that was a world metropolis. Religion in the provinces of Agder was heavily influenced by pietism, with strict rules concerning the female body. When the Second World War ended there was widespread poverty in Norway as a consequence of the German Nazi occupation of the country in 1940–1945.

The author has done several years of fieldwork, interviewing 21 women in New York and in Agder during the years 2010–2013. The majority of the informants were born in the 1930s. Seventeen of them came from Vest-Agder and four from Aust-Agder. Nine of the informants were teenagers when they emigrated, and eleven were aged 21–24. They are all given fictitious names here. The author herself comes from Vest-Agder, and in her fieldwork she has been able to take advantage of her contacts and experiences from there.

Besides the interviews which are the main source, the author has used newspaper material from New York, etiquette books, photographs, and artefacts, for example, in the form of clothes and jewellery.

The emigrant women had a great advantage in making early contact with Norwegians who had emigrated to the USA earlier in the twentieth century. They mostly lived in the Brooklyn neighbourhood in New York, which functioned as a kind of Norwegian-American network. Some of them were related to the informants. The young women received considerable help from these Norwegian-Americans, learning the new language and the culture, and finding contacts so that they could get a job quickly.

At first the young migrants mostly had to take low-paid, low-status jobs as maids in wealthy upper-middle-class families. There they ate together with the host family and had rooms of their own. Working days were long. One advantage compared with Agder was that the housework was lighter thanks to technical aids in the form of washing machines, vacuum cleaners and the like. The young women felt that they were in demand on this labour market.

In her analyses the author has used various theoretical models concerning materiality, migration, consumption, gender, whiteness and race, science and technology. She emphasizes the importance of theoretical openness and flexibility.

The dissertation is divided into three main sections with many subdivisions: The Working Body (pp. 46–121), The Consuming Body (pp. 122–232), and The Leisure Body (pp. 233–334).

The chapter "The Working Body" looks at everyday working life in New York in comparison with the women's experiences from Agder. Learning to understand American society was a gradual process. Whiteness and purity were prominent ideals. The women from Norway were unaware that white skin

had such high symbolic value in the USA. Their whiteness was so obvious to them that they had not reflected on it.

There were both positive and negative experiences in working life. The informants spoke of good and bad jobs depending on the employer they had. The difference concerned the respect they thought they received from the host family. This could vary considerably. In good jobs the women felt that they were respected and enjoyed some independence. They were given good assistance in learning the distinctive cultural features of American society, and they also received active help in learning the language. The result was a positive learning period. In the bad jobs, on the other hand the women felt inferior and powerless. The informants who had experienced these working conditions resigned after a short time. They were able to do so because they were in demand on the labour market.

The chapter "The Consuming Body" investigates how the Norwegian women took advantage of the wide range of American commodities to express their feminine body. This particularly concerns mass-produced ready-made clothes which could be made from previously unknown synthetic materials. The author relates this to the very different experiences the women brought with them from Agder. Many of the clothes there were home-made. There was a shortage of clothes and there was textile rationing during the German occupation and up to 1951. The contrast was striking. At first the women felt out of place in America. This soon changed, however, when they began to acquire the new ready-made clothes. There was a very large choice of clothes at affordable prices. This meant that the women could feel that they adapted more to their American surroundings. They switched from being producers to become consumers buying fashionable new clothes at regular intervals.

The Norwegian women also encountered a new ideal regarding the cleanliness of the body in America. Perspiration had to be kept under control. One means in this struggle was deodorants, formerly unknown to the informants. The new disposable sanitary pads which the women quickly started using also contributed to the increased cleanliness. They were now expected to change and wash their clothes and bath or shower daily. Another novelty for the Norwegian women was the ideal of having shaved armpits and legs. In several cases, however, the women were sceptical about shaving their legs.

The chapter "The Leisure Body" deals with the way the migrants showed off their bodies in leisure time, particularly at the dances they attended. We see this in surviving photographs. The new feminine ideals were in stark contrast to the pietist rules of behaviour in Agder. To some extent these had been carried on, albeit in a laxer form, among the Norwegian-Americans in Brooklyn. This gave rise to some reflections among the migrants about how they were supposed to behave. This required a balancing act between new American ideals and the religious rules they had brought with them. What was to be considered moral and immoral? For example, they had to be moderate in their use of make-up such as lipstick, compared to the extravagant use they witnessed in the USA. This was regarded as being far too unnatural for the body. The women therefore departed from the dominant American ideal. The women who were most active in religion were also the ones who were most cautious about using make-up. According to the pietist ideals in Agder, women were not supposed to use any make-up at all, as several of the informants had learned in their youth. Nor did they need so much make-up in America in view of their white skin, which they had learned to cherish after arriving in America.

Many of the women stayed in America their whole life and got married there,

in several cases to well-established second-generation Norwegian-Americans. Seven of the informants returned to the Agder region. This meant yet another process of adaptation after having gained new experiences and ideals during their years in America. The author, however, does not examine the women's continued lives in detail. The focus is on their young years in America.

To sum up, it may be said that the author has done thorough work. She is well acquainted with the living conditions and cultural environment in Agder that the female emigrants left behind. Through repeated interviews she has managed to come close to the informants. They have talked in detail of positive experiences but also of difficulties that arose in the process of adapting to the completely different living conditions in America. These women encountered strong contrasts.

The author's analytical reasoning is penetrating and her theoretical openness is a distinct advantage. She tries in every way to explain the cultural process that adaptation entails. She has even shed light on how the ideals and lifestyles that were unknown to the new migrants had emerged in America during the early twentieth century. This study is an important contribution to cultural research on migration and the ever-relevant issue of the integration of newly arrived migrants. It is of particular value that young and inexperienced women have been studied in depth.

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With Death as a Protagonist
Christina Sandberg: Med döden som protagonist. En diskursanalytisk fallstudie om dödens makt. Åbo Akademis Förlag. Åbo, 2016. 246 pp. Diss.

"With Death as a Protagonist: A Discourse-Analytical Case Study on the Power of Death" is Christina Sandberg's doctoral thesis in folkloristics, which she publicly defended at Åbo University on 17 December 2016. Sandberg is currently active as post-doc researcher in Åbo.

The author describes the aim of her research as follows:

"My aim has been to show, through interviews with thirteen interviewees from five families, that power acting is also involved with death. I have been inspired by Michael Foucault's statement that power exists everywhere and especially by his statement that 'people know what they do; they frequently know why they do what they do; but what they don't know is what what they do does.' […] The scientific contribution is, as I see it, to increase the understanding as to why mourners, especially the primary mourners, act as they do during the first year after a death in the family, how grief is manifested and what consequences the actors' power acting has, both for themselves and for their immediate environment."

The book has four main chapters. In the first one, "Researching Death", Sandberg presents her method, discourse analysis, and discusses both the reason for choosing this and how she applies the method to her material. She also gives a background to how the idea of death has changed over time.

In the second chapter, "Talking about Death", the author discusses and analyses how the interviews were conducted and her analysis of the material. The use of power and power acting, both her own as a researcher and the informants as the interviewees, are central. There are two areas in this chapter which, in my opinion, are of particular interest: the silence surrounding death and how to talk about emotions, and through emotions, and to show emotions without talking.

The third chapter, "Acting around

Death", is about the process of death, the funeral and how the families of the deceased act afterwards. Sandberg emphasizes that her focus is on power acting, between people but also between the individual and the society, traditions and "even death itself". In the fourth chapter Sandberg summarizes her research and discusses her conclusions.

Death, and mourning, is not easy subject to do research on, especially not – I believe – if your primary material is interviews. Sandberg is impressive in her honest, and sometimes exposed, self-reflection. Her discussions of her own power, and use of power, as a researcher are interesting and important.

The material is analysed and discussed against expert opinions, both from literature and from secondary interviews with people from different occupational groups used to meeting death, dying and mourners in their work. To go out of one's own field of research and find new knowledge and new angles of approach is, of course, essentially a good thing but the author sometimes loses the folkloristic perspective. Instead of developing her own analysis and arguments, she lets the experts dominate the text and a more psychological perspective overshadows the folkloristic perspective.

But, despite this minor objection, Sandberg's thesis presents interesting discussions on an important subject that both researchers from different academic fields and people in the caring professions can benefit from.

Tora Wall
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Ballads with a Social Orientation

Karin Strand: Brott, tiggeri och bränvinets fördärv. Studier i socialt orienterade visor i skillingtryck. Gidlunds förlag, Möklinta 2016. 272 pp. Ill.

In this book Karin Strand examines three genres of broadsheet ballads (*skillingtryck*) testifying to three social situations of the time: *blindness/begging, crime,* and *drunkenness*. It is at the same time a compilation of the author's recent studies of these ballads, most of which are cited with reference to originals in the collections of the Royal Library (Kungliga biblioteket, KB). The material is analysed in search of an answer to the fundamental question linked to the narrative: "how do the ballads and prints represent the real events, persons, and problems they claim to depict?" and is also studied on the basis of "aesthetic and social questions" (p. 47). This is essentially done through a close-up reading of a selected number of Swedish broadsheet ballad texts, endeavouring to place them in a contemporary context. The confusion of "ballads" and "prints", however, ought to have been omitted or at least reworded; it is undoubtedly the written word that is at the centre. The potential tunes are in principle wholly absent from the study, as the author indeed states. As an aside, Strand has previously produced an article on broadsheet ballads about the blind, "Förtvivlans synlighet: Om självframställan i skillingtryck utgivna av blinda", published in the volume *Tryckta visor: Perspektiv på skillingtryck som källmaterial* (2015) – see the review in *RIG* 1, 2016.

Besides the preface, an introduction about the state of research, delimitations and method, and a conclusion, the book consists of three main sections, one each about the three genres. In international terms, research on broadsheet ballads appears to have been extended in recent years, whereas in Sweden it is at least proceeding slowly forwards. The author's preliminary point is to underline the archaic character of the broadsheet ballads compared with today's information and entertainment media, but simultaneously to underline certain similarities. In parallel, broadsheets of this kind are deemed to have been of significance

for the intellectual development of folk culture versus upper-class literature, with reference to theories propounded by the English author and archivist Lesley Shepard (1917–2004).

The first part deals with "beggars' ballads". This designation comprises primarily *ballads of the blind,* a genre which gets the most space in the book but which can be perceived as a broad concept. The stock of such ballads in libraries and other collections thus appears to be generally or arbitrarily catalogued, and the texts are found under a variety of class marks. It is evident that narratives of blindness and impaired sight dominate within this type – *ballads of the blind* is thus a well-defined subgenre – and narratives about "begging" can include texts about both physical and mental impairments along with social destitution. Yet it seems that the whole genre can be summed up under one and the same umbrella, entitled "complaints, that is to say, highly self-centred and personal texts proclaiming one's own misery". In other words, the emphasis is on a first-person narrator who lacks the potential to support him/herself because of the disability and the deplorable situation, and the broadsheets were not infrequently sold and distributed by the victims themselves. Yet the earlier broadsheets evidently differ from the later ones; the spiritual message and the Christian symbolism become vaguer through the years, while social sympathy gains the upper hand.

The author makes the observation that ballads specifically about people with impaired sight have not been vigorous in the folk tradition, even though they existed long after the more stereotyped broadsheet ballads began to disappear from the market. For example, corresponding "complaints" rarely occurred in hand-written songbooks or in the oral tradition, yet people appear to have gone on composing and printing them right up to the 1960s. The reason for their rarity as a custom is assumed to be their character of misery, and here we find a dismal comparison with the modest works sold in the streets by today's EU migrants. Paradoxically, *ballads of the blind* are often about named persons at the bottom of society, while "the blind person" (non-seeing) tends to be portrayed as an ambivalent and complex being in the history of literature, drama, and art; this fact is interpreted as being of "emblematic" significance, and Strand refers in this respect to the American literary scholar Peter Brooks. All in all, the mere occurrence of some (preferably strange) functional impairment seems to arouse the human imagination and thereby provokes ethical stances which are suitably expressed as a symbolic struggle between evil and good.

The spotlight in part two is on broadsheet ballads about *crime* and *criminals*. The heyday for these was in the nineteenth century, and like the *ballads of the blind* the content of the "crime ballads" seems to have changed through time, from stressing spiritual topics to focus more on concrete events; the introverted perspective of the individual criminal with his sense of guilt is abandoned for a more journalistically spiced account. Generally speaking, a narrative perspective expressed in the first person seems to occur more frequently in the older material, for example, in the eighteenth-century "prisoner ballads". A shift took place in the nineteenth century, with a development towards third-person narratives. Yet another difference concerns the handling of details concerning the actual crimes; the later in time we come, the more the narratives appear to include detailed descriptions of the crimes. Of course, there was never any reluctance about publishing biographical data on the perpetrator; this appeared in the heading of the broadsheet.

Strand gives us a sophisticated digression on records of criminal cases as source material and how they might cor-

respond to the same real events as those described in the broadsheet texts. She almost implicitly assumes that such comparisons can be possible. The method is dismissed, however, with reference to current discourse, without denying the usefulness of the court records in other historical research. She assumes that the narrativity of the court records is influenced, at least in certain respects, by the dialogue of the judicial norm, and for that reason it does not correspond to the consensus of the external (folk) world, and she suggests that the judicial process as such could comprise a more or less explicit class repression, with references to the ethnologist Inger Lövkrona concerning the former thesis, and to the historian Eva Österberg for the latter. The texts of court cases and broadsheet ballads can thus be assessed as two attitudes existing in parallel, representing respectively the exclusive and the popular.

Part three of the book examines narratives of *drunkenness*, or more exactly: for the most part highly emotional texts advocating abstention. This genre appears to be smaller than the genres treated in the two previous parts, as most of the examples are said to have been printed in the decades around 1900. The ethical stance in the accounts is unquestioningly linked to the temperance movement and the nationwide issue of the abuse of spirits, "brännvinsfrågan", although the function of the texts was to inform the public rather than to convince the already persuaded. At the same time, it seems that the genre was not entirely independent, as quite a few of the examples were composed as parodies, for example, rewritten *drinking songs*. The author also provides here a survey of broadsheet ballads classed in KB under *Signum I*: "Songs about spirits and coffee". The oldest of these is dated to 1740 and complains about drunkenness at markets. Strand also examines *narrative songs*, here meaning texts about alcohol abuse from a particular family perspective; the texts are often about a daughter with a sense of responsibility, who suffers as a result of her father's drinking, not infrequently with a deceased mother in the background.

The conclusion – "Voices of the Ballads" – sums up the phenomenon of "socially oriented ballads" printed as broadsheets. A recurrent theme is that the investigated texts/narratives deal with people who are placed more or less on the dark side of society, although the expressions partly vary in the different genres. In this connection Strand believes that it is in part a question of attitudes to and affection for the people described. While the individuals in the *ballads of the blind* and "the crime ballads" actually existed, the people in the ballads about drinking are mostly fictitious. At the same time, it seems to be exclusively the *ballads of the blind* that actually tell a personal and genuine narrative; perhaps this is not so remarkable since the composer of the ballad was occasionally the person affected, or at least closely related to the circumstances described. In the other genres the story is instead told by an outsider, that is to say, expressed in the third person.

It has been good to make the acquaintance of this well-written and well-organized book, which can probably lead to a greater interest in further research in this field which has seen little research, at least in Sweden. Karin Strand's scholarly territory is comparative literature, and in many respects the study is from the perspective of the optical reader, whereas I would like to see the future discourse about broadsheet ballads being equally placed in ethnomusicology and musicology. A broadsheet ballad is so much more than just words lacking a contextual consumer. More challenges will surely arise when the topic is approached, for example to schematize vague definitions and concepts; the typology concerning both the meaning and the content of the broadsheet ballad as a format appears to be far

from homogeneous, although it goes without saying that this becomes extra difficult when both text and music are involved.

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From Military Bandsmen to Music Teachers

Maria Westvall: Musiker och folkbildare: Fem porträtt av musiker som började sin bana inom militärmusiken. Gidlunds förlag, Möklinta 2016. 101 pp. Ill.

The significance of military bands for Swedish musical life is an interesting topic in cultural history, but one that has seen relatively little study. Alongside the technical military uses and the demonstration of power, functions that place the bands in a superior position in the hierarchy, they were also an institution for musical education that recruited people from the underclass to a professional activity, and a medium for spreading music to a wide general audience. When they were discontinued in a long process from the 1940s to the 1970s, when their competences and experiences had to be transferred to new activities, this coincided with an expansion of publicly sponsored culture in other forms: municipal music schools, the Swedish National Concert Institute, the growth of symphony orchestras. This study proceeds from the last generation of military music pupils and follows some representatives. It is a report from the project *The Learning Musician*, by Maria Westvall, music educationalist at Örebro University, who has a family background in military music.

Using life stories with an occupation as the unifying category is not an unusual research strategy. What makes this study somewhat more original is that it proceeds from the first occupation in a professional career. The question is thus not "How is a military musician formed?" but "Where did the military musicians move to?" At the centre there are interviews with seven former military musicians, presented in five portraits. A pair of brothers, and two workmates who stayed together, are presented in pairs – no reason is stated for this but it is presumably to avoid long repetitions. Two of them were born in the 1920s and the others in the 1930s. Although there are not such great age differences between them, they reflect different experiences; for those who joined the regimental bands in the 1950s the disbandment process was an imminent reality, and the general public was losing its respect and interest – a couple of the informants speak of "antimilitarism" in society. They all came from working-class settings, and applying for positions as a music pupil was one of few ways to achieve any form of professional training. Some had a passionate interest in music, while others were driven by the prospect of some future other than working in industry. The life stories are chronologically arranged, alternating between a neutral researcher/narrator voice and direct quotations. The narrator's voice retells the informants' narratives in indirect speech, with the emphasis on factual details, while the quotations give emotional interpretation, metaphors, linguistic flavour, and pithy formulations.

The study captures interesting aspects of professionalization, as one occupational category (military musicians) gradually disappears and then, based on individual choices, the practitioners help to build up a new one (music teachers in music schools). (The individual character of the process is reinforced by the fact that the municipal music schools arose without any central national planning.) In the closing chapter the author presents her conclusions about the careers of the musicians. The combination of a musical and a social context was

significant for what Westvall calls "sustainable musicianship". Being in a situation making music together gave a community between the musicians, while they were simultaneously schooled in "functional music-making" in which other people's use and appreciation of the music is a dimension for evaluation. The authoritarian schooling they themselves received is contrasted with the new pedagogical attitudes they adopted in municipal music schools, and the system of military leadership is juxtaposed with the democratic forms in which they worked later in life as leaders. At the same time they hold up the military virtues of discipline, punctuality, and clear organization as assets in the task of building up municipal music teaching. Functional music-making gave all-round knowledge and promoted a curiosity about what was a constant asset, although some express uncertainty and poor self-confidence about their own musical ability. Another interesting aspect is that several of them combined music-making with social and political involvement – one of them would become chairman of the Musicians' Union.

Westvall's synthesis is chiefly based on the premises of music teaching. I would like to highlight some other features. As already mentioned, there were both push and pull factors behind the decision to go into military music. Besides the fact that it seemed like the only available way to develop a genuine interest in music, it is also worth noting the significance of the opportunity to have a different future than in industry. Several also talk about the institutionalized bullying that affected the newest and youngest members. In the context of ethnomusicology it is valuable to note that most of them played in or led a jazz-based dance band in their spare time, which in some cases led to the big band movement that emerged when dance music changed in character. And there are likewise examples of how the tradition of amateur brass bands in industrial communities (initiated by military musicians in the nineteenth century) led to the establishment of municipal music schools in the post-war years.

It is the individuals and their life stories that are at the centre, and their portraits constitute the major part of the text. The introduction and conclusion could have been developed more, for example, with more detailed accounts of the social framework, more discussion of other researchers, glimpses at the significance of military music in other countries. Yet in its more unassuming format, this is a valuable contribution shedding light on the everyday infrastructures of music.

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