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Legendary Churches – Can They Be Found?

Audun Dybdahl

Abstract

During the last two decades a number of Nordic researchers have taken an interest in and published works on potential sources of unknown medieval churches. It has been claimed that by drawing on local traditions, legends and place-name material it might be possible to obtain a far better picture of the population of churches as opposed to only using the traditional written and archaeological sources.

This article critically reviews the use of the legends and name material as sources about unknown medieval churches. A place name for a church or chapel is no guarantee that a church ever existed in the suggested location, considering that place names will often refer to a geographical relationship to a known church site. Bearing in mind that there are hundreds of virtually identical legends relating to building churches and to migratory churches, the author finds that the credibility of such legends is minimal when it comes to tracing unknown medieval churches. Traditions and legends often serve as explanations for real cultural traces. There are very few examples of legendary churches that have been confirmed as genuine churches through archaeological excavations. A geo-radar study of a legendary church at Naust in Rissa in Trøndelag county did not change this conclusion.

Keywords: legends, churches, Middle Ages, place names, archaeology, study of folklore, source criticism

Legends about Churches and Legendary Churches

In 2003, the archaeologists Jan Brendalsmo and Frans-Arne Stylegar published an article entitled "Om kirkesagn og ødekirker" [On church legends and deserted churches] (Brendalsmo & Stylegar 2003). Their aim was to determine whether legends and place names can function as sources on their own premises when it comes to finding an older population of churches. The study focuses on some legendary churches that have been upgraded to "deserted churches", while four case studies aim to show the consistency of the folk tradition. The authors also analyse legends about migratory churches, pointing out that place names may function as tracing tools for finding churches.

Two of the legendary churches mentioned, Åknes in Åseral and Sånum just west of Mandal, have been examined using archaeological methods.

Strong legend traditions are connected with Åknes; one variant was written down by Jens Kraft as early as the 1830s (Brendalsmo & Stylegar 2003: 72ff). He wrote that it was still possible to see traces of the churchyard and that the church had fallen into disuse two hundred years earlier. The church building served as the barn on the farm. An excavation at Kyrkjevodden in 2000 uncovered six massive holes for pillars which have been part of a seven-metre long and four-metre wide building, which based on C14 dating was constructed around 1250. The building is interpreted as a church, even if it is highly unusual that a church building would have been constructed using pillars in the High Middle Ages. Stave churches had long been on the rise. Three Christian graves were also found at this location and they probably predated the pillar church.

There is a rich and imaginative tradition that there once was a church in the location called Kirkeågeren [the church field] (Brendalsmo & Stylegar 2003:74ff). The church was alleged to have been built of stone but its walls were shattered by the cannons of enemy ships. The stones were later used for buildings on the farm. In 2001, shafts were dug in Sånum. Around 20 Christian graves were uncovered along with the remnants of two buildings. A skull that was found was radiologically dated to AD 1440–1640. Based on the archaeological findings, there can be no doubt that there was a church in Sånum in the medieval period. However, this church cannot be characterised as undocumented as the parish of Sånum is mentioned in a document from 1409 (Figure 1).

Brendalsmo and Stylegar then move on to explain legend traditions about vanished churches and burial sites in Vest-Agder County (Brendalsmo & Stylegar 2003:76ff). Dedicated work here has collected comprehensive material of this type about specific traditions relating to church buildings that have disappeared, legends of migratory churches (see below about this type), and about names where the first name element indicates church or chapel (Kirke or Kapell). Special interest is found in such names as Kirkevollen [Church pasture] or Kirkeåkeren [Church field].

The two archaeologists consider the legend material as three different events: “the cultural historian's event, the narrative event and the concrete event” (Brendalsmo & Stylegar 2003:82). The first refers to whether or not one is willing to accept a legend as a source. The narrative event may for example be the story of a migratory church. The authors also point out that legends must have a function in the community if it is to be passed on, whether this is to entertain, explain or construct local identity. The moral element is also strong where there was a religious or political reason for why the church migrated from one location to another.

Brendalsmo and Stylegar find that there are concrete events behind the narrative event. Their conclusion is that the legends “must be perceived as a concrete and place-related source about churches that have no other evi-

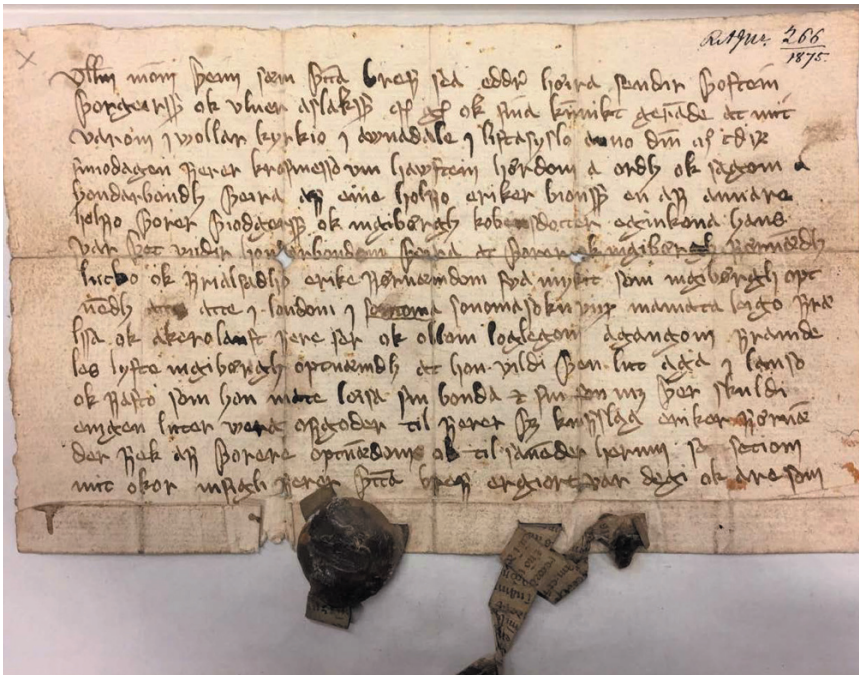

Figure 1. This diploma in the National Archives of Norway (Riksarkivet, Oslo) is dated 8 September 1409. Its contents refer to a married couple who paid a land property to a man for injuries caused by a knife. This was referring to Lande in Sånum parish. The diploma is printed in DN X no. 108. Here there has probably been an erroneous identification. See also RN IX no. 526.

dence in sources, which is the churches at the farms or the location A, and which in virtually all the cases are named. … There would appear, in brief, to be a close link between legends about churches and 'legendary churches' on the one hand, and deserted churches on the other hand" (Brendalsmo & Stylegar 2003:85).

Brendalsmo continues in this vein in an article from 2007, where he writes that Norwegian folklorists in a two-century perspective have been unable to convince other researchers in the field of history that oral tradition is a source similar to written sources and archaeological findings (Brendalsmo 2007:91). He also assigns greater importance to church legends than place names when it comes to locating closed down churches, as the church legends indicate a named farm (Brendalsmo 2007:80).

Similar ideas have also been forwarded by Dag Bertelsen in articles from 2002–2004 (Bertelsen 2002, 2003, 2004). He concluded that "renowned experts" in general consider the network of churches to be fixed (Bertelsen 2004:36). Legends, traditions and place names are not found to be interesting in this context. In his opinion there are a large number of indications of

churches that may help to fill in the gaps in the church network which must have existed in the Middle Ages. He also points out that a concentrated effort would have to be made by researchers in several fields if anything were to be gained from these questions (Bertelsen 2003:58).

This invitation was not accepted by Norwegian researchers, but in 2010 the Swedish historian Olof Holm wrote an article on the value of sources for "church location legends for the study of deserted medieval churches". The empirical basis is generally taken from Jämtland County in Sweden. He finds that church locations dealt with in legends in general are what in Jämtland are designated as ödesbölen (Swedish for deserted farms). He finds it improbable that church buildings could have been erected in these marginal settlements, concluding that church location legends in Jämtland often are fictitious and with no basis in reality (Holm 2010:29). The legends have come into being as explanatory legends of cultural remnants in deserted locations. These may be physical tracks in the terrain, but also names of places that are interpreted as indicating a church. Place names may have inherently been the root of church legends, thus church legends have no independent value as sources (Holm 2010:32). But Holm makes an exception for place names starting with Kyrk or Kapell (church or chapel) which have been alive in the local language up to the present. After a thorough review of Scandinavian archaeological literature, he has not found a single instance of legend material locating a deserted medieval church without the place name starting with "Kyrk- (o.d.) or Kapell" being connected to the location (Holm 2010:33). Holm warns, however, against assuming that names starting with Kyrk (church) indicate in all cases that there has been a church in that location. He concludes his article thus:

> For research on churches deserted during the medieval or reformation period, church legends can be disregarded. On the other hand, place names of the type mentioned above may in certain cases be the point of departure for endeavouring to find and prove by archaeological methods currently unknown church locations.

One of the last researchers in Norway to have written about church legends and their value as sources to uncover otherwise unknown medieval churches is the above-mentioned Dag Bertelsen. In 2016 he published his book *Kirker i glemselens slør* [Churches in the veil of oblivion]. This book is in many ways a continuation of the articles he wrote at the start of the new century.

Bertelsen comments on Holm's article in his book, but does not find his argumentation convincing, as he does not address the importance of iron extraction in these areas prior to the Black Plague. His judgment of Holm's article thus is as follows: "His argumentation does not appear convincing and the conclusions cannot at all be generalised to apply to other areas than Jämtland" (Bertelsen 2016:317).

As in his earlier works, Bertelsen argues that there must have been a far higher number of churches in the Middle Ages than those with traces manifested in written sources. After a total review of various types of sources indicating churches, Bertelsen estimates that in the High Middle Ages there may been another two thousand or so parish churches in Norway in addition to those that have been documented (Bertelsen 2016:405).

In several places in his book Bertelsen refers to "renowned experts" who reject various forms of sources indicating churches (Bertelsen 2016:269, 280, 411). In Chapters 20–25 Bertelsen addresses what he finds to be the most interesting indications of undocumented sources. These are:

1. Pure traditions or narratives about disappeared churches
2. Legend-like narratives which may contain information about disappeared churches
3. Place names which may have been created in reference to a church now forgotten
4. Old burial sites, assembly places, property ownership, maps and preserved objects which may indicate forgotten church locations

Below we will examine in more detail the power and reliability of these source categories.

Historical Traditions Relating to Monasteries, Convents and Churches

A historical tradition in this case means an oral tradition saying that once there was a church or monastery/convent in a location. Knowledge about the existence of this building has then been passed on from one generation to the next until the narrative has been put into writing. The oldest accounts were in many cases made by topographers in the eighteenth century. Gerhard Schøning for example writes that he has been told that in "the olden days" there were churches in Elnes in Verdal and Naustan in Børsa (Schøning 1979:74, 241).

Bertelsen presents a number of historical traditions about monasteries/convents and churches alleged to have existed without this having been embedded in written sources (Bertelsen 2016:283ff). This refers to 16 monasteries at documented medieval churches, and a similar number with no such connections. The number in itself indicates that these "monasteries" have no base in reality. Some references may probably be connected to properties with some sort of grange or granary function for a monastery, such as Opedal for Lyse monastery and Viggja for Holm's monastery (Munkholmen) in Trøndelag (Langgåt 2009:66ff; Dybdahl 1989:228).

Nor is there a lack of traditions about medieval churches in more or less credible locations around Norway. One interesting group comprises

churches and chapels in the fishing villages along the coast from Nordmøre to Finnmark. These could to some extent appear and disappear with the success or failure of the fisheries.

Many historians have expressed scepticism to the numerous church traditions. Jørn Sandnes points out that the church enjoyed a special position in the public imagination (Sandnes 1965:283ff). He maintains that "in almost each local district there is a legend about an old church, alleged to have stood on that or the other farm … For the folklore student they are interesting, but the historian must be careful with using them as sources" (Sandnes 1965:295).

Torbjørn Låg in *Agders historie* [The History of Agder] writes the following about churches in the mountain areas: "Neither kings, clergy nor church parishes belong in Setesdalsheiene [the Setesdal uplands]. Written sources from the late Middle Ages provide such a good overview of the church parishes that existed prior to 1350 that it is hardly credible that parishes have existed which have not been known and absolutely not in such numbers held by tradition" (Låg 1999:267f).

Church Legends

In the 1950s Reidar Th. Christiansen prepared a systematic overview of Norwegian travelling legends (Christiansen 1958). As a sub-category of "Local Legends of Places, Events and Persons", we find as no. 7060 "Disputed Site for a Church". The prototype of such a legend is described as follows (Christiansen 1958:201f):

> In a parish the congregation had decided to build a new church (A1), but two dissenting factions could not agree as to where it was to be built (A2). Finally, however, the building was under way (B1), at least the materials had been brought together (B2), or some mark – a wooden cross, stone, etc. – had been left in the chosen place (B3). One morning, however, whatever had been built was torn down (C1); the materials – implements, cross – had been removed (C2) by an unknown person (C3). New preparations were made (C4), and other signs occurred (C5). In the end the parishioners (D1) decided upon another site (D2) where the materials, etc. were found (D3), or following other indications (D4), the building was not hindered (D5), and other signs as well showed that they had chosen right (D6).

In some versions of this type of legend it is said that the timber for the church was tipped into a river, and the church was built where the timber came ashore. In others, the story is that a horse pulling a load of timber was released from his reins, and that the church was built where it stopped.

Christiansen here reproduces a brief version of a total of 158 such migratory legends. The majority of the legends locate the venue where the new church was built, while just over a half name the place where the church was originally intended to be built (Bertelsen 2016:309). By searching local history literature, Bertelsen has found more than 350 leg-

ends where the planned building site is not the same as a documented church site.

In the vast majority of cases, however, the site where the church was built according to the legend is a documented church site. If this is not the case, Bertelsen believes that this is a clear piece of circumstantial evidence that a church once stood there. Bertelsen offers some examples of different constellations when it comes to final building site and planned building site (Bertelsen 2016:310ff).

1. Both the planned and the final building site correspond to documented church sites
2. A planned building site where there is also a concrete tradition about a church
3. A planned building site with a place name indicating a church
4. Several planned building sites for one and the same final building site

For examples under category 1, six of ten examples are from the Trøndelag area. For Frøya, several legends are connected to migrating the church building from Sula to Sletta on the main island. One variant says that the church was moved in its entirety in one night by gnomes and goblins (Foss 1980:67). The first vicar on Frøya, Randers, entered in the church book for Frøya in 1883 that it had originally been the idea that the church was to be built in Kvalværet: "When it was being moved, however, some logs had come adrift and their course ended at Sletten (Sletta) – which was considered as a sign from on high, and it was decided to build it there" (Foss 1980:67).

When it comes to the realities of this relocation of the church, the written sources have clear language. In the sixteenth century Sula and Titran had approximately 70 per cent of the number of inhabitants on Frøya, in 1760 barely 14 per cent (Foss 1980:69). In the account of his visit in 1739, Bishop Hagerup writes that the vicar wished to move the chapel on Sula to Sletta, which would be a more favourable location for the majority of the population and a better burial site. After some discussion the new church at Sletta was consecrated in 1755, built with new material (Foss 1980:68 and 71). The church site in Ulvan parish on the island of Hitra had been moved to Fillan as early as 1686. There are also several legend traditions about where the church at Fillan had originally been intended to be built (Foss 1980:54, 68; Bertelsen 2016:310).

The migratory church legends are fairly loose on the concept of time. When such legends could arise virtually at any time, there is good reason to question their reliability and veracity when it comes to the medieval period. Some of these legends appear to have some logic in that the planned building site had a more peripheral location than the final site. We know that there was a medieval church at Megard in Snåsa in a marginal settlement

area (Sandnes 1956:122ff). According to the legend, the planned church was moved to Vinje, a stone church that has always been the main church in Snåsa (Sandnes 1956:119ff). We have a similar legend in Hegra about the churches in Skjølstad and Hegra (see below).

It may surprise many to find that migratory church legends have arisen so close to our contemporary time. An interesting case is the establishment of the Viken chapel in Frostviken in the 1790s (Holm 2010:30f). The sources show that this location was chosen according to rational points of view. A safe haven for boats was needed, space for the building was needed and the soil needed to accommodate deep graves. More than 90 years later, local people claimed that construction of the church had started at Kyrkbollandet, but the gnomes and goblins had pulled down in the night what the people had built in the day. The fourteen farmers who participated in the construction work then hewed their axes so they stuck in a log and allowed it to float away. Where the log came to shore is where they built the chapel.

Category number 2 implies both a migratory church legend and a tradition about a church linked to a location. This means that a church building was planned or started in one location, but was finally finished in another. There is, moreover, a local tradition which maintains that there was a church in the location where the church was initially planned to be erected. There must then be reason to ask whether legend and tradition are independent phenomena in such a context.

Tradition and legends of this type are connected, for example, to two locations in Lånke in Stjørdalen. Here, according to tradition, there was a church at Dyva, which was later moved to Lånke (see below). One may wonder at how and why such church legends have arisen. One important factor is undoubtedly word-of-mouth communication from one village to the next. There is no reason to believe that such similar legends could have arisen independently in hundreds of local communities. Other important ingredients appear to be skeleton remains uncovered by ploughing, building remnants, terrain shapes or names suggesting church names.

The Name Material

As mentioned above, several researchers have considered the name material as a source of otherwise unknown medieval churches. Many names of the type *Kirkerud*, *Kirkeåkeren* or *Kirkehaugen* [all names preceded by the noun *kirke*, meaning church] are found close to known church sites. Such names are also found in places where no documented church exists. Bertelsen also mentions names with prefixes such as *Prest*, *Kors*, *Kapell*, *Kloster*, *Støpul* and *Lik* [priest/vicar, cross, chapel, monastery/convent, bell tower, corpse] as interesting in the endeavour to reveal medieval churches. He even produces a table of such names with percentage rates

indicating the probability of the name indicating a disappeared church which has not been documented through written sources or archaeology (Bertelsen 2016:324).

All things considered, it is problematic to use the name material for this purpose, as estimates show 15 000 names of locations in Norway which include either *kirke* or *prest* [church or vicar] (Haslum 2002:107). Furthermore, these name elements have been productive throughout a millennium up to the present time. It also appears that there are certain geographical differences, as these types of place names occur far more frequently in western Norway than in central Norway (Haslum 2002:107ff).

Vidar Haslum uses five semantic categories for names including *kirke* or *prest* [church or vicar]. In the overview below I have included some of the examples of names he mentions explicitly (Haslum 2002:111ff).

Name semantic categories	*Examples with Kirke/ Kjerke Distribution by percentages groups 1–5*	*Examples with Prest Distribution by percentages groups 1–5*
1 Owner/user function	**3%** Kjerkesletta, Kyrkjejordi, Kyrkjestykket, Kyrkjestølen	**50%** Prestbekken, Prestberget, Prestneset, Prestholmen
2 Geographical relationship	**61%** Kjerkesletta, Kjerkåsen, Kyrkejekleiva, Kyrkjeåkeren	**5%** Prestmyrane, Prestetuftene, Presteekra
3 Singular event	**8%** Kjerkjhøa, Kyrkjefloten, Kyrkjeøyna, Kyrkjeberget	**25%** Prestesteinen, Prestholmen, Presteneset, Presttjønn
4 Repeated action	**22%** Kirkesundet, Kjerkeholmen, Kjerkevika, Kyrkjeleitet	**20%** Presteberget, Presteklova, Prestvoren, Prestskjæret
5 Comparative function	**6%** Kyrkjebakken, Kyrkjebusta, Kyrkjesteinen, Kyrkjeåsen	

When it comes to the first category, the name implies that a church or clergyman has owned or used a natural resource. If no factual knowledge about such a user or ownership relationship is known, it would be very problematic to use this as evidence of an otherwise unknown church. Such resources may often lie far from church institutions, and it would be correspondingly problematic to determine which owner or user is being referred to. Approximately half of all names with *Prest* as an element belong in this category, while only three per cent have the *Kirke* element (Haslum 2002:111f and 116). This may not be that strange, as it must be assumed that a vicar has had a more active role in an owner/user function than a church (even if it had

a church warden). Good examples of names in this category are the deserted farm Kirkaunet in Orkdal which was owned by Orkdal Church, and Prestenget in Stjørdal which was under Stjørdal *prestebord* [vicarage] (*Skattematrikkelen* [the tax register] *1647 XIV*: 81; Dybdahl 1976:17). It is highly improbable that churches have been on these properties, rather, ownership is expressed in the names.

A geographical relationship may manifest itself in several ways (Haslum 2002:112f). In by far most cases this would concern a location close to a church or vicarage. This may be designated as a co-location, which applies to approximately 80 per cent of the type of geographical relationship relating to names starting with *Kirke*. Some of these locations are also connected to a legend about a church standing there.

Co-location with the vicar's residence has not been very productive in terms of name formation (Haslum 2002:116f), the material only has a few examples of this (around five per cent of the group).

A somewhat more pronounced directional relationship is found when the place name designates a location on the way to the goal, in this case a church (Haslum 2002:112f). Examples of such names are *Kyrkjeledet*, *Kyrkjebrauta*, *Kjerkesundet* og *Kjørkeskardet* [-track, -road, -sound, -pass]. Here it is necessary to bear in mind that these locations may have been situated far from the church building itself.

A clear directional relationship exists when the church could be seen from some point (Haslum 2002:113). Typical names of this type are *Kjerkhaugen* and *Kyrkjeberget* [church hill]. This is a group of names which will not be particularly useful when trying to locate a church which has not been documented.

Singular events that have given a name where *Kirke* in some form is part of the name will in most cases refer to the construction of churches (Haslum 2002:113f). Stone was taken from *Kjerkhøja* [-hill] for the restoration of the church. Haslum refers to a number of migratory church legends which come under this category. An example is *Kyrkebakken* [church hill] at Hodnekvam. According to the legend, the Myking church was to be built here, but one night the material was moved to where the church now stands. There is reason to ask whether the legend has named the location in such cases, or whether the legend is based on an already existing name.

Names including *Prest* [vicar/priest] in this category will often be connected to dramatic incidents (Haslum 2002:117), perhaps a story of a vicar who drowned at sea (*Presteneset* - headland) or a lake (*Presttjønna* -tarn). The background for the name may also have been of a more trivial nature. *Presttjørna* was allegedly given its name when Dean Eiknes set out fish in the tarn (Haslum 2002:117).

The most common background for repeated action is travelling on the way to church (Haslum 2002:114f). This may refer to the transition from water to land (*Kjerkneset*, *Kjerkehola* or *Kyrkjeberget* [-headland, -cave,

-hill]). Other typical names in this group designate places where it would have been natural to rest horses or let them drink water on the way to church. Names including *Prest-* in this category are also in most cases related to travelling to church (Haslum 2002:117f). *Prestberget* [-hill] or *Presteklova* [-gap] were roads it would be claimed the vicar had used to ride on, and he would have been put ashore and collected from *Prestskjæret* [-reef].

We obtain a comparative function when the place name designates a location which resembles a church (Haslum 2002:115f). In this group we find names such as *Kyrkjebakken*, *Kyrkjebusta*, *Kyrkjeåsen*, *Kyrkjehaugan*. This group is of no interest in our context.

I have chosen to follow Haslum's article about names, including *Kirke* and *Prest*, because he bases his research on a long list of scientific works from across Norway (Haslum 2002:120f).

In Denmark, almost half of 286 known deserted churches have names including "kapell" and/or "kirke" (Kieffer-Olsen 2018:218). Moreover, Jakob Kieffer-Olsen lists 73 place names with "*kapel*" [chapel] and something similar, which with only a few exceptions have not been located near known deserted chapels or parish churches (Kieffer-Olsen 2018:222f). When it comes to names with "*kirke"* [church], there are more than 150 such names with no ties to any known church just south of the Kongeåen [the King's river] (Kieffer-Olsen 2018:234). But there are said to be alternative explanations for a number of the names.

For Denmark, Kieffer-Olsen sees a large potential in using legends and local traditions as circumstantial evidence of unknown deserted churches (Kieffer-Olsen 2018:249). He has tested this in a detailed study of Børglum *stift* (diocese), where he has found that 41 unknown deserted churches are featured in legends (Kieffer-Olsen 2018:250ff). Of these, 24 are named in migratory church legends, while for 16 locations tradition is connected to a church or monastery/convent that once was there, or that there was a parish there. Place names with church or chapel are connected to ten of these locations. Kieffer-Olsen's conclusion is that based on Olof Holm's critical attitude to legends not being supported by adequate name material, there will be at least ten potential unknown deserted churches in Børglum diocese, "but if the legends should be assigned value also without known place names with 'church' and 'chapel', they might indicate at least 41" (Kieffer- Olsen 2018:253f).

Without an in-depth and elaborate analysis of the source material, such postulations have limited value. In Denmark as well, the background for place names of churches and chapels is in many cases based on other actualities than that there once was a church there. As pointed out by Nils Engberg, (Engberg 2018:21) field names such as *Kirkeager* [church field] in most cases refer to the fact that a church or chapel once owned this land. There are, therefore, also the same methodological problems connected to using Danish travelling legends as there are for the Norwegian ones.

Other Material Indicating a Church

Bertelsen lists a number of factors indicating a church which he believes may contribute to revealing unknown medieval churches (Bertelsen 2016: 345ff). This refers to burial sites, stone crosses, memorial stones with Christian content, holy wells, monastery gardens, building remnants, church fixtures and furniture, old maps and property ownership.

The most concrete source group is here undoubtedly the proven Christian burial sites. There may have been some burial sites on the coast without nearby churches, but with hardly no exceptions, the dead in the Christian period must have been buried in consecrated ground next to a church. Some such burial sites have also been discovered without finding any written information confirming that there also was a church there. In the Trøndelag region, some such burial sites have been found. On the Hernes farm in Frosta, which is mentioned in the sagas, remnants of coffins and skeletons have been found from seven Christian burials (Brendalsmo 2001:382f). The burial site appears to have been used for a relatively brief period of time in the eleventh century. But no church has been found here. A Christian burial site with seven graves has also been found at Hårberg in Ørland (Brendalsmo 2001:291f). This burial site was used in the early Christian period, but like the one at Hernes, it was only used for a short period of time. No trace of a church building has been found here either. Bertelsen also mentions such findings from other regions in Norway, but the number is quite low (Bertelsen 2016:347f). In practice this source group will not contribute to increasing the number of medieval churches appreciably.

It is also conceivable that burial sites were established at an early stage without any connection to a church. Later a church has then been built in another location. Examples of such burial sites exist in Sweden, Denmark and England (Engberg 2018:61f).

When it comes to the other categories mentioned above, they probably have little to contribute to locating otherwise unknown medieval churches. Stone crosses and memorial stones may have been erected without any connection to a church; across Norway there are holy wells in dozens of places where it is hard to imagine that there has been a church there. Monastery gardens can in practice be disregarded, as there is every reason to claim that there has scarcely been a monastery in Norway with no written documentation of it. Building remnants may be a difficult matter to decide upon, as in many cases it will be difficult to distinguish between a church and a secular building. Another source group is church fixtures and furniture, a category that is difficult to use. Bjugn Church in Fosen, which was built in the 1630s, has had a medieval triptych there for a very long time (Brendalsmo 2001:277). It must have been in another church earlier, but it is impossible to ascertain which. Sletta church in Frøya, built in the eighteenth century, had several sculptures of saints, but we do not know with certainty which churches they came from (Foss 1980:31ff).

If a church owns land, this would be a clear indication that it also existed in the Middle Ages. After the Reformation, the practice of donating land to church institutions came more or less to an end. Tracing unknown medieval churches through the material from the seventeenth century is virtually impossible, as landed property belonging to discontinued churches would be transferred to existing churches or the vicarage (Dybdahl 1989:158ff). Nor would maps be able to contribute very much. They do not go back to the Middle Ages, and the oldest maps have usually been made for military purposes. Another matter is that redistribution maps from the nineteenth century with detailed descriptions of parcels of land may reveal interesting place names.

Assessing the totality of these source groups, the conclusion must be that in only an extremely few cases can they make a probable suggestion of the existence of an otherwise unknown medieval church.

Sources and Methods in Practice – Stjørdal

In *Kirker i glemselens slør* [Churches in the veil of oblivion] Bertelsen has a chapter on "Kirkelandskapet i Stjørdalen" [The church landscape in Stjørdal] (Bertelsen 2016:373ff), a topic he has dealt with in several articles. In many ways Stjørdalen may be a good point of departure for a study of churches and parishes in Norway. Settlements in the High Middle Ages ranged from good agricultural areas along the sea to barren and marginal areas in the valleys and mountains. The calculated frequency of deserted named farms in the late medieval age was approximately the same in Stjørdal (57.8 per cent) as for the country as a whole (approximately 56 per cent) (Sandnes & Salvesen 1978:64, 72).

When it comes to churches and parishes, the material from the Middle Ages is thin, but using the census register of tithes, information about "Cathedraticum i Stiørndall" [tax paid to the archbishopric from local churches in Stjørdal] and Reformatsen 1589 [a commission report about the church economy in Trondheim diocese], we can form a good impression of the situation towards the end of the Catholic period (Dybdahl 2005:71, 165–169; *OE*: 52; *Reformatsen 1589*:53). In 1520 there were eight parishes, Fløan, Auran, Skatval, Værnes, Voll, Hegra, Skjølstad and Lånke. At that time settlement ended at Kil, but the list of the churches in Stjørdal that had to pay the "cathedraticum" shows that during the Middle Ages there was also a church at Ådal in Forbygda. In Reformatsen 1589, the churches at Voll and Ådal are not mentioned; it was now decided that the churches at Auran, Fløan and Skjølstad were to be closed down, and the congregations transferred to the Skatval and Hegra parishes. Thus Værnes was left as the main church with its annexes Skatval, Lånke and Hegra.

There is much material to suggest that a generation after Reformatsen

1589, a church was built at Kirkeby in Meråker. The Kirkeby farm is mentioned initially in written sources in 1590 (Dybdahl 2001:69), it was in all probability cleared again during the second half of the sixteenth century. The church in Meråker is mentioned by the vicar in his answer to the question from Titus Bülche about the census in the 1660s (Titus Bülche 1664–66:103f). It says there that under Hegra annex there is "Mærager Kirke" [Meråker church], four dangerous and "evil Norwegian miles thence". Divine services were only held there a few times each year held for the elderly who were unable to make their way to Hegra. Gerhard Schøning also refers to the Kirkeby church in his travel description from 1774, assuming that it was built 150 years earlier (Schøning 1979:18, 22). Schøning writes that it was said that when this church was built, "in the soil were found a great deal of human bones and remnants of rotted coffins". At the start of the seventeenth century the Kirkeby farm was owned by Stjørdal vicarage. When also considering the long distance to the nearest church, there is reason to assume that there was a church at Kirkeby, which in the late middle ages was deserted, as was the case with all the inhabitants in the district (cf. map in Dybdahl 1979:94f).

In addition to the above-mentioned churches, in his book Bertelsen suggests the following church indications in Stjørdal (Bertelsen 2016:387):

Skipreide [administrative unit]	*Church location*	*Type indication*	*Probability of church presence*
Aglo	Hegge	Tradition and legend	Probable
	Forbord	Tradition	Probable
	Blanka	Tradition, legend, place name	Fully possible
Værnes	Moksnes	Place name	Uncertain
	Presteng	Place name	Fully possible
	Ner-Holan	Legend	Fully possible
	Kalddal	Tradition and place name	Fully possible
Leksdal	Dyva	Tradition and legend	Probable
	Kirkhaug	Place name	Uncertain
	Elvran	Old map	Fully possible
	Kirkskogbekken	Place name	Fully possible
Hegra	Trøyte	Church fixtures and furniture	Highly uncertain
	Kristlok	Possible vicarage	Highly uncertain
	Stokkvollen	Possible burial site	Highly uncertain
	Bruåsen	Tradition	Fully possible
	Bjørgen	Tradition	Fully possible
Øyar	Hembre	Tradition	Fully possible
	Kil	Old map	Uncertain
	Meådal	Old map	Uncertain
	Klokkhaug	Legend	Fully possible
	Meråker	Old map and name	Uncertain
	Kjørkbykjølen	Place name	Highly uncertain
	Kirkegardsfjellet	Place name	Highly uncertain

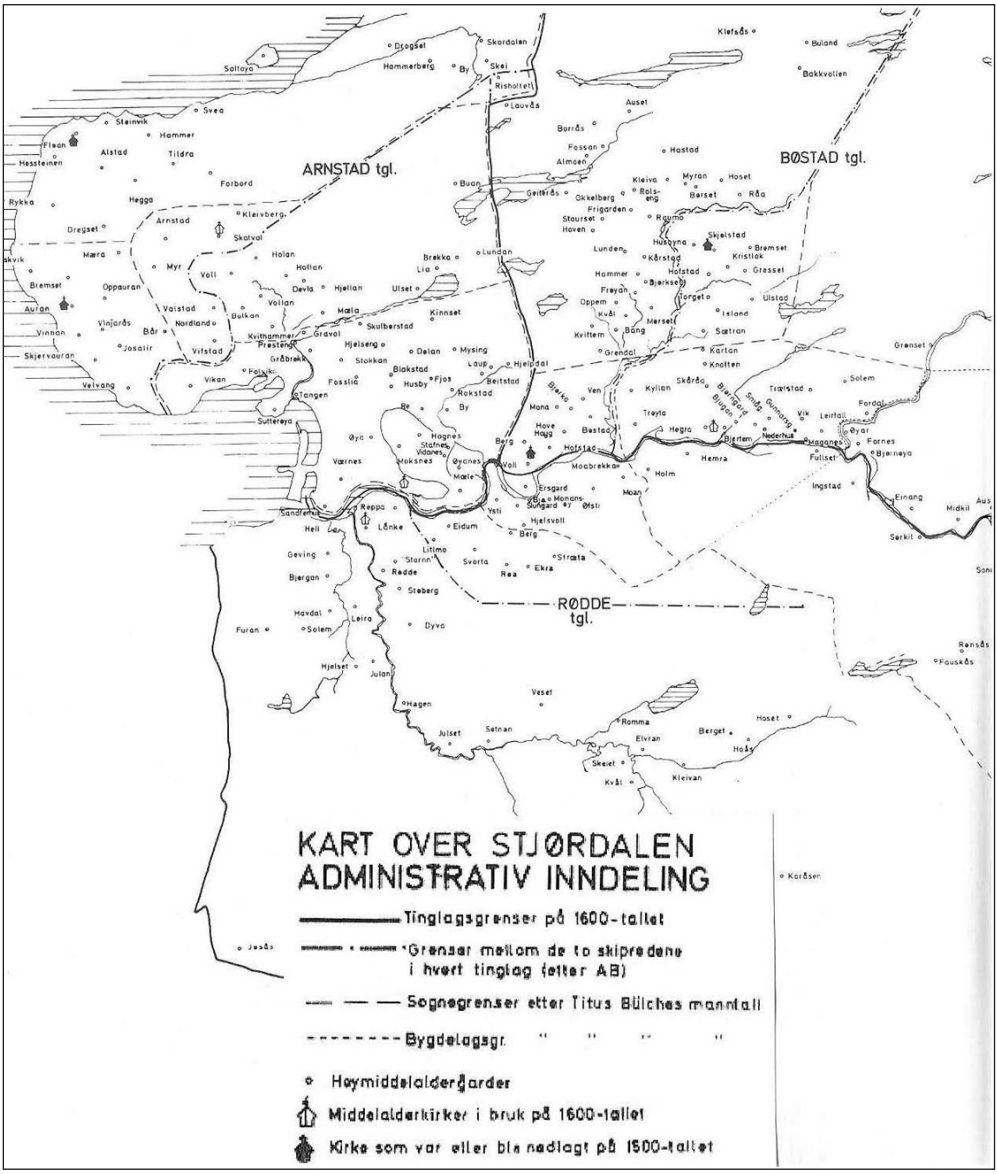

Figure 2. Churches and parishes in Stjørdal in the late medieval period and the early modern period. After Dybdahl 1979: 16 f. Both Voll and Hegra parishes included farms on both sides of the Stjørdal river. The churches at Ådal and Kirkeby are not shown in this map.

Tradition or church legends form the source base for ten of the potential medieval churches in the locations mentioned above. These are Heggja, Forbord, Blanka, Ner-Holan, Kaldal, Dyva, Bruåsen, Bjørgan, Hemra and Klokkhaug. In a map of churches evidenced by legend and tradition in Stjørdal, Jan Brendalsmo has marked the following 12 locations in the

valley: Heggja, Forbord, Ner-Holan, Kalldalen, Dyva, Setnan, Hemra, Leirfall, Rønsåsen, Bruåsen, Klokkhaugen, Kjørkbykjølen (Brendalsmo 2016: 102).

In terms of legend material, it is natural to start with Ivar Nilssen Værnesbranden's publications. According to tradition, the first church in Lånke parish was built at Dyva, where a field was called "Kirkeakeren" [the church field] (Værnesbranden 1905:9f). In a later text *Værnesbranden* calls the field "kristenåkeren" [the Christian field] (Værnesbranden 1928:114). Here, allegedly, digging found remnants of human bones and coffins. When the old church was to be rebuilt, according to the legend there was a discussion about whether to build it at Dyva or Lånke. Building started at Dyva, but what they built in the daytime was torn down in the night and brought to Lånke. This is also where the church was finally built.

According to legend about Kaldalskirken [the Kalddal church], an old man from Langstein had encountered a "huldrebrudefølge" [fairy wedding procession] on its way to "Kaldalskirken" for a marriage (Værnesbranden 1905:29f). When he looked back, he fell off his horse, and his leg never healed.

There are also migratory legends about Ner-Holan and Skatval (Værnesbranden 1905:60f). Here too there was discussion about where to build the church. One story has it that a log was put on a sleigh and a young horse was sent off pulling this. When the horse halted at Kirke-Skatval, the church was built there. Another story claims that what was built by day at Ner-Holan was moved to Skatval by night. This was assumed to be "divine judgment" and the church was built in Skatval.

There was also a legend about a church by Hemra – north of Reina (Værnesbranden 1933:66). This legend was not supported by place names. Here in "later times" a burial chamber was found that might explain the legend. But Værnesbranden did not find the legend improbable, as there were no documented churches in Øyjar *skipreide* [administrative unit responsible for furnishing a ship and crew for military service], and it was at times difficult to cross the river.

Værnesbranden also refers to a legend he had heard from Einar Hermstad, who said that there had been a landslide by Leirfall which had swept away Bjørgan Church (Værnesbranden 1933:76).

At Skatval there was a legend asserting that the first church stood at Heggja (Værnesbranden 1933:71f). During heathen times there had been a sacrificial grove or place of worship there. This *hov*, or place of sacrifice, was torn down and remade into a church in connection with a visit from Saint Olav. At North Heggja we find the name Kirkeåkeren [the church field] referring to a location approximately 100 metres north-northeast of the yard. Tradition has it that there had been a churchyard there, but no skeletons or any others remains have been found to confirm this (Brendalsmo 2016:103).

The church at Heggja was replaced by three smaller churches at Auran, Fløan and Forbord. Værnesbranden writes about the latter that "nothing more is known about the church at Forbord. It is impossible to ascertain where it stood. It has probably been placed in a 'lofty place', preferably up in the Forbordsliene [hills], where there was and still is a good view" (Værnesbranden 1933:72). But Leirfall writes that elderly people up to the present have pointed out the site of the church as being by "Rau-grinna" [the red gate] (Leirfall 1970:280). He states that some large stones have been lying there which may have served as the foundation wall. Ivar Forbord has stated that his father has told him, based on the collection of stones by Raugrinda, that he believed the church was probably here, and he had called this location "Kjerkbakkan" [the church hills] (Brendalsmo 2016:103).

Leirfall also refers to a legend that there was once a church at Bruåsen in Bruås common land (Leirfall 1970:280f). There had been settlements in these areas during the Middle Ages. Leirfall also mentions a legend about a church at Alstad, now in the municipality of Levanger (Leirfall 1970:281). It was alleged to have sunk in a marsh, Kjerkmyra [the church marsh]. In the middle of the marsh lies Blanka Lake. Here the church bells could be heard if a stone was thrown in the water.

Einar Hermstad believed that there had been a medieval church in Meråker, writing the following: "Not far from the current location of the church is the farm Klokkhaug. Legend has it that the first time a church was to be built, they had the usual conflict about where to place it, and the proposed locations were Klokkhaug and Kirkeby, and they started to build it at Klokkhaug, but it ended being built at Kirkeby" (Leirfall 1970:287). Here we thus have another migratory church legend.

Thus there are migratory church legends (Dyva, Ner-Holan, Klokkhaug) connected to three of the ten locations where tradition or legends are the source. A large number of such legends exist, and there is little to suggest that there are real events behind the legends. Very vague traditions are connected to four locations supposedly having a church once upon a time, i.e. Forbord, Bjørgan (Leirfall), Hemra and Bruåsen. With three documented churches in Skatval it is not very probable that there also was a church at Forbord. Bjørgan Church had disappeared in a landslide, and Leirfall writes that the church was located at Leirfall. We cannot put much hope in having this tradition confirmed. By Hemra farm, it is said that there was a field there that was left unploughed long after the Reformation (Bertelsen 2016:379). This is not an uncommon statement in connection with so-called church indications.

Bertelsen does not offer any other information about the Bruåsen location than that there is a tradition that there was a church there (Bertelsen 2016: 387). Close by lies Stokkvollen. For many years up to the present people would say that they were going to "cut the grass on the graves" when they

were going there (Bertelsen 2016:385). It is believable that this could refer just as much to animal pitfalls as Christian graves.

With respect to the names of places in Stjørdal, there are some names where the first element is *Kirke* and *Prest* [church and priest/vicar]. Presteng is undoubtedly a deserted farm which was run as a sub-farm for the vicar of Værnes church.

Some names with *Kirke* are connected to definite medieval churches. A holding at Voll is called Kirke-Voll ("Af K*ir*kiu Welle") in Aslak Bolt's cadastre from 1432/33 (*AB*: 58). Kirkeby in Meråker has already been dealt with. These are thus names of locations where there most probably were churches. Bertelsen writes that a location called Kirkemo at Moksnes is mentioned in old documents, but neither the location nor the background for this are known. This might refer to a "neighbouring name" as Moksnes and Værnes (with the county church in Stjørdal) are neighbouring farms.

Bertelsen also includes some names with *Kirke*, i.e. Kirkhaug, Kirkskogbekken, Kjørkbykjølen and Kirkegardsfjellet. The former has been referred to as "uncertain", the others "highly uncertain" (Bertelsen 2016:387). The map shows that Kirkhaug lies almost 400 metres above sea level. The background for the name may have been that there was a view of one or more churches. Kirkskogbekken most probably is connected to ownership. Kjørkbykjølen is situated remotely up against the Swedish border. Even if there was some activity in these outlying regions, it is very improbable that there was a church there.

Kirkegardsfjellet is alleged to be entered on a map from the seventeenth century, next to the national border at Storlien, but Bertelsen offers no reference to this entry (Bertelsen 2016:383). Another map that has caught Bertelsen's interest is a military map from the second half of the seventeenth century with markings for several churches in Stjørdal (Norge no. 14 in Kartverket [Norwegian Mapping Authority]). In the table above, four church indications are connected to the so-called "Norges-kart no. 14". This map regrettably has no legend to explain symbols, but there are stylized symbols for churches at Værnes and the four churches designated as annexes: Skatval, Lånke, Hegra and Meråker. Bertelsen has noted that there are similar symbols at Elvran, Kil and Meådal (Bertelsen 2016:384). He asks whether the cartographer might have used an older original. A medieval church at Elvran would fit well with a tradition that Sondalen in the old days belonged with Leksdalen. What Bertelsen finds most interesting is the marking of churches in Meråker. First here is marked "Meerager annex", which must be the church at Kirkeby. A little further south there is a similar symbol by the Meråker farm, which the cartographer consequently must have considered to be the location of the main church in this district.

Figure 3. This map, Norge [Norway] 14, is assumed to be from around 1690. We here see a number of symbols indicating churches. See more about this in the text below.

A closer study of this map shows that there is a church symbol by Kirkeby and the words "Meerager annex". By Meråker there is a similar symbol and the words "Leensmans Meerager". As mentioned above, the church in Meråker was an annex under Hegra around the middle of the seventeenth century, as there was no vicar or priest permanently residing in Meråker. The church-like symbol at Meråker thus does not refer to a church, but rather indicates that this was an important location for some reason, in this case the residence of the "lensmann" (bailiff). Similar considerations must be the basis for the other "church symbols" by Elvran, Meådal, Kil and Fornes (the symbols by Kil and Fornes are very similar). Here there may also be reason to note that the word "Trenche" is closer to the "church symbol" than the name "Kyl". "Trenche" here probably means "entrenchment". Such facilities naturally would need a "symbol of importance" on a map drawn for military purposes by a foreign mapmaker. The church-like symbols on this map therefore have no value as sources of otherwise unknown medieval churches. Nor does the map give an indication of any of the known medieval churches that were not being used at the middle of the seventeenth century.

In his table of churches and church indications in Stjørdal, Bertelsen enters 34 locations, adding that the list can in no way be considered complete, as it must be assumed that many indications have been lost. As mentioned above, there have been nine documented church locations in the valley, including Kirkeby in Meråker, which, however, has not been evidenced in sources before the seventeenth century. There may also have been a chapel at Steinvikholmen. The idea of the church landscape has not been significantly changed by the material Bertelsen and others have presented. There may have been *høgendeskirker* [private chapels] at virtually all large farms in Stjørdal, but as long as there is no concrete evidence there is little point in speculating about this. It is of course interesting to document old legends and attempt to arrive at some idea about why they have come about. However, I believe that only in exceptional cases could these put us on the track of genuine medieval churches, which I will return to.

A Traditional Church at Naust in Rissa – Examined with Geo-radar

An old tradition in Rissa says that the oldest church building in the district stood on the farm called Naust, a neighbouring property of the old chieftain farm called Rein (Dybdahl 1990:82). In late Middle Ages and early modern period there was a stave church at Rein, which was replaced by a notched log church in 1649 (Dybdahl 1990:174ff). The oral tradition about the church at Naust can at any rate be traced back to the 1930s where it is mentioned in a text about Rein (Bjørgan 1932:4). It is claimed that findings had

been made which allegedly came from an old churchyard. On the opposite side of Lake Botnen there was an old tradition that there had been a church at Naustbrettingen.

Supporting the widely held idea, it has been claimed that there is a special section of a field at Naust, called *Gammelkjerkåkeren* [the Old church field], which stands out from the surrounding area (Stamnes & Dybdahl 2018:9). The soil where the church is supposed to have been located is blacker than the areas abutting this field. This contrast is highly visible from the opposite bank of Lake Botnen when the soil has been ploughed and harrowed. Another piece of circumstantial evidence of the former presence of a church at Naust can be that according to Aslak Bolt's cadastre from 1432/33, the archbishopric owned a part of the farm (*AB*: 104). If the church was discontinued, the archbishop may have claimed the church property.

It has been claimed that bone remnants have been found in this location, but apparently this material has not been preserved as the bones were taken to be animal remains. In the catalogue section of his doctoral dissertation Brendalsmo writes (Brendalsmo 2001:300):

> Around 40 metres away from Lake Botnen there is a place called *Gammelkjerkgården* [the Old church field]. Here, probably at the end of the previous century, large numbers of human bones were found on several occasions after ploughing. In recent years the plough in the same area has hit something that might be a foundation wall. During the ploughing, fishing net sinkers and soapstone have also been found. The finders believed these could be gravestones.

Of objects submitted to the NTNU Science Museum we can mention a bolt lock and several pierced soapstones, interpreted to be fishing sinkers or loom weights (Stamnes & Dybdahl 2018:9). The alleged site and the surrounding field have been searched with a metal detector. The findings in general appear to be from the Middle Ages and more recent times. Among the objects found are a fitting for the end of a strap, several pieces of pottery from the medieval period, pot feet of metal or pottery and a fishing sinker (Stamnes & Dybdahl 2018:10). Some slag, melted copper and bronze tin, have also been found, which may indicate that metal work has taken place there. Large amounts of stones burned brittle testify to early settlement.

In his doctoral dissertation, Brendalsmo has not dealt with the legendary churches in Stjørdal. But he has included Naust, which has been designated as a medieval burial site and a possible church site (Brendalsmo 2001:300f). Brendalsmo envisions that the burial site may have been part of the farmyard or have been covered by cultural layers after the church went out of use. He suggests parallels with burial sites at Uthaug and Hårberg in Ørland and Hernes in Frosta. As no church is mentioned in written sources, he assumes that it must have been discontinued before 1350.

As it would be of great historical and methodological interest to have insight into whether the oldest church in Rissa was erected at Naust, an ini-

tiative was made to have the area examined with geo-radar. This survey was performed in the autumn of 2017, and the findings were published the subsequent year (Stamnes & Dybdahl 2018).

An area of approximately 6250 square metres was examined, which included the area with black soil. The examination was performed using a 3D GPR. This equipment has produced profiles for each 7.5 cm with high resolution in the entire examined area. A number of anomalies were found. Fifteen pits with stones are probably cooking pits. A possible house ruin was also found, as was a large area of deviating response, which in scope is coincidental with the layer of black soil. If the archaeological material found is included, there is much to suggest that there were once buildings in the area with black soil where people lived who for some period of time were engaged in metalwork. No postholes or graves were found. The black soil layer clearly indicates that this is a farm pit – a cultural layer consisting of waste and remnants of burned and rotten buildings which has been accumulating over centuries – rather than an early Christian church with a burial site.

Conclusion

In *Kirker i glemselens slør* Bertelsen provides a table which shows the distribution of church indications by county in the form of church traditions, church legends, place names and other indications (Bertelsen 2016:365). All in all he ends with 2636 church indications against 1162 documented churches for all of Norway. This material is now available on the website https://lokalhistoriewiki.no/wiki/Indikasjoner_på_udokumenterte_kirker, which is managed by the Norwegian Institute of Local History.

The problem with this database is that it only names the location and gives a brief rationale for entries such as “Forbord in Stjørdal: Church reported by Raugrinda under the ski hill at Forbord”. Including a possible chapel at Steinvikholmen, this website has 22 locations entered for Stjørdal with indications of there once being an undocumented church there. In general the most comprehensive group for the Trøndelag region is the place name indications. Here it appears that a number of names with *Kirke* (with dialect variations) and *Prest* have been included with no reflections on the background of these names.

The danger with a website like this, which is moreover managed by the Norwegian Institute of Local History, is that many will believe that the locations entered here have been real church sites. Warnings should be given in the introduction to the material of such unintended “side effects”. It is clear that some churches have existed which we today have no knowledge about, but in the quest to find medieval churches we must not forget basic critical use of historical sources and methodology.

When there is every reason to approach traditions, church legends and place names with a pinch of salt, this can be given a rationale based on a number of factors:

1. The large majority of real churches not known from written or archaeological sources must have been closed down in the early Middle Ages. The chance that recollection of the church has been lost is therefore strong.
2. Even if strict requirements were hardly posed for the education of the clergy during the process of converting Norway to Christianity, there is reason to believe that there was a shortage of priests in the medieval period.
3. The majority of the unknown churches must have been local chapels, built by the well-to-do on their farms. Many of the legendary churches are located in outlying fields, far from large farms.
4. Many legends are "migratory legends", a template type of legend genre that is well known in many countries.
5. Many legends feature fairy-tale elements, such as supernatural beings, which do not add any credibility to the legends.
6. Place names with *Kirke*, *Prest* and similar elements without any connections to a documented church will only in exceptional cases refer to a disappeared church. The place name will in most cases indicate a road to a church, proximity to a church, ownership or circumstances of use, a view to a church or a landscape formation similar to a church.
7. Archaeological finds must be assessed closely by experts. For most people it will be difficult to distinguish between secular and church buildings and between skeletons from heathen and Christian times.
8. In some extremely rare cases, archaeological studies have confirmed that previously undocumented legendary churches have actually existed.
9. It is difficult to know where medieval church fixtures and furniture originally belonged.

One may then ask how and why legends about churches have come about. An important reason relating to legends of migratory churches is, as mentioned above, the infectious nature of other similar stories. When people hear such legends from other districts, it is obviously easy to construe one's own legends on a local basis. Indeed, one could simply replace the names. In other cases, these may be "explanatory legends", where, for example a coffin in a grave from heathen times or a collection of rocks as found at Hemra and Forbord in Stjørdal have raised associations to an ancient church. Similar to what is the case in Jämtland, many legends have arisen due to cultural traces in the terrain which have been interpreted as remnants of a church building.

When it comes to Naust in Rissa, it may be believed that people have wondered about the area with black soil, where even bone remnants have come to the surface after ploughing. Within sight was the church at Rein; it may then have been reasonable to assume that an older church with "the old churchyard" had existed at Naust. As mentioned in the introduction, two legendary churches in Agder have been confirmed as genuine by archaeological excavations. But the church at Sånum is connected to a written source, as Sånum parish is confirmed in the Middle Ages. In Jämtland, some locations with church legends have been the subject of archaeological studies. It has turned out that in many cases there have been "misinterpretations of a house ruin, a clearance cairn with an uncommon shape or something else" (Holm 2010:29).

Olof Holm concludes that the legends of churches "to a very high degree are fictitious". In some cases such legends may still be connected to locations with *Kyrk* or *Kapell* , where there actually has been a church which later has disappeared. In such cases the legend in itself has no evidentiary force, as the legend may simply be an explanation of the name of the place.

As mentioned above, a name with *Kirke* may not actually refer to an old church. Jørn Sandnes expresses his scepticism to the many names of this type in Namdal thus: "They may for example be partly linked to how there once was an old road passing by the church, partly that a church owned land there, partly also the idea of a churchyard based on findings and bone remnants from heathen graves" (Sandnes 1965:291).

In my opinion there is reason to suggest that some researchers in recent years have had exaggerated notions about the number of undocumented churches that have been closed down in the Middle Ages. Bertelsen has also found that the number of documented churches is less than half of the number of undocumented churches with circumstantial evidence of medieval status. An indication of the number of churches in Norway which were discontinued in the late Middle Ages is given by a study conducted by Mona Beate Buckholm of *Firdafylket*, *Sygnafylket* and *Hordafylket* [historic counties in western Norway] based on the land register *Bergens Kalvskinn* [register book in Bergen made from calf leather] from the middle of the fourteenth century. Of 171 churches and chapels in the country in these counties, 34 were closed in the late Middle Ages or the early modern period. If we deduct 11 which are known to have been discontinued after the Reformation, 23 churches and chapels (13 per cent) remain which were discontinued in the period between the *Bergens Kalvskinn* book from around 1360 and a cadastre from 1585 (Buckholm 1998:7, 59f). These are numbers for which there is every reason to take note of.

After a thorough review of written and archaeological sources relating to the occurrence of deserted churches in Denmark, Nils Engberg arrived at 456 "definitely deserted churches" (Engberg 2018:9). Engberg has also at-

tempted to determine when these churches and chapels were discontinued, i.e. when they ceased to function as places of worship. He found seven churches discontinued before 1100, 15 in the period from 1100 to 1300 and 64 rural parish churches discontinued between 1300 and 1525. The great restructuring of churches in Denmark occurred, however, in the reformation century up to 1600, when as many as 284 church buildings became "deserted churches" (Engberg 2018:61ff).

Several Danish researchers have attempted to determine the number of churches and parishes in Denmark. Axel E. Christensen found that in the thirteenth century there were 1817 parishes in what is now Denmark (Kieffer-Olsen 2018:86). Kieffer-Olsen finds that the Danish sources relating to church affairs in the Middle Ages are so flawed that nothing at all can be stated about the number of medieval churches that have been discontinued if they are not mentioned in written sources or manifest themselves as archaeological remnants. Based on studies by Jes Wienberg and Nils Engberg, Kieffer-Olsen finds that the number of known churches in the Middle Ages in Denmark can hardly reach more than approximately 3100 (Kieffer-Olsen 2018:151). Kieffer-Olsen then draws comparisons with three areas where written sources from the Middle Ages give a more or less complete picture of contemporary churches. These areas are Iceland, the Orkneys, Shetland and the shire of Devon in England. If Wienberg's number for parish churches in Denmark (2692) is applied, the proportional relationship between parish churches and all churches is 1.2. If similar proportions from the mentioned areas to Denmark are transferred, it would be found that the number of medieval churches in Denmark was not 3100, but rather somewhere between 11 000 and 17 000. Such comparisons in my opinion have very little value because the dissimilarities between Denmark and the regions in the west are far too great in many respects.

Collecting legends and traditional material is valuable cultural history work. For the folklorist there are many issues to address. For the historian, the very number of more or less similar narratives becomes a factor that erodes the credibility of a legend claiming there was once an undocumented medieval church in a specified location. The chances that there really has been a church there almost one thousand years ago are in my opinion minimal.

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Continuities and Changes in Death Notices, the 1960s and 2010s

Tove Ingebjørg Fjell

Abstract

This study examines continuities and changes in death notices published in the Bergen area over a period of 50 years. Special focus is put on the 1960s, when death according to Philippe Ariès was estranged and tabooed, and on the 2010s, when according to Michael Hviid Jacobsen, death is again accepted. Attitudes towards death change slowly, and it has been pointed out that death is in the domain of slow culture. Nevertheless some changes have been introduced in death notices over this 50-year period, and it is argued that trending is towards privatization, individualization, and intimization. Research questions are how continuities and changes in death notices are expressed, and how they may be interpreted. The main research material stems from the *Bergens Tidende* regional newspaper whose readership area includes a large city as well as its surrounding countryside.

Keywords: death notice, death, 1960s, 2010s, privatization, individualization, intimization

Introduction

Attitudes towards death are changing, which is evident from ways of caring for the terminally ill, from how to conduct funeral ceremonies and design cemetery headstones, and from ways of composing death notices. Historian Philippe Ariès is known for his work on the estranged, tabooed and distanced death of the 1900s ("the forbidden death"). This differs from the three predominant attitudes towards death[1] held between the Middle Ages and the twentieth century, all of which share a common notion of acceptance rather than repression and concealment (Ariès 1977; Jacobsen 2009:19). Sociologist Michael Hviid Jacobsen explains Ariès' decline narrative by looking to Ariès' own lifetime; he points to death denial as being a consequence of two world wars, and age denial being caused by medical advancements, consumerist culture etc. (Jacobsen 2009:21). Jacobsen suggests that a counter reaction has taken place, which has given birth to a new phase where death, after many years in hiding, is back in full view: Changes manifest themselves in the form of a new visibility of death, and how it is regarded and managed.

The aim of this study is to examine continuities and changes in death notices published in the Bergen area over a period of 50 years. Special focus will be put on the 1960s, when death according to Ariès was estranged and tabooed, and on the 2010s, when according to Jacobsen, death is again accepted. How are the continuities and changes expressed, and how may they be interpreted? All research material stems from the *Bergens Tidende* regional newspaper whose readership area includes a large city as well as its surrounding countryside. The 1960s have been highlighted because they incorporate a period of the "forbidden death" (cf. Ariès 1977) yet predate many major changes in Norwegian society, such as the oil age and the emergence of a stronger welfare state; gender issues and the environmental movement; and a trend towards individualization and intimization in the public sphere. The 2010s were chosen because the decade represents a period of renewed acceptance of death (cf. Jacobsen 2009).

Research Material and Method

I have compared death notices published in the *Bergens Tidende* over some selected weeks in 1960 and 1965, as well as in 2010 and 2015.[2] These weeks cover different parts of the two decades and different seasons: 15–31 March 1960 (196 notices), 1–15 September 1960 (149 notices), 2–15 January 1965 (245 notices), 1–15 June 1965 (154 notices), 17–30 March 2010 (145 notices), 1–14 September 2010 (150 notices), 2–15 January 2015 (179 notices), and 1–14 July 2015 (143 notices). The total body of research material consists of 1361 death notices (345 from 1960, 399 from 1965, 295 from 2010, and 322 from 2015).

There is a difference between the 1960s and the 2010s with regard to the number of insertions: In the 1960s, death notices were sometimes published repeatedly. The first notice would announce the death while the second and sometimes third notice would include a new piece of information, such as the time and place of the funeral. Therefore, the death notices from 1960 and 1965 refer to the death of fewer than 345 and 399 individuals respectively. The death notices of the 2010s are not usually republished, only on occasions when editing is required. Sometimes however, the death of a person is announced repeatedly because different members of the family do not wish their names to appear alongside one another in the same death notice, e.g. children from first and second marriages.[3]

In addition to studying death notices, I conducted an interview with a funeral director in order to get a better understanding of developments in the 2010s. Additionally, the research material incorporates written responses to the 1957 questionnaire no. 64 "Death and funerals" by Norwegian Ethnological Research (NEG), in particular question 212, concerning death notices.[4]

From the Burning of Death Straw to Death Notices

Death involves a significant change in a person's status and normally results in a ceremonial ritual of some kind (Alver & Skjelbred 1994:31ff; van Gennep 1965). Composing a death notice is one of many practices that make up the rite of passage that is observed when someone dies. In earlier times, death was announced in other ways. Before World War I, when mattresses were not yet in common use in the countryside, the burning of death straw was a ritual that served to announce someone's death (Hodne 1980:54ff; see also Alver & Skjelbred 1994:45). In the old agrarian society, the tradition was for groups of neighbouring farms to appoint a messenger that would visit each farm in turn with news of someone's death and an invitation to the funeral (Holmsen 2011a:35, 2011b:86–87; Hodne 1980:56, 73 ff.; Alver & Skjelbred 1994; see also Dahlgren 2000:117).[5] Gradually newspapers became the main conveyors of death messages although it varies when this became common practice. The *Bergens Tidende* carried death notices from its earliest issues, but in small numbers, often only one or two per issue. According to some of the respondents to questionnaire no. 64 (Norwegian Ethnological Research), death notices were familiar and common newspaper features throughout the country from the 1880s–1890s; others date this to the 1910s–1920s. A number of respondents pointed out that newspaper death notices were an upper class phenomenon, and that they were primarily used for prominent people. As the financial situation in society at large improved, newspaper death notices became increasingly common.

Alver and Skjelbred point out that in the aftermath of World War II, death notices printed in the Oslo newspapers would be respectfully concealed (Alver & Skjelbred 1994:55). The *Bergens Tidende* offered no such respectful concealment in the 1870s, when death notices were published on the front page, nor in the 1960s, when they were surrounded by advertisements for funeral homes, theatre and cinema shows, women's wear, TV sets and mascara, as well as news items with headlines in the vein of "SPY caught in Stockholm" "Drove like a madman in stolen car and ended up in bar", or "Threatened to kill mother".[6] In the 2010s, death notices are located next to birthday and wedding anniversary announcements. The same page also carries advertisements for funeral homes and headstones. Sales adverts inserted by shopping malls also appear at times, and even promotions for the self-help course "Stop complaining – start living".[7]

In the age of the internet, death notices are still being published through traditional media. One could imagine that death announcements would become exclusively a matter for online newspaper platforms or social media, such as the deceased's Facebook page, a family member's Instagram account, a neighbourhood mailing list, or postings on the funeral director's tributes page,[8] which may be shared on social media.[9] Online posting of

death announcements is increasing, but it is likely that most people still learn about a person's death through traditional media.

A quick glance at death notices from the 1960s and 2010s gives the impression that they seem quite similar, with a black border, most often featuring a symbol, the name of the deceased,[10] the date of death, often the age of the deceased, the nature of the family relationship and the names of relatives, and the time and place of the funeral service. Publishing a death notice is an expression of a collective practice, and the repertoire is limited. According to the linguist Geirr Wiggen, Norwegian death notices are "a narrow and ritualized genre" with "quite rigid requirements" (Wiggen 2000:14, 16; my translation).[11] This is to be expected, considering the fact that attitudes towards death change slowly – "death is in the domain of slow culture" (Jacobsen 2009:18; my translation). Wiggen emphasizes however, that although death notices are subject to rigid genre requirements, they are far from identical. There is a certain diversity within each decade, as well as over the 50-year period from the 1960s to the 2010s. Jacobsen makes the same point when arguing that there has been a counter reaction to the "forbidden death" of the twentieth century (Jacobsen 2009; Ariès 1977).

Increasingly Expressing the Individual

The death notices of the 1960s appear to be publicising death events accompanied by detailed factual information. The death notices of the 2010s on the other hand, accentuate personal communications rather than facts. One type of factual detail found in notices from the 1960s but not 50 years later, is the surviving female family members' maiden names. The older notices also carry details such as the time of day that death occurred ("died last night"), and specify the age of the deceased in units of half-months or half years, e.g. 5½ months, 7½ years, 53½ years or 94½ years.[12] They even provide travel information such as bus or ferry time tables. The deceased's occupation, formerly or at the time of death, was commonly provided in the 1960s, primarily for males;[13] occupational information was provided in the death notices of only four women.[14] In the 2010s, occupational details are very rare, with the exception of three titles – chief engineer, captain and war veteran – referring to men in the 70–90 age group. No occupational information is provided for any of the women in the death notices of that period.[15] According to Carl Dahlgren, who has found the same development in Swedish death notices of the mid 1990s, the omission of occupational information removes the deceased from his or her social setting, thus reinforcing the individualist aspect (Dahlgren 2000:118).

The same process is evident with respect to the inclusion of symbols. While the death notices of the 1960s consistently included the Latin cross, the notices of the 2010s feature a wide variety of symbols. When IKEA's

founder, Swedish Ingvar Kamprad, died in January 2018 (Pedersen 2018), his colleagues published a death notice that included an Allen key symbol.[16] In Sweden, death notice policies are far less restrictive than in Norway (Bringéus 1987:212),[17] but this choice nevertheless received much attention in Kamprad's home country. The *Bergens Tidende* will not allow the inclusion of just any symbol in the notices they print. Symbols were first introduced in the death notices of the 1890s, but they were uncommon. The period up to 1940 saw a certain increase in the use of symbols, but the practice was still quite sporadic. As the Church gradually became responsible for most funeral ceremonies, the inclusion of a cross became increasingly common, especially after World War II (Wiggen 2000:125). From 1950, all death notices included symbols in the top left corner (see fig. 1), and in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s all death notices featured cross symbols in the top centre.[18] In the 1990s, most death notices included a cross, but by then, the newspaper accepted a range of ten different symbols:[19] The "alternative" symbol in most frequent use was the flower, but the Circle of Life was also occasionally inserted, as well as the Norwegian Humanist Association's logo. In 2000 the Latin cross remained the most commonly used symbol, but there was a moderate increase in the number of "alternative" depictions.[20, 21]

In the research material from the 1960s the Latin cross dominates; there are only two exceptions: a Roman Catholic cross (R.I.P.) for an individual who lived in the US, and one death notice without a symbol.[22] By the 2010s

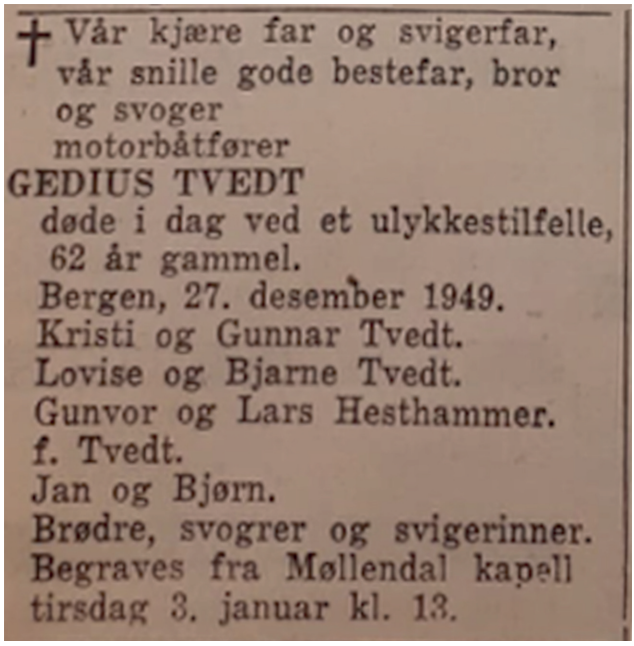
† Vår kjære far og svigerfar,
vår snille gode bestefar, bror
og svoger
motorbåtfører
GEDIUS TVEDT
døde i dag ved et ulykkestilfelle,
62 år gammel.
Bergen, 27. desember 1949.
Kristi og Gunnar Tvedt.
Lovise og Bjarne Tvedt.
Gunvor og Lars Hesthammer.
f. Tvedt.
Jan og Bjørn.
Brødre, svogrer og svigerinner.
Begraves fra Møllendal kapell
tirsdag 3. januar kl. 13.

Fig. 1. Death notice, *Bergens Tidende* 2 January 1950.

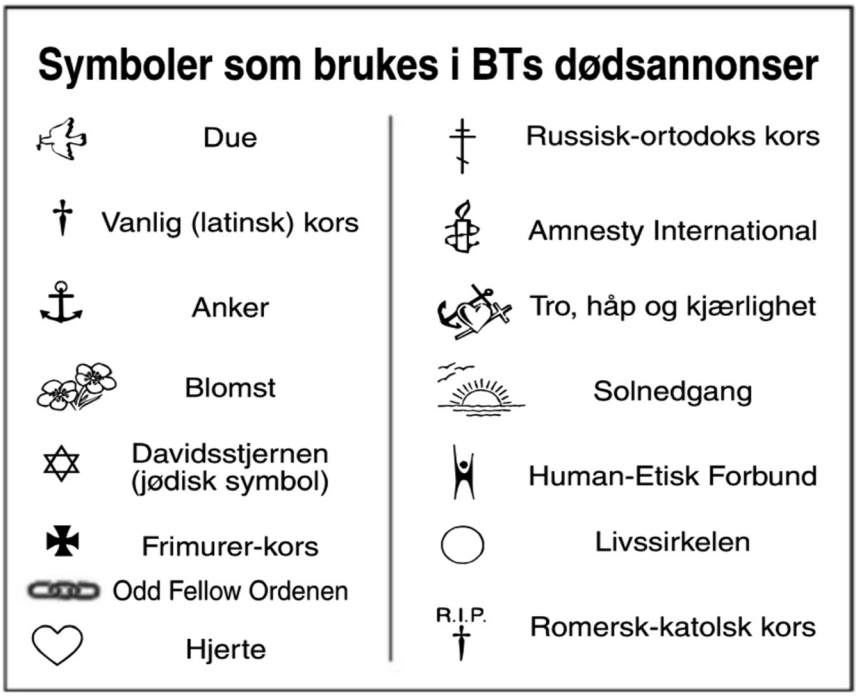

Fig. 2. Death notice symbols used in *Bergens Tidende* 2010–2015.

a great change is to be seen, and there is now a choice of 14 different symbols (see fig. 2).[23] In addition, the Islamic crescent is accepted but not advertised. According to the interviewed funeral director, the latter symbol is hardly ever used because Muslims rarely publish death notices, but prefer to communicate the death message in person.[24] Recently, the newspaper seems to have adopted a less restrictive policy with regard to symbols. For instance, in 2018 the image of a horse's head was accepted for print.[25]

Most death notice symbols have religious connotations. The various cross symbols may reference the death of Jesus whilst the Star of David is a Jewish symbol; the crescent is an Islamic symbol; the trinity of faith, hope and love alludes to Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians;[26] the dove and olive branch may be associated with the dove of Noah or the Holy Spirit; and Freemasons are expected to hold a Christian faith, while Odd Fellows are expected to believe in a supreme being (Hagesæther 2018). The Circle of Life symbolizes eternity and may be interpreted as both a religious and a humanist symbol. The logos of Amnesty International and the Norwegian Humanist Association, as well as the anchor, heart, flower and sunset depictions, are considered non-religious symbols.

Different symbols may carry numerous religious connotations and surviving family members may interpret symbols in different ways. Earlier research into the motivation of surviving family members when choosing symbols, has found that an increase or decrease in the use of religious symbols is not necessarily associated with changing levels of spirituality in the population (cf. Bringéus 1987:213). Wiggen points out that the absence of a cross in the death notices of the early twentieth century does not suggest that the deceased was not a Christian, nor does the inclusion of a cross in contemporary death notices suggest that the deceased was a Christian (Wiggen 2000:129). It is probable that most surviving family members give no thought to Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians when they choose the trinity of faith, hope and love, nor indeed to the Holy Spirit when they choose the dove with an olive branch. Some surviving family members may well be choosing the Latin cross because it symbolizes the hope of Jesus' resurrection, while others may choose the cross because it symbolizes death, or because it is the most commonly used symbol (cf. Bringéus 1987:210; Wiggen 2000:129, see also Gustavsson 2011:52; Modeland 2017:20; Bengtsson & Rifall 2008:16). Nils-Arvid Bringéus refers to a study of death notice symbols where e.g. a flower is interpreted as a symbol of resurrection, life, and "nature's course", thus mixing religious and non-religious interpretations (Bringéus 1987:212–213). According to the interviewed funeral director, the encounter with death is a new situation to many, and most people are looking for the most "common" practice. Bringéus suggests that people's insecurities result in surviving family members gratefully taking the advice of professional funeral directors (Bringéus 1981:8). With most surviving family members lacking in knowledge and experience of death, it appears that funeral directors achieve the status of ritual funeral experts.[27]

When considering that the cross is a commonly used symbol and that many who find themselves in unusual circumstances, like the death of a loved one, are keen to go with "common practice", the cross becomes "a non-marker as far as philosophy of life is concerned", verging on the anonymous (cf. Wiggen 2000:129; my translation). In the 2010s, the number of death notices that feature symbols other than the cross is increasing, whether the deceased is young or old.[28] The alternative symbols, like depictions of a heart, sunset, or a flower, are vague and more ambiguous than the cross, and "lend themselves more easily to being imbued with personal content" (Wiggen 2000:131; my translation): The symbols may reference the deceased's life or philosophy, or they may reflect the faith or creed of surviving family members. The choice of an alternative symbol may be interpreted as an individualization and a reaction against "the anonymity of the cross" (Modeland 2017:6, 22).[29] It is therefore possible for the alternative non-marker symbols to be imbued with an appropriate meaning that will release the deceased from "the anonymity that the

widespread use of the cross brought to bear on the first post-war decades" (Wiggen 2000:131; my translation).

From Death to Sleep

The most important purpose of a death notice is to announce the death of a person. This message can be phrased in many ways, like "John Johnson died today", or "passed away", focusing on the deceased, or "John Johnson parted with us", or "left us", focusing on the surviving family (cf. Wiggen 2000:36ff).[30] The words used to describe death constitutes a significant difference in the research material. In the 1960s, different combinations with "died" ("died quietly", "died suddenly") were the most commonly used phrases, while in the 2010s euphemisms such as "passed away"/ "fell quietly asleep" have become the norm. In the 1960s phrases like "passed away"/ "fell quietly asleep" were hardly ever used, appearing in only 71 out of 744 death notices. The same finding emerged from Geirr Wiggen's study and he interprets this as an escapism:

> The sleep metaphor [fell quietly asleep] which was in constant use in the late twentieth century, is probably associated with escapism rather than a theologically founded perception of death (Wiggen 2000:56; my translation).

Wiggen explains his interpretation by pointing to Americanization and a blinkered adoration of youth, as well as the modern era's general repression of death. At the same time, he underlines that "passed peacefully away" appear (in its overwhelming gentleness) to be a disarming acceptance of it" (Wiggen 2000:57–58; parenthesis in original version; my translation). However, it is conceivable that the euphemism is not an expression of blinkered adoration of youth, or a disarming acceptance of death: It may just as well be the result of conforming with the standard choice, at least in the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century.

The death notices of the 1960s would not generally comment on the length of illness preceding death; only 8 out of 744 death notices carried such information. The decade sees a few paraphrases appearing, such as "passed away", "was suddenly taken from us", "left us", "found peace", and "perished". The number of religious paraphrases is also low, only 51, such as "moved home to Jesus/God", and "believing in the Saviour".

In the 2010s this has changed, as previously mentioned, and most use the paraphrase "passed peacefully away". Furthermore, the mention of suicide has now entered the death notices, and in the 2010s the paraphrase "chose to leave us" has emerged.[31] Even if most people who take their own lives are aged 45 and over (the Norwegian Institute of Public Health 2017), suicide is generally referenced only in young people's death notices. In my research material, there may be more suicides, however, the expression "chose to leave us" is used in one death notice only, and typ-

ically concerns a young male in his 20s. It may be that suicide among young people no longer represents a taboo in our days, whilst suicide among older people still does.

In the 2010s, it has become increasingly common to mention whether death happened after a short or a long period of illness. Sometimes this is clearly communicated through expressions like "after a long and painful battle", "lost the battle" and "lost the battle against her illness". The illness referred to is predominantly cancer: In these death notices financial support for the Norwegian Cancer Society is typically requested. Also, cancer metaphors tend to make use of military terminology like "battle" (cf. Sontag 1979:56ff).

In the 2010s, the euphemisms "fell quietly asleep" and "passed away" dominates the neutral "died". It is hard to conclude that this trend suggests a displacement of death: While the predominance of euphemisms increases, other phrases provide a reality check, like "lost the battle" and "after a long illness", and by asking for support for The Norwegian Cancer Society or research into other terminal illnesses.

Expressions of Privatization

Death notices from the 1960s are easily recognizable in the 2010s. There is a certain repertoire, a fairly set structure and phrases. This may be interpreted as a formula, or "a group of words which is regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given essential idea" (Ong 2002: 25, cited in Eriksen & Selberg 2006:151). Examples include references to condolences and flowers. Condolences are mentioned only when not wanted. Flowers are mentioned in a variety of ways, but particularly when it is considered preferable to express sympathy by making a donation to a favoured organization. Such formulas represent a limited repertoire, with little variation, and represents some of the continuity in death notices.

Death notices may carry a number of privacy intimations, such as calls to refrain from expressing condolences and sending flowers (cf. Wiggen 2011:22). There are more such calls in the material from the1960s (143 out of 744 notices), than in the 2010s (12 out of 617 notices). There is less variation in the numbers that discourage the sending of flowers (27 in the 1960s, and 15 in the 2010s). However, when adding notices that combine the phrase "just as welcome as flowers" or "instead of flowers", with a call for donations to a favoured organization, the change is reasonably substantial (166 in the death notices of the 2010s). In the death notices of the 1960s, a request for donations to a favoured organization is found in five cases only, all of them religious causes, whilst in the 2010s there is a large diversity of organizations. Financial contributions are primarily requested in support of the institution where the deceased died: Surviving family

members wish to express their gratitude for the care given to an old and sick relative, to research on a disease that brought lower quality of life to the loved one, or that caused death, or to an organization that was favoured by the deceased.[32] Only 21 of 617 death notices carry a request for donations to a church or a religious organization, such as a Christian missionary society or the Salvation Army.

Requests to refrain from expressing one's condolences or from sending flowers may be considered to constitute privatization of parts of the ceremony. The research material suggests that the trend towards privacy is diminishing in some ways (fewer mentions of condolences) whilst remaining constant in others (flowers not wanted). However, as mentioned, by counting the instances of the phrase "instead of flowers" accompanied by a request for financial support of a specific recipient, a large increase is found. This may also be interpreted as a focus on the individual, as there is often a connection between the deceased and the recipient.

Information that the ceremony "has taken place" is a further privacy marker. The reasons may be many, including suicide, but surviving family members may also wish to handpick funeral guests, or the deceased's age may imply that there are not many relatives and friends left to take part in a funeral.[33] This phrase occurs in death notices from both decades: In the material from the 1960s there are 24, in the material from the 2010s, there are 56.[34] In both decades, the majority of people whose funerals are held in private, are elderly. On closer inspection of the material, it becomes clear that the phrase "the funeral has taken place" carries different meanings in the two decades. In the 1960s, the phrase is generally "the funeral has taken place", but eight death notices read "will be buried/cremated today", i.e. on the day of publishing. This is not a phrase found in the material from 50 years later. Considering the fact that the *Bergens Tidende* used to be published in the afternoon, and that no information is provided about the time and place of the funeral, this is clearly a way of keeping the ceremony private.

In the material from the 2010s, the phrase "the funeral has taken place" is often complemented by "in peace", a wording never used in the material from the 1960s. Increasingly, peaceful ceremonies are also reported to have taken place in the presence of "the closest family".[35] Many also refer to whose idea this is, when adding "as requested by mother", "as requested by Ole", or "according to the wishes of the deceased". References to the funeral having taken place "in private" or "attended by family only" and "attended only by those closest to him" can be interpreted as expressions of privatization.

Increased Intimization: Highlighting Family and Home

The notion of family comes into play when someone dies. Death notices picture the family, and those counted as close relatives are named. In both

decades, kinship relations are hierarchically arranged. Siblings, brothers-in-law or sisters-in-law, and aunts and uncles are often listed, in addition to closer relatives like partners, children, parents and grandparents.[36] Many constituent elements are similar in the death notices of the two decades, with respect to who are considered significant relatives and how they are hierarchically arranged. There is however a difference in how relatives are described. The phrases "my best friend" and "partner" are use in both decades, but more so in the 2010s. They are used to emphasise the strength of the relationship between partners, or between parents and children. The most commonly used phrases are "my loyal husband and best friend" or "my dear, faithful wife and best friend". In the 2010s parents are also referred to as "best friend", as in "My dear father and best friend". In the death notices of 2010s, homosexual relationships are recognised, albeit rarely. The low numbers may reflect an associated stigma, or perhaps that homosexual partners are not considered to qualify as surviving family members (cf. Svensson 2013:118).[37]

The death notices of 2010s communicate the relationship between the deceased and their loved ones with greater intensity. Examples include "my beloved husband and best friend", "my love and very best friend", "love of my life", "my beloved rock", "my beloved [name] and wise man", "my very own beloved [name], husband and best friend".[38] A more colourful and graphic language is used than in the 1960s, with adjectives like "generous", "fun", "kind", "best", "most brilliant", "most patient individual in the whole world". An example from 2015 reads:

> Our dear, caring mother, mother-in-law, wise, generous, attentive grandmother and kind great-grandmother. Our dear sister-in-law and aunt.

Another example from the same year reads:

> My fantastic husband and soul mate, our caring father and father-in-law, our kind grandfather, our young great-grandfather, my big brother, brotherly brother-in-law and uncle, our good friend.

A last example from 2010 reads:

> Our kind, dear mother and mother-in-law, my beloved [name], the best grandmother and [nickname] in the world, our dear, optimistic, vibrant sister, our aunt, and our darling ray of sunshine.

Descriptives like generous, attentive, loving, vibrant or brotherly paint a picture of a stronger and more individual relationship than merely "mother", or "brother-in-law". The use of nicknames also contributes to intimization.

Some elements, such as *where* death occurred and *who* was present, may be considered to further accentuate the intimization process. There have been huge societal changes in recent decades; the opportunities for medical

treatment have increased, and so has the number of nursing homes for the elderly. The emancipation of women has meant that they expect to take paid work, which reduces their ability to care for the sick and elderly. Men have not responded by taking responsibility for the unpaid care work that previously used to be expected of women. While extended families previously shared households, thus making a number of possible care providers, this is no longer the norm (cf. Alver & Skjelbred 1994:51). The death notices reflect this societal change: The death notices from the 1960s refer to 49 deaths in institutions, primarily hospitals, whilst in the material from the 2010s, the equivalent number is 283, primarily involving nursing homes for the elderly, but also hospitals. This increase points towards a professionalization of death: People grow older and sicker and are more in need of care during their final years. With this in mind, it is interesting that in the death notices of the 2010s, a new factor has emerged in that the deceased is said to have died or passed peacefully away "at home". This phrase is not found at all in the 1960s, although most of the deceased probably died in their private homes. Pointing out that death occurred "at home" may be read as a counter reaction to the prevalence of dying in institutional settings and the professionalization of death. It may also be interpreted as an indication that the surviving relatives are resourceful and have the finances to take time off work to care for a dying relative.[39] The statement implies that the family is a well-working unit and has the mental capacity to take on such a task. This suggests a certain status. Geirr Wiggen found the same in his study from the late 1990s, and suggests that dying at home has become exclusive, and that descriptions of "home deaths […] contribute to intimizing and privatizing the public genre that death notices once were, and to a significant degree still are" (Wiggen 2000:83, see also 91; my translation). Making a point of the "home death" accentuates the loving relationships between the deceased and the surviving partner, which is further underlined by the phrase "died in my arms". This expresses a new intimacy which puts "emphasis […] on emotional ties, on subjective experiences of belonging and solidarity", where "the glue in […] close relations is based on emotional ties", and where family is not so much something one *has*, but something that can be put on display (Aarseth 2018:85; my translation Finch 2007).

Some Things Old and Some Things Very New

The changes seen in death notices may be interpreted in the context of professionalization: The notices would probably have been more diverse were it not for professional ritual experts, the funeral directors, who recommend some choices while discouraging others, thus helping surviving relatives to conform with "common practice" without generating a feeling of being bystanders to an assembly line funeral. Funeral homes may be considered ritual-preserving

institutions that guide surviving family members towards recognizable and accepted practices (cf. Døving 2004:7ff) Sometimes however, "cross-over death notices" appear, despite the fact that the funeral directors, the ritual experts, normally ensure a strong continuity. One example is a death notice that was composed pre-death by the deceased and his family (see fig. 3).[40] There are many reasons why people might want to compose their own death notice. There may be no surviving relatives, or no-one close enough to know their wishes for their own funeral, or they might consider this to be their last project in life. In the majority of instances, it is not obvious that a death notice has been composed by the deceased, but sometimes it is.

This particular death notice has a traditional layout and employs the familiar formula, but the chosen symbol is unusual.[41] The wording is celebratory and jocular, suggesting that the deceased has neither "died" nor "passed away", but "parked his slippers". However, the most important aspect of this notice is the clear voice of the deceased himself, in a way that is not found in any of the other research material. The first sentence switches from 3rd to 1st person: "and left *my* dearest beloved wife", and it continues by mentioning a long list of relatives, friends and work colleagues. They are not just sons and grandchildren, but "great sons" and "lovely grandchildren". They are listed in a traditional hierarchical order, but there are far more of them than what is common practice. This notice presents the deceased as a generous person who is grateful for the life that he has lived. In a unique way, this death notice manages to communicate a closeness to the deceased, even if it also contains the more obvious continuities, such as the use of a symbol, the position of the symbol, the black border, the dates of birth and death, the list of relatives, a verse, and the time and place of the funeral ceremony.

Overtrykker-
maskintrykker
"Generaldirektøren"

Sigurd-Emil Engelsen

f. 29.08.1925
parkerte tøflene
22. desember 2017,
og forlot min kjære
elskede viv og lojale
arbeidskamerat,
"Solo"
Mine flotte sønner
Kai - Stig - Steffen
mine herlige barnebarn
Edvard og Helene
Victoria og Vincent
Emiline
Min kjære nevø Odd,
min kjære niese Ingrid
med familier.
Og deres alltid
hjelpsomme mor, Ursula.
Mine svigerdøtre:
Sissel Anita,
Caja og Renate.
Mine slektninger
Bjørn og Elise
med slekt.
Alle mine svigerinner,
svogere, slekt og venner
representert
ved min gode
venn og svoger Svein.
Tidligere
arbeidskamerater -
brigadevenner.
Månedlige hyggestunder
i Markeveien.

Takk til dere alle for et
behagelig, fornøyelig og
innholdsrikt liv.

En vandrer har kastet
sin ensomme stav
- hans fot og
hans hjerte gikk trett.
Det synker en kiste
i nattens grav
- en seiler glir ut
på det ukjente hav,
mot kyster
som ingen har sett.

Bisettes
i Lille kapell, Møllendal,
fredag 5. januar kl. 13.30.

Fig. 3. Death notice composed by the deceased and his family. *Bergens Tidende*, 29 December 2017.

Continuities and Changes

There are obvious continuities reflected in the research material from the 1960s and the 2010s. What may be communicated, and how, is subject to specific standards. Nevertheless, some changes have been introduced over the 50-year period, and I have tried to show the trend towards privatization, individualization, and intimization. According to the folklorist Ann Helen Bolstad Skjelbred, death calls for a set of public and private actions, such as the composition of the death notice: "Statements made in public, that are visible to anybody, often carry quite private messages. Expressions of grief fluctuate between the private and public spheres" (Alver & Skjelbred 1994:44; my translation). This fluctuation is significant. The most important difference between death notices of the two decades is the factual content of the 1960s, with occupational titles and travel information. The death notices of the 2010s are more private and self-contained in character in that they communicate their message to a smaller group. In the 2010s, death notices are phrased in more euphemistic language. Some interpret this as being indicative of escapism (cf. Wiggen 2000), but the death notices of the 2010s also reflect greater realism in that they refer to long and painful periods of sickness, the names of terminal illnesses, and even suicide. In the death notices of the 2010s, the deceased is painted as an individual by using diverse symbols, more heartfelt descriptions such as "the world's best" or "fantastic", and asking for financial support for a favoured organization. The intimization trend is brought to bear through the descriptions of family ties and love between family members (cf. Bengtsson & Rifall 2008:25). Society and the mentality of the general public have gone through major changes in the course of this 50-year period, as has the narrative of the family. The heartfelt is emphasized, and individuals and families are put on display to a larger degree in the 2010s than in the 1960s.

I am grateful to the anonymous reviewers for their useful input.

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[1] Philippe Ariès refers to the three first phases as "the tame death", "the death of the self", and "the death of the other", while the fourth phase is "the forbidden death" (1991).

[2] Death notices in the *Bergens Tidende* cover deceased people, not pets, and normally no other life forms. In 2017 a death notice was published for a cactus, *Eriocereus Jusbertii*. The dead cactus lived in a gallery in Bergen, and the notice formed part of an art project by Renate Synnes Handal. According to the interviewed funeral director, newspaper proofreading is not what it used to be. The newspaper editors probably believed the notice to refer to a person with a foreign name.

[3] Death notices are inserted by the family of the deceased, not colleagues or friends. There is one exception in the research material from the 1960s, where a notice was inserted by a landlord.

[4] The *Bergens Tidende* started publishing in 1868, and I have studied changes in numbers and symbols in the volumes of 1869, 1870, 1880, 1890, 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930, 1940, 1950, 1970, 1980, 1990 and 2000. I have not studied the 1868 volume of the *Bergens Tidende*, as it has not been archived.

[5] According to the ethnologist Rigmor Frimannslund Holmsen, this practice declined in the period between 1900 and WWII (Holmsen 2011b: 90). Relatives who lived outside the group of neighbouring farms were notified of the death by letter (Alver & Skjelbred 1994:46; Hodne 1980:72–77).

[6] *Bergens Tidende* 25 March 1960; 12 September 1960; 1 September 1960.

[7] *Bergens Tidende* 22 March 2010.

[8] Some publish identical death notices in the newspaper and on the funeral director's tributes page. This page provides, in addition to the actual death notice, an opportunity to write a personal eulogy, pay for a memorial gift, e.g. to an organization favoured by the deceased, light a candle for the deceased, order flowers for the funeral, and find a map with directions to the church or funeral home. I have not studied the tributes pages.

[9] Modeland points out the same situation: "My understanding is that death notices will not disappear. But they will change platforms" (2017:38; my translation).

[10] Children's surnames were generally omitted in the 1960s, but in the 2010s, this is the case for infants only.

[11] Geirr Wiggen studied 2600 death notices from 1 January 1901 to 31 December 1998 (2000). His research material is from the newspapers *Aftenposten*, *Dagbladet*, *Arbeiderbladet*, *Nationen* and *Vårt Land*.

[12] Bengtsson & Rifall and Modeland point to a greater level of detail in Swedish death notices from the 1870s onwards than I find in the death notices of the 1960s. The older notices refer to the exact hour of death, and they specify age in years, months, and days. This became less common from the 1930s onwards (Bengtsson & Rifall 2008:25; Modeland 2017:16; see also Bringéus 1987:209), and hardly ever appears after the 1940s (Wiggen 2000:91).

[13] Occupations include auctioneer, dentist, doctor, shipmaster, captain, chief engineer, steward, dockhand, lighthouse keeper, shipbuilder, carter, factory manager, customs officer, grocer, senior engineer, postmaster, rector, senior conductor, station master, telephone switchboard manager, baker, senior plumber, government scholar, chief administrator, accountant, police officer, supreme court advocate, typesetter, hairdresser, musician.

[14] These included a nurse, a housekeeper, a teacher and a fashion house assistant.

[15] Anders Gustavsson found the same when studying headstones, with only very few women having their occupation specified (2011:65–67).

[16] https://www.dagbladet.no/kjendis/detaljen-i-ikea-kongens-dodsannonse-vekker-oppsikt/69404395.

[17] In Sweden, the practice of including symbols in death notices saw changes from the 1970s (Dahlgren 2000). For other studies on funeral practices in Sweden, see e.g. Gustavsson 2011; Bengtsson & Rifall 2008; Modeland 2017.

[18] A similar development is seen in Sweden: The inclusion of the cross did not become common practice until the 1940s. In the period between the 1950s and the 1970s the cross symbol dominated, with only sporadic inclusion of the Star of David and symbols of various fraternities. However, a wider variety of symbols in Swedish death notices is found from the late 1970s, more than a decade before the same development is seen in Norway (Dahlgren 2000:13).

[19] Symbols accepted for print in the *Bergens Tidende* in 1990 included the Latin cross, the Greek cross, the Russian cross, R.I.P., the Star of David, the Circle of Life, the dove of peace, and the logos of the Norwegian Humanist Association and Amnesty International.

[20] Death notices are composed by surviving relatives, usually with the help of a funeral director.

Different newspapers may have their own restrictions regarding symbols. In 2000, the Latin cross still dominated, but additional popular symbols included the dove of peace, followed by flower and sunset depictions. There is also an increase in the use of symbols depicting the trinity of faith, hope and love, the Norwegian Humanist Association's logo, and the Circle of Life. There is also sporadic use of the Roman Catholic cross, Amnesty International's logo, the Star of David, and the Freemasons' emblem.

[21] Bergen's second newspaper, the *Bergensavisen*, provides a choice of 166 different symbols supplied by Adstate, an online funeral service (https://adstate.com/about-us/). Examples include transport symbols (cars, bikes etc.), animal and bird symbols, sports symbols, musical symbols, and symbols associated with specific professions. I have studied death notices appearing in this newspaper over the same periods as the research material from the *Bergens Tidende* in 2010 and 2015. The *Bergensavisen* carries very few death notices compared to the *Bergens Tidende* (46 in 2010, and 48 in 2015, totalling 96), and the symbols chosen by surviving family members, most often the Latin cross, are exactly the same as in the *Bergens Tidende*, despite the fact that there are 166 symbols to choose from. The research material from the *Bergensavisen* includes no transport symbols, sports symbols etc.

[22] March 1960.

[23] The alternatives are the Latin cross, the Roman Catholic cross, the Russian cross, the Star of David, the trinity of faith, hope and love, the dove and olive branch, the emblems of the Freemasons and Odd Fellows, the logos of Amnesty International and the Norwegian Humanist Association, and depictions of an anchor, heart, flower, and sunset.

[24] According to Cora Alexa Døving, many Norwegian-Pakistanis in Oslo use their own funeral committees and funeral directors. The publishing of death notices is not a common practice; instead, handwritten bulletins announce a person's death (2004:101ff; 118ff; 121–122).

[25] This symbol is found in Adstate's database but is not included among the symbols acceptable to the *Bergens Tidende*. The death notice was published on 17 March 2018.

[26] Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, 13:13: "So now faith, hope and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

[27] It is standard practice for funeral directors to put forward suggestions to surviving family members with respect to some constituent elements of the death notice. Only very few have chosen an alternative rarely-used symbol, like the Circle of Life, before they approach a funeral director. If surviving family members are hesitant, they will be advised as to which symbols are the most common, like the Latin cross, the trinity of faith, hope and love, the dove of peace, or a heart. Funeral directors will advise that the most commonly used non-religious symbols are depictions of a sunset, flower, or heart.

[28] The other symbols are predominantly the Biblical trinity of faith, hope, and love (48 death notices), dove with an olive branch (47), and the depiction of a heart (31), sunset (28), or flower (26). Other symbols are seldom used. In the research material from 2010, there are 2 Roman Catholic crosses, 0 Russian- crosses, 0 Stars of David, 3 Freemason emblems, 1 Odd Fellows emblem, 0 Amnesty International logos, 4 Norwegian Humanist Association logos, 2 Circles of Life, and 4 anchors. Members of the Norwegian Humanist Association may clearly opt for symbols other than the association's logo (cf. Thorbjørnsrud 2009:46).

[29] In a study of headstone symbols used during the 1990s in Sweden and Norway, Anders Gustavsson found a larger number of secular symbols in Sweden than in Norway. Such symbols may be associated with the profession of the deceased, or their hobby, etc. (Gustavsson 2011: 50).

[30] The religious references are fewer in the 2010s: Only 16 out of 617 death notices include varieties of phrases like "moved to Jesus/God", and "in the faith of the Saviour". However, in the 2010s phrases are found that never appeared in the 1960s, like "promoted to Glory" (Salvation Army) and "awaiting resurrection in Paradise" (Jehovah's Witnesses).

[31] People who took their own lives, previously sanctioned and blamed (Bringéus 1987:196), and for many centuries they were never buried in consecrated ground or did not get a public

death notice in Norway (Alver & Skjelbred 1994:56). There are many geographical variations concerning attitudes to suicide: The social scientist Ilona Kemppainen claims that in the interwar period in Finland, the cause of death, including suicide, was openly spoken of (2009). In the 2010s, the Norwegian public's attitude to suicide has undergone a complete change away from the silence of earlier times. Anders Gustavsson points to the same public mention of suicide on memorial websites in Sweden and Norway 2009–2010 (Gustavsson 2011:162ff).

[32] The Norwegian Cancer Society is frequently named as a worthy recipient, as well as funding for research on illnesses such as heart and lung diseases, dementia, multiple sclerosis or Parkinson's. Other recipients are organizations that the deceased used to support, such as Doctors Without Borders, the Norwegian Society for Sea Rescue, the Lions Club, The Norwegian Society for the Protection of Animals, the Red Cross, support for homeless children in Moldova, SOS Children's Villages, Plan Norway, or The Norwegian Committee for Academic and Cultural Boycott of the State of Israel.

[33] According to Hilding Pleijel (1983) the meaning of "quiet committal" has changed from suggesting punishment, e.g. following suicide or murder, to being an expression of a privacy (Pleijel 1983; Dahlgren 2000; see also Bringéus 1987:232–233; Wiggen 2000:23, 114).

[34] These numbers do not include those who died abroad and were buried there. In the 1960s, the majority of those funerals were held in the US, while in the 2010s they were more often held in European countries, e.g. Spain.

[35] It may read e.g. "surrounded by his nearest and dearest", "surrounded by her loved ones", "surrounded by some of those closest to him", "surrounded by her closest relatives", "died in my arms", etc.

[36] The niece and nephew are hardly ever used in the two decades, and the terms foster mother / foster father are used in the 1960s only. The terms great aunt / great uncle are used in the 2010s only.

[37] The ethnologist Ingeborg Svensson's dissertation discusses the topic of homosexual men, HIV, and funeral practices (2013). Svensson analyses the planning of funerals, including death notices, and how funerals are conducted.

[38] Anders Gustavsson refers to the same development in a study of memorial websites in Sweden and Norway, 2009–2010. The opportunities to express oneself that are provided by memorial websites are however different to those offered by a death notice (2011:142ff).

[39] In Norway, people who care for a loved one in the final stages of their lives, are entitled to attendance allowance for a maximum of 60 days (NAV 2018). https://www.nav.no/en/Home/About+NAV/Relatert+informasjon/attendance-allow-ance+when+caring+for+a+person+with+whom+you+have+close+ties Some institutions may be able to arrange for relatives to spend all day and all night with a dying relative – as if he or she were at home. Some maternity wards are in a position to put the same arrangements in place in connection with deliveries (see e.g. Fjell 1998).

[40] I am grateful to the wife of the deceased for the opportunity to use this death notice.

[41] Unusual for the *Bergens Tidende*, which provides a short list of acceptable death notice symbols.

A Case Study of Primary Mourners and Power Acting

Christina Sandberg

Abstract

In this article, the focus is on the primary mourners of a family member who is deceased. The role carries prestige, as the person assigned to it is considered to have lost the most. With the role comes a strict right of decision regarding the practicalities surrounding the death, but also an entitlement to the greatest support. The role is assigned by society to the widow/widower or the mother of a dead child. My study shows that several family members simultaneously, in different discourses, can assume the role. Upon the death of her father, an adult daughter may be assigned the role by her family or co-workers, while within her childhood family she takes on the role of her mother's primary support person. The prestige of the role becomes visible also when there are two primary mourners for the same deceased person, for instance a man's wife and his mother. In a case where there are several coexisting primary mourner options, such as siblings, one of them is usually assigned the role. The main benefit of the role not being static is that the grieving person is provided with many platforms from which to deal with the event.

Keywords: primary mourner, power acting, death, grief, silence around death

Introduction

Power exists in every relationship; it is a network in which individuals are simultaneously exposed to and exercise power. Power is an operational force both in routine and in temporary acting, and thus a mobile and changing process, in which power positions are constantly being modified. Hence power can only be studied in terms of how it is exercised, and only exerted within the discourse and through the power strategies that are used in the moment. Michel Foucault (1926–1984) showed this in his analyses, and it was also the starting point for my studies on power acting in connection with death in a family. For my doctoral dissertation[1] I interviewed thirteen persons in five families and six experts,[2] who in their professional life are confronted with death on a daily basis. At least two members of each family tell, on separate occasions, about the different phases (events before death, death, events after death) of the same deaths (one or more). All interviews distinctly showed how one or more actors, either within the family or through social institutions, exercised power. The society acted through le-

gislation and regulations, in the face of which the individual is, or feels, totally powerless. Within the family, power acting is more complex. It can be about how and where the dying individual wants to be attended to, it can be about funeral arrangements, it can be about how one expresses or refrains from expressing illness and feelings, and it can be about who considers him/herself to be or is considered by others to be the primary mourner. Society gives the role to the mother of a dead child or the widow/widower, while the death of an elderly parent is considered normal and predictable, and as such, is not expected to impact on the everyday life of an adult child (Ekvik 2005: 11f). My aim with this article is to advocate a kind of rethinking when it comes to the role of the primary mourner; and through that, to give insight into the reasons why a mourner acts as he/she does, and what impact his/her behaviour has on the immediate environment, but also to increase the understanding of the changes that influence how death and grief are perceived in today's society.

In this article I will discuss the role of the primary mourner through the following juxtaposed pairs: (1) the dying individual–other family members, (2) young wife–mother-in-law, (3) wife–daughter, and (4) only child–siblings, and I will use the same material as used in my thesis. Furthermore, with inspiration from Michael Hviid Jacobsen's article (2016) on "spectacular death", I will show how the media exposure of a fierce fire, which ended the lives of five young persons, affected the role of the primary mourner for one of the deceased.

Also in this article, as in my dissertation, the starting point is a comment that Michel Foucault made in an interview with Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow for their book *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (1983:187), namely: "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." Accordingly, the perspective is power.

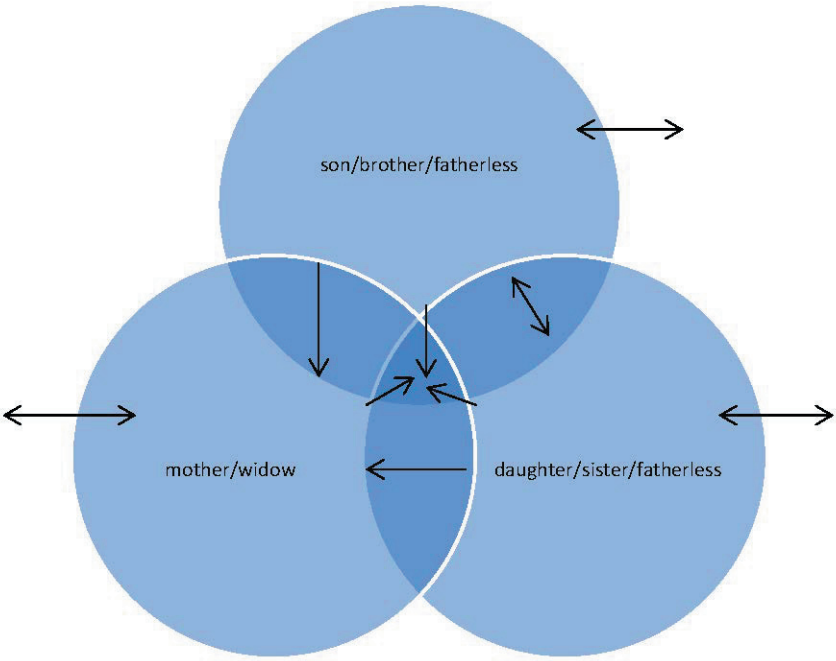
The Role

The primary mourner in a family is defined by the social role or position that individuals within the group have in relation to the deceased and to each other (Trost & Levin 1999:137ff). Within the group, there are expectations based on norms and regulations for how one should act in different situations, and there are also expectations regarding valuations that influence the world picture and reality of the group members. If that is not enough, there are also expectations concerning the intensity and accuracy of behaviours that are desirable and important for each role in question (Trost & Levin 1999:143). A person plays different roles, which adapt to accommodate the roleplay of other actors, and the behaviour within the group is controlled by conventions arising from a group-established consensus, where one is ex-

pected to follow conventions and communicate as a group member, not as an individual (Goffman 1974:9; Habermas 1994:75). A person thus holds on to such behaviour as corresponds to his/her social position within the group (Hörnqvist 1996:218).

The role of primary mourner provides the grieving with a safe space to act out, since there are immense expectations or conventions that both the immediate environment and the society place on the primary mourner. With time, that role becomes an identity, because the death affects the mourner's continued life as a widow/widower or as a parent to a dead child. This new position functions as an essential element in the person's new social position, and affects his/her resources within that position (Ylikoski 2000:30). Habermas (1994:77) speaks about a learning process in which the creation of a new role both relies on and influences one's social environment. This, in turn, influences an even larger environment, which then results in new regulations. Habermas endeavours to show how this circle-like development is vital for both individual and social identity.

My research shows that the role of "primary mourner" is not tied to only one person in the family, although the roles of the widow and the widower are the most obvious of those roles assigned by society. So, even if the role within the family is granted to the mother or father, in other social connections it can be attributed to other family members. For example, grown-up children can be assigned this role by their friends and co-workers within certain discourses. The diagram below clarifies this.



The diagram illustrates the role in a family where the father has passed away. Every interaction shows the family members' relations to the father and to each other. Within their respective interaction, each member holds the role of primary mourner as widow or fatherless child, but they also hold the roles of mother, children and siblings. The arrows show the different movement patterns that generate roles for them. The overlapping section of the diagram could be called the discourse of the death message, and is characterized by shock, disbelief and grief. This is also where the family's primary mourner is defined; in this case, the mother/widow. When the son and daughter move towards the mother, their role is to act as support for her. When they move towards each other, they are equal in grief and as each other's support persons. When they move outside their childhood family, they might be assigned the role of primary mourner by their own families, friends and colleagues.

All interactions surrounding the deceased create different expressions of grief, and according to the hierarchy of grief, that is based on the mourners' relationship to the deceased, the role of the primary mourner is the most authoritative. The role is created by conventions, and it feels wrong if someone else manipulates the hierarchy, for instance by showing excessive grief at the funeral or the memorial (Rubow 1993:77, 98). The fact that the role of the primary mourner can be assigned to different persons, could be considered an advantage for the persons' grief process, because they then will have many sounding boards for their thoughts and emotions, and this might prevent them from stagnating in their grief (Sandberg 2016:200f). Virtual memory sites serve the same purpose, as anyone using the site can nominate themselves as the primary mourner for any chosen deceased (see e.g. Gustavsson 2013; Haverinen 2014).

The Dying Individual – Other Family Members

I consider the fact that the role of primary mourner is assigned only after someone has died to be the result of the culture of silence that still surrounds a private death. Research shows that it is very difficult for a fatally ill person and the relatives, but also for health professionals, to talk about the approaching death (see e.g. Kübler-Ross 1974, 1991). Neither the dying nor their relatives wish to discuss the topic, because they do not want to show their anxiety or grief over the inevitable. This often leads to the dying individual being excluded from his/her social community already during his/her lifetime (Elias 1993:23f; Åkesson 1997:108). Relatives also find it embarrassing when they don't know what to say, and they feel that if they broach the topic, the dying individual might think that they are wishing his/her death (Bauman 1994:; Molander 1999:109). The dying individual, however, wishes to be seen and confirmed as a person to the bitter end, just as he/she

needs to be able to trust that relatives will not desert him/her should he/she initiate a discussion about the approaching death (Saunders 1980; Kübler-Ross 1991:42).

Life takes on a whole new meaning when death becomes a reality, and emotional talks may be perceived as threatening; one neither has the will nor the words to engage in this type of conversations (Crafoord 1995:208). I have named this kind of silence "the silence of the imminent death". When the mother in one of my example families was diagnosed with cancer, the course of the disease was frequently discussed, but the fact that it could lead to the mother's death was not brought up. The husband explained his silence like this:

> We never talked about death, that she would die … I thought about it often, but I didn't dare mention it as I thought that I might offend her if I started talking about her death … It still pains me; she could have said something like "Now we must part", or something.

The mother chose to live her life as a normal healthy family member instead of a sick one, and the others did not question that. By establishing the boundaries for what can and cannot be discussed both inside and outside the family, their integrity as a family was protected (Drakos 2005:26, 139ff). At some point the illness will also affect friends and colleagues, for instance, in the form of a sick leave. Still, one needs to assume that life goes on, even if one can experience stress when not knowing whether new projects can be started or if one needs to restrict one's commitments, says the psychologist I interviewed. The dying do not only grieve for their loss of life, but also for the loss of family, friends, home, work and hobbies, long before the devastating message that nothing more can be done (Grönlund 1998; Pargament 1997:96). Serious diseases, such as cancer, are always frightening, and when one gets such a diagnosis it creates anxiety for both the patient and the relatives. The daughter in the family says:

> Well, it was there all the time, the cancer. Not a day passed by that you didn't think about it. Life went on and you did the things you've always done, but it was a huge stress.

When you're seriously ill, life also starts breaking down into periods; everything is structured in accordance with the patient's condition, treatments and health examinations, and this affects your basic security, says the psychologist. The biggest challenge, according to research, is not to master the illness, but to manage everyday life and to reconcile with the fact that the life one had is changing, and that is why the individual strives to live life normally for as long as possible (Pargament 1997:83f). The dying person's primary, and most primitive, defence is to deny that he/she is fatally ill and will die, as it gives him/her time to process the situation (Qvarnström 1979: 30f). The acceptance of the reality would cause all of one's dreams to col-

lapse and leave the person feeling lost (Pargament 1997:108ff). To be able to keep moving forward as usual is important, not only for the sake of the patient, but also because it allows other family members to live a normal life (Falk & Lönnroth 1999:51).

Raunkiær (2007:100ff) points out the importance of routine both for the dying and for their relatives. Routines represent safety and the present, as they give an illusion of continuity; they simply have a normalizing effect. In a family with a dying member no one wants to think about the future. Still, the anxiety for the ill family member is there. If he/she is hospitalized, the relatives stand ready to leave everything to be at the bedside, should the patient's condition deteriorate. If the patient is cared for at home, the anxiety is even more palpable. Relatives say that "when you have lived together for years, you somehow know when the end is near". An extreme example from my material touches on a case in which both of an informant's parents were hospitalized at the same time. The mother was at one hospital, because she needed extended care, and the father was at an emergency hospital, which increased their anxiety for each other and the children's anxiety for the consequences the situation would have on the parents' state of health. Research shows that the lack of resources results in humanity having to give in to compromise on care, especially when it comes to elderly persons, because they "don't expect so much" (Nikkonen 1995).

At some point, especially if the illness is long-term, both the dying individual and the relatives are forced to take on new roles within the family and the immediate environment. The dying individual is, for instance, deprived of his/her normal role as husband or wife, and the other spouse may feel like a widower/widow long before the actual death. This is especially true if the dying individual is being cared for at home, where the presence of death also feels stronger (Raunkiær 2007:113f). Still, the dying individual never gives up hope; he/she hopes for a miracle, but at the same time he/she plays the role that he/she knows will function in the current social environment, because this gives him/her time to process the inevitable (Kübler-Ross 1991: 47; Qvarnström 1979:37). The dying person may feel it is unfair that he/she will not be allowed to witness grandchildren or an advancing career, but also relatives may feel that they are forced to say farewell to a part of their future. The dying person will not be there when children graduate or became parents. The daughter says:

> Mother never said "when I die", but I'm sure she thought about it a lot. I once asked if she was afraid to die, and she answered that she didn't fear death, she just didn't want to give up the life she had.

For the dying, mourning begins with the diagnosis of an incurable disease. It takes time to accept the "identity" of a dying person, because there will be nothing left when all relations are broken. The dying person must be allowed to die in his/her own way. For instance, someone who was, during

his/her lifetime, a very private person must also be able to die privately. The process of death can be somewhat influenced, even if the time of death cannot be chosen, except in the case of suicides (Saunders 1980; Ågren Bolmsjö 2006). All this defines the dying person's position as the primary mourner. Also, the dying individual who directs his/her own funeral amplifies the role. Relatives seldom contradict the wishes of the dying; on the contrary, research shows that it makes it easier for them, as the funeral thus reflects the deceased, and the practical details are less stressful (Bringéus 1987:263; Åkesson 1997:79ff). Furthermore, it can prevent conflicts that might arise depending on how the relatives define the primary mourner among themselves. In the example family the mother determines the family's next primary mourner through her instructions to her daughter; when she has received the message that nothing more can be done for her, she instructs her daughter "not to leave father alone", in response to the daughter's statement that she will move out should the mother die.

For relatives, mourning begins when they are informed of the situation. The grief can be just as powerful, but even if they physically lose the person, they will be able to keep him/her among the living through memories and discussions. The relationship does not end at the graveside, even if the mutual life does; the relationship is re-evaluated. I consider the fact that we do not talk about the dying individual as a primary mourner relates to our cultural environment: inconvenient topics related to death and illness are still considered taboo, and if the patient does not share information, we seldom ask for fear of seeming inquisitive. Moreover, medical science and health care are expected to cure even the most severe illnesses and prolong our lives. Society encourages mourners to live through and put an end to their grief, so that they can go back to their lives as productive members. In my material either the dying person refused to discuss his/her death or the relatives dismissed the topic by saying "of course you'll make it", at least in front of the dying person. In both cases the dying individual is left alone in his/her grief, which further defines the dying person's position as primary mourner while still alive.

Wife—Mother-in-Law

Death is considered untenable, because there are neither established overall strategies to endure it, nor narrative models for how to recount painful experiences (Foucault 1998:99; Nylund Skog 2002:145). A void emerges around death, because it no longer has a place in everyday life; by not discussing death we not only spare the dying, but also their immediate environment, from the need to confront death in an otherwise "happy" existence (Åkesson 1997:11, 67; Hodne 1980:12). After birth, the death of a dear relative is the most revolutionary event in a person's life, and one falls into

a state of shock, even when death has been expected (Gustafsson 2006). The first few days feel unreal, and it takes time before one understands that the death is true; one becomes more or less paralysed (Enggren 1978:11, 17). Furthermore, the mourners feel both destitute and left without the support they would need (Dyregrov 2008:53). Sensitive experiences in a person's life often generate an absence of speech as a means of censoring any talk about the subject. Asking how someone's husband died and, thus, giving the grieving person the possibility to talk about the death, can just as easily be interpreted as a sign of either empathy or curiosity (Johansson 2005:268; Foucault 1998:18). The silence is especially valid when it comes to suicide, as the affected are even more vulnerable and susceptible to other persons' claims (Giddens 1984:198f). I will exemplify the consequences this can cause in terms of defining the primary mourner in a family where the father took his life.

The young wife arrives home after picking up her children from day care. The husband's car is parked on the driveway, and the four-year-old son runs happily to his study. Out of the corner of her eye, the wife sees her husband's foot in the doorway and rushes forwards. The husband has shot himself. The wife gets into a state of shock, and it takes time before she is able to call her parents, who arrive to take care of her and the children, and also inform the police and the son-in-law's parents. The foremost recollection the young widow has from that moment until the funeral is the total silence surrounding her husband's death and how alone she felt.

> You know that people are talking about it, but I lived in a vacuum. Absolutely no one talked to me. And it was just as difficult for me to decide whether I could bring it up.

One of the reasons for the silence was probably that they lived in a relatively small city, where the deceased and the young widow as well as their parents were well known. The easiest way to draw boundaries for interaction with the outside world is by producing silence, but it is also a way to emphasize the discretion that is required of one's discussion partner (Drakos 2005:217; Foucault 2005:52). The consequence the silence had for the family was that the young widow's role was reduced to that of a bystander; she was neither allowed to act nor give an opinion regarding the arrangements for her husband's funeral. She was not even given the report of the police investigation into the suicide. The role of the primary mourner was assigned to the mother-in-law. The young widow's parents arranged for a familiar undertaker to choose some coffins that he thought the parents-in-law might accept; the mother-in-law decided everything except the flowers, which were chosen by the father-in-law. The young widow says:

> I remember that I stood by the window at the funeral parlour and thought that well, surely this is her moment. I'm sure I just said "yes" and "that will be fine". My mother-in-law took over, and it was as if neither my father-in-law nor I existed. She like stole the show, but then again I knew he had been her everything.

At the pastor's office, the young widow experienced that there was no room for her as the pastor only addressed the parents-in-law. While she had some understanding for his difficult situation, as he and the parents-in-law were good friends, he was also the father of one of her best friends. The pastor I interviewed said that clergy are expected to share the relatives' pain, despair and grief and to show compassion and consolation. This especially applies if the pastor is familiar with the deceased and/or his relatives. A possible interpretation of the fact that the young widow's parents and parents-in-law made all the arrangements could be that they wanted to spare her from further agony. However, this appeared not to be the case, since the mother-in-law kept all the condolence cards for almost twenty years before she finally gave them to the widow with a brief "well, I suppose these belong to you". This is the only time she referred to her son's death. The young widow says:

> We never talked about his death. We have both wandered alone in our grief. You could say that we have never met in this sorrow … Maybe she didn't understand how overwhelming the grief was for us. I always thought that I had somehow to bear a double sorrow, because I grieved for both myself and my children; they became fatherless.

The family culture defines how members act when something revolutionary happens in the family (Falk & Lönnroth 1999:25). When a father or a mother dies, sons and daughters often take on the role of the adult, as the other parents is so involved in his/her grief (Ekvik 2005:31). The responsibility for the young widow was assumed by her childhood family and they assigned her the role of primary mourner, but she lacked support from other primary mourners, because her children were so young and the husband's parents excluded her from their grief. The mother-in-law was assigned the role both by her family and by the locals, probably due to the family's social position. One can assume that she also had a much bigger support group that enabled her to express her grief. Furthermore, she also had the benefit of support from her husband and daughter as other primary mourners.

Wife—Daughter

It is said that the one who is dying knows when death arrives, it's the relatives and health professionals that refuse to hear what the dying person is saying (Grönlund 1998). This was also the case in a family where the father died unexpectedly. While he was waiting for a routine operation at the hospital, he suffered a heart attack during his daughter's visit. The daughter describes the situation like this:

> At some point he said "I won't make it" and I said "Don't be absurd, of course you'll make it, a simple operation." Then we talked about this and that and he got the first heart attack. I said "Take a nitro, it'll help" and it did, but after a while he became

totally grey and said "No, I'm not making it, I know it", but I said "I'm sure you'll make it, just don't give up."

The father was rushed to surgery, and the daughter was asked to call the mother due to the critical situation. The mother arrived before the father died on the operating table. The mother/wife had not even been aware of his heart condition; the father had sworn the daughter to secrecy, probably because he didn't want to alarm his wife or because he himself needed time to process the situation. The most devastating fact of death is that of "death as a taught phenomenon", either one's own death or that of one's parents, as it brings death one step closer (Bauman 1994:178).

The widow/mother was assigned the role of primary mourner both by her family and by society, and the daughter acted as her foremost support, in full accordance with the expectations the environment puts on the roles of widow and daughter. One maintains the chosen façade that comes with one's "established social role" (Goffman 1974:33). The expectations for appropriate behaviour that are placed on every social position are not always helpful, however; such expectations can also cause problems, for example, when a primary mourner can't perform the expected behaviour, in this case, tears every time the husband's death came up.

Relatives who have witnessed a dying person's last moments say that they will remember it forever. The feeling of de-realization is overwhelming, and one cannot accept that death is a reality. This is good, because it delays the pain that could lead to total paralysis. Instead, relatives can take on the reality gradually over a period of days, weeks and months (Dyregrov 2008:32ff). According to Wallin (1994), the shock functions in the same way as a deep cut that takes a while before it begins to bleed; the primary mourner would "bleed to death" if all the feelings the death causes were to appear simultaneously. Still, relatives need to know how the death occurred, if the dying person suffered, who was present and what was done to try to bring the dying person back to life (Åkesson 1997:39; Lindqvist 1999:57). This is especially valid for the primary mourners if they did not witness the death. The widow says that she remembers every word the doctor said when he confirmed the death, but still she had an urgent need to know every detail, so she rang the doctor, and he described the events in detail. One possible explanation why it is so important to know even the smallest detail of a dear person's death could be that the primary mourners feel, having been absent from the incident, that they have been deprived of a memory of an important event, and therefore need as many details as possible in order to generate their own memory (Sandberg 2016:141).

The interviews with the mother/widow and the daughter show that the daughter also meets the criteria for the family's primary mourner. The mother says that she was paralysed by the shock and only saw her own grief, not that of her children and grandchildren. They had to act as her support the

whole first year, and for instance make sure that she ate and showered. The daughter describes her grief very similarly; she did realize that her daughter was grieving for her granddad, but she did not have the capacity to console her. The tiny strength she had left went to support the mother. The daughter describes the father as her best friend, and the mother confirms that she was his "little princess". This, combined with the fact that the father and the daughter together had agreed not to burden the mother with his health issues, could legitimize the daughter as the family's primary mourner. The mother states that, already at the undertakers, she had experienced exclusion as everything happened so fast.

> While grieving, and with one hour of parking time, you need to choose a coffin for your own husband, and the flowers, and the pastor and everything. I was not even allowed to grieve in peace.

Also, during the funeral she thought that everything happened so fast; "the coffin just practically slipped into the grave"; she had thought that a person's last moment on earth should have been a little longer. All this further increased her feeling of alienation. In addition, the daughter felt that it was her duty to handle the funeral service details; she welcomed the guests, distributed the programmes and read out the condolence cards. In retrospect, she couldn't understand how she could be so strong, but "one is forced, in that situation, to accept that their father is now being buried". The fact that the daughter takes on the leadership role could be interpreted as an act of the primary mourner, and the mother's statement of alienation supports the assumption. The mother may even have felt that she had been deprived of her role as primary mourner when the daughter took on such a visible role at the funeral. Research shows that mourners often find funerals to be very overwhelming as they feel all of the attention is focused on themselves as mourners. The situation gets even more difficult if they feel that they are not supposed to show grief and that they need to master the funeral with grace (Järveläinen 2007:21; Åkesson 2006). The daughter's behaviour can also be motivated by her wish to ease the stressful moment for her mother and to honour her father in a way she felt meaningful.

Only Child—Siblings

When one of the parents dies, both society and the children assign the role of the primary mourner to the other parent. But who will shoulder the role when the other parent dies? As an only child, the role is naturally assigned to him/her, but the access to support that siblings can give will be absent. In a family where the son was the only child, his wife took on the role of supporter, as she felt that it was her obligation to act as support person to her "totally devastated" husband, after he had witnessed his mother's death and the rescue personnel's efforts to keep her alive. He held the dropper and saw

the mother's heartbeat slowly decrease and finally end. He closed his mother's eyes and witnessed her being wrapped in "black garbage bags" and taken away. Also, the two daughters that witnessed the resuscitation of their parents describe it as unpleasant. It is not that they did not wish their parents to live, but that they probably just didn't want the dramatic measures to which their dying parent were exposed to be their last recollection should it still end in death. If the death is dramatic, even when the deceased is an elderly parent, it can, as such, legitimize the fact that it may be dwelled on for a much longer time than if the death had occurred during sleep.

What is the situation when the primary mourners consist of a group of siblings? Are they all equal as mourners and as each other's support persons, or is one of them assigned the role of the family's primary mourner? The younger daughter of a cancer patient expresses the meaning of having a sibling like this:

> I have sometimes thought that I would probably have gone mad had I been alone. Having someone that truly knows how it feels, even if they experience things differently; you can still talk about it without the need to explain the background and reasons. You just say something and the other one understands.

Also in two other families the informants said that it eased their grief when they could discuss the death with their siblings. Still, it is interesting that one of the siblings in these families was also assigned the role of the family's primary mourner. In one family, the siblings and other relatives assigned the role to the youngest daughter after their mother had died. Both parents had moved in with the daughter in order to help her after a severe accident. During her rehabilitation, the father died, and the mother was unable to move back to their mutual home, so she continued to live with her daughter until she died. The daughter was unmarried and was also the person who kept in touch with other family members, held family celebrations, babysat and was always ready to help her siblings in every way possible.

In the family where the young husband took his life, the young widow had many siblings. She was the eldest daughter of a strong-willed and dominating mother, so her siblings had always felt that it was easier to turn to her for help and support. She was also appointed as next of kin for her parents, and so she was the first one informed when the mother died. Her task was then to notify the father and the siblings. She was assigned the role of primary mourner by both her children and her siblings when the mother died as well as three months later when the father died. She still is the person everyone turns to, even though she clearly stated, following the mother's death, that she had no wish to be the "family's new mother".

Research shows that it is important to be able to mention the deceased by his/her name, and it is equally important to be allowed to talk about the death, but it is very difficult to know how much friends and acquaintances can handle (Björklund & Gyllenswärd 2009:51; Ekvik 2005:85). The pur-

pose of grief is to help the mourners to accept what has happened and to enable life to go on. One can never describe one's grief to another person, because grieving is a "journey in an inner landscape", but it is easier to share grief with someone who has experienced something similar (Lindqvist 2007:71f). When a beloved person dies, something within you dies as well, and this reflects on who you are; you don't just re-evaluate your life, but also your relation to yourself (Lindqvist 1999:16; Enggren 1978:23). Maybe it is easier to expect both sympathy and support from your siblings than from outsiders. Today's society only provides urgent assistance for major accidents or events, while the need for assistance and support in individual crisis is just as urgent, and as a result of that, the people in the immediate environment of those who are in crisis are forced to provide the necessary support (Pargament 1997:74). On the other hand, the mourners I interviewed stated that if one has not experienced death and grief first-hand, one cannot help others' in this situation.

A Media-Created Primary Mourner

Late on Friday, 9 October 2009, five teenagers were killed in a fierce fire in Naantali, a small seaside town on the west coast of Finland. After a few hours a Rest-in-Peace site was established on IRC-Galleria[3] by the sister and best friend for one of the deceased. Photographs were uploaded and expressions of grief and longing were shared. YouTube videos of the deceased were also published online. By the early morning hours, over 350 persons had joined the group.

The onsite media coverage was extensive, showing friends, acquaintances and strangers creating a sea of flowers, candles and cards; later on, the funeral was also followed by the press. On Monday, 12 October, *Ilta-Sanomat* (the biggest afternoon tabloid in Finland) headlined their article with "Young hero dies trying to save a sleeping girl". A girl with minor injuries was interviewed and the readers learned that the hero who turned back into the flames was her boyfriend. The text was accompanied by a picture of a lone red rose that someone had left on the scene, and the text implied that it was the girlfriend's goodbye. She was also interviewed by the local press. The funeral was covered by the other afternoon tabloid *Iltalehti* and headlined: "Farewell to the hero", and readers learned how this 16-year-old boy, besides being interested in motorsports, was also involved in the volunteer fire brigade, and that is why he acted so bravely. Joined by the boy's classmates and teachers, the girlfriend laid her own bouquet at the funeral. She didn't attend the memorial.

Eight years later, on 5 June 2017, the Nelonen channel on Finnish television showed episode nine of season two of their documentary series *Katastrofin anatomia* (The Anatomy of a Catastrophe). The series presents devas-

tating accidents in modern-day Finland, such as the school shootings in Jokela 2007 and Kauhajoki 2008, the fatal shootings in Hyvinkää 2012, the baby murders in Oulu 2014 and the tsunami in 2004. Episode nine featured the fire in Naantali. Every episode is structured so that representatives of different authorities – police, the national rescue personnel, medical experts and accident investigators – guide the viewers through the events at the actual accident site, point out the biggest risks and declare what should have been done differently when the accident occurred and what authorities have done regarding safety regulations and legislation in response to the accident in question. All episodes also relate a personal tragedy; in episode nine it is told by the girlfriend. She is, once again, assigned the role of the primary mourner, one who lost her boyfriend, but who finally after all these years has managed to move on with her life. She now has a family and a job, but the experience has influenced her development as a human being. The story is directed very professionally, but it is untrue. In reality they had known each other for less than two months; they were students at the same high school. They socialized, but were not an item. On the night in question, he had been out on the town with his friend, and she spent the evening at her friend's home in Naantali. At some point during the evening she rang him up and suggested that he and his friend should join them; there were a total of fourteen teenagers at the house on that Friday night, according to the friend. The lone rose had been brought, in the early morning hours, by the dead boy's mother. The main feeling the dead boy's parents and sisters experienced when the episode was shown was that their grief had been belittled, since they had been deprived in the public eye of their role as the boy's primary mourners. For them his death is still an open wound. In a small community, everyone knows who the dead boy is, and his fate is still discussed. I am often confronted with it, as he is my first grandchild.

Conclusion

In this article, my aim has been to focus on one aspect of power relations in a family that has lost a member, namely, the role of the primary mourner, in order to point out the consequences that power acting in this specific discourse can have for those involved. To talk about power in connection with death still seems to be taboo, even if all traditions, conventions and rites associated with death, as such, are expressions of power that originate from some local, public or ecclesiastical authority. If my informants even mentioned a family member's power acting, it was explained in relation to the person's fear of death or overwhelming grief.

Also, when expressing grief, one follows the models by which one has been raised. The things that we feel work successfully, whether they are self-perceived or borrowed from other people's tales of grief, are the things

we resort to both as mourners and when meeting a mourner. According to researchers this is a process that changes in time and space, nowadays at quite a fast pace on both the individual and social level (see e.g. Ehn & Löfgren 1996:55; 2001:9f.; Ölander 2001). Since the millennium, research on death has meritoriously pointed out new aspects that influence our understanding of how people experience and comprehend death. Death has been made visible through rapid medial development, and it affects, for better or for worse, our behaviour as mourners and/or how we interact with a mourner. Michael Hviid Jacobsen (2016) states that this development has created a need for rethinking, and he introduces a new phase, the spectacular death, in order to reinterpret rites, customs, traditions and perceptions regarding death in a way that will better describe today's global death scene. Anders Gustavsson's studies (2013) on changes in the expression of grief and sorrow during the two last decades in Sweden and Norway show that increased individualism is a fact. One forum where individualism can appear openly is the social media with its different types of memorial sites for the deceased, for both people and pets. For her doctoral thesis (2014) Anna Haverinen has studied the situation in Finland, the USA and England. She states that virtual memorial sites are intended to be eternal places for remembrance and grief, the same way the grave is a place to mark the physical estate of the deceased. The flow of death overwhelms us daily on television and in newspapers, films and social media. This is actually a good thing, because it breaks the taboo, and death becomes visible and present in our lives. The negative aspect of this phenomenon is that, by becoming an everyday issue, death has, to a certain extent, been trivialized, even though death is still experienced, on the private level, as a most bewildering and unintelligible event.

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[2] The experts were: a doctor, a priest, a police officer, a psychologist and two funeral directors.

[3] The first social media website in Finland, founded in December 2000 by Tomi Lintilä.

The Wild Host and the Etymology of Sami *Stállu* and Norwegian *Ståle*(*sferda*)

Reflecting Ancient Contact

Eldar Heide

Abstract

In this article, I discuss whether there is a connection between the Sami tradition of *Stállu* and the Southern Norwegian tradition of *Ståle* and *Stålesferda*. Stállu is a kind of troll in Sami tradition, but one variant of it, the *Juovlastállu* 'Yule Stállu', is connected to Christmas and greatly overlaps with the *Oskoreia* / *Juleskreia* / *Julereia* tradition of the Wild Hunt, which in the district of Setesdal is called *Stålesferda*, a name indicating that it is led by *Ståle*. This, and the fact that *Stállu* seems to be a loanword because it has an initial consonant cluster, which Sami in principle does not have, is the basis for a suggestion that the character Stállu and much of the tradition connected to him is a loan from an early Scandinavian *Ståle* tradition. I agree that the word is borrowed, but argue that the Scandinavian word that has been suggested as the source is implausible. Instead, I suggest a different etymology for *Stállu* / *Ståle* and argue that the essence of the tradition of the *Juovlastállu* / *Stålesferda* / *Oskoreia* etc. is *the swarming host* – of dead spirits, elves, or other, with their riding or draught animals. Therefore, I suggest an Old Norse **stál* as the source for *Stállu* and *Ståle*. In the Modern Norwegian dialects, this word, *stål*, is common in meanings such as 'a compressed mass of live beings; a crowd, flock, school', which fits very well. Even if the term *Stállu* and other elements in the Sami traditions surrounding it seem borrowed from Scandinavian, the Sami may well have had similar traditions prior to borrowing the term.

Keywords: Stállu, Sami religion, Old Norse religion, Norwegian folkloristics, Sami folkloristics, the Wild Hunt

Introduction: The Stállu Tradition

In this article, I will discuss whether there is a connection between the Sami tradition of *Stállu* and the Southern Norwegian tradition of *Ståle* and *Stålesferda*. This connection was first suggested by Nils Lid (1933:52, cf. 43–70) but in an unsatisfactory way. In the folklore of the Sami in northern Scandinavia, *Stállu* (North Sami; South Sami *Staaloe*, *Staala*) is one of the favourite characters. The name Stállu and the tradition about him is found in most of Sápmi, from Härjedalen in the south to the Kola Peninsula in the northeast, in myriad legends and folk tales. Stállu has human form, but is bigger and stronger than humans, like a troll. He is evil, eats humans,

catches small children and challenges the Sami for duels, especially *noaidi*s (Sami shamans, South Sami *nåejtie*). But he is stupid and clumsy and is often tricked by the noaidi or Ash Lad (Áskovis). Another variant portrays Stállu as a zombie-like demon sent forth by a noaidi to injure or kill his enemies (Qvigstad 1927:489–506, 1928:243–66, 627–60, 1929:413–31, 531–51; Mark 1932:220–31; Lid 1933:48–52, Manker 1960:217ff, Steen 1967, Kjellström 1976:157ff, Fjellström 1985:396ff, Cocq 2005:15ff; references to primary sources are found in these works.) These variants of Stállu are by far the best-known, and most of the research has concentrated on them. In this article, I will refer to these variants as *Troll Stállu*, which is a constructed, analytical term.

In addition to Troll Stállu, there is a tradition about a *Juovlastállu*, 'Yule Stállu'. We know this tradition from Finnmark, Northern Troms and Jukkasjärvi in Northern Sweden, from late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century recordings (Lid 1933:43–48, information from Qvigstad, cf. Qvigstad 1928:712–19, Mark 1932:217–19).[1] "In Finnmark, Júovlastállu was believed to be a sprite who punished those who did prohibited work or made noise during Christmas, or those who had not prepared Christmas in the proper way". Children should not ski during Christmas or be noisy in other ways (this is recorded in many places) – like banging doors or sticks of firewood, racketing with reindeer sleds, reindeer bells or dogs – because then, Stállu might come and get them (also many places) – he might kill them (Kautokeino) or catch them in a sack trap and take them to his place, or he might return them to the place from which he had taken them after a number of days (Utsjoki, Mark 1932:218). Because of this, children used to be silent and dutiful during Christmas, it is said. If people had to fetch firewood during Christmas because they had failed to store enough before the holiday, "they would sometimes get stuck and would not come unstuck until they promised never to do it again. Therefore, they believed that it was Juovlastállu who held them" (Qvigstad in ibid:44–45. Talvik, Alta, Finnmark). People were supposed to pile the wood very neatly and to tidy up thoroughly around the chopping block and the wood stack: "the brushwood and all the chippings should be cleared away and swept together", "the Sami use to tidy and sweep well around the chopping block and between the tent and the chopping block, to make it smooth". This was because Stállu was believed to drive with his farmhand from home to home during the nights around Christmas, especially Christmas Eve, and especially with a *ráidu*, i.e. a line of reindeer pulling a sled, just that Stállu's draught animals were mice, rats and lemmings. If the area around the home was not tidy and clear, the *ráidu* could get stuck. If that happened, it meant bad luck in the coming year, and the person who had not tidied well enough had to go out in the night and help Stállu. Also, a kettle full of water should be left out in the tent or hut, so that Stállu could

have a drink when he came in the night. If he did not find water, he would suck the blood from someone in the household, preferably the middle child. As a help for Stállu, a branch or a tree should also be erected behind the wood stack, for Stállu to tie his *ráidu* to when he was inside. In Talvik near Alta, one should also leave out a tray with meat. From Finnish Utsjoki on the Norwegian border, it is said in connection with such stories that Stállu lived in a large gorge (Lid 1933:43–48; Kjellström 1976:160). Much further south, in Swedish Lule Lappmark, it is noted that the similar Julebukkane (see below; *rähttuna* / *julbockarna*) used rats for draught animals; Grundström 1929:56. The *rähttuna* [modern Lule Sami spelling] were departed souls who came back to their old lands once every year, between Christmas and Epiphany).

In Kautokeino, a story was told about what once happened when the children made a racket on Christmas Day. Stállu came, in the shape of the moon, down through the smoke vent in the roof of the hut into the indoor woodpile on the rafter, then down onto the bar over fire place, before he lit a fire and cooked the children (Qvigstad 1928:668–77). A similar story is recorded by Johan Turi from Kautokeino / Torne Lappmark: Because of the noise, Stállu came, in the shape of a bird, through the smoke vent down onto the bar above the fireplace. Some of the children hid in the woodpile, but the end was tragic (Lid 1933:47–48). Juovlastállu in the shape of the moon is recorded from Talvik in Alta, too (Qvigstad 1928:715).

From Lyngen / Storfjorden in Troms, a habit is recorded that someone disguised as Stállu would come to the Christmas party trying to poke the girls with a half-burned stick of firewood (to make black marks on their clothes), demanding "tax for the king" – or go from farm to farm doing this. Sometimes he had two or many men accompanying him, called *hoammá*, plur. *hoammát*, "helpers". Sometimes the stick would be phallus-shaped, and the girls would try to tear the clothes off Stállu. Sometimes a crowd would go from farm to farm singing Christmas carols on Christmas Eve. This group consisted of four frontmen called *Daban*, and there was a rear party of three mummed men following them, of which the strongest was called Stállu and the others *hoammát*. The *Daban* singers could be invited in, but more often (it seems), this would happen to the Stállu rear party, who demanded tax for the king and were given drams and bread. If not, they would splash a bucket of water on the girls who were supposed to serve them and poke them with the stick. (Lid 1933:43)[2]

Suggested Backgrounds for the Stállu Traditions

Some believe that the tradition about Troll Stállu has its roots in historical events and derives from encounters with plundering Chuds (from Russia) or tax collectors from Norwegian or Swedish authorities in the Viking Age or

High Middle Ages. Especially three arguments have been put forward for this:

a) According to Sami tradition, the name *Stállu* is derived from *stálli* "steel", and it is said that Stállu wore a *ruovdegákti* 'iron shirt' (Aikio 1907; Helland 1906:274; Lid 1933:52; 61; Manker 1960:217; Steen 1963:15). The supporters of this theory interpret this as chain mail, which the sedentary farmers had, but not the nomadic or semi-nomadic Sami.
b) Aspects of Stállu's behaviour, such as carrying hoards and plundering the Sami and his generally aggressive attitude towards them, fit with tax collectors.
c) A certain type of deserted settlements in the mountains between Northern Sweden and Norway, archaeologically dated to the Viking Age and High Middle Ages and most easily explained from Norwegian architecture, is in Sami tradition associated with Stállu and therefore called "Stállu ruins" (*stallotomter.* Manker 1960).

This theory was launched by Friis in 1871 (:75), based on the first two arguments, but it has strong advocates in recent times in Kjellström (1976) and Wepsäläinen (2011), who has developed the third argument in particular.

Lid (1933:52, cf. 43–70), however, rejects the link to *stálli* as folk etymology and to the iron shirt as a way of fleshing out this folk etymology. Instead, he points to the significant overlap between the Jouvlastállu tradition and the Norwegian tradition of the Wild Host. In Setesdal, Southern Norway, the Wild Host is referred to as *Stålesferda*, 'Ståle's travel', and its leader as *Ståle*. Lid argues that the name *Stállu* and the tradition surrounding it is borrowed from these Norwegian traditions (Lid 1933:61–62).

The Wild Host

To provide a background for the further discussion, I will now give an overview of the traditions that may be related to the Juovlastállu tradition before I compare the Juovlastállu tradition with the Norwegian traditions in more detail.

The Juovlastállu traditions are part of an enormous and heterogeneous complex, found throughout most of North-Western Europe, with related traditions further east and south (Olrik 1901, Brunk 1903, Plischke 1914, Celander 1920, 1943, Lid 1929, 1933, Jones 1930, Endter 1933, Huth 1935, Meisen 1935, Vilkuna 1956, Vries 1962, Eike 1980, Johansson 1991). It is problematic to apply one single term to such a complex, but for the sake of convenience, I use *the Wild Host* here as an analytical, constructed term in cases where it is difficult to apply an ethnic term.

In Norway, the best-known term is *Oskorei*(*d*)*a*. The latter part, *-rei*(*d*)*a,* derives from the Old Norse verb *ríða* 'to ride', reflecting riders and wagon or sled drivers (whereas *Osko-* is obscure). This term is known from Østfold (*Askereia*) through Telemark to Rogaland, while in Setesdal it occurs alongside *Stålesferda* 'Ståle's travel' and *Lussiferda*, 'Saint Lucy's travel' (Skar 1961–63 [1903–16] I:418–22), reflecting St. Lucy's Day following the longest night of the year according to the Julian Calendar. The name Lussiferda is known from the valleys in Eastern Norway, from Agder and from Western Norway. In the latter area, *Juleskreia*, 'the yule host' and *Julereia* (*Jola-*, *Jole-*) 'the Christmas Ride / Riding' are the most common names, but *Våsereia*, *Våsedrifta* and *Mossedrifta* are also known – probably meaning 'the strenuous riding / flock' (most likely from *vås* n. "strenuous travel, toil, hardships", Aasen 1873:908). In Nordland, *Gongferda* and *Gandferda* are common names, whereas *Gåsreia* and *Gassreia* are also found (where *Gås-* and *Gass-* are corruptions of either *vås-* or *gasse-* "an ill-natured sprite", Ross 1971 [1895]:228). The most widespread names are probably *Julesveinane* 'the yule lads', *Julebukkane* 'the yule billy-goats' or *Julegeita* 'the yule goat', found throughout large parts of Norway, at least in the west-facing parts of the country up to Troms. (Helland 1900:418–21; Lid 1929:33–67; Celander 1943, Eike 1980)

In Telemark, the Oskoreia is (Celander 1943, Eike 1980[3]) a host of deceased spirits riding across the sky or along the roads with much racket at night, especially around Christmas and especially during storms. In Telemark, Guro Rysserova and Sigurd Svein are the leaders. Where the Oskoreia halts, they will enter people's houses and drink up the Christmas beer and sometimes even have a Christmas feast. If the Oskoreia stops at a place, this usually forebodes a killing or other death. The Oskoreia can also abduct people and disfigure them or horses and objects, and it can move houses, even take houses with it. The Oskoreia can take with it people from anywhere, but it is especially important to watch out on the roads, because the Oskoreia can follow roads and ride high in the air alike. Horses taken by these spirits are ridden almost to death, and they are found lathered up in the stable in the morning. If people are abducted, they may be thrown down again on the same spot after some time, but most often they are thrown down far away. (Faye 1948 [1844]:65, Skar 1961–63 [1903–16] I:402ff, Christiansen & Liestøl 1931:164–65, Storaker 1938:76–77, Fuglestvedt & Storaker 1943:115–16)

The Western Norwegian Juleskreia, too, wants to enter people's houses and drink up the beer. Sometimes the host has a female leader, and as riding and draught animals, the host may have goats and billy-goats (Helland 1901: 654–55; Lid 1929:55ff; 1933:53–54; Lid 1929:33–67). The Northern Norwegian Gandferda / Gangferda is a noisy host of deceased spirits in the sky that may forebode decease or accidents. It does not try to enter people's

houses during Christmas, however. The variant that in Northern Norway and Trøndelag wants to do this and eat up people's food, is called *Julesveinane*, *Julebukken* or *Julegeita* (Lid 1929:55–56). In Western Norway and Agder, these names are found side by side with others (mentioned above).

Lid (1929, 1933) does not include these variants in the Oskorei / Juleskrei / Julerei etc. traditions; these are separate things according to him. I suspect this is because the Julebukkane are best known from the Halloween-like costumes of modern times, i.e. a host of mummed humans, dressed up as goats or the like, going to people's homes to make a racket, singing Christmas carols, demanding treats – and because of the desire in traditional folkloristics to construct a tidy taxonomy, where blurred lines are explained as a result of corruption in modern times (e.g. Christiansen 1922:24–25; Celander 1943:90, 134–35; 149). There is, however, no basis for the assumption that popular traditions were tidy in earlier times. In the traditions, the Julebukkane and Julesveinane are also to a large extent supernatural beings and can hardly be separated from the variants called Oskoreia, Juleskreia, etc. Sometimes, the supernatural Julebukkane and Julesveinane fly through the air, sometimes they walk around on roads (Lid 1929:55–56; Helland 1901:654–55), just like the human guisers. In some places, it is said that the Julegeita is the same as the Oskoreia (Sirdal, Agder, Eike 1980:265), or that "the Julereia was usually called Julesveinar or Julebukkar" (Sogn, Eike 1980:265) or that the Julebukken and the Julegeita "were part of Oskoreia's company" (Mandal, Lid 1929:52; likewise in Tovdal, East Agder, Eike 1980:265). In addition, another human variant of the Wild Host would appear during Christmas, especially on Boxing Day (26 December), when people in large, noisy and rapidly moving groups would ride or drive in sleds to each other's homes for food and beer (Lid 1933:9–42; Celander 1943:127–29). This is often called *Staffansriding*, 'St. Stephen's riding', because St. Stephen's Day is 26 December, or *annandagsskei*(*d*), 'second day riding'. The tradition of the human Julebukk can also be referred to as "singing Staffan" (Lid 1933:23–24, 44).

Most of the traits mentioned above are found in the majority of variants, regardless of name, and the (sometimes significant) discrepancies between the variants seem largely independent from what names they bear. Different variants can also exist side by side under different names in the same settlements. In such cases, it may seem necessary to classify them as different traditions, but when taking larger areas into account, this turns out to be very difficult (cf. Eike 1980:269–70). As pointed out by Eike (1980:269–70), in the large picture, the same terms refer both to the supernatural beings that visit for food, drinks and noisy fun and to humans who are at the same game, disguised as the Juleskreia etc., or riding horses or sleds like it (also Celander 1943:129, 85).

In Iceland, the hag *Grýla* and her *Jólasveinar* (Jón Árnason 1958–61 [1862–64] I:207–10, III:283–6) correspond to the supernatural Norwegian Julebukkane and Julesveinane and there, too, humans went guising in connection with this tradition (Vilborg Davíðsdóttir 2007, Gunnell 2007:282–93, 298–303, 318–23, 325–26). There are also widespread legends of elves / hidden people (álfar, *huldufólk*) who would force their way into human homes for food, drink and a party on Christmas Eve or New Year's Eve (Celander 1943:114–16).

In Scotland and Ireland, the Fairy Host / *Sluagh Sidhe*, forms a close parallel to the West Norwegian traditions about the Wild Host (Celander 1943:168–69 / Christiansen 1938). So does the Finnish tradition of the *Hiidenväki* 'troll people' (Vilkuna 1956. *Hiiden* is genitive of *hiisi*).

In Denmark and Southern Sweden, there are also traditions that have much in common with the Norwegian ones (Celander 1943:139–49). They concern hosts that travel around at Christmas as a soughing or racketing company of people, dogs and black horses passing in the sky, especially during storms. It may forebode death or accidents as well as abduct people, and it can force its way into houses and eat up the food. Widespread in Sweden is the custom of *Staffansridning* (Lid 1933:9–42; Liungman 1946). These traditions, too, differ from the Norwegian traditions. The most common variant in Denmark and Southern Sweden is a single huntsman with dogs chasing hags in the forest. In variants, however, the huntsman leads a hunting party (Celander 1943:141–43). Also, this tradition is not so commonly connected to (the time before) Christmas as to autumn (Celander 1943:159–60). In Sweden, the most common name for this is *Odens jakt* 'Odin's Hunt', in Denmark *Uensjægeren* and the like, normalized *Odinsjægeren* 'the Odin Hunter' (Hyltén-Cavallius 1863–68 I:162, 166; Celander 1920; Olrik 1901).

In Northern and Southern Germany, too, the tradition of the huntsman (alone or with a host) is common, often riding through people's houses (Huth 1935). In the north, he is called *Wodenjäger*, *Woenjäger* and the like, where *Woden* is considered to come from the name of the deity, Old Saxon *Woden* = Old Norse Óðinn. Further south and east, the short form *Wod* is used, or he is called *Der wilde Jäger* 'the Wild Huntsman'. As in Southern Scandinavia, he hunts for hags in the forest. Northern France has largely the same tradition, using the name *Chasseur sauvage*, which means the same. In England, there is also a tradition about a wild huntsman who comes to take away the souls of those about to die. In certain parts of Germany, a woman leads the Wild Host, called *Perhta* or *Frau Holle*. In Southern Germany, the Hunt has no leader; there, it is a host of deceased spirits travelling across the sky, especially during storms. This collective crowd is called names like *Die wilde Jagd* 'the Wild Hunt' or *Das wütende Heer / Das Wutesheer*, 'the Raging Army' (Olrik 1901;

Plischke 1914; de Vries 1931, 1962). The element *wüt-* / *wut-* comes from the same root as *Woden*.

This Wilde Jagd or Wütende Heer has a double meaning similar to what we have seen in Scandinavia: it also refers not only to supernatural beings, but also to processions of mummed humans touring the neighbourhood for fun, food and drinks (Eike 1980:269–70).

Where the Wild Host has a leader, this leader is sometimes understood as a legendary hero or king: Sigurd in Norway, Valdemar Atterdag in Denmark, Dietrich of Bern in Germany, King Arthur in England, etc. (Plischke 1914:16, 23, 39, 42).

In Southern Scandinavia as well as in Northern Germany, it was common to give Odin's horse or horses the last sheaf cut in autumn or the last tuft of grass during haying. Odin's dogs or the Wild Huntsman's dogs might be given a slaughtered animal or bread or beer. The offerings were believed to bring a good harvest, luck with the livestock or luck in a more general sense. They were made during haying, harvest or before or during Christmas (de Vries 1931; Celander 1920, 1943:150; Lid 1933:143–49). Similarly, in Norway it was common to leave out food and drinks for the Wild Host when it was expected (i.e. especially before or during Christmas), in the house or outside, for good luck (Lid 1929:33–67). In Southern Scandinavia and on the Continent, however, the Wild Host and the offerings to it are connected to autumn more than to (the time before) Christmas (Celander 1943:159–60).

The Wild Host is often associated with wind, especially in mountainous or Atlantic areas, or the Wild Host simply *is* a gale (de Vries 1931:25; Celander 1943:86, 90, 94, 98, 120, 135; Eike 1980:246, 287–88, 298). In the areas where the Wild Host is connected to autumn, it is more often linked to flocks of migrating birds and the noise they make (Olrik 1901; Celander 1943:147–48, 159, Eike 1980:288). In many traditions, it is clear that the Hunt is a host of nocturnal, deceased spirits (de Vries 1931:25; Celander 1943:76, 148–50). In others, such as the Icelandic tradition, it is elves (Celander 1943:108, 110, 114–18, 134, 137–40, 166–69).

Discussion

Comparison of the traditions

If we now return to the suggested backgrounds to the Stállu traditions, there can be no doubt that Lid was following an important lead when he pointed out the similarities between Juovlastállu and the Norwegian Oskoreia / Juleskreia / Julesveinane / Ståle(sferda) etc. In the following, I will examine the similarities and differences between the Sami and Norwegian traditions in more detail. The information about Juovlastállu presented above can be summed up as follows:

a. There is a Troll Juovlastállu as well as a human disguised as Juovlastállu.

The Troll Juovlastállu:

b. Demands that people stay inside and do not make noise during Christmas and is used by humans to threaten children to observe the norms.
c. Will come with a *ráidu* of mice, rats and lemmings at nights around Christmas.
d. Demands that people ensure they have enough firewood for the whole holiday before Christmas and tidy up around the chopping block so that Stállu's *ráidu* does not get stuck.
e. Will come into the tent or hut for refreshments; therefore, water and meat should be left out to him.
f. Punishes severely those who do not observe the Christmas norms.
g. As punishment, he will in particular catch disobedient children in a sack trap and abduct them, either eating them or returning them to the same place much later.
h. Lives in a large gorge.
i. In one legend, children hide from Stállu in a woodpile.
j. Can assume the shape of the moon or a bird and enter the hut or tent through the smoke vent in the roof.

The human Juovlastállu:

k. Is disguised to resemble Troll Stállu.
l. Goes to Christmas parties.
m. Pokes the girls with a stick, sometimes half-burned or phallic-shaped.
n. Tours the farms around Christmas, demanding beverages and bread as "taxes for the king".
p. Is accompanied by men called *hoammát*.
p. Is accompanied by a singing crowd with a number of frontmen called *Daban*.

I will now compare these aspects with Norwegian tradition.

a. This is the same as in the Norwegian traditions. The terms *Julesveinane*, *Julebukken* and *Julegeita* refer to supernatural beings as well as humans imitating the supernatural beings (Eike 1980:261–64).

b. Stay inside, do not make noise, frighten children: Such ideas are very common in connection with the Juleskreia etc. in Norway (Eike 1980:249).

c. *Ráidu* of mice etc. To this, I know no direct analogue, but it is not unusual in Norwegian tradition that the Juleskreia etc. ride on other "impossible" or

odd means of transport: saddles, empty barrels, brooms, bowls, pots, anchors, trammel hooks, poles, sticks, billy-goats, pigs (Lid 1929:56; Celander 1943:92–93).

d. Enough firewood before Christmas and tidy well afterwards: This is common throughout all of Norway, people would do this to avoid trouble with the Julesveinane etc. (Celander 1943:77, 86–87, 98–99; Eike 1980:259). Sources from Masfjorden, Western Norway, also mention that, if people did not tidy well, the Julesveinane could bump into something (Lid 1929:55; Celander 1943:99; Eike 1980:258–59).

e., **n.** Refreshments for Troll Juovlastállu / human Juovlastállu: In Norwegian tradition, it is quite common that people would leave bread or beer near the door for the Stålesferda, Julesveinane, etc. the nights before or during Christmas (Lid 1929:55, 63; Celander 1943:98; Eike 1980:254). This is the variant of the belief in which the Wild Host does not trouble people if they observe the norms. Even more widespread was the belief that the Wild Host would try to force its way into people's homes and eat all the Christmas food, drink all the Christmas beer and do all kinds of damage (Celander 1943:80, 83–85, 97, 123). The friendly, joking human variant of Julebukkane is very common in Norway (above). In Sami, the term corresponding to this form of *julebukk* is *juovlastállu* (Kåven et al. 1995:279). The Norwegian human Julebukkane will in some areas demand a "tax" (*skatt*) or claim to be the bailiff (*fut*. Eike 1980:264).

f., **m.** Troll Stállu punishes severely / human Stállu punishes jokingly, with a stick or similar: The idea that the supernatural Juleskreia etc. will abduct people is very common in Norwegian tradition (Eike 1980:249; Lid 1929: 57, 60). In many places, especially in Northern Norway, the human Julebukkane etc. would jokingly punish people who did not give them what they demanded, or who slept too long on Christmas Day, especially by whipping them with brushwood. Therefore, the human Wild Host was in Northern Norway often called *Juleskåka*, *Juleskjerkja* or *Juleskjekelen*, meaning approximately 'the Christmas Thrashing' (Lid 1929:62, 101–02). However, I know of no Norwegian analogue to the mentioned characteristics of Stállu's stick. But there are examples that the Wild Host, if rejected, break other taboos connected to bodily functions. In Sør-Audnedal, Agder, the Julebukken would come on Christmas Eve and sit on the chimney when Christmas porridge was cooked, and if he did not get his share, he would defecate into the chimney (Lid 1929:60). Taboo notions linked to the Wild Host may have been more common than the material reflects, since it is well-known that taboo subjects are underrepresented in the recorded material (Frykman 1979).

g. Abducting people, especially children, and sometimes returning them:

this motif is very common in Norwegian tradition, although it happens to adults more often than children (Eike 1980:249). Catching disobedient children in a sack trap: to this particular way of abducting people, I know no analogue in the Norwegian tradition about the Juleskreia etc. In Norwegian troll traditions, however, catching children in a sack is well-known.

h. Lives in a gorge: Setesdal's Ståle lives in a cave (Skar 1961–63 [1903–16]:418). In Danish tradition, it is also mentioned that the leader of the Wild Host lives in a cave (Ellekilde 1931:146).

i. Children hide from Stállu in a woodpile: I know no analogue to this in Norwegian tradition. But a common motif is that the Julesveinane etc. seek shelter in the neat pile of Christmas firewood (Lid 1929:52–56, 60–61).

j. Through the air, down through the smoke vent: it is very common in Norwegian tradition that the Juleskreia etc. moves through the air, and it is quite common that it/they enter through the chimney (Lid 1929:52–56, 60–61; Celander 1943:98). The next step in this part of the Juovlastállu tradition is also quite common in Norwegian tradition, when representatives of the Julebukkane etc. descend onto woodpiles on the rafters and then down onto the bar over the fireplace (Lid 1929). This way of entering corresponds to their being sprites flying in the air, Lid points out (ibid:94, footnote 5). The Northern Norwegian Gandferda sounds like a flock of birds (Aasen 1873: 207; Ross 1971 [1895]:225, 989 + p. 13 / 1013; Nicolaissen (1879–87 I:44–45; Heide 2006, ch. 4.12.3.) and, in Sogn, Western Norway, the Juleskreia can be a flock of crows (Hægstad 1912:82). The Southern Scandinavian Odinsjægeren is clearly inspired by flocks of migrating birds (Olrik 1901: 154). According to Peter Christen Asbjørnsen, two moons can be seen when the Oskoreia is around (Bergh 1990:90).

k. Disguised to resemble Troll Stállu: this corresponds to the very widespread Norwegian tradition of human Julebukkar, which was discussed above.

l. Human Stállu goes to Christmas parties: this, too, corresponds to the very common Norwegian tradition about human Julebukkar, Julesveiner etc., as noted above.

o. Accompanied by men called *hoammát*: this is a loanword from Norwegian (Qvigstad 1893:193–94; Lid 1933:44, footnote 1). Late Old Norse *hofmaðr* referred to "a person belonging to an aristocratic man's company" (Fritzner 1883–96 II:32. Literally 'court man'), and Modern Norwegian *hovmann* denotes a "clerical officer, escort" (Aasen 1873: 301). In Trøndelag (Sparbu), one of four supernatural Julesveinar was called *Hømann*, which is the same word (Lid 1929:57), and as Lid points

out (1933:44, footnote 1), the term *hoammát* corresponds to the notion that the Norwegian Julesveinar in many places have the title *embetsmenn* 'office-holders'.

p. Accompanied by a crowd with frontmen known as *Daban*: this is also a loanword, from Norwegian and Swedish *Staffan*, probably through Finnish *Tapani* (Lid 1933:23–24, 44), which is part of the Julebukkar / Julesveinar tradition, as we saw above.

Although there certainly are differences between the Sami and the Norwegian traditions (especially points c., g., i., j.), the overlap is so extensive that they clearly form parts of the same general tradition. If we compare Juovlastállu to Ståle in particular, many similarities are lacking, but the Stålesferda, 'Ståle's travel', nonetheless resembles closely the Oskoreia and Lussiferda from the same area as well as the Western Norwegian Juleskreia, Julereia, etc. (Skar 1961–63 [1903–16] I:418–22). Moreover, the Juovlastállu and Ståle traditions also have unusual traits in common. Regarding the leaders, both Stállu and Ståle are trolls (a. There is a Troll Juovlastállu as well as a human disguised as Juovlastállu. ., Lid 1933:54–55), and as trolls, both are connected to legends about the blinding of trolls and trolls tricked into falling off cliffs (ibid:55). Stállu lives in a gorge, Ståle lives in a cave (h.). Both Stállu and Ståle appear in legends where they have fixed residences and both are reflected in place names in the mountains (Lid 1933: 56). At the same time, the 1200 km between the Juovlastállu and Ståle traditions make it improbable that the one is borrowed from the other in recent times. Because of these circumstances, and the similarity between the terms *Stállu* and *Ståle*, there are very good reasons to believe that these terms and the traditions surrounding them have a common origin, i.e. that both are remnants of a tradition that at some point was distributed through large areas of Scandinavia.

This might at first glance seem implausible because of the enormous distance between the areas where the Juovlastállu and Ståle traditions are recorded. However, Ståle's Setesdal district is culturally the most conservative in all of Norway. For example, Setesdal's dialect has preserved the dative case well over 100 km away from the nearest other dialect to do the same (Sandøy 1987:100). Another example of Setesdal's cultural conservatism is the lesser known meaning of the name *Oskefisen* (*Ask-*), 'the Ash Lad', who is the main character of many folk-tales. In an area stretching continuously from Swedish Finland through Sweden to Trøndelag on Norway's west coast, *oskefisen* (*ask-*) also refers to a sprite living under the fire(place), causing whistling or crackling, or spitting that makes the fire flare up or the ashes blow. This is also attested from one place in Setesdal, at least 250 km away from Trøndelag. This probably represents a "relic island" (Heide 2012:78). The tendency also applies to traditions that in mod-

ern times seem to have a northern distribution in Norway: The *gandfluge,* 'supernatural insect to be sent forth by ritual specialists to do damage', is best known from Trøndelag and Northern Norway, but is attested as far south as Setesdal (Heide 2006:76, 156). Admittedly, these distances come nowhere near the 1200 km between Juovlastállu and Ståle. But there is, in fact, a "stepping stone" in Sunndalen, North-Western Norway. There, a legend is recorded about a man called Ståle: He lives under an overhanging rock in the mountains, is strong like at troll and comes down to the settlements to trouble people and make hullabaloo (Beito 1974:52–53, recorded by A.B Larsen 1883–84). This Ståle assumes an intermediate position between (Juovla)Stállu and the Ståle of the Christmas Stålesferda. Still, however, there are more than 900 km from Sunndalen to the Juovlastállu area. But there are examples of relic islands much farther apart than this. The masculine noun *áni* / *åne* 'fool, oaf' is attested in Iceland and on the Island of Senja, Northern Norway, and nowhere else (Sigfús Blöndal 1920:35; Ross 1971 [1895]:28), both apparently remnants of an Old Norse **áni* (which seems to be reflected in the compounds *ánagangr* m. and *ánóttr* adj. [also found on Senja] in the fourteenth-century Icelandic *Áns saga bogsveigis* (1829:341. See Heide 2018:152). In this case, the distance is c. 1400 km. Reflections of Old Scandinavian *gandr* (m.) in the probably original meaning 'staff, log' are only fond in Iceland and Finland's Ostrobothnia, the extremes of the Scandinavian language area (Heide 2006:122–24), 1600 km apart. The Wild Host traditions clearly are very old, and therefore, it is not problematic to understand the Juovlastállu and Ståle areas as relics of a previously large, continuous area.

The great overlap between the Juovlastállu traditions and Norwegian, Finnish and Swedish traditions about the Wild Host counts against the Stállu traditions deriving from historical encounters between the Sami and non-Sami aggressors, because the traditions of the Wild Host appearing around Christmas clearly are not historical.

The apparent ancientness of the Wild Hunt traditions also implies that the earlier attestation of Troll Stállu – before 1780 as opposed to the 1890s (Lindahl & Öhrling 1780:431; Lid 1933:43–48) – should not be regarded as decisive to our understanding of the origin of the Stállu tradition.

The Etymology

What could a common origin for (Juovla)stállu and Ståle be? I agree with Lid that a derivation from Sami *stálli* 'steel' is not plausible, and I would like to add a few reasons for this. Firstly, this etymology only considers *Stállu* and does not account for the combined *Stállu* / *Ståle* tradition. Secondly, the link between *Stállu* understood as derived from *stálli* and his *ruovdegákti* 'iron shirt' is problematic because steel and iron are not the same. In Medieval times, as in later times, the term steel, Old Norse *stál*,

was reserved for temperable iron (containing more than 0,3% carbon), which was intended for sharp edges (Granlund 1972:377). This was a costly, scant product and would not be used for chain mail. Thus, Stállu's alleged wearing of chain mail could hardly explain his name Stállu, even though it resembles (Sami) *stálli* 'steel' (a term borrowed from Scandinavian). On the other hand, the iron shirt can easily be explained as part of a folk etymological explanation for the name *Stállu*.

Lid argues (1933:55 / 63) that the common starting point for Stállu and Ståle is a wooden or stuffed, male-like figure or idol, connected to the harvest costumes mentioned above and also partly to Christmas, such as the Danish *Stodderen*, *Høstmanden*, *Staffensmanden*, the Swedish *Stådaren* and *Knutgubben* and the Norwegian *Gudmund*, *Fakse* – or a human imitation of such a figure, which Lid argues that the human Juovlastállu is (Lid 1933:61–63, 1929:158–69; Nielsen 1979). On this basis, Lid explains *Stállu* and *Ståle* from a modern Norwegian masculine *stål* (m.), "old, stiff man", and the verb *ståle,* "walk stiffly and totteringly" (Ross 1971 [1895]:755), which is derived from the noun. The original Ståle/Stállu would then be a figure or idol of the mentioned kind understood as an old man (Lid 1933:61, 63. Similarly Birkeli 1938:202f). To this, Celander (1943:137, footnote) objects that Lid's essential meaning "old man" is "not very enlightening" ("föga upplysande"). I agree. This meaning does not seem to grasp the essence of the tradition of the Stålesferda / Oskoreia / Juleskreia / Juovlastállu. Lid appears closer to the gist of the complex when he says that the essence of Oskoreia / Juleskreia is "the wild host [*skreid*] that 'rides from farm to farm'" ("rid um hus". Lid 1933:42). This seems to be reflected in most of the names: *Juleskreia*, *Våsedrifta*, *Julesveinane*, *Jólasveinar*, *Das wütende Heer* (a host), *Oskoreia*, *Julereia*, *Lussiferda*, *Stålesferda*, *Gandferda*, *Odens jakt*, *Odinjægeren*, *Wodenjäger*, *Die wilde Jagd* (riding, traveling, a riding hunting party). I cannot present a complete list here, but most of the remaining names seem to refer to having or assuming the shape of goats and billy-goats – *Julegeita*, *Julebukken*, *Julebukkane*, *Julegeita*. As far as I can see, none of the names refer to such a figure or idol as Lid has in mind. Another problem is that Lid places the common origin of *Stállu* and *Ståle* in Proto-Germanic times, whereas nothing indicates that the masculine *stål*, from which Lid derives *Stállu* and *Ståle*, is very old. It is confined to two small areas in north-western Norway, quite close to each other ([Ross 1971 [1895]:755; Torp 1919:709).

There is, however, another Norwegian *stål*, a neuter noun, that may fit better. The neuter *stål* means (*Norsk Ordbok* 1966–16 11:67):

A. "a densely packed layer of hay, (unthreshed) grain or the like in a barn; a pile",
B. a room or barn for *stål* in the meaning just noted, and
C. "a compressed mass of live beings; a crowd, flock, school", as in

fiskestål “a school of fish”, *sildestål* “a school of herring” and *skreistål* “a school of Arctic cod”.

Meaning B. a room or barn for stål in the meaning just noted, and . is, apparently, derived from A. “a densely packed layer of hay, (unthreshed) grain or the like in a barn; a pile”, . Meaning A. seems to be ancient, as it is found all over Norway, with an *i*-mutated variant, *stæle* (same meaning. Torp 1919:709; *Norsk Ordbok* 1966–16 10:1629), Swedish *ställe,* “the bottom layer of standing sheaves in a barn”, in principle older than the fifth-century *i*-mutation (Schalin 2017), and with cognates in other Germanic languages. Southern German *Stadel* is “a hay or grain barn”, English dialect *staddle* “the base of a stack”; Swedish dialect also has the form *stägel,* “the bottom layer of standing sheaves in a barn”, = Danish *stejle* (Torp 1919:709; Grimm & Grimm 1854–1961 17:417; Upton et al. 1994:390; *Ordbok över svenska språket* 1898–32:13958; Rietz 1862–67:692; *Ordbog over det danske sprog* 1918–56 21:1119). The original meaning clearly is ‘(something) standing’, namely the standing sheaves in the bottom layer of a stack or the like, as Torp points out. He reconstructs the Proto-Scandinavian form of the neuter *stål* as **staþla*, a derivation from the root in Old Norse *standa,* ‘to stand’, which had the supine form *staðit* (Torp 1919:709, cf. Pokorny 1959:1007).

If we assume that meaning C. of the neuter *stål* also existed in Proto-Scandinavian times, it is a good candidate for explaining *Stállu* and *Ståle*. The plural of neuter **staþla* would be **staþlu* (cf. **barnu*, plural of **barna* ‘a child’, Prokosch 1939:241), and the loss of the þ would be analogous to the development in Old Norse **nāþlu* (a feminine) > *nállu* ‘a needle’ (North Sami form). The retaining of the *-u* would be the same as in, for example, (North Sami) *ráidu* (above), from Proto-Scandinavian **raidu*, and *skálžu* ‘seashell’, from **skalju* (Aikio 2006:14; Theil 2012:64–68; Bjorvand & Lindeman 2007:976–77, both fem. sg.).

Meaning C. of the neuter *stål* comes very close to *skrei*(*d*) and *drift* in *Juleskreia* and *Våsedrifta* etc.; *Skreia* also appears as a simplex name of the Wild Host (Celander 1943:87). A *drift* is a drove of livestock, and a *skrei* is “a crowd, pack of people, animals or birds” moving forward – or “an avalanche” (*Norsk Ordbok* 1966–16:115, 10:115). In most variants of the tradition, the Wild Host is described as a teeming pack of supernatural beings and animals. For example, the Northern Norwegian *Gandferda* / *Gongferda* is referred to as “a swarm of dead” (Celander 1943:90–91), and the Juleskreia in Sogn is said to “travel with a loud rumble as if from a large drove of cattle” (ibid:78). Thus, it would make very good sense if (*Juovla*)*Stállu* and *Ståle*(*sferda*) derive from a word that meant something like ‘a compressed mass of live beings; a crowd, flock, school’.

If this is indeed the origin of *Stállu* and *Ståle*, it implies that the terms originally referred to a host and that the individuals *Stállu* and *Ståle* secondarily

emerged as leaders of the host and the term then transferred to them. This is a common way of understanding the relationship between *Das wütende Heer* and the god *Woden* (e.g. Plischke 1914:81; de Vries 1931:30ff). There are also many examples that a leader has secondarily been added to the host. Some examples from Norway: *Trond* (a common man's name), *Horgekongen* 'the king of the *horg* mountain' (from where the host came in some cases), *Gudmund* (a common man's name), *Guddursbassen* (probably a corrupt form of Gudmund + *basse* a big, strong man'), *Jul-Anders* ('Christmas Anders'), *Lussi* (because of St. Lucia's Day), etc. (Celander 1943:96; Eike 1980:265, 269; Christiansen 1922). Other examples are mentioned above.

It is, however, uncertain, even improbable, that meaning C. of the neuter *stål* developed as early as in Proto-Scandinavian times. The development in itself is a common one, found in e.g. Old Norse *múgi* 'a crowd; a heap, stack', where the latter meaning is the original one (Torp 1919:463). Another example is English *heap*, which in Scandinavian – the Old Norse form is *hópr* – means 'a host, flock' (Hellquist 1948:242). Also, terms like *stack* can be used informally in this sense (as internet searches demonstrate). An interesting example of this tendency is found in the Norwegian Wild Host tradition. In one account from Western Norway, the Juleskreia is described as containing "ei heil såta med folk", 'a whole stack of people' (Hafslo, Eike 1980:244). A *såte* comes very close to a *stål*. However, the 'host, flock' meaning of *stål* is confined to Western Norway, and this may be seen as an indication that it is not as old as Proto-Scandinavian times. On the other hand, this does not in itself exclude the possibility that it really is.

It may be better, however, to understand *Stállu* as a loan from a later Scandinavian form, an Old Norse *stál*, which in all probability existed in all meanings listed under A.–C. above, even though it is not attested – with the *-u* added in Sami. In Sami, nouns are supposed to end in a vowel, so if a borrowed word does not, a vowel is added. In neuters, it is usually *-i* (e.g. the mentioned *stálli* 'steel', probably from Old Norse *stál*) or *-a* that is added, but it can also be *-u* (Qvigstad 1893:51).

Questions may be raised regarding the explanation of Stállu and Ståle that I put forward here because the Stállu / Ståle traditions are not recorded in Old Norse texts. However, there is reason to believe that only a fraction of the narratives and traditions that existed were recorded. Moreover, the description of Óðinn and his following (see especially *Eddukvæði I. Goðakvæði* 2014, *Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* 1931) have much in common with the traditions about the Wild Host from post-Medieval times, as has been pointed out especially by Celander (1943:140–75, especially 161–63). Óðinn is the leader of a host of deceased people (the *einherjar*), he or his riders (the *valkyrjur*) fetch them when they are to die, he and the gods are connected to Christmas through his name *Jólnir* and the designation *jóln* (the gods); in one story, he steals the Christmas food, he is the ecstatic god (cf. *wütende*), he often appears in dis-

guise and he is called the masked one, *Grímnir*; furthermore, a prominent member of his group, Þórr, chases hags and rides in a chariot pulled across the sky by billy-goats (not mentioned by Celander 1943:162–64) – just to mention the main aspects. There is a correspondence between nearly every aspect of Óðinn and his group and the tradition of the Oskoreia etc., as Celander points out (ibid:163). Many of the essential aspects of the Wild Host traditions can also be deduced in the earliest known versions of Óðinn. The day name Wednesday / óðinsdagr, which is a calque of the Latin *dies Mercurii* 'day of Mercury', originating in the Roman / Germanic border area along the Rhine in the early centuries AD, tells us that the Óðinn of this time was identified with Mercurius. Among other things, Mercury was a god of commerce, communication, and travel and he was a psychopomp (guiding souls to the realm of the dead; Phillips 2006). When we take into account that over-land trade at this time implied large, noisy caravans of draught and pack animals and their drivers, the similarity with the Wild Host is considerable. Admittedly, the name Óðinn is not found in the Norwegian Wild Host tradition, but this seems to reflect a medieval circumstance: the god's name belongs to the tradition of the Wild Host in those parts of Europe where there are pre-Christian place names formed from the name, not in those regions where such place-names are not found (Celander 1943:163).

Ideas similar to those lurking behind the term *Stállu* / *Ståle* may well have existed in Sami culture prior to borrowing the name/term. *Weekends* and *second-hand shops* existed in Norway before these terms were taken into Norwegian in the late twentieth century, to partly replace *helg* and *brukthandel*. Regarding the traditions discussed in this article, similar traditions are found across much of the world (Plischke 1914:27–28; Celander 1943:172), so there is no reason to believe that they were not found among the Sami before the introduction of the term *Stállu*. This may be compared to how the term *Halloween* and the Halloween costume has been introduced in Norway during recent decades. As shown above, similar costumes were common in Norway long before the introduction of the modern Halloween, although Halloween occurs nearly two months earlier (like the old South Scandinavian and German traditions mentioned above) and Halloween has added some traits to Norwegian tradition (for example jack-o'-lanterns).

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[1] I translate all quotations from Scandinavian languages without notification and add the original wording only when this seems to matter.

[2] Today, *juovlastállu* in North Sámi also means 'Santa Claus' (Kåven et al. 2000:249). This is clearly a very late development, parallel to what has happened to the Icelandic *jólasveinar* (Widding 1976:343).

[3] The most thorough presentation of the Oskoreia itself and the other Norwegian and Icelandic variants is Celander 1943, then Eike 1980. Regarding these variants, see also Lid 1933:52ff, Bø 1987:81ff, Opedal 1930:105–06, Opedal 1934:122, Aasen 1923:70–71, Helland 1900: 418ff, 1901:653ff. More sources are listed in Bø 1987:170 and Sivertsen 2000:316–17.

Of Wavering Flames and Fires

Northern Lights in Icelandic Sources

Aðalheiður Guðmundsdóttir

Abstract

Many tourists who visit Iceland desire a unique and genuine Icelandic experience. One of the things that attracts international visitors to the country is its northerly position, its alien brightness and the interplay of landscape and climate. An important part of this is the northern lights. With the increased interest shown by foreign visitors, many Icelanders now desire to inform their guests and to share information about the culture of the past. How common were the northern lights over Iceland in days gone by? Did early Icelanders descry something in the northern lights more readily in other conditions than now, when the stimuli were fewer and the darkness deeper? Did they leave behind stories about the northern lights and do such stories leave traces of superstition related to them? And finally, does something indicate that the northern lights are more common in the oldest sources than people have supposed up until now? In this article the sources on the northern lights, as well as stories about them, will be called forth and placed in context. These are all Icelandic tales that have been preserved from the past until today, and behind them superstition may certainly be discerned, which shows that Icelanders since olden times have been fascinated by the northern lights, and detected something in them in the fullest sense of the word, which they believed to have predictive qualities.

Keywords: Icelandic literature, Icelandic folklore, legends, northern lights, aurora borealis

Although fishermen from foreign lands trawled along the shores of Iceland from the beginning of the fifteenth century and possessed knowledge of Icelandic nature, weather, and winds, it was not until the mid sixteenth century that merchants, captains, and other travellers set about recording descriptions of the island and its inhabitants. Still later they came eager to explore, and some of them crossed the rock into the wilderness. In some cases, they came to see with their own eyes the mountain Hekla and the glacier Snæfellsjökull, and that amazing landscape that was formed in time immemorial by the forces of fire and ice. Still others went out of their way to acquaint themselves with the people who lived in the country and who had not only survived there in severe conditions from generation to generation, but also boasted an impressive past.

Foreign travellers, particularly in the seventeenth century up until the twentieth century, did not set off on long and harsh journeys northwards

across the Atlantic Ocean with the intention of amusing themselves and enjoying a pleasurable life, but rather to acquire life experience and scientific knowledge; these were explorers. More often than not their expeditions turned into hazardous voyages and various things occurred that no one could have expected. Although the purposes had certainly been dissimilar it is interesting to compare this group with tourists today, particularly those who seek adventure travel or extreme tourism. Today foreign travellers flock to Iceland with the same objective; to study the culture of the people and the natural beauty of the island, and to experience something unusual.[1]

One of the things that attracts international visitors to the country is its northerly position, its alien brightness and the interplay of the landscape and climate. An important part of this is the northern lights that are, for many of the visitors, a new and fantastic experience. Seeing the northern lights for the first time can be a long-held dream, and in many cases, they are imbued with magic. With such increased interest shown by visitors, it is also evident that many Icelanders desire to inform their guests and to share information about the culture of the past. How common were the northern lights over Iceland in days gone by? Did early Icelanders descry something in the northern lights more readily in other conditions than now, when the stimuli were fewer and the darkness deeper? Did they leave behind stories about the northern lights and do such stories leave traces of superstition related to them? And finally, does something indicate that the northern lights are more common in the oldest sources than people have supposed up until now? In this article the sources on the northern lights, as well as stories about them, will be called forth and placed in context. Those presented here are all Icelandic tales that have been preserved from the past until today, and behind them superstition may certainly be discerned, which shows that Icelanders since olden times have been fascinated by the northern lights, and detected something in them in the fullest sense of the word, which they believed to have predictive qualities.

Sources that are treated in the following discussion include a generous range of works from medieval times into the nineteenth or even twentieth century lore; from Eddic poems, *Íslendingasögur* [Sagas of Icelanders], *fornaldarsögur* [Legendary Sagas], traditional ballads, and poetry to travelogues, topographies, and popular legends. Since the aim of the analysis is to study these sources in relation to cultural expression across disciplinary boundaries, the most important method is that of comparative literature, which allows us to understand the context of the local tradition from within, as well as in relation to the cultures of the neighbouring countries. The main focus, however, is on the Icelandic sources, and while some more thorough comparison with foreign traditions, as well as with other kinds of omens and celestial phenomena would be a desirable approach, that is outside of the scope of this article and must be treated separately.[2]

The Earliest Sources

The northern lights, which were called *aurora borealis* in Latin and known universally under this term supposedly first used at the beginning of the seventeenth century,[3] were widely mentioned in ancient sources, particularly by the Greeks and the Romans. Early medieval records of the northern lights testify that people were often terrified by the phenomenon. The northern lights were usually regarded as bad omens predicting earthquakes, plagues, war, and famine. They were often interpreted as a sign from God. Historical records from medieval times bear witness to sightings of the northern lights over continental Europe (Maraschi 2018:302–11), and amongst others, the famous descriptions of the northern lights over Russia in the year 921.[4] On the other hand, it is generally claimed that there are no sources about the northern lights over Iceland until the most recent centuries. Also widely mentioned, however, is one medieval source that tells of the northern lights but it is neither Icelandic nor a direct source on the northern lights over Iceland, because it concerns the Norwegian *Konungs skuggsjá* [Speculum regale or King's Mirror], which was written in the period 1250–60 and tells about the northern lights over Greenland.[5] *Konungs skuggsjá* was actually a known work in Iceland, is preserved in Icelandic medieval manuscripts, and it is likely that Icelanders knew about the lights which are described there. It appears that they saw no reason to cut the narrative from the text of the Icelandic manuscripts, as sometimes was done if people did not understand it in the context of the meaning in the original sources, or if they judged that it was not relevant to a new body of readers. The value of *Konungs skuggsjá* for matters concerning the northern lights or the lack of them over Iceland in the medieval period is implicit particularly in that the settlements of the Norse in Greenland, in both the western [Vestribyggð] and the eastern [Eystribyggð] settlements, were, in the former case, at roughly the same latitude and, in the latter, more southerly than Iceland. Since the source attests the northern lights in this area, it may be assumed that they were seen over Iceland as well, even though the so-called auroral zone or oval is in fact variable and does not always follow the same degree of latitude (Þorsteinn Sæmundsson 2012b:3; Akasofu 1979:53–55, cf. the discussion of Brekke in Bøe 2004:38).

Konungs skuggsjá takes the form of a conversation between father and son, and the father says that he is not familiar with the northern lights himself, but describes them according to the accounts of others, and further delineates the three most common theories of wise people about the nature of the northern lights. The description, which is detailed, is his answer to his son, who has often asked him about "þ*at* er grœnlændingar calla norðrlios [what the Greenlanders call the northern lights]". His answer is established not on one specific testimony, but on the descriptions of the people who have "iðulega … langar stunnder … ágrœnalaŋde ƿæ rit *[frequently* had

been in Greenland for long periods of time]" (Holm-Olsen 1945:32–33).[6] *Konungs skuggsjá* in other words shows signs of second-hand descriptions of various individuals, as well as the readings and inferences of learned people.

Since the father says that he has not seen the northern lights himself, people have naturally wondered whether they were rare at the time of the account. It is difficult to speculate about this since the author is unknown and he could have been from the southern part of Norway, an area where the northern lights were rarer in the thirteenth century, although it is believed that the work was written for King Håkon [IV; Håkonsson] the Old (d. 1263) in Bergen. Nonetheless, people have wondered whether the reason for the lack of sources from the Middle Ages was simply a lack of the northern lights, and thus also over Iceland, and even that the earth's magnetic field shifted through the ages, or that the solar activity was lesser in degree in former times (Brekke & Egeland 1983:21–23; Þorsteinn Sæmundsson 2012a:n. pag.). Here it is still important to keep in mind how *Konungs skuggsjá* is structured and the kind of knowledge that is conveyed. The son asks his father repeatedly about what the Greenlanders call the northern lights and obtains detailed answers concerning his questions; when his questioning turns to Iceland he enquires about the nature of the great volcanic eruptions and receives thorough responses about them (Holm-Olsen 1945: 17 ff.). In other words, the father answers only what his son asks, and his query concerning the northern lights turns to Greenland but not to Iceland or Norway. On the whole, the son asks only about that which is characteristic for each area in and of itself, which does not necessarily mean that the same phenomena are not to be found elsewhere. The testimony of *Konungs skuggsjá* has thus long been regarded as misleading, and what is more, Peder Claussøn Friis (d. 1614), who translated this exact passage in the sixteenth century, saw cause to change it, and determined expressly that the northern lights could be seen over Greenland, Iceland, and Northern Norway.[7]

Given the extent of the medieval sources, that is to say, the writing of history, and learned and vernacular literature, it is natural for people to consider why the authors of these works do not every now and then mention the northern lights. Here it is necessary to take three things into account. In the first place it is important to look at the nature of the sources; Icelandic medieval literature is more narrative than documentary, where environmental factors such as weather and celestial phenomena seldom make their way into accounts except for rhetorical purposes or when relevant to the subject matter. A shortage of descriptions of climatic conditions should hardly be taken as an indication that the weather was stable at all times, and in the same way few direct descriptions of darkness cannot mean that it was not dark. In literature bad weather is an omen for difficulty, and sometimes it was connected to actions that result in being lost at sea or even shipwrecks,

in addition to the fact that people were delayed because of weather or were stranded outdoors. We might therefore ask: Why should people have recollected the northern lights at all in the medieval saga literature? In the second place it is necessary to look at the application of the concept and thus what words people could have used about the phenomenon we call the northern lights today. In the third place it is worth considering the imagery of the figurative language and the mythological connections, since it could be more helpful to look at sources that convey religious and folkloric ideas rather than literature, even if the latter can certainly include religious features. This will be discussed in more detail later.

Usually it is thought that Íslandslýsing (Lat. *Qualiscunque descriptio Islandiae*) [Description of Iceland], which has long been attributed to Bishop Oddur Einarsson (d. 1630) in Skálholt, is the oldest Icelandic source on the northern lights. The source, which was written in 1588–89, is indeed valuable and Oddur's account is at once an extraordinary description of nature and a testimony about people's interest in the phenomenon. An excerpt from the original Latin text offers an example (Oddur Einarsson 1928:22):[8]

> Prætterieram fere cæleſtes flammas siue lumen illud admirabile, quod Islandi uocant [*Nordurljos*, hoc eſt ſeptentrionale lumen, quod uidelicet eo magis appareat, quo uiciniores ſint homines polo ſeptentrionis. Hol lumen idcirco rebus admiratione dignis annumero, quia cauſas ejus a nemine hactenus discere potuimus. Aliqui uolunt eſse capras physicorum ſaltantes, quod an uerum ſit, ipsi uiderint. Quoties certe nobis apparuerat, perinde uiſum eſt, ac ſi totum cælum ignibus correptum conflagraret, qui ignes admirabili agitatione ſursum ac deorſum tam celeriter diſcurrunt, ut miraculosam istam flammarum commotionem uix potueris contueri sine quadam cerebri conturbatione. Apparet autem potiſsimum tempore autumnali et hyberno totis continue noctibus, præsertim cum majores ſunt serenitates. Non desunt, qui affirment hoc lumen oriri ex refractione radiorum ſolis oblique circumeuntis extremitatem terræ, qui, cum incidant fortaſse in copiam niuium aut glaciem pellucidam, hanc claritatem in aëre faciunt.

The most important characteristic of this source is that it suggests that Icelanders have long known the northern lights, although they have had difficulty understanding or explaining the phenomenon, and that the northern lights are commonplace and can even be seen entire nights in succession. Moreover it appears that Icelanders generally speak about the northern lights at this time (cf. *norðurljós*), even though Oddur himself chose to speak about celestial flames (*himinlogar*).

Oddur was not alone among his contemporaries in writing about the northern lights, because somewhat later his son, Gísli (d. 1638), also a bishop of Skálholt, compiled annals and it is recorded there, among other things, that in the years 1608 and 1609 rainbows were often seen at night, signs in the sky that adopt various shapes and "… splendorem subito fulgurantem ab oriente";[9] it is not obvious how we should interpret these phenomena but it is worth mentioning that arced northern lights have been portrayed

as a rainbow in non-Icelandic sources (Akasofu 1979:35). It is also not a simple matter to guess about the characteristics of the fiery flames which Gísli Oddsson says gleam "supra vastitatem maris bybernis maxime noctibus".[10] Such gleams, which are "varij et magni pluribus locis",[11] he says have often been seen in the year 1638 (Halldór Hermannsson 1917:15–16, 38; Gísli Oddsson 1942:31–33, 65). Apart from this he wrote a short work about the wonders of Iceland (Lat. *De mirabilibus Islandiæ*) where he goes further than his father, with a more detailed description of the northern lights. Like Oddur he says that it was customary to call the phenomenon *norðurljós* [northern lights], yet he himself speaks at the same time about "nocturnus insignis" (*næturljómi* [nocturnal luminance]), "lumen cœleste" (*himinljós* [celestial light]) and "flammarum" (*logi* [flames]). He thinks it likely that the northern lights are known not only over Iceland, but also on the outermost spits of Northern Norway (Halldór Hermannsson 1917:34; Gísli Oddsson 1942:59–60). The Frenchman Isaac de la Peyrère (d. 1676) who wrote travel books about his stays in Iceland and Greenland in the years 1644 and 1647, was of the same view, and claims that the northern lights were visible over Iceland, Norway and Greenland (de la Peyrère 1647:102–3).[12]

In the mid seventeenth century Jón *lærði* (the learned) Guðmundsson (d. 1651) mentions the northern lights in his discussion of a certain *norðhvalur* [Greenland, or arctic, right whale] (Halldór Hermannsson 1924:xv, 28), and in an annal which is thought to be from the seventeenth or eighteenth century there is furthermore mention of the vision of fishermen who first thought that it was the northern lights, but seemed unsure about the nature of the lights when they transformed into red and finally dark red light, which illuminated the sea (*Annálar 1400–1800* 1922–87:III 333). In a topographical account of Iceland by Peder Hansen Resen (d. 1688) from the latter part of the century the northern lights are mentioned in the manner of *Konungs skuggsjá* and Oddur Einarsson.[13] There are few northern lights accounts in the poetry of the seventeenth century, since poets did not compose about nature with the romantic sentiment that would emerge later. The view of nature was realistic; the sun warms and storms rage. Bjarni Gissurarson (d. 1712), however, who wrote his poems in the seventeenth century and on until the eighteenth, frequently addresses weather descriptions in his poems and mentions in one of them "hringmyndað loft / með himinljósum [annular sky / with celestial lights]" (Bjarni Gissurarson 1960:33). Although the reference is broad and does not necessarily deal with the northern lights, it may be that he used the northern lights as a metaphor in one of his poetical letters, where he discusses radiantly bright light which passes below the mountain slope (Bjarni Gissurarson 1960:40). It is evident that sources from the seventeenth century are not exhaustive here, still, much can reside in unprinted documents and older print materials. Foreign sources indicate how-

ever that the northern lights were relatively infrequent in Northern Europe in the latter part of the century.[14]

There are more and fuller sources about the northern lights in the eighteenth century, and among them the accounts of Þormóður Torfason from 1706, Johann Anderson from 1748, Niels Horrebow from 1752, *Ferðabók* [Travelogue] of Eggert Ólafsson and Bjarni Pálsson about their journeys in Iceland in 1752–57 (publ. 1772), the account of Uno von Troil (publ. 1775), the essay of Magnús Stephensen about climate from 1783 and *Ferðabók* [Travelogue] of Sveinn Pálsson, written in 1791–97.[15] Particularly interesting is the colourful description of Þormóður Torfason (d. 1719), which relates that in his youth people were often frightened of the northern lights, and even believed that the northern lights were able to put them under some kind of spell ("viros qvoqve ad trucem illius aspectum obstupuise").[16] The report by Anderson (d. 1743) is also noteworthy, as he says that Icelanders predict weather according to the colour and the sound of the northern lights; that yellow and pink northern lights are an omen for frosty and dry weather while reddish hues indicate rain or wind. Beautiful and skipping northern lights he says portend energetic storms or great frost (Anderson 1748:103; Þorvaldur Thoroddsen 2003–9 II:234–35.)[17] and similar testimony about weather forecasting can be found in Horrebow's (d. 1760) descriptions (Horrebow 1966:179–80).[18] Furthermore, these works testify that systematic observations of the northern lights were being conducted already in the eighteenth century, cf. the statements by Horrebow who carried out his observations on the climate in Iceland in the years 1749–51 (Horrebow 1752: 391–478, cf. Þorvaldur Thoroddsen 2003–9:II 243). Similarly, Magnús Stephensen (d. 1833) mentions in his work *Um Meteora, edr Vedráttufar, Loptsiónir, og adra náttúrliga tilburdi* á *sió og landi* [On Meteors, or Weather Patterns, Celestial Events, and other Natural Phenomena on Sea and Land] of 1783, that his contemporaries had already begun to measure the northern lights with a magnetic needle. He claims that the northern lights are common in fair weather and calm skies and that sometimes they can be heard "eins og suda eda hvinr í loptinu [like a buzz or whistle in the sky]" (Magnús Stephensen 1783:162–63). From Magnús's writings it is apparent that people in his time had great and yet divergent views on the northern lights.[19] Among the most extensive records are probably the surveys of Sveinn Pálsson (d. 1840) who measured the frequency of the lights,[20] and those of Eggert Ólafsson (d. 1768), who detailed the northern lights all over Iceland and distinguished them from other types of celestial lights. According to his testimony the northern lights were common in Iceland around the eighteenth century in innumerable variations (Eggert Ólafsson 1981:I 6, 71, 177, 228, II 20, 184–86).[21] In this perspective, it is not surprising that words such as *norðurljós* [northern lights] and *himinljós* [celestial lights] become entries in word lists of the eighteenth century, such as those of Jón Ólafsson

(d. 1779) and Björn Halldórsson (d. 1794).[22] Foreign explorers who were specifically interested in the northern lights include the Frenchman Yves-Joseph de Kerguelen-Tremarec (d. 1797) who published his travelogue *Relation d'un voyage dans la mer du Nord* [Account of a Journey in the North Sea] in 1771.[23]

More Recent Sources

In the nineteenth century scholars took an interest in the northern lights, both in the humanities and in the sciences. Among figures in the humanities, Finnur Magnússon (d. 1847) is probably the most worthy of mention. In his edition of *Sæmundar-Edda* (*Den ældre Edda*) of 1821–23, he maintained that in pre-Christian times people held the view that the northern lights were caused by the reflection from the shields of the Valkyries, as they rode in the air and accompanied battle-slain warriors to *Valhoļl* (Finnur Magnússon 1821–23:I).[24] Still, it is possible that Finnur Magnússon was influenced by Georg Christian Braun, who published his book on Nordic religion in 1819, and said that Norwegians believed that the northern lights showed the Valkyries in the skies (Braun 1819:54). Whether or not the idea was just in accordance with the spirit of the times, it is safe to say that Finnur Magnússon did the concept one better in that mythological interpretation, which enjoyed the favour of scholars, and its influence extended to foreign works.[25]

Scandinavians were at the forefront of the field of northern lights observers in the latter part of the nineteenth century, for example Sophus Tromholt (d. 1896) who stayed in Iceland while researching in the winter of 1883–84 for the Danish Meteorological Institute. It is believed that Tromholt was in Iceland during a period of bad weather and little came of his observations, despite performing his experiments at the mountain Esja and Skólavörðuholt, in and around the capital city Reykjavík. In addition, the Danish Meteorological Institute supported another exploration to Iceland under the leadership of Adam Paulsen (d. 1907). Accompanying him was the artist Harald Moltke (d. 1960), who captured the diverse forms of the northern lights in images, both in Iceland and elsewhere in the Nordic countries (Stauning & Henriksen 2008:2–78; Brekke & Egeland 1983:28, 81–86; Þorsteinn Sæmundsson 2012a:n. pag.).[26]

Like other scholars, Tromholt attempted to distinguish various shapes appearing among the northern lights and he recorded them himself in numerous drawings. In his description of the corona, which is a relatively rare appearance of the lights, he tells us (Brekke & Egeland 1983:33):[27]

> Then a strange sight appears. The whole sky, in all directions, is covered with ray-bundles, and they all shoot towards that point (the magnetic zenith) and so transform the vault of heaven into a mighty dome of flames, its beauty no word is able to express and no brush is able to paint. All the brilliant shades of colour, which together

compose the seven coloured rainbow, are here meeting to decorate the glorious vault of light …

In spite of his words, it is clear that the artist Moltke made quite an impressive attempt to capture the corona in one of his paintings (Stauning & Henriksen 2008:61–62), and the same can be said of the poets, who seized the beauty of the heavens in words. One of them was, indeed, Finnur Magnússon himself, who not only researched the relationship between the northern lights and mythology, but also wrote about the northern lights in his poem *Rökkurrímur* [Twilight Ballad], where he deems them silvery and calls them shimmering like newly-fallen snow (Jón Helgason 1959:174). Another poet, Grímur Thomsen (d. 1896), depicts a powerful image of nature, the lights and gods in his poem *Ásareiðin* [The Ride of the Gods], which begins (Grímur Thomsen 1934:1):

Jóreyk sje jeg víða vega
velta fram um himinskaut –
norðurljósa skærast skraut.–
Óðinn ríður ákaflega
endilanga vetrarbraut.

Far and wide I see the horseman's dust cloud
roll forth from the heavenly pole –
the clearest splendour of the aurora.–
Óðinn rides fiercely
the whole length of the winter road.

Benedikt Gröndal (d. 1907) says that Icelandic winter nights either darken in harsh weather or are enveloped in the flames of the northern lights. For him, the northern lights were important and in his poem *Ísland* [Iceland] he speaks about the star rose which gleams and radiates through the northern lights; in another poem, *Vorvísa* [Spring verse], he says: "ríður um reginleið / rósfagurt norðurljós [rides along the road of gods / aurora fair as the rose]" and that his island, Iceland, was "blikandi dregin dúk [covered with shimmering cloth]". In the poem *Næturgali* [Nightingale] he calls the northern lights *segulljós* [literally 'magnetic lights' referring to *aurora*] (Benedikt Gröndal 1946:20, 22, 83–84, 100; 1981:98–100, 105, 165).[28] Several other poets wrote about the northern lights, such as Bjarni Thorarensen (d. 1841), Jónas Hallgrímsson (d. 1845), Sigurður Breiðfjörð (d. 1846), Steingrímur Thorsteinsson (d. 1913), Þorsteinn Erlingsson (d. 1914), Matthías Jochumsson (d. 1920), Hannes Hafstein (d. 1922) and Stephan G. Stephansson (d. 1927). Just as for Finnur Magnússon, the northern lights belong to the romantic national view of nature, and a realm of magic comes into being when the northern lights are reflected in the snow. It may be said that Icelandic poets in the nineteenth century used the northern lights as a kind of glittering illumination sparkling luminescence, which perfects their bewitching natural image. As with Benedikt Gröndal, so too does Matthías Jochumsson

speak of *segulljós* [magnetic lights],[29] while Steingrímur Thorsteinsson refers to *næturljómi* [nocturnal luminance] in the same way as Gísli Oddsson,[30] while Jónas Hallgrímsson talks about *glaðir næturglampar* [merry twinkling lights at night-time] (Jónas Hallgrímsson 1847:158). In addition Jónas wrote a detailed description of the northern lights over Grímstungnaheiði in the Icelandic highlands, which was published in Danish in the *Landfræðisaga* [Geographical History] of Þorvaldur Thoroddsen (publ. 1892–1904). Among other things, Jónas describes his magnificent sight of one of the most powerful expressions of the northern lights, the corona (Þorvaldur Thoroddsen 2003–9:IV 208–10).[31]

At about the same time, travel descriptions of foreign explorers multiplied,[32] and in the travel account of Richard F. Burton (d. 1890), who stayed in Iceland in the summer of 1872, it is mentioned that Icelanders were no longer able to whistle at the northern lights to lure them closer to themselves (Burton 1875:68). While testimony about this is lacking in older domestic sources, there are, however, Sámi tales from the same period that warn people against whistling at the northern lights or provoking them in any way (Lundmark 1976:88; Brekke & Egeland 1983:4). Comparable tales can be found in northern Canada and Alaska, where the custom of whistling in the direction of the northern lights is referred to and shows signs of people's attempts to communicate with them, since whistling is in effect people's response to the sound believed to emanate from the northern lights (Akasofu 1979:8, 10; Ray 1979:17, cf. Gustafsson 2018:128). The Icelandic poet Sigurður Breiðfjörð, who stayed in Greenland during the years 1831–34, familiarized himself with the religious traditions of the Greenlanders and he explains that they believe that the souls of the deceased dwell in the heavens: "og eru norðurljósin filkingar þeirra sálna, er eiga þar bústaði; mun þeim vera kalt, og eru þær að knattleikum nætur allar [and the northern lights are the ranks of the souls which reside there; evidently they are cold and are playing ball all the night]" (Sigurður Breiðfjörð 1836:47).[33]

A considerable number of sources on the northern lights come from the nineteenth century, whether they are in the form of scholarly discussions, fiction, or popular legends, some of which contain superstition, i.e. belief in supernatural influences, leading to good or bad luck. Various legends are attributed to Eiríkur Ólafsson from Brúnir under the Eyjafjöll mountains (d. 1900) and one of them tells about when Eiríkur witnessed a gathering of hidden people early one morning, when the northern lights were in the sky (Jón Þorkelsson 1899:99):

> Einn nýjársmorgun fyrir dag man eg eptir því að eg var orðinn kirkjubúinn, og stend í bæjardyrunum. Þá var heiðrikja og norðurljós, en ekki tungl. Sá ég þá að fjöldi af fólki gekk vestur túnið fyrir neðan bæinn. Eg fór inn í bæ og sagði fólkinu, að það væri mart fólk að fara vestur túnið. Nokkuð af fólkinu kom út, og sá einginn neitt, nema húsmóðir mín sá eins og eg, og sagði hún það alt vera huldufólk, er ætlaði til sinnar kirkju; og fólkið var ekkert hlessa á þessu, því það var þá í almæli, að það væri

fjöldi til af því. Þetta voru að tölu 20–30 manns, karlar og konur og börn á öllum aldri.

[One New Year's morning before daylight I remember that I had got ready for church and was standing in the entryway. There were clear skies and the northern lights, but no moon. I then saw a crowd of people go west over the field below the farmhouse. I went into the house to say that there were many people going west across the field. Some of those who were inside came out, yet no one saw anything, except my mistress who saw as I did, and she said they were all hidden people who were on their way to their church; and our people were not surprised by this, because it was common knowledge that they existed in great numbers. These amounted to about 20–30, men and women and children of all ages.]

Many tales mention that a flickering of light accompanies the hidden people, although no further explanation is given.[34] A legend from the same century speaks of unexplained flickers of light which are connected to the dead, because it was said that lights above a certain farm occurred at the same time a person on the farm died. Nothing is reported in more detail about the nature of the lights which were seen in the sky in November 1885.[35]

An example of the northern lights as an omen of danger or agitation is found in 1896 when the northern lights were particularly active before the earthquake, and from that point they aroused dread among people who remembered that time (Sigurður Ægisson 2001:B 13). The difficulty with the validity of tales from nineteenth-century oral tradition is that they mix concepts of natural as well as supernatural emanations of light which either perform the same role or do not.[36] Here we may mention nightly visions in the sky [*vígabrandar*], spirit orbs [*vafurlogar*], Saint Elmo's fire [*hrævareldur*], lights hovering over buried treasure [*fjárlogi*, *mundarlogi*], *ignis fatuus* [*málmlogar*, *mýrarlogar*] and all kinds of dim lights and flames that disappear when people attempt to approach them.[37] All in all, the sources show clear signs that in the nineteenth century people's understanding of the northern lights was quite dissimilar, learned as well as popular, and it even occurred to a jokester or two to tease a companion and persuade him that there were barrels full of the northern lights (Þorsteinn M. Jónsson 1964–65: V 310–11).[38]

Northern lights research progressed in the twentieth century, and in 1957 the magnetic observatory of the University of Iceland was built in Leirvogur in Mosfellsbær, where measurements were taken of magnetic disturbances linked to the northern lights. As time passed, research became continually more multifaceted. In 1995, radar stations were installed in Stokkseyri and Þykkvibær in the south of Iceland, which were run by the British and French in collaboration with the Science Institute of the University of Iceland (Þorsteinn Sæmundsson 2012a:n. pag.). Today there is a research centre, *Arctic Observatory*, run in Kárhóll in Reykjadalur, Þingeyjarsýsla (https://karholl.is/is/). According to the most recent research it appears that the activity of the northern lights has been variable over past periods of time, both

in terms of frequency and in the extent to which they have been observed in a northerly or southerly direction (Brekke & Egeland 1983:21–23). It is more natural to relate informants, such as the father in *Konungs skuggsjá*, who knew the tales about the northern lights even though he had not seen them himself, to the period of time when the northern lights had not been seen or been common in the sky over central and southern Norway, than to conclude that the northern lights were unusual in the Middle Ages, which must be considered rather a long time.

Stories about the northern lights increased in the twentieth century, and one of them tells how the poet Einar Benediktsson (d. 1940) had tried to sell the northern lights, but no further sources have been found for the tale; the story seems to be pure fiction (Guðjón Friðriksson 2015:n. pag.). It may be that this narrative is associated with the idea that the northern lights could be caught and even transported in barrels, as the tale from the nineteenth century showed – and why not then make them an exportable commodity? Conceivably, it might have occurred to Einar Benediktsson to sell access to the northern lights, just as is done today. Like many poets of the same time, Einar Benediktsson wrote about the northern lights, and in a poem that first appeared in print in 1897 under the plain title *Norðurljós* [Northern Lights], he speaks of "rafurloga [charged particles or electric flames]", "gullhvelfdan boga [gold-vaulted bow]", "ljóshafsins öldur [waves of the light-sea]" and "hringspil með glitrandi sprotum og baugum [playset with shining spears and rings]" to mention a few innovative poetic expressions (Einar Benediktsson 1945:103). Although the natural sight is still romantic, it is not unlikely that the poet got the idea about "rafurlogar [charged particles or electric flames]" from the bearer of enlightenment Magnús Stephensen, who invented the term "raf-kraptur [electrical power]" and said that some thought the northern lights were electrically-powered fire (Magnús Stephensen 1783:163–64).[39] Among other poets of the twentieth century, mention should be made of Hulda (d. 1946), Davíð Stefánsson (d. 1964) and Jóhannes úr Kötlum (d. 1972), but more recent poets are quite numerous. One of Jóhannes's poems is called simply *Norðurljós* [Northern Lights], and stanzas three and four are as follows (Jóhannes úr Kötlum 1926:18–19):

Þá kviknaði alt í einu snögt
á undralampans kveik. –
Og sjá, hin björtu blysin guðs
sér brugðu í fagran leik.
– Þau þutu víða vegu geims
og vóðu blámans hyl,
og leifturhraðar litasveiflur
lýstu jarðar til⟨.⟩

Að lýsa þeirri drottins dýrð
ei dauðleg tunga kann.
– En helga nálægð himinsins

mitt hjarta þegar fann.
Og lúin sál mín lagðist þar
við lífsins bjarta ós,
og svalg á einu augnabliki
öll þau norðurljós.

[Then kindled quickly all at once
the wick of the wonder lamp. –
And look, the god's bright flares
burst into beautiful play.
– They dashed in space far and wide
and rushed the deep blue,
and fleetly-flashing hued oscillations
set alight the earth.

No mortal tongue can
reveal their lord's glory.
– Yet suddenly my heart sensed
the holy nearness of heaven.
And my weary soul lay there
at life's luminous estuary,
and gulped in one moment
all the northern lights.]

From the romantic view of nature of the earlier poets, the northern lights become part of a symbolic world that expresses the spiritual wellness of the artist.

For most people, the northern lights were something wholly other than spiritual nourishment or a symbol for the light of the soul, rather they were at the same time a natural phenomenon and an omen, as can be seen in a survey of the National Museum of Iceland, which in 1970 sent out questionnaire no. 21 about folk belief related to celestial bodies [*himintungl*].[40] In their responses people generally referred to the superstition that they were familiar with in their environment, alternately in adult life or in childhood. Rather than tracing these examples, reference can be made to the work of Sigurður Ægisson, who dealt with the folk belief survey in particular, and thus can be sampled responses of various individuals. The most frequent observation from these recent sources is that people took an interest in the movements of the northern lights, as well as their colours. Usually great activity and nuance were said to presage a storm, whereas if the northern lights hovered still it anticipated calm (Jónas Jónasson 1961:144; cf. Sigurður Ægisson 2001:B 12); great, bright and stationary light could be an omen of frost. There are variations in individual descriptions, and even examples of people who had differences of opinion, and that much movement was thought to forecast calm weather. Others thought that when the northern lights were seen late in the winter one could expect snow. In these cases, people used the northern lights to predict seasonal weather conditions, as well as weather in the near future.[41]

Northern Lights as an Omen of Misfortune

People have long taken into account the effects of the northern lights on human health, both spiritual and physical. At the end of the sixteenth century Bishop Oddur Einarsson held the view that people could become bewildered by looking at the lights, and the same view was held by his son Gísli Oddsson, who thought that few people could gaze for any length of time at the northern lights, because that could cause rattling of the brain and dizziness (Oddur Einarsson 1971:63; Gísli Oddsson 1942:59). The same attitude occurs in more recent sources, and in the worst case it was believed that people could become "snarvitlaust [absolutely mad]" if they looked too long at the northern lights, especially those that "bröguðu mikið [flashed a lot]" (Sigurður Ægisson 2001:B 13). It was not thought advisable for a pregnant woman to stare at the northern lights or twinkling stars, because that could have an undesirable effect on the unborn child, which could either be born with blinking eyes or be cross-eyed (Jónas Jónasson 1961:259).[42] This example resembles a widely-known folk belief, according to which an unexpected sight or emotion of an expectant mother could have a lasting effect on the child, which bore the mark of the vision forever after (Shildrick 2002: 40–41 and further 28–47). These examples show that the northern lights have been regarded as hazardous and that people were even advised not to pay them too much attention. On the other hand others thought it better to be safe than sorry and use the northern lights as a frame of reference, as the circumstances dictated, to avoid misfortune.[43]

Generally it was especially red northern lights that were associated with misfortune, though it has not been in all cases. In Scandinavia, testimonies about red northern lights were already recorded in the period between 1538 and 1602 by Joen Petri Klint, where they are specifically associated with war and even red clothes and burning blood (Gustafsson 2018:126–28). In Iceland, reddish light heralded uncommon events, such as war or strife and, moreover, volcanic eruptions and seasonal weather conditions. It was thought that the belief in red northern lights as an augur of conflict was common anywhere they were seen,[44] and from the testimony of Magnús Stephensen it is clear that the same understanding was in place in Iceland in the eighteenth century. On the other hand, he criticizes the old superstition that is related to what is known as northern redness [*norðurroði*] and northern lights, as if they had something to do with conflicts, plagues, and the like. He says (Magnús Stephensen 1783:164–165):[45]

> At nordr-rodinn bodi fyrir stríd, blóds-úthellíngu, drepsótt edr hallæri; og at sá skuli gánga af vitinu, sem stari á norðr-liós edr stiørnur, eru gamlar kerlínga-villur og fíflslig hiátru, sem á eingum fœti stendr; eingu at sídr er hún nógu krøptug til at giøra allrahanda síonhverfíngar, og sýna uppi í loptinu strídandi her, elldlig vopn og vagna, og annat þeßháttar.

[That northern redness boded conflict, the spilling of blood, plague or famine; and that people would go out of their wits if they stared at the northern lights or stars, are old wives' tales and foolish superstitions, which do not stand on solid ground; still they are strong enough to cause all kinds of optical illusions, and reflect in the heavens combatting armies, fiery weapons and wagons, and other things of this kind.]

According to this, Magnús Stephensen was of the opinion that the northern lights awakened the power of people's imaginations exceedingly. The belief in the reddish northern lights as a forewarning of misfortune doubtless bears the explanation in the colour of the lights that may occasionally resemble blood. Such an example can be seen in the description of reddish lights in the sky that split up and took upon themselves on the one hand the colour of the blood of the living and on the other that of the dead.[46] The description recalls the older narrative mentioned earlier, recorded in an annal from the seventeenth or eighteenth century about the fishermen. Completely red northern lights in the sky are rarer than green, blue and violet, and it is understandable that they have been granted predictive power, at least beyond more common colours,[47] and many examples show that red northern lights were considered blazes (Akasofu 1979:13). In the nineteenth century, people were aware of the belief that blood-red northern lights were thought to be an omen of good weather conditions, and that faint, ruddy northern lights foreboded snow (Sigurður Ægisson 2001:B 13). In his travel account, Richard F. Burton says that the Icelanders used to call scarlet red northern lights *lofteldur* [skyfire], and that they predicted losses.[48]

Although examples of red northern lights as a bad omen do not exist in Icelandic sources until the eighteenth century, we might want to remember that in earlier times, people used the word *logi* (cf. *himinlogi* [celestial flames]) for the northern lights in general, which means that reddish northern lights would probably have been called *rauðir logar*, or reddish flames. This recalls a famous refrain from the traditional ballad about Ólafur liljurós [Olaf Lilyrose], who died of his wounds after being injured by an elf woman. As it says in the poem, his blood ran down his horse while "raudur logienn brann [the red flame burnt]" (Íslenzk fornkvæði 1962:I 25). Could it be that the protagonist Ólafur fell under the burning sky of the northern lights, which at the same time foretold his death? It would not be the only case where the northern lights were connected to the interaction with elves in particular, and in Scandinavian variants of the same ballad we find the concept "elvelogji/elvelue [elf flame]" instead of red flame in the Icelandic poem (Blom & Bø 1973:65; Grundtvig 1882:179).[49] It is difficult to determine the age of the Icelandic verse but the oldest preserved manuscript is from 1665 (Íslenzk fornkvæði 1962:I 24–28; AM 147 8vo, pp. 14r–16v). Still older is *Darraðarljóð* [Dǫrruðr's Lay], where bloody clouds and blood-coloured air conceal a prediction of the outcome of the Battle of Clon-

tarf in 1014.[50] Although the figurative language has not been considered in context with ruddy northern lights, and while there is neither a direct reference to light nor flame, it should be mentioned that in the poem there are indeed Valkyries who depict the blood-red scene, and as will be considered in more detail later, it may be that the Valkyries' relationship with the northern lights is a traditional aspect of Nordic folklore.

Enveloping Flames and Trembling Gates

As previously mentioned, people have long thought that the northern lights were nowhere referred to in Old Norse literature, except for *Konungs skuggsjá*. The fact is that a similar story can be found in the Icelandic *Hemings þáttr Áslákssonar* [The Tale of Hemingr Áslákson] which is also believed to date from the latter part of the thirteenth century. In the tale a certain ship's captain relates what he saw while he sailed to Norway from Finnsbúðir east of the glacier in Greenland (*Hauksbók* 1892–96:335):[51]

… þa er ver hofðum siglt íj nætr undan landi. þa sam ver elld brenna. hann var sva langr at ver sam fyri hvarngan enda. hann var blar sem einn logi. byr var en bezti, oc matti hvergi hia sigla. var mitt rað at sigla þar a elldinn sem ver komum at oc lægztr var loginn …

[… When we had sailed two nights from land, we saw a fire burning. It reached so far that we could see no end to it. It was as blue as a flame. Although the wind was fair, it was not possible to sail past it. I advised that we sail directly into the fire from where we were and where the flame was at its lowest point …]

This appears to be a description of the northern lights, and they are likened to *logi* [flame], which is exactly the word used in conjunction with the word *norðurljós* [northern lights] in *Konungs skuggsjá* (cf. note 5, "sƿipan *n*de loge [enveloping flame]") (Holm-Olsen 1945:32) and from then on, at least until the days of the father and son Oddur Einarsson (cf. Latin *flamma*) and Gísli Oddsson, and even longer, as the poem about Ólafur liljurós indicates. Just as in *Konungs skuggsjá*, the narrative tells of the northern lights above the Greenland Sea, albeit after a two-day sail in the direction towards Iceland.

Another narrative that may be placed in the context of the northern lights descriptions such as *Konungs skuggsjá* and *Hemings þáttr Áslákssonar* can be found in the accounts of the Battle of Roncevaux Pass in *Karlamagnús saga* [The Saga of Charlemagne], where we learn about the dream of Charlemagne about a tremendous flame in the sky that frightens people: "hann þottist sjá ókyrrleik mikinn í lopti, hvassviðri mikit, regn ok snjó ok ákafligr logi. Ok því næst féll sú furða á hans menn, svá at þeir hræddust ok œptu allir hárri röddu ok kalla á Karlamagnús konung sér til hjálpar [it seemed to him that he saw a great disturbance in the sky, a powerful storm, rain and snow and a keen flame. And then this marvel befell his men, that they be-

came frightened and all cried out in a loud voice and called upon King Charlemagne for help]" (Unger 1860:527).[52] *Karlamagnús saga* was originally translated in Norway from French epic poems in the thirteenth century (A version), and the translation was reworked in Iceland in the fourteenth century (B version). The narrative is far from being as descriptive as the other two medieval sources, but it fits within the context of European medieval records where the northern lights and other kinds of celestial signs were interpreted as bad omens (Maraschi 2018:302 ff.). It is also worth bearing in mind that in other and more recent manuscripts (of the B version) there is no reference to a disturbance in the sky; rather it refers to "mjök kynliga luti [very strange things]" or something unusual and that it mentions both lightning and an eager flame, that is to say, the keen flame in the sky is separated from the lightning (Unger 1860:527). There are extant descriptions of the northern lights over continental and southern Europe in the Middle Ages, and they were so rare that people would occasionally faint or even go mad at the sight of them (Akasofu 1979:14; Maraschi 2018:312).

Another thing that might be mentioned in this connection, and which occurs in some medieval texts, is cairn fires [*ignis fatuus*], and depictions of them can indeed resemble the northern lights. Further, it seems that people have difficulty defining cairn fires no less than the northern lights, which may relate to the fact that both were thought to be from another world. As an example of this, we might mention *Þorskfirðinga saga* [The Saga of the People of Þorskafjörður] (cf. *Gull-Þóris saga* [The Saga of Gold-Þórir]), which relates the sight of Gold-Þórir when he returns from the sea and meets his companion Úlfr (*Þorskfirðinga saga* in *Harðar saga* 2009:183):

> … sá Þórir, hvar eldr var, nær sem lýsti af tungli, ok brá yfir blám loga. Þórir spurði, hvat lýsu þat væri. Úlfr segir: „Ekki skulu þér þat forvitnast, því at þat er ekki af manna völdum". Þórir svarar: „Því mun ek þó eigi vita mega, þótt tröll ráði fyrir?" Úlfr kvað þat vera haugaeld.
>
> [… Þórir saw a fire that was like the light of the moon over which stirred a blue flame. Þórir asked what kind of light it was. Úlfr responded: "That should not make you so curious, because it is not caused by human power". Þórir replied: "Shall I not know about it, even though trolls command it?" Úlfr said that it was a cairn fire].

In this case the episode's setting is Hálogaland in Norway,[53] and a similar narrative can be found in *Grettis saga*, as the protagonist, Grettir Ásmundarson, is situated for a time in Sunnmøre in Norway. Grettir says that such fires can also be seen in Iceland, where they are said to burn above treasure (*Grettis saga Ásmundarsonar* 1936:57). Cairn fires are also mentioned in *Egils saga Skalla-Grímssonar* where they are said to be frequently seen in Mosfell in Iceland (*Egils saga Skalla-Grímssonar* 1933:298). Although other types of celestial lights are also mentioned in Icelandic medieval literature, the connection with the northern lights is in many cases more

far-fetched, such as the light which appears above King Ólafr Tryggvason when he prays at night and perseveres for two to three hours. The same kind of light returns upon him shortly before his death (*Ólafs saga Tryggvasonar* in *Færeyinga saga* ... 2006:269–70, 345, cf. Brekke & Egeland 1983:9, 14).[54] In medieval records, the northern lights were thought to predict, among other things, the death of a king (Maraschi 2018:302, 308–9).

Moving away from the cairn fires, burning blazes, and ardent flames spoken of in *Hemings þáttr Áslákssonar* and *Karlamagnús saga*, we can now look to Nordic mythology, where fires burn in the sky, and are usually linked with the dwellings of the gods, the *jötnar* [giants] and other mythic creatures. Here we might mention, for example, the mythological residence of Gerðr Gymisdóttir from *Skírnismál* (*Eddukvæði* 2014:I 381–82) and Brynhildr Buðladóttir from the heroic poems of the Poetic *Edda* and *Völsunga saga* (*Vǫlsunga saga* 1906–08:66–68, 70, 73, 77),[55] who are marked or surrounded by *vafrlogi* [wavering flames]. In addition to the word *vafrlogi*, *Skírnismál* also speaks of *eikinn fúr* [vigorous fire] in a comparable meaning (stanzas 8–9 and 17–18), and it is clear that the fire forms a boundary between worlds. The habitations of Gerðr and Brynhildr are supernatural in this respect and predetermine which heroes are privileged to visit them, or to be more exact, the chosen horses of the heroes; on the one hand Sigurðr Fáfnisbani's Grani, who is the descendant of Sleipnir and the horse Óðinn chose for Sigurðr and, on the other hand the horse that the god Freyr gave Skírnir especially for the journey to visit Gerðr. In other words, only these particular horses, these divine gifts, are granted to ride through the wavering flames, in one case to Óðinn's Valkyrie and in the other case to the *jötunmey* [giant maid] in *Jötunheimar* [Jotunheim]. Additionally, Ólafur liljurós, or rather his Scandinavian parallels from the ballad *Elveskud*, recall Sigurðr and Skírnir, by riding in a similar manner through the elf flame, which clearly separates the elf world from the human one.[56] The idea of the *vafrlogi* may also have lived on in oral tradition, since in a fairy tale that was recorded in the nineteenth century, the male protagonist rescues a princess by igniting a protective firewall around them (Ásmundur Helgason 1947: 98–112).

The concept of the *vafrlogi* [wavering flames] as a wall of fire between two worlds is in itself widespread in European writings, and moreover can be found in other Icelandic medieval texts, in different contexts (von See et al. 1997:80–82). The wavering flame is, for example, highly reminiscent of the great cairn fires which Hervör, the heroine of *Hervarar saga og Heiðreks* [The Saga of Hervör and Heiðrekr], has to wade through at night in order to arrive at the mound of the berserks. From there she supposedly travels to the border of the other world, where she awakens her dead father, Angantýr. Upon her return, Hervör says (*Heiðreks saga* 1924: 33):

… helzt þóttumz nú
heima í millim,
er mik umhverfis
eldar brunnu.

[… it seemed to me
I was between worlds
where around me
fires burned.]

We are told that the flames diminish, that is to say that they do not burn constantly, or at least not always fervently, which indicates that when they subside, they become for Hervör a gateway to the other world, just as the *vafrlogi* of Gerðr and Brynhildr; in a similar vein, *Völsunga saga* tells us that the flame abates for Sigurðr (*Vǫlsunga saga* 1906–08:67). Whatever can be said about the cairn fires, the mythological connection of Gerðr and Brynhildr certainly gives cause to connect the idea of the *vafrlogi* to the northern lights, if the word *vafrlogi* is expressed as a flickering flame, and it can't be said that the northern lights do not flicker. These mythical dwellings, or rather these mythical dimensions, point at the same time to other kinds of residences of the Nordic gods, like Valaskjálf, the home of Óðinn, which is said to be in heaven, but within that is Hliðskjálf, his throne. In Gylfaginning of *Snorra-Edda* it is related that Valaskjálf is constructed by the gods themselves and is covered in clear silver (Finnur Jónsson 1931:25, cf. *Grímnismál* in *Eddukvæði* 2014:I 369). According to *Grímnismál* in the Poetic *Edda*, Óðinn and his wife Frigg sit upon Hliðskjálf and look out upon all the world. In *Skírnismál*, also in the Poetic *Edda*, Freyr sits on Hliðskjálf and also views the whole world and sees into *Jötunheimar* as well (*Eddukvæði* 2014:I 376, 380; Finnur Jónsson 1931:25). The name Hliðskjálf may be understood as a trembling gate, comparable to the shining northern lights belt, and Valaskjálf could then refer to Óðinn's rumbling silvery abode, to the quaking boundary that demarcates the world of the fallen or slain (*Valhǫll*, meaning the hall of the slain). In dictionaries, however, such possibilities are not mentioned.[57]

From *Snorra-Edda* it may be clear that Valhǫll is, like other dwelling places of the gods, in heaven. *Helgakviða Hundingsbana* II tells of when the fallen hero Helgi parts from his beloved Sigrún in the grave mound at daybreak and rides to Valhǫll. Upon leaving, Helgi says (*Eddukvæði* 2014:II 282, cf. Brekke & Egeland 1983:16–17):

Mál er mér að ríða
roðnar brautir,
láta fǫlvan jó
flugstíg troða;

I must ride the
reddened roads,

let the ashen steed
mount the steep ascent;

Just like the horses of Sigurðr and Skírnir, Helgi's pale horse (i.e. dead) treads the steep path to the world of the gods. In this instance it is certainly difficult to discern the nature of the red road, and whether it refers to the northern lights or to the red sky at morning, except that the morning redness does not conjure up as immediate a connection with roads as do the northern lights. Moreover, Helgi tells Sigrún that he must cross *vindhjálms brú* [the bridge of heaven] before the inhabitants of Valhǫll (the slain) are awakened; the bridge being a part of or a continuation of the red road. The overall metaphor is an important contribution to the discussion of northern lights in Icelandic heroic tradition. Furthermore, it is obvious that the poet Bjarni Thorarensen perceived that the road to Valhǫll would lie in the northern lights, as expressed in his poem *Sigrúnarljóð* [The Lay of Sigrún] (cf. also *Apturgönguvísur* [Phantom Verse] or *Til Sigrúnar* [To Sigrún]), which he composed about the subject matter of *Helgakviða Hundingsbana* II (Bjarni Thorarensen 1935:I 77):

Glöð skulum bæði við brott síðan halda
brennandi í faðmlögum loptvegu kalda
í gullreiðum norðljósa þjóta um þá!

Happy shall we both venture away
ignited in embrace on the chilly roads
and dash on them, in the golden reins of the northern lights!

Heavenly light and flames are otherwise prominent in the narrative world of the Helgi poems, and in *Helgakviða Hundingsbana* I this powerful view of nature is emphasized (*Eddukvæði* 2014:II 249–50):

Þá brá ljóma
af Logafjǫllum,
en af þeim ljómum
leiptrir kvómu;
– – –
*háv*ar und hjálmum
á Himinvanga;
brynjur váru þeira
blóði stokknar,
en af geirum
geislar stóðu.

Then radiance burst
upon Logafell [Flame Mountains, Fiery Peaks]
where from those gleams
came flashes;
– – –
bearing helmets
at Himinvangi [the mead of heaven; sky];

their coats of mail
spattered with blood,
and from their spears
shone rays.

Although some words are now missing from the stanza, it is clear from the context that the description deals with Valkyries who ride in the skies, and that rays are emitted from their weapons.

Regarding *Helgakviða Hundingsbana* II, it is evident that the red-coloured roads Helgi travels lead to the world of the gods, via a bridge. In view of this, and recalling Skírnir and Sigurðr, it is tempting to interpret the tricolour bridge Bifröst in a similar way, as a trembling passage between heaven and earth, or as a ridge (*röst*, *brú*) that vibrates (*bifar*), and yet it is clear that Snorri Sturluson (d. 1241) had another meaning for it, when he let High describe Bifröst and say to Gangleri: "kan vera, at þat kallir þv regnboga [it may be, that you call it a rainbow]".[58] It may be pointed out that with the words *kann vera* [can be, may be] Snorri asserts nothing about the nature of the bridge. Most likely is that Bifröst is same as Ásbrú [the bridge of the Áss-Æsir gods] in *Grímnismál*, but from *Gylfaginning* and *Grímnismál* one can see that it concerns a bridge that is composed of flames; in *Gylfaginning* High says to Gangleri that the red colour of Bifröst is caused by burning fire, and in *Grímnismál* it says: "ásbrú / brenn ǫll loga [Ásbrú / burns all of flames]" (*Eddukvæði* 2014:I 374). The flame that characterizes the bridge has little in common with the coloured bands of the rainbow, and in *Studier i Snorres mytologi* Anne Holtsmark (d. 1974) believes that Snorri had incorrectly linked Bifröst with the rainbow (Holtsmark 1964:54).[59] Like the words *vafrlogi* [wavering flame], Valaskjálf and Hliðskjálf, the word Bifröst connotes motion (cf. the bridge that vibrates), in addition to the reference that it burns and will break apart under the horses of the sons of the fire giant Múspell. The metaphor is even more suitable concerning the northern lights, as they certainly break apart continually, while a rainbow dissolves. Another orthographic variation of the bridge's name is precisely *Bilröst*, which has been interpreted as a bridge that *bilar/brotnar* [breaks down/breaks apart] (see *Grímnismál* and *Fáfnismál* in *Eddukvæði* 2014:I 377, II 306).[60]

Several more places in the world of the gods recall the northern lights, although not to as decisive effect, such as Valhǫll, which is bright as gold,[61] Glitnir, which has pillars and walls of red gold, and a roof of silver (cf. the word *glit* in the sense of *blik* [flash or gleam] and *ljómi* [brightness or radiance]), and Gimli, which is brighter than the sun itself (Finnur Jónsson 1931: 25–26).[62] All these mythological dwellings are located in the regions where Bjarni Thorarensen, Grímur Thomsen and Benedikt Gröndal would place the northern lights, that is, on the way of the gods or *reginleið* [the royal road], as told in the poem by Benedikt Gröndal (Benedikt Gröndal 1981:98):

Köld ertu, móðurmold,
mæt þó og unaðsæt;
ríður um reginleið
rósfagurt norðurljós.

Mother Earth, you are cold,
yet prized and blissful;
ride the royal road
the rosy northern lights.

In a similar vein, Einar Benediktsson speaks of "rafurljósin [electrical lights]" as "drottnanna hásal [the gods' great hall]" (Einar Benediktsson 1945:103), a kind of festival hall of the gods.[63]

As has become evident, the poets Grímur Thomsen, Benedikt Gröndal and Einar Benediktsson were not the first to relate the northern lights to the way of the gods or their great halls, since Finnur Magnússon also connected them with giant maidens and the sky ride of the Valkyries in his edition of *Sæmundar-Edda* (*Den ældre Edda*) of 1821–23. Finnur Magnússon had already gone far with the concept, especially since he reckoned that Gerðr herself might be no less than a symbolic representation of the northern lights. In *Skírnismál* Freyr tells how light extends from Gerðr's arms over land and sea (*Eddukvæði* 2014:I 381):[64]

Í Gymis gǫrðum
ek sá ganga
mér tíða mey;
armar lýstu
en af þaðan
allt lopt ok lǫgr.

In Gymir's courts
I saw walking
a woman so fair;
her arms shining
and from them
also sky and sea.

Finnur Magnússon thought that Gerðr's name signified her home, and referred to a fence (*gerði*), which encloses and envelops, like an enclosure, and – not least of all – the encompassing *vafrlogi*. Accordingly, the myth about Freyr and Gerðr, as it is portrayed in *Skírnismál*, refers to the origin of the northern lights in the province of the *jötnar* and the frost giants and how they are feminized in opposition to the sun, which is masculine like the god Freyr. Naturally, Freyr and Gerðr will not be able be enjoy each other's affections, no more than the essence of northern lights and the sun can ever be merged. It was with this understanding that Finnur Magnússon maintained that Gerðr and her dwelling place referred to the northern lights (Finnur Magnússon 1821–23:II 77, 171–75, 197).[65] Interestingly, in his poem

Ísland [Iceland] Benedikt Gröndal says that his native soil is "segulmeyjan silfurblá [lodestone Virgo silver blue]" (Benedikt Gröndal 1946:83; 1981: 165), which might be a reference to Finnur's interpretation of Gerðr.

Although it may be assumed that Benedikt Gröndal and other Icelandic poets functioned under Finnur Magnússon's influence, Nordic and Sámi tales indicate that the mythological connection of the northern lights is more traditional than merely to have been contrived from the aforementioned roots, i.e. by Finnur Magnússon. The role of the Valkyries corresponds in tales to the northern lights in that they were thought to be a kind of unmarried women in the other world, who alternately lit fires or danced by the hearth (see for example Lundmark 1976:88; Brekke & Egeland 1983:1 and further the discussion of Brekke in Bøe 2004:8). Sámi folktales from present-day Russia mention a divine being, Naainas, who is said to have vanished when the rays of the sun touched her, and this recalls Gerðr in Finnur Magnússon's interpretation (Lundmark 1976:89; Brekke & Egeland 1983: 6). Finally, the fiery weapons of the Valkyries may be compared to early medieval sources, attesting that in southern Europe the northern lights represented fiery swords in the sky (Maraschi 2018:306).

When it comes to the interpretation of Norse myths, little can be asserted, and yet it is right to keep in mind that sometimes it is necessary to interpret medieval literature in context and to read within individual texts from the testimony of others, rather than to derive meaning solely from the wording of particular manuscripts. It is however safe to say that the Poetic *Edda* and Snorri's *Edda* perpetuate a figurative connection to the northern lights, and possibly also some more common conceptions of mythological dwellings in the heavens. Scholars have previously discussed more general ideas, and specifically the association of mythical habitations with the Milky Way, without mentioning the northern lights explicitly. In his book *Leiftur á horfinni öld* Gísli Sigurðsson explains:[66]

> Ein leið til skilnings á norrænum goðsögum […] er að leita eftir heimsmynd sagnanna út frá hugmyndum um veröldina eins og hana ber fyrir augu manna: Jörðin er niðri, umlukin úthafi, en himinninn hvelfist yfir með bústöðum guða og annarra goðmagna og rennur saman við Jörðina í undirheimum jötna og forynja handan við ystu mörk þess sem dauðlegir menn ná til.
>
> One path to understanding the Nordic myths […] is to look for the world view of the tales from the conception of the world as it occurs before people's eyes: Earth is below, surrounded by the ocean, while the sky vaults above with the dwellings of the gods and other divine powers, and extends with Earth into the underworld of the *jötnar* and mythic beings beyond the extreme limits where mortals can reach.

Although Gísli Sigurðsson himself discusses the world view of the Norse myths in a broader context than the present study, his words can be applied to the threads that have now been passed between the sources and the evident interpretative possibilities. Interpretations of this kind are not unrelated

to how the myths have, over time, explained the natural phenomena that people have not succeeded in explaining through reason or in a scientific manner. It was through myths that people learned to recognize thunder and lightning as the blows of Thor's hammer and earthquakes as Loki's reactions to the drops of serpent venom as they fell upon his face. In the same way the northern lights had to fall within the world view that developed over a long period of time concurrent with people's intrinsic search for knowledge and understanding.

Conclusion

As shown in this article, it is apparent that numerous sources bear witness to the northern lights over Iceland in the distant past, though the oldest references among them are the fewest. They are mentioned occasionally in folktales, and it is worth keeping in mind that the essence of such tales is to give an account of uncommon things rather than the day-to-day. Thus, the legends relate momentous events that took place when the northern lights were visible in the sky, including the red-hued ones that were thought to bode misfortune and even death, just like the red flame that illuminated the narrative scene in the poem about Ólafur liljurós. The belief in red-coloured northern lights as a harbinger of conflict and adversity was actually common farther afield than in Iceland, and in this regard Icelandic accounts of the northern lights are comparable to foreign sources (Lundmark 1976:89; Gustafsson 2018:126–28; Brekke & Egeland 1983:6–7). A principal feature of Icelandic documentation about the northern lights is their predominant relationship with the weather, which is polymorphic. Some of the sources compare with tales from Northern Scandinavia, especially where the northern lights were said to prophesy wind, and it was customary, for example, to predict weather according to the colour and the sound of the northern lights in Hálogaland in Norway and among the Sámi (Lundmark 1976:87–88; Brekke & Egeland 1983:104).[67] Otherwise only a portion of Icelandic tales relate to those told in Northern Scandinavia, and, in foreign folklore the northern lights are not infrequently connected with the souls of the deceased or people's dead ancestors (Mathisen 2014:75–76, 83; Lundmark 1976:89; Brekke & Egeland 1983:1–9).[68]

As research in the empirical sciences has shown, the activity of the northern lights has varied from one period to another, not only in frequency, but also in how far north or south they were seen. It is therefore important to account for the possibility that stories about the northern lights have appeared in certain periods and not in others, although old stories could easily have survived in oral tradition and undergone changes. As with other tales, they reflect, more often than not, local beliefs, and perhaps it is no coincidence that Þormóður Torfason mentioned that the northern lights were able to

place Icelanders under a spell, since stories of enchantment have been prominent in Icelandic narrative tradition. Also, it is understandable that old tales about the northern lights reflect fear, for they were unexplained, and in fact a pure enigma even among Christian people before they came to be researched.

Although the latest sources referred to here were assembled around 1970, in many ways they manage to disclose the same kind of superstition. However, they are by nature different from the earlier accounts, since they are answers to direct questions, rather than reports conveyed via oral transmission. All in all, the stories bring the following to light:

1) Testimony about the northern lights is evident in Icelandic sources from the end of the sixteenth century,

2) as well as in medieval narratives like *Hemings þáttr Áslákssonar* [The Tale of Hemingr Áslákson], and even other and more obscure medieval sources.

3) In addition, myths and stories with mythological elements can be interpreted in such a manner that routes to the worlds of the gods – and even the habitations of divinities, supernatural beings, and Valkyries – are analogized to the northern lights.

4) Icelandic sources from the eighteenth century and later attest to superstition related to the northern lights. One of these does, however, indicate superstition among seventeenth-century people.

The result of these comparisons is that stories about the northern lights and conceptions of belief related to them must be considered traditional in Iceland, but naturally the number of sources grows the closer we get to the present. Various kinds of superstition are directly associated with the northern lights, and it may be that they inspired myths and were aligned with the gods and other supernatural powers. Whatever might be said about the oldest sources, it is certain that people, not least foreign travellers, attribute them even today to the realm of magic, and there is support for the idea of a "supernatural experience" for those who gaze at them. Ultimately, this is how the old ideas connect with the new ones.[69]

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[1] For an overview of descriptions of Iceland up until the eighteenth century, see Sumarliði Ísleifsson 1996: especially 11–71. Concerning foreign explorers in Iceland in the nineteenth century, see for example Unnur B. Karlsdóttir 2013:143; on the hopes and expectations of foreign travellers to Iceland and the romantic view of nature, see Unnur B. Karlsdóttir 2013:140–42, cf. Katrín Anna Lund 2016; Gunnar Thór Jóhannesson & Katrín Anna Lund 2017. On simi-

lar expectations in Northern Norway, see Mathisen 2014:74, 81. On explorers in Northern Norway from the seventeenth century until the nineteenth century and their accounts of the northern lights, see the discussion by Brekke in Bøe 2004:3–6, and about explorers at the North Pole, see Akasofu 1979:22–32.

[2] On earlier research on the northern lights as well as on other celestial phenomena, see Akasofu 1979; Brekke & Egeland 1983; Brekke in Bøe 2004; Sigurður Ægisson 2013; Mathisen 2014; Gustafsson 2018; Maraschi 2018. On comparative literary studies, see Damrosch 2006.

[3] It is believed that the concept was first recorded in print by the Italian Galileo Galilei (d. 1642) and shortly thereafter by the Frenchman Pierre Gasendi (d. 1655) (Brekke & Egeland 1983:37). Slightly earlier, the Swedish vicar Joen Petri Klint (d. 1608) called the same phenomenon *casmata caelorum* (Gustafsson 2018:126).

[4] The Arabian explorer Ahmad ibn Fadlan, who travelled to the northern regions in the territories which correspond to present-day Russia in the years 921–22, described the northern lights and said that the inhabitants thought they were heavenly beings in battle (Cosman & Jones 2008:237).

[5] The phrase comes in a description of Greenland, where it says, among other things: "En sa lutr er þu hæfir opt æpter spurt hvat ɣæra man þ*at* er grœnlændingar calla norðrlios … En þæsse ɣærðr [<ɣæeðr?] natura oc skipan anorðrliosi at þ*at* er æ þæss liosare [a>e] er siolf er nott myrqvare oc syniz þ*at* iamnan u*m* nætr en alldrigin um daga oc optazt í nið myrkru*m* en sialldan í tunglskini. en þ*at* er sɣ*a* til synu*m* sæm maðr se mikin*n* loga langa leið af myclum ællde. Ðar skytr af ilopt upp at sia hvassu*m* oddu*m* misiamnu*m* at heð oc mioc ukyʀ*r*um oc ɣærða ímisir hæ|-ð-|ʿʀ′e oc bragðar þ*æt*ta lios alt til synu*m* sɣa sæm sɣipan *n*de loge. En mæðan þæsser geislar ero hæster oc biartazter þa stæn*n*dr þar sɣa mykit lios af at þeir ┼┤ mæn*n* er uti ɣærða stadder þa mægo þæir ɣæl fara leiðaʀ sinnar sɣ*a* oc at ɣæiðe skap æf þeir þurfu … oc þ*at* kan*n* at ɣærða stun*n*du*m* at mon*n*um syniz sɣ*a* sæm þar skioti af storu*m* gneistu*m* sɣ*a* sæm af sin*n*dran*n*da iarni" (Holm-Olsen 1945:32, cf. Ólafur Halldórsson 1978:127–28). For an English translation, see Larson 1917.

[6] For the son's questions about the northern lights, see pp. 13 and 31.

[7] „ … och kommer icke saa høit paa Himmelen, at den kand sees vdi andre Lande vden Grønland och Island och den norderste Part af Norrig, och kaldis derfore Nordlius [and does not reach so high in the sky, that it can be seen in other countries except Greenland and Iceland and the northernmost part of Norway, and is therefore called Northern Lights]" (Friis 1881:216).

[8] [I had almost forgotten to mention those celestial flames, or the marvellous light, which Icelanders call *norðurljós* [northern lights] and which is more visible the closer one is to the North Pole. The reason why I added this light to the tally of wondrous things, is that we have hitherto not been able to learn from anyone about its causes. Some will claim that these are the swelling constellations of the natural scientists, but whether that is right, they must judge for themselves. It is certain, however, that when these lights are apparent, it is as if the sky were aglow in luminescent flames. These flames dash with such remarkable speed, up or down, that it is hardly possible to look at this splendid and flashing movement without becoming somewhat dizzy. They are usually seen in the autumn and winter, whole and successive nights, particularly when skies are clearest. There are those who maintain that the light is brought about by how the rays of the sun, which are emitted obliquely around the poles, break, when they fall upon snow fields or clear ice, and they cause then this illumination in the sky.] The Icelandic translation of Oddur's original Latin uses the word *himinlogar* for "cæleſtes flammas" (Oddur Einarsson 1971:63).

[9] Halldór Hermannsson 1917:16, cf. "skæran ljóma geisla frá austri [clear brightness shining from the east]" (Gísli Oddsson 1942:33).

[10] Halldór Hermannsson 1917:38, cf. "lengi yfir hafbreiðunni aðallega á vetrarnóttum [for a long time over the surface of the sea chiefly during winter nights]" (Gísli Oddsson 1942:65).

[11] Halldór Hermannsson 1917:38, cf. "breytilegir og miklir víða hvar [variable and great in many places]" (Gísli Oddsson 1942:65). In a comment about the year 1591 it is mentioned that

the sky had reddened frequently, but no explanation is given (Gísli Oddsson 1942:15). Further it says: "His superaddo luminaria qvædam manetia et hærentia in infimo aëre supra mare variarum figurarum, qvæ notabiliter apparent in australibus plagis præcipue, qvorum formas et habitudines latius explicare non intendo" ("Hér við bæti eg ýmislega löguðum logum, sem standa kyrrir eða hanga neðst í lofti yfir hafinu og sjást að vísu einkum við Suðurland; en eg ætla ekki að greina nákvæmar frá lögun og eiginleikum þeirra [Herewith I add variously shaped flames, which remain still or hang lowest in the sky over the sea and are actually visible especially in the south [of Iceland]; but I do not intend to give an account of their form or properties]" (p. 66; Halldór Hermannsson 1917:39). Gísli's annal fragments, which along with his work about Iceland's marvels, were translated to Latin by a priest in his cathedral, Rev. Ketill Jörundsson, and it is that text that forms the basis of the account, translated from Latin by Jónas Rafnar, here cited.

[12] Although de la Peyrère completed his book *Relation de l'Islande* in 1644 it was not published until 1663 (de la Peyrère 1663). It is thought that de la Peyrère's accounts were based mostly on older descriptions of Iceland and Greenland. See also Møller 1981:177.

[13] Resen cites moreover Claus Christoffersen Lyschander (d. 1623/24) who is supposed to have said in his account of Greenland that the northern lights are not limited to the northerly regions alone; rather they can be seen occasionally in the south, though he mentions examples from Norway in particular. The Greenland account is now lost (Resen 1991:91–92), cf. Þorvaldur Thoroddsen 2003–9:II 129.

[14] See the discussion of Brekke in Bøe 2004:14–15.

[15] See also the translation of the natural history of Anton Friderich Busching (1781:252). Uno von Troil (d. 1803) travelled to Iceland along with Sir Joseph Banks (d. 1820) in 1772. On the northern lights, see von Troil 1775:54. On the general research history, see also Þorsteinn Sæmundsson 2012b; Akasofu 1979:37–86, and the discussion by Brekke in Bøe 2004:16 ff.

[16] Þormóður Torfason 1706:103–4 [a man may actually be spellbound at the wild sight]. For Þormóður's descriptions of the northern lights, see pp. 102–3; see also Brekke & Egeland 1983: 42–44. There are reports that the northern lights frightened other peoples too, such as the indigenous people of Alaska, the Norwegians, the Sámi in Northern Sweden and the inhabitants of the Faroe Islands (ibid.:3–4).

[17] In addition to considering the nature of the northern lights, Anderson says that Icelanders think that the northern lights are more common than before (p. 104).

[18] Horrebow also mentions the idea that the northern lights originate from sulphur vapour high up in the atmosphere, cf. Aðalheiður Guðmundsdóttir 2018:n. pag.

[19] It is worth noting that nothing appears to have been preserved by the royal astronomer Eyjólfur Jónsson (Johnsonius, d. 1775), who was sent to Iceland for the purpose of making observations about, among other things, the northern lights (Þorvaldur Thoroddsen 2003–9:III 77–79).

[20] Sveinn Pálsson describes especially the lights he observed in 1792, and says they were unusually bow-shaped. In addition he details tricolour northern lights and those which were red as blood (1945:46, 161–62).

[21] Especially thorough are the descriptions on pp. II 184–86.

[22] AM 433 fol (*Lexicon Islandico-Latinum*), located at the Árni Magnússon Institute, Reykjavík; Björn Halldórsson 1992.

[23] See also the travel description of Christian U. D. von Eggers (d. 1813) in *Physikalische und statistische Beschreibung von Island* I (Þorvaldur Thoroddsen 2003–9:III 75, 113). On the northern lights in eighteenth-century Iceland, see also Metcalfe 1861:385, 395.

[24] See also his *Eddalæren og dens Oprindelse eller Nøjagtig Fremstilling af de gamle Nordboers Digtninger og Meninger om Verdens, Gudernes, Aandernes og Menneskenes Tilblivelse, Natur og Skjæbne* I–IV, 1824–26.

[25] C. A. Holmboe (d. 1882) conjectured that the ancient Scandinavian looked on the aurora as the emanation of some divinity, the nimbus over some mighty brow (Holmboe 1861; Metcalfe

1861:385). It is not possible to say whether Holmboe had in mind common tales or whether he was influenced by Finnur Magnússon's interpretation; See also Burton 1875:67 and Brekke & Egeland 1983:15–16, where the best-known critique of Finnur Magnússon's reading is mentioned.

[26] The images of the northern lights are now preserved at Danmarks Meteorologiske Institut, Copenhagen. Reproductions can be found in the Museum of Natural History in Akureyri, Northern Iceland. They are printed in Stauning & Henriksen 2008.

[27] For an Icelandic translation, see Jón Eyþórsson 1927:336.

[28] Today the word *segulljós* is used as a synonym for the northern and southern lights, i.e. comparable lights covering the earth's southern hemisphere (Þorsteinn Sæmundsson 2012b:1).

[29] Moreover he speaks of *bragandi blikeldar* [lustrous flickering flames] (Matthías Jochumsson 1936:3, 151).

[30] In the poem *Ástarvísur* [Verses of Love] Steingrímur Thorsteinsson mentions *næturljómi* [nocturnal luminance]: "Oft kallar hugur á þig blíðum rómi, / Þá aftanstjarnan skín í vesturheim, / Þá blikar himinbogans næturljómi [The soul often calls to you in a gentle voice, / when the evening star shines in the western north, / when the nocturnal luminance of the heavenly arc glitters]" (1910:164–65). Today the word *næturljómi* is used for another kind of heavenly light, which is also called *loftljómi* [nightglow or airglow] and is not limited to the North Pole. In his poem *Vetrarnótt* [Winter Night] he says that the vault of the night is embellished by the flames of the northern lights and in the poem *Ég elska yður, þér Íslands fjöll* [I love you, you mountains of Iceland] he speaks of the heavenly vault which shines with the gleaming of the northern lights. He says, further, in the poem *Sú var tíðin fyr, þá frelsið reisti* [It was the time before, when freedom was established]: "Fagurhvelfdum yfir þig var lyft, / Þeim, er skín í norðurljósa loga / Leifturfáður Sögu rúnaskrift [A dome of grandeur was raised above you, / the one gleaming in the fire of the northern lights / flash-recorded runic inscriptions from history]" (1910:6, 19, 151).

[31] See also the Icelandic translation in Jón Eyþórsson 1927:334–35. Jónas's colleague in Denmark, the natural scientist Japetus Steenstrup (d. 1897), shared his interest in the northern lights and intended to observe them in Iceland, but nothing came of it.

[32] The northern lights are further described in the books *By Fell and Fjord or Scenes and Studies in Iceland* by Elizabeth Jane Oswald (publ. 1882) and *Summer Travelling in Iceland* by John Coles (publ. 1882).

[33] In scholarly discussion it is especially held that Greenlanders connected the northern lights to the souls of stillborn children (Ray 1979:19, see also the discussion of Brekke in Bøe 2004:8).

[34] See for example Sigfús Sigfússon 1982:III 163–64 (*hulduljós* [hidden light]); Ólafur Davíðsson 1978:I 44, 65, 88, II 114; Jón Árnason 1954–61:V 290. In some cases the light originates only from the dwellings of the hidden people.

[35] The informant of the story was Jón Jónsson Borgfirðingur (d. 1912), see Ólafur Davíðsson 1978:II 89.

[36] As Sofie Gustafsson notes in her research on different celestial omens and phenomena, this is also the case with her earlier sources (Gustafsson 2018:125). For a discussion of comets, parhelions, red moon etc., see her book *Järtecken*, and sources cited there.

[37] About *hrævareldar* [St Elmo's fire], see Horrebow 1966:181–82. All these terms, in both Icelandic and English, have deep folkloric references and their meanings can be variable, differing between times and places.

[38] Informant: Þorsteinn Þorkelsson (1831–1907), Syðra-Hvarf in Svarfaðardalur.

[39] In 1896 the Norwegian Kristian Birkland (d. 1917) proposed the theory that the northern lights could be formed by electrical radiation from the sun (Þorsteinn Sæmundsson 2012b:2).

[40] Questionnaire no. 21 deals with folk belief regarding different celestial bodies such as stars, the sun, the rainbow, the moon, celestial signs, and the northern lights (see http://sarpur.is/Spurningaskra.aspx?ID=531277). There were 84 respondents; 63 reports mention the northern lights.

[41] Many such examples are detailed in Sigurður Ægisson 2001:B 13; 2013. See also Eiríkur Valdimarsson 2010:96.

[42] Cf. also Jón Árnason 1954–61:II 524, V 473, who tells about the danger of children ending up with blinking eyes.

[43] Sigurður Ægisson says that people thought it "hyggilegra að haga sér eftir bliki og stöðu þeirra á himninum með flutninga, gjafir, kvonbænir, byrjun búskapar [more sensible to behave according to their movement and placement in the sky with relocation, gifts, proposals of marriage, establishing a farm] … " (Sigurður Ægisson 2001:B 13).

[44] Finnur Magnússon maintains that the northern lights and other celestial visions were regarded as omens of conflict and misfortune in many countries (1821–23:I 62), cf. Sigurður Ægisson 2001:B 13. In some places the northern lights were generally connected with war, not just the red-coloured ones. They were often compared to shining weapons in battle (Akasofu 1979:9; Ray 1979:18).

[45] See also Eiríkur Valdimarsson 2010:165. Magnús's testimony about optical illusions related to the heavenly lights, where people believed they were seeing conveyances, recalls tales of Estonia, where the northern lights were connected with horses and carriages of guests attending a heavenly wedding (Sigurður Ægisson 2001:B 12).

[46] The tale further records that eyewitnesses did not think the phenomenon reflected the northern lights (Guðni Jónsson 1940–57:IV, 143–46). The informant of the tale was Ófeigur Vigfússon from Fellsmúli (d. 1947). Northern lights researchers have distinguished between at least two reddish light nuances in the northern lights: crimson and scarlet red (Þorsteinn Sæmundsson 2012b:5). See also note 47.

[47] In many cases, the colour red occurs in coordination with other colours, and it is uncommon for the northern lights to be entirely red (Þorsteinn Sæmundsson 1964:24; 2012b:4–5, see also Sigurður Ægisson 2001:B 10, 13).

[48] Burton says, however, that the concept had not only been used for scarlet red northern lights, but also for lightning and other unspecified light in the sky (1875:68).

[49] Although the poem is known in the Nordic countries, British Isles, and elsewhere, a comparable refrain to the Icelandic variants is nowhere to be found (Vésteinn Ólason 1982:116). In some places in Scandinavia northern lights were called "blodlyse [blood lights]" (Brekke & Egeland 1983:5).

[50] See stanza 9 of "Darraðarljóð" in *Brennu-Njáls saga* 1954:458, cf. Brekke & Egeland 1983:14.

[51] See also textual variants in AM 115 8vo from the latter part of the seventeenth century: "ad hafit fyrer þeim logadi ï einu bäli, allt vid himne, ad sjá [that before them the sea was seen burning in one conflagration, reaching the sky]" (Fellows Jensen 1962:41). The same event is mentioned in *Grænlands annáll*, which speaks of conflagration and flames (Ólafur Halldórsson 1978:57). The location of Finnsbúðir is not known, though it is thought to have to do with a fishing area on the east coast of Greenland. Finnsbúðir is mentioned in Ívarr Bárðarson's description of Greenland (Ólafur Halldórsson 1978:134).

[52] The printed text is from AM 180 a fol from the latter part of the fifteenth century.

[53] The Norwegian place name Hálogaland has long been associated with the northern lights or high flames, cf. "Halogie id est: excelsa vel excellens flamma" (Arngrímur Jónsson 1609:31) and "*Halogie*; c'est à dire grande & bele flame" (that is, a large and beautiful flame; de la Peyrère 1663:65). Not all are in agreement about this interpretation. Cf. Tryggvi Gíslason 2005.

[54] In this context can also be mentioned the light which was continually seen over the body of King Ólafr Haraldsson as it lay among the dead on the battlefield. In the same saga, we are told about a heavenly fire which lights candles (*Heimskringla* 1979:II 397, 409).

[55] See also *Fáfnismál* in *Eddukvæði* 2014:II 311; *Snorra-Edda* (Finnur Jónsson 1931:130–31).

[56] Cf. "Olav han spente sin hest mæ spori / så rei 'en igjenom dæn elvelogji [Olaf spurred his horse to urge it on / so it rode through the elf flame]" (Blom & Bø 1973:65); "Hr. Oluf bukker over Sadelbue, / saa red han gjennem den Elvelue [Master Olaf bends over the saddlebow, / then he rides through the elf flame]" (Grundtvig 1882:179).

[57] About the word *skjálf* [tremor], see Holtsmark 1964: 40, where the option in question is not mentioned, see also Läffler 1893:166–72, who associates the word *-skjálf* with the clan Skilfingar and the name of a Swedish farmhouse. In the Icelandic etymological dictionary the word is connected to *höll* [hall or large house], *hæð* [floor or storey], *bjálkabygging* [beamed construction] and *bekkur* [bench] and it is not listed as a possibility that the word *-skjálf* could encompass the same meaning as the name of the Icelandic waterfall Skjálfandi, which is related to the verb *að skjálfa* [to tremble or to shake].

[58] Cf. also "kan vera, at kallið er regnboga", with a slightly different wording (Finnur Jónsson 1931:19).

[59] See Holtsmark's discussion about Bifröst on pp. 51–54, cf. also the discussion of Brekke in Bøe 2004:9. Interesting in this connection is also the Odinic name Bifliði/Biflindi (Finnur Jónsson 1931:10).

[60] Finnur Magnússon compared Bilröst with the Milky Way (1821–23:IV 221), cf. also Holtsmark 1964:51–54.

[61] See *Grímnismáli* in *Eddukvæði* I 2014:369–70, where Óðinn's hall is said to be made of pikestaffs and covered with shields.

[62] Cf. also *Grímnismál* (*Eddukvæði* 2014:I 371) and *Völuspá*: "Sal sér hon standa / sólu fegra, gulli þakðan, á Gimlé [She sees a hall standing / a fair hall, covered in gold, in Gimli]" or "Stóð fyr norðan / á Niðavǫllum / salr ór gulli [There stood in the north / at Niðavellir / a hall of gold]". South of Niðavellir runs the river Slíðr: "Á fellr austan / um eitrdala / sǫxum ok sverðum, / Slíðr heitir sú [A river runs from the east / through venomous valleys / with shears and swords, / it is called Slíðr]" (*Eddukvæði* 2014:I 300, 307). Note also the beautiful dwelling place of Baldr, Breiðablik (cf. *breitt blik* or *ljómi* [broad gleam or radiance]). About Gjöll and Gjallarbrú (*hina skínandi brú* [the shining bridge]), see Brekke & Egeland 1983:12, 16.

[63] See also Benedikt Gröndal, who claims in his poem *Gígjan* [The Harp] that the northern lights conceal sacred halls (1946:7).

[64] See also Brekke's discussion in Bøe 2004: 8–9.

[65] See further in his commentaries in II. and III. volumes. See also: "Her beskrives ellers nogle af Nordlysets Phoenomener paa en meget pasſende Maade, som en *dunkel*, *flagrende* eller *omsvævende Flamme*, og Udtrykket *Vafur - logi* er saaledes saare vel anbragt paa dette Sted [Described here are some of the phenomena of the northern lights in a very fitting manner, as a dark, fluttering or hovering flame, and the expression *Vafur - logi* is as such rather appropriate in this regard]" (II 197). In addition, Finnur Magnússon thought that Garmr, the hound of Hel, may have been signified by red northern lights, and did not rule out that the same could have meant the rooster Fjalar (1821–23:I 65, II 261).

[66] See also: "Goðsögur fornmanna eru heimild um hugmyndir fólks sem horfði á heiminn frá jörðinni og reyndi að skýra hann fyrir sér. Rannsóknir á goðsögum og stjarnvísi annarra þjóða gefa tilefni til að ætla að norrænir menn að fornu hafi, líkt og aðrir jarðarbúar, tjáð hugmyndir sínar um fyrirbæri á himninum með goðsögum af því tagi sem skráðar voru í Gylfaginningu Snorra-Eddu á þrettándu öld [Myths of people from earlier ages reveal the ideas of those who looked at the world from earth and tried to explain it to themselves. Research into the myths and astral lore of other peoples gives reason to suppose that Nordic people of the past, like other earthly inhabitants, expressed their understanding about the phenomena in the heavens with myths in such a way that they came to be recorded in Gylfaginning of Snorri's Edda in the thirteenth century]" (Gísli Sigurðsson 2013:102).

[67] In the same way the indigenous people of North America looked towards the northern lights in order to forecast the weather (Ray 1979:18).

[68] A legend from Labrador says that the spirits living in heaven light torches to guide the newly deceased upon their arrival in the other world (Akasofu 1979:10; Ray 1979:19).

[69] I would like to thank Chip Robinson for the English translation.

To Stage a Minority Group

The Folklorist Carl-Herman Tillhagen and the Photographs in the Collection *Sweden's Gypsies* at the Nordic Museum

Lotta Fernstål & Charlotte Hyltén-Cavallius

Abstract

This article discusses the collection of photographs in the archive collection of *Sweden's Gypsies* (Sw. *Sveriges zigenare*) at the Nordic Museum, created by the folklorist Carl-Herman Tillhagen. Many of the photographs originate from the so-called inventory of "Swedish Gypsies", part of the state "Gypsy investigation", performed in 1954–1956. The aim is to critically analyse Tillhagen's creation of this collection to gain a greater understanding of the collection and its background. We explore how and in what context Tillhagen compiled the collection and added written information to the photographs. We also place Tillhagen in a century-long anthropological, and colonial, tradition of fieldwork aimed at creating knowledge about "the other" and the use of photography in this practice. In doing this, we pay attention to Tillhagen's fieldwork methods and role as a "gypsy expert", his way of using photography and his composition of the collection. The collection can today appear to be both strange and prejudiced, while it also contains rich information of various kinds, e.g. about Roma's living conditions as well as the normative ideals of the majority society, and about the role of folklore research and the folklore archives in collecting information on national minorities. By producing knowledge about the background of the collection and circumstances surrounding its origin we contribute to the possibility of using its photographs with a critical eye for new interpretations and new knowledge.

Keywords: archive collections, minority group, photography, fieldwork, Carl-Herman Tillhagen, "Gypsy investigation", "gypsy expert"

Introduction

This article discusses the collection of photographs in the large archive collection *Sweden's gypsies* (Sw. *Sveriges zigenare*), created by folklorist Carl-Herman Tillhagen at the Nordic Museum (Sw. *Nordiska museet*) in Stockholm, Sweden.[1] This unique collection of photographs documents Roma and their dwellings during the winter and spring of 1955, and Tillhagen also brought older and younger photographs to the collection and sorted them based on subjects. Many of the photographs originate from the so-called inventory of "Swedish gypsies" (Sw. *svenska zigenare*)[2] that was part of the state "Gypsy investigation" (Sw. *Zigenarutredningen*), which

was carried out in 1954–1956. The aim of the article is to critically analyse Tillhagen's creation of this collection of photographs to gain a greater understanding of the collection and its background. The intention is to explore how and in what context Tillhagen created the collection and added written information to the photographs. The collection can today appear to be both strange and prejudiced, while it also contains rich information of various kinds. For example, about Roma's living conditions as well as the normative ideals of the majority society, and about the role of folklore research and the folklore archives in collecting information about national minorities; in this case, especially about Tillhagen's work. We want to show how Tillhagen's fieldwork methods, his way of using photography and his composition of the collection place him in a century-long anthropological and colonial tradition of fieldworks aimed at creating knowledge about "the other" (Edwards (ed.) 1992). Knowledge about the background of the collection and circumstances surrounding its origin can contribute to the possibility of using its photographs with a critical eye for new interpretations and new knowledge.

The first part of the inventory of the Gypsy investigation was carried out by local police authorities, which on December 10, 1954, visited all Roma camps in the country to register who lived in the camps and their personal data. In February and in the spring of 1955, a follow-up, in-depth interview study was conducted by Tillhagen, employed by the Nordic Museum and hired by the Gypsy investigation as a "gypsy expert". During his study, Tillhagen also photographed those he interviewed (SOU 1956:8–10). The material from the Gypsy investigation, such as the forms from the inventory and the in-depth interview study, is kept in the Swedish National Archives.[3] The photographs were separated from the other archival material and were kept by Tillhagen at the Nordic Museum (where they still are), where he continued working with them after the Gypsy investigation. It should be pointed out that this inventory is only one of several surveys and registrations of Roma carried out by Swedish authorities during the twentieth century. These were part of the societal control of Roma (Fernstål & Hyltén-Cavallius (eds) 2018:41–55). As late as 2013, the journalist Niklas Orrenius revealed the existence of the so-called travelling registry (Sw. *Kringresanderegistret*) that had been put together by the police in Skåne, Sweden (Orrenius 2013 a, b, c, d, 2017). The fact that registrations have been made on an ethnic basis this late, gives an indication of how established the structural antigypsyism still is in Sweden (cf. Kott 2014).

Before the analysis of the photographs in the collection *Sweden's gypsies* begins, Carl-Herman Tillhagen, the originator of the collection, will be presented.

Carl-Herman Tillhagen – Folklorist and "Gypsy Expert"

In the 1930s and 1940s, Carl-Herman Tillhagen (1906–2002) studied among other things folklore at Uppsala and Stockholm University, and in 1939 he was offered employment as assistant at the teaching department at the Nordic Museum. At the Nordic Museum he worked until his retirement at the end of the year 1971. To a large extent, Tillhagen worked on issues relating to, for example, folk games, dances, amusements and medicine, of which the latter was also the subject of his doctoral thesis (dissertation in 1960).[4] His work generated a large archive of material at the Nordic Museum.[5]

In 1943 the Nordic Museum initiated an ethnological study about Roma, or "gypsies" with the then common term ("*zigenare*" in Swedish), and that was when Tillhagen began to engage in issues concerning Roma. In his book *Taikon berättar. Zigenarsagor* from 1946 (transl. "Taikon tells. Gypsy tales"),Tillhagen writes (our translation):

> In December 1943 I got acquainted with the gypsy Johan Dimitri-Taikon. I had searched him in his winter quarters of that time at Bondegatan in Stockholm to recruit him as an informant for an investigation about the living conditions of the gypsies and their customs and traditions. We had barely greeted each other until we were engaged in a conversation about the gypsies and their education, an issue that seems to be of great importance to Taikon (Tillhagen 1946:5).[6]

From 1943 until his retirement, Tillhagen was deeply involved in issues related to Roma, both folklore research and popular adult education (Sw. *folkbildning*) as well as in state investigations and Roma's right to permanent housing. Also in more private affairs, such as discussing adoption or assisting in juridical matters.[7]

The same year, in 1943, the National Board of Health and Welfare carried out a state "inventory" of the Roma within the country. In this, local police authorities visited Roma camps throughout the country on May 31 to obtain information from a special questionnaire concerning, among other things, name, place of birth, places of residence since the summer of 1942, literacy, sources of income, number of living and deceased children, and the parents' year of birth, "race" and any relationship with each other.[8] The inventory, however, also included Roma at hospitals, in orphanages, prisons and other institutions, as well as resident Roma (Zigenarnas antal och levnadsförhållanden 1944; see also Kotljarchuk 2017). Through the inventory, a documentation of Roma families and family relationships was obtained, and to some extent it also provided information on living conditions. The questionnaire had been reviewed in advance by employees at several different institutions, including Professor Gunnar Dahlberg at the Swedish State Institute for Racial Biology in Uppsala, assistant Allan Etzler at Långholmen prison in Stockholm (who in 1944 defended his thesis in history on "gypsies and their descendants"

325. J. ag.

325. J. ar.

325. J. as.

ohan Dimitri Taikon berättar sagor.

Figure 1. Carl-Herman Tillhagen and Johan Dimitri Taikon in 1947, in Tillhagen's office at the Nordic Museum. Photo: the archive of the Nordic Museum (NMSvZ vol. 1).

in Sweden) and Sigurd Erixon, professor at the Institute for Folklife Research in Stockholm.[9] Tillhagen was not invited to contribute on this occasion. A few years later, Tillhagen wrote that the inventory, in his opinion, had not covered all the "gypsies" in Sweden, and that he considered the group to be 20% more than the 453 individuals who had been registered (he also states the estimate as approximately 600) (Tillhagen 1949a:2).

For the study by the Nordic Museum, Johan Dimitri Taikon (1879–1950) was consulted by Tillhagen in 1943, as mentioned above. Taikon was interested in co-operation according to the agreement that he assisted Tillhagen as an informant and that Tillhagen helped him with a Romani-Swedish dictionary (Tillhagen 1947:90–91).[10] Taikon had several short-term employments during the 1940s to further assist Tillhagen in the work on the living conditions, folklore and language of Roma.[11] One of Tillhagen's main interests seems to have been to record their genealogies (and over the years further process these genealogies, see below). Mapping of the kinship system of a society or a culture was early on part of the basic methods of anthropology, and Tillhagen inscribed himself into an anthropological tradition of knowledge in which "enlightened" men produced knowledge from a position of power. In this work, Taikon was his foremost informant. However, his confidence in Taikon does not seem to have been complete since the information was checked against other existing information, such as public records when such were available (Tillhagen 1949a:3). Through this work, Tillhagen had from the second half of the 1940s a registry of all individuals that he meant should be included in the group "gypsies" in Sweden, which he published internationally in 1949–1950 in the *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society* (an academic society founded in the United Kingdom in 1888) (Tillhagen 1949a, 1949b, 1950). Through publication in this journal, Tillhagen also inscribed himself into an international context and a specific knowledge tradition regarding Roma research. The knowledge production within the Gypsy Lore Society has been described as "the Romanies are most frequently playing a role, represented by outsiders whose knowledge may be gained from extensive fieldwork, but who lacks the insider perspective" (Saul and Tebutt (eds) 2004:4).[12]

In 1952, Roma in Sweden were recognized as Swedish citizens when the Minister of Social Affairs, Gunnar Sträng, in the second chamber of the parliament stated that (our translation) "the estimated 700 Swedish citizens who are known as gypsies have the same rights and obligations as other Swedes" (*Riksdagens protokoll* 1952:21–23).[13] In 1954, the entry ban of the immigration law for Roma was lifted, which had been in force since 1914, and the same year the Gypsy investigation began to inquire what measures should be taken to enable Roma to fit into a "normal" society. The investi-

gation was appointed by the Ministry of Social Affairs and was run by three investigators. Tillhagen was hired as an expert with the task of carrying out the previously mentioned in-depth interviews, as well as checking the information collected by the police during their visits to the camps (SOU 1956: 510).[14]

As previously mentioned, also in this investigation local police authorities entered Roma camps throughout the country on a certain date (December 10, 1954), and names, year of birth, family relationships, literacy, occupation or employment and other personal data were recorded.[15] In a document from the initial stage of the investigation, it appears that Tillhagen lent the investigators his genealogy of Roma families, which he had prepared with the help of Taikon.[16] Tillhagen's material, more extensive than the 1943 registration, was thus the basis for the inventory within this investigation, and Tillhagen also had, as mentioned above, the task of checking the information that the investigation received from the police. This, in combination with his follow-up interview study, gave him great influence over which individuals should be included in the registry of the "Swedish gypsies" that emanated from the inventory, and he also added individuals to the registry after the police had done their work.[17] The term "Swedish gypsies" was consolidated with the investigation and explained as "gypsies" who are Swedish citizens. To know who these were, the official report of the investigation stated that there now was a very carefully drawn up list available of all the "full and mixed gypsies" in the country as well as of the Swedes living with "gypsies" (SOU 1956,: 19).[18] This list, or registry, processed and approved by Tillhagen, thus constituted the definition of which were to be categorized as "Swedish gypsies".

For the interview study of the investigation, Tillhagen visited most of all Roma camps in February 1955 and subsequent months. The visits were always unannounced. His interview questions included housing, dressing, eating habits, professional knowledge, which languages were spoken, education, and the interviewees' wishes for the future regarding schools and housing. The views of family fathers and camp leaders seem to have been taken as valid for the whole family or group (SOU 1956:87, 132, 140). This was probably the first time Roma were systematically consulted about their own wishes on these issues (Fernstål & Hyltén-Cavallius (eds) 2018:50). The questionnaires Tillhagen used usually end with comments regarding his opinions about the interviewees.[19] Tillhagen estimated that he visited about 95% of all Roma in the country, or roughly 700 of 740 "gypsies" (SOU 1956:87). In the investigation, the point of departure was that Roma eventually would assimilate to fit into a "normal" life, and what that demanded was what was to be investigated. Tillhagen's questions were adapted for this aim and in his comments about the interviewees, assessments were made as to

how well he believed different people and families could succeed in this assimilation project. But the interviews also gave him an enormous amount of information for his research and he saved copies of the questionnaires at the Nordic Museum as well as the photographs he took when visiting the camps.[20]

At the end of the 1950s, Tillhagen had an assignment for the National Labour Market Board, which among other things meant travelling around the country to visit Roma and municipalities (Tillhagen 1965:98–103). At the beginning of the 1960s, another government intervention was initiated on behalf of the Ministry of Labour: the social medicine study of 1962–1965, which included all "Swedish gypsies" and was commonly called the "Gypsy study" (Sw. "*Zigenarundersökningen*") (Takman 1966, 1976). The figurehead in this would be Doctor John Takman. This study likewise used a registry that was updated by Tillhagen as their point of departure (Takman 1976:31).[21] Initially Tillhagen had a sociological part in the study, but it seems that there may have been a controversy between him and Takman, and Tillhagen soon disappeared more and more from the study (Ohlsson al Fakir 2015).

Since the 1940s Tillhagen had held a lot of lectures around the country, at libraries and associations etc., and he also appeared on the radio and television as an expert on the culture and needs of Roma.[22] In 1965 Tillhagen published the book *Sveriges zigenare* (transl. "Sweden's gypsies"), in which he goes through history, living conditions, customs and traditions of Roma, and what he considered their and the society's challenges at the time. He was presented on the cover of the book as the foremost expert on the "gypsy issue". The 1960s, however, were a revolutionary and progressive time. The radical doctor Takman was working for the sake of Roma, but above all, Roma themselves had begun to have a public voice. The activist and author Katarina Taikon published her autobiographical debate book *Zigenerska* in 1963 (transl. "Gypsy woman") and a civil rights movement for Roma rights had begun to take shape, with the witty and well-spoken Katarina Taikon, who often appeared in the media, as the figurehead; among other things, housing and education for adult Roma were required. In his book, Tillhagen positioned himself against contemporary debaters and it seems that he had to guard his position as an expert (Tillhagen 1965:155–162).

Archival materials also indicate this, for example Tillhagen's inscription on the cover of some material regarding radio programmes in 1965 with Arne Trankell, who participated in the Gypsy study concerning educational issues: "Professor Arne Trankell, who never met a gypsy, considers himself to know better than me how a grindstone should be used" (i.e. knowing how things should be done correctly).[23] Trankell had criticized Tillhagen's book on radio and suggested certain forms of education for adult Roma that Till-

hagen did not agree on, and it seems that Tillhagen felt a need to emphasize his long-established direct contacts with "Roma", much like a so-called "Romani Rai". Norma Montesino has discussed the role of the "gypsy expert" as a "Romani Rai" (regarding Tillhagen, among others), a person with seemingly unique direct contacts with Roma, who are presented as secretive and difficult to gain knowledge about other than by having succeeded in winning their confidence (Montesino 2001, 2002:57–85). In these ways of establishing authority as a "gypsy expert", a "Romani rai", the researcher embodies the ideal ethnographer who does long periods of fieldwork, learns the language and culture, establishes contact with a so-called "gatekeeper" and through this gets a unique and exclusive access to an exotic people (see e.g. Clifford & Marcus (eds) 1986; Pratt 1986). And Tillhagen described his position in this way in 1965: "The Swede's and the gypsy's behaviour patterns are almost completely incommensurable. Therefore, the gypsy is not easy to understand. It took me a couple of years of daily socializing with gypsies, before I considered myself capable of making a concordance between gypsy and Swedish" (1965:155).[24]

In his book, Tillhagen also appears as someone who wanted to help the Roma and it is clear that he had also been deeply committed in, for example, arranging housing for Roma in different parts of the country. Nevertheless, it is also clear that he saw them as less knowledgeable, in need of help, and of someone to guide them. He compared them to naive children and felt that someone needed to "pilot" them into "our community", and he wrote that he had persuaded "many families" to settle down and even more to participate in educations (Tillhagen 1965:134–135, 156–157; cf. Montesino 2001:18–19). At the same time, in the introduction of the book he wrote that "The efforts of the state powers to incorporate the gypsies into our Swedish *folkhem* [approx. the people's home, the welfare state]" seemed to succeed, partly because "The Swedish gypsy policy is based entirely on the foundation of free will and humanity" (Tillhagen 1965:8).[25] Here, Tillhagen seems to have overlooked himself as having functioned as a link between the state, municipalities and Roma, and who for a long time had been seen as reliable and trustworthy and opportunities with to persuade and influence in both directions.

The Photographs in *Sweden's Gypsies*

The photographs in the collection *Sweden's gypsies* are in volumes 1–8. Here, the volumes 1–5 are in focus, which contain photographs from Sweden.[26] The photographs were arranged by Tillhagen; volumes 1–2 comprise photographs from the Gypsy investigation 1955, and volumes 3–5 photographs from the beginning of the twentieth century to at least the mid-1960s that are sorted according to subjects. In volumes 1–5 there are in total a little

more than 700 sheets of paper with usually one to six photographs per sheet (occasional sheets contain seven to twelve photographs). An important part of the collection is also the information written on the sheets to which the photographs are pasted. During Tillhagen's employment until the end of 1971, it was most likely he who used the photographs in the collection (in a letter from 1977 he mentions that he had taken photographs as a man whom the "gypsies" trusted and that the material should be confidential for some years).[27]

To overview and study the voluminous photographic collection, we use the following components for the analysis:

- Photographs taken during the Gypsy investigation in 1955 (volumes 1–2)
- Photographs from about 1900–1965, sorted by subjects relevant to folklore research (volumes 3–5)
- The written information that accompanies the photographs (volumes 1–5).

The analysis does not provide statistical data on, for example, the number of photographs of different kinds, but mainly discusses the overall characteristics of the photographs. Questions for the analysis have been what characterizes the photographs Tillhagen took during the Gypsy investigation in 1955, and how they relate to what was stated in the investigation and in particular in relation to Tillhagen's contribution to the investigation. What did Tillhagen document and convey through these photographs? What characterizes the photographs of the collection that are older and younger than 1955, and what did Tillhagen add to the collection through these? What kind of information did Tillhagen put in the written information for the photographs? In the analysis, the contents and the expression of the photographs are of interest, as well as the intentions that Tillhagen may have had regarding the motives, selection of photographs and written information (cf. Petersen 1999). The specific individuals in the photographs are not in focus, nor details about different individuals in the written information; primarily the analysis is a critical examination of Tillhagen's creation of this collection of photographs.

To illustrate the analysis and discussion, we have selected a few sample photographs (cf. e.g. Åker 1998; Kjellman 2017). We have chosen photographs of people who appear positive about being photographed and which comprise written information that is as neutral as possible. We have chosen to be careful with publishing photographs since we do not know how the photographing at Tillhagen's unannounced visit was experienced; instead, we work with overall descriptions of the characteristics.

Photographs taken during the Gypsy Investigation 1955

From February 1955 and a few months ahead Tillhagen completed the in-depth interview study within the Gypsy investigation, when he also photographed those he visited and their living environments. He has, as mentioned, stated that he always arrived unannounced and that he visited about 95% of those he categorized as "Swedish gypsies" (which were more than those whom the police authorities registered, see discussion above) (SOU 1956:87). The photographs are mainly in volumes 1 and 2 of the collection and are distributed with one to six photographs per sheet on slightly more than 300 sheets. Many photographs were taken outside and throughout the snow shows that the visits were made during winter. The people living in the camps were photographed outside, often lined up in front of their dwellings, often they are without outerwear and in bare arms even though they are outdoors in the winter, which indicates that they were lined up by the photographer for a photo session in order to soon go indoors again. Sometimes a whole family is lined up on the same photograph, sometimes one or a couple of the family members are on different photographs. How the photo sessions took place during the visits to the different camps does not seem to have followed an exact pattern but varied depending on who was at home and how long the visit lasted. Tillhagen also photographed the various dwellings and camp environments without people; usually different kinds of tents, often photographed so that the protruding stove tube is visible, caravans and buses redesigned to live in (much like caravans), and how these different dwellings were placed in relation to each other.

Some of those Tillhagen visited were photographed indoors, and interiors have also been photographed without people. In caravans, sleeping and kitchen compartments were documented as well as living room interiors with curtains, tablecloths, photographs and radio. If the outdoor photographs show low standards and coldness, many of the photographs of interiors rather emphasize homeliness and tidiness. That it was cold can be understood since the people in the photographs wear obviously warm clothes even though they are indoors and that carpets are put up on the walls in an attempt to keep the cold out, and people are pictured sitting by the stove, usually the only source of heat.

At Tillhagen's visits, people of all ages were photographed, from infants to the elderly. Even young children a couple of years old were often lined up to be photographed as well as the older people, but a couple of children are also photographed while sleeping or doing homework. Apart from homework, activities are strikingly absent from the photographs even though Tillhagen arrived unannounced and must have interrupted all kinds of chores. There is a photograph of a man who is burning scrap to refine metals and of a boy with an accordion. There is also a part of a funfair photographed as well as a caravan with a sign that says "*Sibylla*" (i.e. fortune

SVERIGES ZIGENARE

Intervjuundersökningen 1955

Vatjulo, alias Josef Taikon
Lägret i Skillingaryd, mars -55
Se bl. nr 25.

Sällskapet i sin helhet.
Vatjulo med Klara samt barnen
Vajne,f. 35, Burte,f.36,Allan
eller Zurkitsa f. 43, Oskar
eller Fardi, f. 40 samt Marko,
f. 32 med hustrun Sonja Calda-
ras f. 2o och hennes dotter
Monika Nina Kati,f. 52.

26:3

514.G.ap.

26:4

514.G.aq.

Foto C.-H. Tillhagen, mars 1955.

Figure 2 (above) and 3 (next page). Examples of two sheets with photographs and personalia from the Gypsy investigation 1955. Usually the families were photographed outside their dwellings, but sometimes also interiors were documented as well. Photo: Carl-Herman Tillhagen, the archive of the Nordic Museum (NMSvZ vol. 1).

SVERIGES ZIGENARE

Intervjuundersökningen 1955

Dimitri, Gustav Bl. 45

Gustav Dimitris fält på lägerplatser vid Koppartrans, Hisingen mars 1955

Gustav Dimitris fru Malin, född Gilo Bull 1925.

8:6

514.N.ad.

8:7

514.N.ae.

8:8

514.N.af.

Foto: C.-H. Tillhagen, mars 1955.

Figure 2 (previous page) and 3 (above). Examples of two sheets with photographs and personalia from the Gypsy investigation 1955. Usually the families were photographed outside their dwellings, but sometimes also interiors were documented as well. Photo: Carl-Herman Tillhagen, the archive of the Nordic Museum (NMSvZ vol. 1).

teller), but otherwise it seems that Tillhagen had no interest in documenting activities or means of livelihood (and also the funfair and Sibylla caravan seem to have been photographed as part of the external environments rather than as examples of activities). An exception, however, together with doing homework, are photographs from a modern home in Malmberget where a woman in her kitchen seems to be working at a new, shining household appliance. At a closer look, however, she is not working but posing at the apparatus or demonstrating it. Here too, the aim is rather to picture the standard – a modern standard in this case – rather than activity.

To sum up, Tillhagen's intention with the photographs seems to have been to document individuals (who is who), and exteriors and interiors of the camps, with a focus on standard – usually low standards but at the same time also tidiness and homeyness. The fact that the photographs were taken in the winter reinforces the impression of coldness and the urgent need for standard housing.

Photographs from c. 1900–1965, Sorted by Subjects

In addition to the photographs that Tillhagen took in 1955, there are in the volumes 3–5 of the collection both older and later photographs, taken by different photographers. These are considerably more diversified than the photographs in volumes 1–2 and they are sorted by subjects that reflect the interests of the folklore researcher. In the volumes, there are a total of over 400 sheets, usually with one to six photographs per sheet, but sometimes 7–12 photographs per sheet.

A significant contrast in comparison with the photographs taken in 1955, is that these photographs boast of life and activities, such as dancing, school, music making, children playing and women telling people's fortune. Among them, there are also several studio portraits of individual Roma and families. These photographs originate from the early 1900s to the mid- 1960s. The oldest dated photograph is from 1903.[28] However, there may be even older images in the collection since it also contains photographs of older photographs, not always stating the exact year of the original.

The photographs in this category are taken by various photographers and brought to the collection by Tillhagen, who also sorted them within the different subjects. Private persons gave some of the photographs to Tillhagen, others were taken by studio or press photographers. Many were taken by himself in the late 1950s and early 1960s, in connection with his assignment within the National Labour Market Board.[29] In those years too, he travelled around Sweden to visit Roma and, as in 1955, he photographed those he visited, many of whom still lived in camps. These photographs resemble those from 1955 in that they picture mainly individuals and homes.

Volumes 1–5 are labelled as follows:

Volume 1:
C-H TILLHAGEN'S INTERVIEW INVESTIGATION 1955
Images no. 1–40
PHOTOGRAPHS: Dwellings
Camps
Life of the people
Portraits

Volume 2:
C-H TILLHAGEN'S INTERVIEW INVESTIGATION 1955
Images no. 41–70
PHOTOGRAPHS: Dwellings
Camps
Life of the people
Portraits

Volume 3:
PHOTOGRAPHS
Dwellings
Camps
Life of the people

Volume 4:
PHOTOGRAPHS
Portraits

Volume 5:
PHOTOGRAPHS
Wedding
Easter party
Music making
Schooling
Funeral
Household work
Copper work
Jewellery
Objects
Means of transportation

In volumes 1–2, the sheets with the photographs are in a bundle, i.e. not arranged according to the labels on the volumes. In volume 2, however, there is an empty cover with the label "Dwelling, life of the people", indicating that the sheets have previously been organized according to subjects but that the order has been changed at some point. All photographs in volumes 1–2 were taken by Tillhagen during the "Gypsy investigation" in 1955 (except for one sheet in volume 1 with photographs from 1946, which seems to have been misplaced there). The writing on the volumes that says "Images no. 1–40" and "41–70" does not refer to the number of photographs in each volume, which is considerably more, but a numbering in Tillhagen's two notebooks accompanying the volumes (which are both to be found in volume 1). In the notebooks there are numberings that correspond to photographs and give information about who is in the photograph and who a caravan belongs to etc., i.e. similar information as on the sheets that the photographs are pasted to.

In volumes 3–5, some of the sheets with the photographs are in covers with labels as given on the volumes. Probably all photographs in these volumes have been arranged this way, but the order has been interrupted over time. The photographs in volumes 3-5 are taken by different photographers and are from different times, from the beginning of the twentieth century to the mid-1960s, including photographs taken by Tillhagen between 1955 and 1965.

Tillhagen's intention with the photographs seems to have been to compile a collection relevant to his interests as a folklore researcher, covering different subjects, for example topics such as music, transport, Easter parties and funerals. Many images also contain written information that has nothing to do with the different subjects, which is discussed below.

Information Accompanying the Photographs

Each photograph in volumes 1–5 is attached to a sheet of paper (with, as mentioned above, often several photographs per sheet), on which there is written information, usually typed at the top right of the sheet and sometimes also under each photograph. This information is part of the standardized composition of the sheets and has been written by Tillhagen, or perhaps assistants, when the photography collection was organized. The typed information usually mentions which town a photograph was taken in, especially for the photographs taken in 1955. Throughout the collection there is also information about the persons in the photographs regarding their different Swedish and Roma names and nicknames, how they are related to each other and to people who are not necessarily in the photograph, and sometimes in which country they were born. Sometimes there is also information about whether individuals were considered "full-blooded gypsies" or "half-gypsies".[30]

Sometimes Tillhagen states in the information whether he had helped, for example, a family with housing or to redeem pawned jewellery, and he also states opinions and judgements on persons and families. For example, "View of the camp with [NN's] own caravan, [NN] is very decent and clean, a good caravan builder", or "A weakly gifted family on both sides, both bodily and spiritually".[31] The written information also shows Tillhagen's research interests, for example concerning crafts and work, such as copper work, tinning, music and silver work. Also, for example, descriptions of cooking and dwellings, among other things regarding carpets on the walls of tents, how fireplaces were arranged and bedding stored in the daytime, or how a caravan was painted black and abandoned after one of the owners died.

However, in particular the written information on the sheets demonstrates Tillhagen's interest in the individuals and the families and their relationship with each other. Throughout the photographs he took and the information he collected during the Gypsy investigation in 1955, he documented the appearance, names and kinship of each individual. Through older and later photographs with information about the pictured individuals, he further immersed himself in this information, both historically through the older photographs and as time went by with newer photographs. This piece of information accompanying a photograph from 1911 of eleven persons, most of whom are children or young people, is an example of Tillhagen's good

knowledge of family relationships and details such as year of birth: "Tudari's children and probably some other relatives. In 1911, Tudari is said to have had 9 children".[32]

It should also be mentioned that there is sometimes also handwritten information added on some of the sheets, in many cases probably added by Tillhagen when he received new information about the individuals in question (possibly also by later employees at the Nordic Museum who updated the information). This information, as well as the typed details, often states which individuals are pictured and relationships between different people.

To Stage a Minority Group

The photographs in volumes 1–5 in *Sweden's gypsies* have been analysed proceeding from three components: photographs taken during the Gypsy study 1955, photographs from about 1900–1965 that are sorted by subjects relevant to folklore research, and Tillhagen's written information that accompanies the photographs. In summary, with the photographs from the winter of 1955 Tillhagen documented, in a relatively standardized manner, especially the dwellings of Roma, focusing on coldness, low standard, homeyness and tidiness, and in some cases modernity, as well as individuals (who was who). The photographs from circa 1900–1965 sorted by subjects are considerably more diversified in expressions and activities; the main intention with these seems to have been to create a collection relevant to Tillhagen's research interests. Also in the written information accompanying the photographs, this interest appears to some extent, but above all the information shows Tillhagen's interest in the individuals and their genealogies.

In folklore and folklife research, the photographing of people, environments and buildings had been used since the second half of the nineteenth century and in the early 1900s, both as a method for documentation and for communication.[33] Tillhagen was, of course, part of this tradition. At the same time, Tillhagen also inscribes himself into a continental anthropologic tradition by studying an "exotic people", however in this case within the border of the nation. With the photographs and the added information about, among other things, genealogy, Tillhagen created a systematic structure over the Roma group, similar to the anthropologist's way of working in a colonial context (MacDougall 1997:280; Edwards (ed.) 1992:7). As stated above, Tillhagen systematically photographed the majority of all Roma in Sweden by the mid-1950s. Also within the field of racial biology, various, often subordinate, groups had been photographed systematically; at the Swedish State Institute for Racial Biology since the beginning of the 1920s, where photographs of Roma, among others, were also collected (see e.g.

Broberg 2001; Kjellman 2014, 2017).[34] However, Tillhagen's photographs are more similar in character to the photographs of Roma in different parts of Europe that are part of the folklore researcher Arthur Thesleff's collection of photographs from the late decades of the nineteenth and early decades of the twentieth century.[35] Also in these Roma are lined up standing or sitting in front of their dwellings (and/or their means of transportation).

After the Gypsy investigation in 1954–1956, Tillhagen continued the pursuit to get better living conditions for Roma. The key words in the Gypsy investigation and for Tillhagen were assimilation through permanent housing, school and education, with the goal that the Roma would start working within the ordinary labour market. At least future generations would, through permanent housing and the possibility to attend school, be able to become good and useful citizens. Tillhagen wrote in the report for the Gypsy investigation that:

> During a few generations, Sweden has been transformed from an old-fashioned farming community to a modern industrial state with a high standard of living and a large general level of education. For the gypsies, this has meant that the basis for their nomad life has almost completely disappeared in our country. […] The modern, advanced industrial society has very little need for the services that a nomadic people can provide. The growing impoverishment of the gypsies and the ever-increasing decay of their culture testify about this in a tragically forthright way. […] It is my conviction that the gypsy culture cannot be saved (SOU 1956:112–113).[36]

The Roma were considered obsolete and had to be rescued and assimilated into the majority society, and the idea was that the "gypsy culture" would not be possible to "save". It was within the interview assignment and this context of ideas that Tillhagen photographed the Roma he visited in 1955. Thereby the expression of the photographs can be understood. Demonstrating the miserable conditions of the dwellings in the winter and at the same time presenting how the people arranged their living environments in a tidy and homey way illustrated the need for action at the same time as the people were shown as proper and having good potentials. To show a child doing homework and a woman with modern kitchen appliances in a modern residence reinforced the same. Both these photographs were also selected for the official report of the Gypsy investigation, as well as a photograph of a woman mending clothes and the child who had fallen asleep at a table late at night, in addition to photographs that pictured the poor standards of the dwellings (SOU 1956). Focusing on children's abilities (doing homework) and vulnerability (falling asleep at a table because of late habits in a crowded home) further emphasized the demand for action for the sake of future generations and their possibility to become assimilated and contribute to the development of the society.

The Roma were to be assimilated, which in the report of the Gypsy investigation was expressed as being "fitted into a normal society" (SOU 1956:

7). What was considered normal in the report appears to have been the ideal of the *folkhem* [approx. the people's home, the welfare state]: "Their difficult housing situation is certainly a heavy burden that the gypsy who wants to fit into our *folkhem* must bear" (SOU 1956:107).[37] In this process, Tillhagen thought that the so-called "gypsy culture" would be lost. His collecting and ordering of photographs that were older and later than those he took in 1955 is an expression of an attempt to document this culture, and it was a tool for him in his own activities as a folklore researcher at the Nordic Museum and as an expert. His interest in genealogy also appears in the photographic material and the accompanying information, and for a long time this overall knowledge of details gave him a unique position as an expert. By the mid-1960s, however, Tillhagen had become increasingly outrun in the public and in debates by more radical researchers and debaters, such as the above-mentioned Katarina Taikon, John Takman and Arne Trankell.

Through Tillhagen's interest in genealogy since the 1940s and his role as an expert in the Gypsy investigation in 1954–1956, he contributed to the official formation of the group "Swedish gypsies" and which individuals were to be categorized as such. Above, Tillhagen was discussed as a "Romani Rai", a Western European notion of the "gypsy expert" with unique contacts within and knowledge about Roma groups (Montesino 2001, 2002:57–85). In a letter at the beginning of the investigation, its secretary wrote about Tillhagen's excellence for his task:

> He would then have the task of asking questions that require special knowledge of gypsies and special ability to speak with them. With the help of Tillhagen we would not have to assemble and specially train interviewers. In any case, they would never be able to acquire the specific technique needed to get anywhere with gypsies. […] However, with Tillhagen as an interviewer, we would be able to achieve a good result with our investigation. First, he already knows the most about the gypsies, so no special trimming is required, and, secondly, he has, according to what I noted the other day during a joint visit to the Taikons in Tantolunden, a specially developed ability to take the gypsies in the right way.[38]

In the archival material of the Gypsy investigation, which, in addition to the questionnaires of the inventory, also includes letters and protocols, there is no indication that Tillhagen's expertise was ever questioned. His undisputed credibility lay in his over a decade-long engagement with Roma, which began with the work with Johan Dimitri Taikon in 1943, a credibility that during the Gypsy investigation was further enhanced by his personal visits to most of the camps. Through the photographs Tillhagen took during these visits, he also created a pictorial representation of the group. Individuals were photographed in a similar manner (with some exceptions, see discussion above), following Tillhagen's directions. For the report, where the results of the investigation were presented in the mid-1950s, photographs were chosen to officially represent the group and its living conditions as

well as the need to solve the group's housing issues, especially for the sake of future generations, which was emphasized by photographs of children who had fallen asleep at a table late at night or who were doing homework (SOU 1956).

The older and later photographs taken by different photographers and in various context that Tillhagen added to the collection to document the "gypsy culture", broaden the possibilities to stage the group in a more heterogeneous manner. Tillhagen, however, did not use this opportunity in his book *Zigenarna i Sverige* (transl. "The Gypsies in Sweden") from 1965. In this he mainly used his photographs from the mid-1950s, with the addition of e.g. a photograph of children in a camp school in 1960. Tillhagen's staging of the "Swedish gypsies" was thus largely unchanged from the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s. His purpose of staging this group in a certain way had also not changed to any great extent. His paternalistic view of the group and the individuals' need for help to assimilate into the *folkhem* community was still the same, and thus there was no need to change how to stage them.

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Archival sources (with abbreviations used in endnotes)

NLS: "Arthur Thesleffs papper", and "Thesleffs samling", the National Library of Sweden
NMCHT: Carl-Herman Tillhagen, the Nordic Museum
NMSvZ. *Sveriges zigenare*, the Nordic Museum
SNA1943: Socialstyrelsen 5:e byråns arkiv 1913–1961. Inventering av zigenare och tattare 1943–1944, SE/RA/420267/420267.06/H10**,** the Swedish National Archives
SNA1954: 1954 års zigenarutredning, SE/RA/321506, YK 1506, the Swedish National Archives
SSIRB: the Swedish State Institute for Racial Biology, Uppsala University Library

[1] The collection *Sveriges zigenare* comprises 46 volumes, of which vols 1–8 contain photographs. The collection is in the archive of the Nordic Museum and was registered 1987 by Birger Grape and 2004 and 2006 by Diana Chafik and Ingrid Hedman.

[2] We use the term "gypsies" to replace "zigenare" in accordance with the language when referencing historical sources, otherwise Roma. For an in-depth discussion regarding the terms in Swedish, see e.g. Fernstål & Hyltén-Cavallius (eds) 2018:18–24 and in English Hyltén-Cavallius & Fernstål (in print) "…of immediate use to society". On folklorists, archives and the definition of "others" *Culture Unbound*.

[3] SNA1954 vol. 1–11.

[4] The years 1939–1945 Tillhagen worked as an assistant, 1945–1960 as an assistant supervisor (Sw. *arbetsledare*) for the archive staff and director of the Excerpt Collection (Sw. *föreståndare för excerptsamlingen*), and from 1961 to his retirement as a curator and director at the Folklore Collection, according to the document "C.H. Tillhagen C.V.", June 14, 1965, NMCHT vol. 45a. See also e.g. af Klintberg 2010.

[5] See a list of 17 pages by Ingeborg Borgenstierna 2005 of Tillhagen's posthumous material and material that was donated to the archive after his retirement, and the information in note 1, NMCHT, NMSvZ.

[6] Original quote in Swedish: "I december 1943 lärde jag känna zigenaren Johan Dimitri-Taikon. Jag hade sökt upp honom i hans dåvarande vinterkvarter vid Bondegatan i Stockholm för att värva honom som sagesman för en undersökning rörande zigenarnas levnadsförhållanden, seder och bruk. Knappt hade vi hälsat på varandra, förrän vi var ingripna i ett samtal om zigenarna och deras skolundervisning, en fråga som synes ligga Taikon varmt om hjärtat."

[7] For juridical matters, see e.g. monitoring books, and for adoption, see documents regarding conversations about adoption from abroad, NMSvZ vol. 9 and 19.

[8] The questionnaires, SNA1954 vol. 3.

[9] Letter to Dahlberg, Erixon and Etzler with a request to review the questionnaire, March 24, 1943, SNA1943 vol. H10:6.

[10] Johan Dimitri Taikon had earlier worked with Erik Ljungberg to create a lexicon, but the work had been abandoned because Ljungberg also had other commitments. Tillhagen supported the work for a couple of years before Ljungberg and Taikon resumed their work in the mid-1940s. In 1963 the work was published in a book that also included a part about phonology by Olof Gjerdman (Gjerdman & Ljungberg 1963). The recordings in Romani that Gjerdman did with Taikon are at the archive of Institute for language and folklore, Department of Dialectology and Folklore Research, Uppsala.

[11] See e.g. the documents "Till Statens Arbetsmarknadskommission" December 13, 1947 (unsigned), "Till Nordiska museet", July 6, 1945, signed by Sven Fridlund, "Till Kungl. Socialstyrelsen", December 8, 1947, signed by Gösta Berg, "Ang. zigenaren Johan Dimitri Taikon, född den 20/5 1879", January 9, 1948, signed by G.H. Nordström. SNA1943 vol. H10:6. See also Tillhagen 1965:22–25.

[12] See Hooper 2004 for an analysis of the Gypsy Lore Society and the Gypsy Collections in Liverpool, and Lee 2004 for an analysis of how the Gypsylorists reinforced their epistemic control in constituting "the Gypsies" by suppressing other possibilities.

[13] Original quotation in Swedish:"de uppskattningsvis 700 svenska medborgare, som är kända som zigenare, har samma rättigheter och skyldigheter som andra svenskar."

[14] The three investigators were Gösta Netzén (secretary of the investigation), Johannes Onsjö and Arthur Widén, all members of the second chamber of the parliament. The other expert, besides Tillhagen, was actuary at National Board of Health and Welfare, Gustaf Berglund, whose task was to statistically process the information of the investigation, according to a letter to "Herr Statsrådet och Chefen för Kungl. Socialdepartementet", October 21, 1954, signed by Gösta Netzén and Olof Särnmark, SNA1954 vol. 1.

[15] Instructions for the questionnaire *Uppgifter till 1954 års zigenarinventering*. SNA1954 vol. 8.

[16] Letter from Carl-Herman Tillhagen to Olof Särnmark, August 26, 1954. SNA1954 vol. 1.
[17] The document "Ej å blanketterna förtecknade zigenare. Av C.-H.T. förtecknade å nedan angivna blanketter." SNA1954 vol. 8.
[18] Original quotation in Swedish. "en inom utredningen upprättad mycket noggrann förteckning över alla såväl hel- som blandzigenare i landet ävensom över de svenskar, som lever tillsammans med zigenare".
[19] SNA1954 vol. 8.
[20] NMSvZ vol. 9–12.
[21] See also the typed, updated original registry by Tillhagen "Förteckning över svenska zigenare och deras släktskapsförhållanden 1960", covered in notes and corrections made by Tillhagen with different pens on many different occasions. NMCHT vol. 45a.
[22] See e.g. the television programmes *Vagabond – eller vanlig människa?* from 1963 and *Kris* from 1964.
[23] Cover in NMCHT vol. 44. Original quotation in Swedish: "Professor Arne Trankell, som aldrig träffat en zigenare anser sig bättre veta hur en slipsten ska dras än jag".
[24] Original quotation in Swedish: "Svenskens och zigenarens beteendemönster är nästan helt inkommensurabla. Zigenaren är därför icke lätt att komma underfund med. Det tog mig ett par år av dagligt umgänge med zigenare, innan jag ansåg mig kapabel till att göra en konkordans mellan zigenskt och svenskt."
[25] Original quotation in Swedish: "Statsmakternas ansträngningar att inlemma zigenarna i vårt svenska folkhem … Den svenska zigenarpolitiken bygger helt på frivillighetens och humanitetens grund".
[26] Vol. 6 contains photographs taken by various photographers of "gypsies abroad", sorted by country, e.g. Romania, Holland, Spain, and vols 7–8 primarily contain doublets and negatives of photographs in the other volumes.
[27] Letter from Tillhagen to librarian Sten Lundwall at the Nordic Museum, October 21, 1977, ref. 2549. NM.
[28] The photography from 1903 was taken at Dalarö, in the Stockholm archipelago. NMSvZ vol 3.
[29] The years on the sheets the photographs are attached on indicate this, and Tillhagen also mentions this in a letter to librarian Sten Lundwall at the Nordic Museum, October 21, 1977, ref. 2549. NM.
[30] NMSvZ vol. 4.
[31] NMSvZ vol. 3. Original quotations in Swedish: "Vy av lägret med [NN:]s egen vagn t.h. [NN] är mycket ordentlig och renlig av sig, god vagnbyggare", "En på båda sidor svagt begåvad familj, både kroppsligt och andligt".
[32] NMSvZ vol. 3.
[33] For discussion regarding the history and role of photographs and photography in folklore research and the supposed objectivity of photographs, see e.g. Becker 1993; Petersen 1999; Broberg 2001; Gustavsson 2014.
[34] The Swedish State Institute for Racial Biology was founded in 1922 and existed until 1958. In their archive there are over a hundred albums with photographs of various groups of people, of which one is called "Album G1, Tattare och zigenare", in the registry called "Zigenare och deras ättlingar". SSIRB.
[35] Arthur Thesleff (1871–1920) was from Finland but worked also in Sweden. From his work there are e.g. objects from Roma in Finland at the collection of the Nordic Museum, and his collection of photographs of Roma in Europe are at the National Library of Sweden, as well as further archive material from his work as a folklorist and botanist. Many of his photographs are digitized and available through their digital catalogue Regina. NLS.
[36] Original quotation in Swedish: "Under ett par tre generationer har Sverige omvandlats från ett gammaldags bondesamhälle till en modern industristat med hög levnadsstandard och utbredd folkbildning. För zigenarnas del har detta inneburit, att grunden för deras nomadisering

så gott som helt försvunnit i vårt land. […] Det moderna, avancerade industrisamhället har ett mycket ringa behov av de tjänster ett nomadfolk kan tillhandahålla. Därom vittnar på ett tragiskt vältaligt sätt zigenarnas tilltagande utarmning och deras kulturs allt snabbare fortgående förfall. [...] Det är min övertygelse att zigenarkulturen inte går att rädda."

[37] Original quotation in Swedish: "Deras svåra bostadssituation har sannerligen lagt sten på den tunga börda, som den zigenare måste bära som vill inordna sig i vårt folkhem".

[38] Letter to K.G. Netzén from Olof Särnmark, September 25, 1954, SNA1954 vol. 1. Original quotation in Swedish: "Han skulle alltså få till uppgift att ställa de frågor, som förutsätter speciell kunskap om zigenare och speciell förmåga att komma till tals med dem. Med biträde av Tillhagen skulle vi slippa ifrån att dra samman och specialutbilda intervjuare. De skulle i alla fall aldrig riktigt kunna tillägna sig den särskilda teknik, som erfordras för att komma någon vart med zigenare. […] Med Tillhagen däremot som intervjuare skulle vi kunna nå ett gott resultat med vår undersökning. För det första vet han redan det mesta om zigenare, varför någon specialtrimning inte erfordras, och för det andra har han, enligt vad jag häromdagen kunde konstatera vid ett gemensamt besök hos Taikons i Tantolunden, en särdeles utvecklad förmåga att ta zigenarna på rätt sätt."

Revisiting Typology and Classification in the Era of Digital Humanities

Egil Bakka

Abstract

This article will discuss if and how the old techniques of making typologies and classifying can regain their importance in humanistic research, being theorized, revised and adapted to digital media. Taking its point of departure in practices of classification in folkloristics and archaeology, it compares different disciplines as models, while aiming to engage with dances as sets of movement structures, rather than with the dancing as sets of social practices. The reflections proceed from personal experiences during the period from about 1970, extending towards 2020.

Keywords: classification, typology, ethnochoreology, dance anthropology, dance history, terminology, folkloristics, archaeology

Digital Humanities Archives and Historiography[1]

Thinking back to the archive world of the early 1970s, we had the standard options of fixing information on paper through writing or notation, on film through a photographic process or on magnetic tape through sound recording. I remember the cumbersome typing of catalogue cards on a typewriter with carbon paper to get a couple of copies, or duplicating text archives on xerox machines. In my student days, I stood day in and day out copying folklore manuscripts at Norsk Folkeminnesamling in Oslo, just for security.

Then came the digital technology that, up through the last decades of the twentieth century, enabled us to store the three kinds of captured information according to one basic new principle. After acquiring my first computer in the early 1980s, I started making simple applications for the electronic storage of catalogues and texts. This was a first important step forward, but digital sound and image followed and allowed for their integration in processes of retrieval and presentation that are still far from achieving its full potential.

The concept of digital humanities is a keyword which for me has meant a gradual, half-century-long growth in digital techniques which have affected my professional work profoundly. The keyword covers an enormous range

of aspects connected to the meeting and interaction between humanities and an ever-growing digital technology, whatever that may include. My point is to discuss if and how the old techniques of making typologies and classifying can regain their importance in humanistic research, being theorized, revised and adapted for digital media. I will restrict myself to discussing the adaptations which I think would realistically make an impact within a wide concept of dance. It is a reflection based on my personal experiences in the period from about 1970, extending towards 2020.

The digital storage of text, sound and image allows editing, sorting and analysis performed by software in a way that immensely reduces the workload of the researcher. The scanning and OCR treatment of printed and maybe even handwritten text allows archives to make accessible and gain access to enormous collections of electronic resources that can be reached from anywhere via the internet. The improvement of automatized translation breaks down borders between languages, and the capture of motion and sound makes the analysis of enormous amounts of data realistic even in modest projects and institutions.

Classification and Typology

For the purpose of this article, I will proceed from a definition on Wikipedia, which states that "Classification is a process related to categorization, the process in which ideas and objects are recognized, differentiated and understood" (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Classification). On the one hand, our language is built upon categorizations, from which research proceeds. On the other hand, research will try to group ideas and objects, or in our case expressions in new ways. It is a study of cohesion and discontinuity of elements to bring about deeper or alternative understanding of patterns in culture.

The term *class* as in classification comes from the Latin *classis*, a class or division of the people as in social class or school class. It is from the offset about a group. The term *type* comes from a Greek word meaning "to strike, to set a mark" on something. It was taken up by Latin and acquired a broader meaning. For my purpose, the type is rather one element of which there are many of the same kind, so the perceived sameness of elements is the point of departure. This idea is recognizable in terms such as typical, archetype, prototype or stereotype. In my context, it can be seen as an element or phenomenon that is reoccurring or recreated with variations, but where each recreation is considered in principle the same as the previous one, which is a fitting model for work with practices. The term *class* cannot as easily stand on its own and needs to be specified more than does the *type*, and the same might be true when it comes to a system of classes or types, a *classification* or a *typology*. As a verb, *to classify* is in frequent use, whereas *typologize*

and *typify* are not. In this article, I will not make any precise distinctions between the two sets of terms but will relate to the ideas presented above. I will classify to make a typology.

Classifying Dance as Sets of Movement Structures

This article aims to engage with dances as sets of movement structures, rather than with the dancing as sets of social practices. It proposes tools for writing a history of the dances, and not only the history of dancing. Questions will be: What dances did the Norwegian peasants of the eighteenth century use and what were their forms? rather than: When and where did the same peasants dance? Then it does not suffice to work from the names of the dances, and the information about them that is passed down in various kinds of written sources. It is necessary to engage with dances as movement structures and find ways to systematize and sort them according to their forms. The sources may then be dance material that has survived long enough to be documented, mostly at a later stage. Names and other metadata are some of the many additional sources that need to be used when the movement content is defined. I aim at discussing methods for theorizing about the history of how dances developed and how they are related and propose working by grouping the dance documentation according to complex form analysis coupled with metadata, including music.

Anthropologists of dance have argued that the main reason for studying dancing is to learn about the societies where it belongs (Kaeppler 1999:16), even if analysis of the dance form is included. Some ethnochoreologists, including the author, would say that their discipline started with studying the dances as human expressions with intrinsic value, but there was also a wish to understand them in their social, historical and cultural context. After a period when dancing rather than dances received the primary attention, the UNESCO Convention on the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage from 2003 (the ICHC) brought back the idea that movement patterns of dance have value in themselves and need to be studied to support safeguarding.

In 1997 the Nordic Association for Folk Dance Research published *Nordisk folkedanstypologi: En systematisk katalog over publiserte nordiske folkedanser* (Nordic typology of folk dance: A systematic catalogue of published Nordic folk dances) (Bakka 1997). The work was done voluntarily by a group of 11 researchers and experts from all the Nordic countries through individual work and many meetings in the period 1992–1997. The typology classified 3,267 dance descriptions into a large number of groups, and became a basis for the classification in the computer cataloguing system Fiol (Løvhaug 2006). One of the ideas behind the work was also to write the history of Nordic folk and social dances. An earlier project had already worked

with one genre, the round dances, the nineteenth-century couple dances, such as waltz and polka in this way (Urup et al. 1988). The typology became, therefore, a hypothesis about the history and interrelatedness of Nordic folk dances. History proved suitable and helpful as an organizing perspective for computer-based folk dance catalogues and also mirrored to some degree the ways the folk dancers grouped their material. The article that follows is based on my introductory article in the book, published in Norwegian, which I have translated and totally reworked in the hope that it may have a broader relevance as a tool of digital humanities.

Typologies and Disciplines

The systematization of research material using classification is an old method. Many disciplines have applied it, and differences in the nature of the classified material have created distinctions in the investigated issues and in working methods. Disciplines are different in how much they have used typology as a method, and whether they have developed a solid theoretical foundation, and whether the theory development has been kept going until today. In the field of botany and zoology, propagation is the confirmation of a species on which their typologies build. For folk dance research in the Nordic countries, a local community's acceptance of a realization as a valid representation of a particular dance concept with a name will be a corresponding confirmation of dance type.

At this point, I need to give a definition developed in the field of Nordic dance research, which will to a certain degree underly the following discussions. The relationships between the actual dance activity that sources refer to, describe or depict, and the actual material with which we work when we actually do a classification, are of different kinds. We will use the term *dance realization* to mean the actual dancing of a dance.[2] Five couples may have danced the waltz three times each at a party and thus produced a total of 15 realizations of the waltz. If the whole party participated in a grand polonaise, this was also one realization of that dance, since they interacted in one big pattern and not as individuals or couples only. A complementary term is the dance concept, the knowledge and skills that dancers have in their bodies, and that allows them to produce ever new realizations, which may differ more or less from each other. The researcher may observe the realizations and may interview the dancers about their concept, but much of it is tacit knowledge, so the primary source for a dance is the realizations. So, the sources that are available to us can be a filmed dance realization, or somebody's attempt to describe their own/somebody else's dance concept of a specific dance, and these are two fundamentally different kinds of access to knowledge about dance (Bakka & Karoblis 2010:109–135).

Models and Concepts in Folklore Typology Compared to Dance

Working with folk dance, one would think that folkloristics would be the apparent discipline from which to borrow methods. Folk dance has been considered central within the concept of folklore, and when the genres of folklore are listed, folk dance is usually one of them. I therefore find it necessary to start discussing the classification practice of folklore, which has generated many large projects and even attempts to span the world. The place that folk dance is given in the practical work of folklorists is entirely different from what general descriptions of the subject suggest. The study of the text, and/or the oral performance dominated the subject at least until well into the 1970s. It is not hard to understand that most folklorists have felt alien to dance as a movement expression and thus as a form. When some folklorists have dance skill, it is hardly due to their studies of folklore, but rather because they have happened to pick up skills and interests in other contexts. Verbal expressions and movement expressions are fundamentally different, and to analyse forms of the two requires two completely different competencies. It is therefore not a coincidence that the average folklorist, with his/her concentration on the verbal, has experienced folk dance as peripheral and unmanageable, even if he or she in principle may agree that it belongs to the discipline. Researchers of bodily movement would say that the movement aspect is highly relevant to any kind of performance, regardless of folklore genre, but to take up tools as complex and different as those needed for the study of movement is not easy. The newer trends in folklore that concentrate on performance and context studies could be expected to reduce this problem. However, many folklorists see performance studies as a new research paradigm that puts the forms, be it texts or movement structure, into the background (Kvideland 1981). Still, it is possible to ask if folklore has models to offer dance when it comes to classification and typology.

The Concept of Genre

The term *genre* is borrowed from French *genre* ("kind"), derived from Latin *genus* (cognate with Ancient Greek *γένος* (*génos*)), from Proto-Indo-European **ǵénh₁os*. Doublet of *gender*, *genus*, and *kin*. In general, genre is most popularly known as a category of literature, music, or other forms of art or entertainment, whether written or spoken, audio or visual, based on some set of stylistic criteria" (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genre). Folklorists have criticized and partly discarded the concepts of genre and subgenre and have viewed attempts to define some kind of universal or regional structure of genre as problematic, if not impossible (Ben Amos 1969:12). Nevertheless, we know that people in local communities had genres: "Dans, spel, song, sogeteljing, eventyr, segn, ordtak", would probably be categories used in various dialect forms throughout Norway even before folklorists and collec-

tors started to invent terms.[3] The Israeli-American folklorist Ben Amos has a detailed discussion of the concept, pointing to a number of different approaches to genre, concluding:

> Although the significance of ethnic classifications of folklore has long been recognized, in most cases its actual study was frustrated by the discrepancy between the analytical and the ethnic systems. The preceding discussion is merely an exploratory outline which attempts to point to areas of promise rather than to present conclusive theory and method. However, if folklore communication, allusive and complex as it is, is based upon culturally defined rules, then discovery of them is essential. The system of genres is the primary ethnic formulation of such a grammar of folklore. (Ben Amos 1969:329)

Within the field of folklore, dance might be characterized as a genre, which is logical, but not crucial, for work with dance. Judging from the Nordic, and probably also from European material, many dance types have been grouped into what could be called genres. Norwegian folk dance genres are for instance Runddans, Bygdedans or Turdans, which was probably coined by outsiders during the nineteenth century, adopted and systematized by the folk dance movement of the early twentieth century and used even by in research contexts (Bakka 1978). The term round dances was also a relatively firmly established term among European dancing masters of the nineteenth century. Studies of emic categorization are an essential point of departure for the conceptualization, but terms for local categories at genre level may not necessarily be suited as a basis for research terminology. As we will see, "type" may seem to be the firmest and most manageable concept for classification in folklore as well as in dance. Types may then be grouped at many, more or less hierarchical levels related to the concept of genre. In my experience of dance classification, it does not seem meaningful, however, to make a system of higher and lower genre levels with labels and definitions, such as genre or subgenre going across a typology. The number and character of levels will be different from type group to type group. In our Nordic typology the category of chain dances was subdivided only one level down, where there are three groups of types, the farandole and the branle types, and types with couple elements. The group of newer turning couple dances were subdivided into four sublevels with many subgenres and finally types at the lowest level (see table 1).

The Concept of Type

In the old, but still important, classification systems of folklore, the concept of type is central. The concept of type is based on the view of folklore as consisting of describable and transferable units, and it is perhaps one of the most suitable terminological tools. It focuses on folklore's diversity of forms, and groups folklore examples that resemble each other: variants of the same fairy tale, the same ballad or same story, in sets called types. Then

Table 1: An example from *Nordisk Folkedanstypologi*, adjusted with English keywords (Bakka (ed.) 1997:31–32)

Level	Code	Label/description	English keywords
HIGHEST LEVEL	**OP --- --**	**OMDANSINGSPAR-DANSER**	**TURNING COUPLE DANCES**
Sublevel 1	**OP N-- --**	**Nyere omdansingspardanser**	**Newer turning couple dances**
Sublevel 2	OP NV- --	**Valseformer**	Waltz music
Sublevel 3	*OP NVf --*	*Flermelodi former av vals*	*More melodies per type*
Sublevel 4	OP NVf 1-	Vals med totaktsomdansing	Two-measure turning
Type level	OP NVf 1a	Vanlig vals	Ordinary waltz
Type level	OP NVf 1b	Vals med tre svikter	With 3 svikts
Type level	OP NVf 1c	Vals med forskutt svikt	With shifted svikt
Type level	OP NVf 1a	Vals med promenademotiv	With promenade motifs
Sublevel 4	OP NVf 3 -	Vals med annen omdansingsform enn totaktsomdansing	Other than two-measure turning
Type level	OP NVf 3a	Tostegsvals	Two-step walts
Type level	OP NVf 3b	Stegvals	Step-waltz
Sublevel 3	*OP Nve --*	*Enmelodiformer av vals (type levels not specified)*	*One melody per type*

the folklorist systematizes and describes the sets of variants that come into being in this way. The well-known type indexes, for instance, the ballad indexes are based on the concept of type (Jonsson Solheim & Danielson 1978). The folkloristic concept of type is based on an apparent awareness or understanding among the carriers of the tradition and their environment that when someone sings a ballad or tells a fairy tale, then the realization represents something more than a one-off event. A ballad is something that exists in people's consciousness, it has a name, and different persons sing it in different variants. If we accept that there are communities where people know each other and have a repertoire of shared folklore, we will find a reasonably shared understanding of how realizations will be attributed to types: "What you are singing there must be Li-ballad." This is also the starting point for the folkloristic type concept. Just this, that the type concept is based on local practice, is even more true for social dance. Here we have a naming practice that may even be clearer. For some types of social dance, we find names that probably are more widespread than names for the most common types of folklore. When we are going to group a more extensive material that covers more than one local community, maybe the material from a whole country or from many countries, the instantaneous attribution operating in a local

community may work in some cases. The waltz is an example of this; dancers of the social kind of waltz across the western world would probably agree that they all dance the same dance, the waltz. With most dances, however, it would not work out. Then the researchers' relatively pragmatic assessment becomes the basis for the grouping of variants in type sets. This applies to folk dance as much as verbally based folklore. In other words, the folk dance types, as well as folklore types, have an emic basis and point of departure, but that clear emic basis loses its significance when we work with more massive amounts of material from large geographic areas. Here I think, however, that the parallels between the typology of folklore and the typology of folk dance stop.

When we come to a discussion of the premises and criteria for typology, I think that folkloristics has less to offer dance, for which there are two main reasons. The first one is, as I have mentioned before, that expressions where the substance is language and expressions where it is movement are so different that the principles of grouping become challenging to compare. Language-based expressions have as rule what you call content or a story, and this is usually the most significant dimension for making a typology. In a Nordic dance expression, one cannot talk about any verbal content; it is the pure form that becomes significant; there is no story. This is how the dance resembles tangible cultural forms more than the verbal ones. A quotation from the renowned Hungarian labanotator Janos Fügedi says something about the distance between a fairy tale carried by the meaning of its oral form and the abstract dance.

> The word "meaning" mentioned frequently in connection with dance movements is avoided here intentionally. The abstract, non-imitating dance movements may carry certain "meaning" as formulated by the experts, but verbalizing these "meanings" in a semiotic sense is nearly impossible. The notion of expressive or aesthetic "content" is applied here as realization of space, time, and dynamics. This refers to the booklet in which this article was published in Norwegian. The typological work was already finished when this article was written to discuss methods. (Fügedi 2019:1)

The second reason that folkloristics is not of much help for classifying dance is that I have had difficulty finding any in-depth discussion about the premises and criteria for folkloric typology. One of the more significant typological works covering the Nordic countries: *The Types of the Scandinavian Medieval Ballad* from 1978, devotes less than a page to the type concept. A sentence summarizes the principle: "As opposed to the folktale and other prose categories where only the content, the story or narrative tread determines the type, ballads depend to a large extent on their verbal and even stanzaic patterns for typological characterization." Otherwise, the editors are mostly referring to the basic pioneer editions from the nineteenth century which established the current typology (Jonsson Solheim & Danielson 1978:9–21).

The Concept of Motif

A meaningful reference to the basis for the term is the Medieval Latin *motivus*, serving to move. For me it would mean elements that carry an action forward, towards its aim. The root meaning works well in the field of dance, and I think in folklore and practices in general, by stressing an elementary level where the elements have a constructive power and importance to uphold progress. In my experience the motifs are not as likely to have names as genres or types, but some did exist in some folklore genres in Norway; a dance could have "tak" or "tur", music could have "vek" or "repetis" – I am not so sure about text-based material, as even strophes or refrain may not be quite comparable to motifs.

The substructure of the type in folklore material is first and foremost the motif. In dance research, however, most researchers are working with much more complex subtype structures. The I.F.M.C. Study Group for Folk Dance Terminology started their work in 1962 and published a system for the structural analysis of dance (1974), later followed by a book with more examples of methods (Kaeppler & Dunin (Eeds.) 2007). The book is based on several work meetings between the authors and presents a number of articles where different authors apply their methods to dance material from different parts of the world. Five articles represent key publications and schools of thought (Giurchescu & Krösclova; Kaeppler; Bakka; Torp; and Felföldi), while the remaining 10 are case studies. Giurchescu and Krösclova give a comprehensive and thoroughly discussed and revised version of the 1974 publication, and they define subtype structure as follows:

Table 2: A survey of the structural units of the East European system for structural analysis (Giurchescu & Krøsclova 2007:46)

1. Symbols for the structural units of dance (Form-units) (See note 27.)

		Dance name	
T = Dance	(Latin *totus*)		
P = Part	(Latin *pars*)	(1)	[ ]
St = Strophe	(Greek *strophe*)	I	[[ ]]
S = Section	(Latin *sectio*)	1	[ ]
Ph = Phrase	(Latin *phrasis*)	A	( )
M = Motif	(Latin *motivus*)	a	
Mc = Motif-cell	(Latin *cella*)	a'	
Me = Motif-element	(Latin *elementum*)	α, β, δ, and so on.	

Note: the brackets are used only for the shorthand graphic notation and not for th of the Form levels.

I will still concentrate on the motif level, which Giurchescu and Kröschlova describe as follows: "The Motif carries sufficient information about a dance

idiom that its simple repetition may result in a virtual dance, recognized by people as belonging to their own tradition" (2007:28). It has been common practice in this system to see motifs as small pieces covering 1–3 bars of music containing all movements happening in a dance within this period.[4] The whole system is made to analyse the structure of dance realizations. Table 2 gives a survey of the levels used, where the Totus represents the realization, then comes levels of elements down to the smallest and indivisible element of the Motif-element. The motif level is still seen as the most constitutive level of dance material, even though other levels are needed to give a full and detailed analysis of the structure.

A comparison to the motif concept of folklore can be drawn from Jane Garry's (2017) survey of *Archetypes and Motifs in Folklore and Literature*, keyed to Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index of Folk Literature* (Thompson 1955: 58). She proposes:

> Simply defined, a motif is a small narrative unit recurrent in folk literature. In his introduction, Thompson writes, "Certain items in narrative keep on being used by storytellers; they are the stuff of which tales are made … there must be something of particular interest to make an item important enough to be remembered, something not quite commonplace." In a later essay, Thompson famously defines a motif by saying: A mother as such is not a motif. A cruel mother becomes one because she is at least thought to be unusual. The ordinary processes of life are not motifs. To say that "John dressed and walked to town" is not to give a single motif worth remembering; but to say that the hero put on his cap of invisibility, mounted his magic carpet, and went to the land east of the sun and west of the moon is to include at least four motifs – the cap, the carpet, the magic air journey, and the marvellous land. (Thompson 1972:753 in Garry 1917:XV)

In many ways, the motif level and genre level seem to be equally important to systematization within folkloristics as the type level. In the introduction to his *Motif-Index of Folk Literature*, the American folklorist Stith Thompson discusses the old and well-known folktale typology of the Finnish folklorist Antti Aarne that classifies approximately 800 European folk tales. Thompson thinks the typology is reasonably useful for Europe because here we largely find the same tale complexes, but he continues:

> Outside of Europe, however, Aarnes index is of little use. In the remoter parts of the world, whither any adequate study must lead us, the European language types apply to very few stories. Yet there is much common matter in the folk literature of the world. The similarities consist not so often in complete stories as in single motifs. Accordingly, if an attempt is made to reduce the traditional narrative material of the whole earth to order (as, for example, the scientists have done with worldwide phenomena of biology) it must be by means of a classification of single motifs – those details out of which full-fledged narratives are composed. It is these single elements that can form a common basis for a systematic arrangement of the whole body of traditional literature. (Thompson 1955:10)

It is striking that the folklorists to such a limited extent discuss their primary classification concepts, motifs, types and genres when presenting their ma-

jor typologies and indexes. It seems as if the terms are taken for granted and rather described than discussed if someone writes something in general about them. An American introduction to folkloristics has formulations that seem to explain some of this. It describes folkloristics through four basic perspectives, developed by and governing the discipline. One of these perspectives is covered in a section entitled "Folklore as Genre and Type". Here the authors conclude: "As illustrated throughout this chapter, folklore can be conceptualized and studied as a *describable entity*. Doing so involves ordering folklore examples into sets and subsets (for example, genres, types and subtypes), based on similarities that one discerns in them" (Georges & Jones 1995:120f). A little earlier they say that "phenomena are identifiable as folklore only when and because they can be configured with similar phenomena into type sets. Every example of folklore is, by definition, a member of a type set and therefore a version of a specific type and one of multiple versions of a particular story, song, tune, dance, riddle, basketball, belief, chair, etc. Therefore, when folklorists identify a phenomenon as an example of folklore because of its similarity to other phenomena documented through time and space, they invoke the concept of type set."

The Who-Told-What Classification

A thorough and interestingly argued work about classifying folklore, more specifically legends, was published by the UCLA folklorist Timothy R. Tangherlini in 1994. A first point to notice in this work is that Tangherlini does not use the concept of type in the same way as most Nordic folklorists do. His work is therefore neither a typology nor a motif index of Danish legends. Tangherlini refers to "numerous failed attempts at producing a functional legend catalogue", so this is one of the genres where folklorists, according to him, did not manage to solve the problems of a type catalogue and also struggled to identify the legend as genre and to identify its subgenres (Lo. 318).[5] This is probably why Tangherini found a new approach to classify a huge Danish collection of legends from the renowned Danish folklore collector Evald Tang Kristensen. The collection contains substantial metadata about Tang Kristensen's informants, which enables Tangherlini to compare the data of the legend content with the life stories of those who told them.

> By correlating the two groups of information – the "what" and the "who" – one can develop a statistical overview of the tradition concerning which groups of informants use which content elements in their legends. This helps to answer questions such as, "Do women informants tell more legends about women than men?"; "Which informants favor trolls in their accounts?"; and the like. The questions can refer to the generalities of the informant group as a whole, as well as tendencies within single informant repertoires. Thus, questions of the nature, "Do informants who tell legends about parsons also tell legends about folk healers?" can also be addressed. (Tangherlini 1994:Loc 938)

Tangherlini's new way of using classification is definitely interesting, particularly with material that is characteristically more strongly marked by individuals than is generally shared by a community. Dances are typically more shared because in most cases they require a group of people to be realized, and most of those present may participate in the realization. Additionally, there are hardly many collections of dances where the dancer's personal lives are also told.

As we have seen, the three basic classification levels – motif, type and genre –can have the same point of departure for a folklorist and a folk dance researcher. The folklorist, however, seems to take the levels more or less as given entities, which rarely are discussed in terms of principle. Also, the dance material appears to be more parallel with material culture, because of its lack of verbalized content and its abstract quality. These qualities are instead found in objects that are classified, for instance, in archaeology. And that discipline is undoubtedly the one within the social sciences and the humanities that has worked most with typological methodology. For this reason, I will compare typologies of archaeology and dance.

Models and Concepts from Archaeological Typology

The establishment of the term typology is, at least in the Nordic region, particularly linked to the efforts of the Swedish archaeologist Oscar Montelius. Around 1900, he published several works that were based on what he called the typological method. This is a method of arranging objects, but for Montelius it expresses at the same time fundamental opinions about the development of material culture, and thereby about historical process. In Montelius' typological works, the question of Darwinism can be traced; he sees a parallel kind of evolution in the development of man-made implements. Montelius puts it this way: "The species is for the scientist what the type is in fact for the archaeologist of prehistory. The latter, at least here in the Nordic region, no longer sees as his sole task the description and comparison of archaeological findings from different countries and the exploring of the life in these regions. He now wants to show how the one type, like the one species, evolved from the other. We call this *typology*" (Montelius 1900:237) (Prescott 1992:1f).

Those who work with typologies in the field of culture have probably left Montelius' highly evolutionistic thinking, and many discussions have been conducted about this kind of methods. Within disciplines that can include folk dance research, such as, Ethnology and Folklore, large typological projects were carried out far back in time, and surveys and basic knowledge are therefore available as a basis today. Trends now go in entirely different directions, but that does not necessarily mean that the fundamentals of the

method are outdated or that its theoretical foundation is not being renewed or discussed. Even if the use of typological methods is out of phase with what happens between our closest colleagues, it does not mean that kind of knowledge that typological work can yield becomes unnecessary for dance research and dance history. Basic knowledge does not get out of date even if we are late in developing it. Classification and typologies have been important methods within several different sciences such as biology, zoology, archaeology and linguistics. There is solid theoretical literature to build on, also works from recent years. Even if typology is a relatively general method, and even if it is discussed at an academic level, it is, of course, a problem to benefit from works in entirely different disciplines. When I am going to try and find a simple theoretical foundation for our work with a historical typology for dance, I think that our best source is archaeology. Archaeology is one of the disciplines where typology has been central as a method, and where it is still developed at a theoretical level. Additionally, the approach is quite similar to ours.

I have found two main directions in the recent archaeological literature on typology. The first direction works with simple and practical models for typology. It is to a considerable extent built on qualitative thinking, partially relying on intuitive judgement, and it develops hypotheses without relying on strict definitions. This kind of typology becomes a tool to look for patterns and connections and at the same time, gradually, a tool to present them.

The other direction uses applied statistics, computing and mathematical calculations, often based on physical measurements of each archaeological object. By an advanced system, and with purely quantitative methods, one can identify similarities and inequalities in an extensive material and group them accordingly in different ways (Welinder 1991; Whallon & Brown 1982). From my point of view, both main directions are exciting as inspiration for our field. The typology we published in 1993 had, to a large extent, been developed in similar ways to what is explained above as the first direction. Our work shows, in fact, a considerable similarity to models from the first direction, without being directly built on them (Bakka (ed.) 1993).[6]

Cyber-archeology and Motion Capture

Since 1993, the second direction, which seemed unrealistic for work with movement in the 1990s, has been moving forwards and already has parallels in our field, which I will discuss briefly. Archaeologists have coined the term "cyber-archaeology" for this direction, which the American archaeologist Thomas E. Levy defines as "the integration of the latest developments in computer science, engineering, science, and archaeology" (2017:2).

> The digital "data avalanche" in archaeology is a result of the relatively inexpensive plethora of digital data capture tools (digital cameras, GPS units, mobile phones, laptop computers, external hard drives, drones, and more) that are rapidly becoming

> part of the archaeologist's toolbox. […] The adoption of digital methodologies by these researchers has led to the emergence of a new subfield that may be called "cyber-archaeology" […] This volume […] demonstrates how archaeologists working in a variety of countries in the eastern Mediterranean –primarily Israel, Jordan, and neighbouring countries – apply cyber-archaeology methods to help create "grand narratives" to explain what happened in the past in one of the world's most complex historical and cultural regions. (Levy & Jones 2017:1)

The technique of motion capture has a potential similar to cyber-archaeology for the work with movement classification. Matt Delbridge at the University of Melbourne defines motion capture as "A series of techniques where actors wear specially designed suits allowing computers to track their movements. These captured movements are used as the basis for life-like animated characterization" (Delbridge 2015:Loc.130). The captured movements could probably also be used for advanced analysis; it might be possible, for instance, to define a particular characteristic movement sequence, and then search for and retrieve parallels. For a long time we have been able to search for pieces of language, and for structures of sound as in music, but as far as I know, a regular search for movement still is mainly done with the help of names, labels or textual metadata. Norwegian research has been using motion capture techniques to describe the play of underlying factors such as durations in musical patterns and the play with bodyweight, evaluating earlier results based on observation and embodiment (Haugen 2015:432–436; Mæland 2019). This is creating new knowledge about physical qualities and their perception, but is confined by a sophisticated technology that is just recently finding its way out of the lab, with portable equipment. More seriously it could only be used when recording new material. It would mean a tremendous step forward for the dance field if movement data could be extracted from already existing recordings.

With all these new possibilities I believe that there is still a need for in-depth practical and theoretical knowledge of dance as structure, and not only as physical movement, to develop relevant questions and to interpret findings. We are at a point where we are becoming able to describe basic patterns of duration and weight. The tools needed for seeing how these patterns cluster into compelling "moves", with stability and generative power to influence historical processes, are at a whole different level and can also show progress. I will discuss this later on. I propose that combining tools and methodologies from these two so far entirely separate branches can give significant breakthroughs within both of them. We might venture to rephrase Thomas E. Levy's definition of cyber-archaeology for cyber-choreology as the integration of the latest developments in computer science, engineering, science, and choreology.

Two American brothers, the archaeologist William Y. Adams (WYA) and the philosopher and science theorist Ernest W. Adams (EWA), wrote a book on archaeological typology as a practical method. Upon closer inspec-

tion, it turns out that the book mainly discusses typology in general. It has, on the one hand, broad theoretical discussions about typology as a method in a clear and easy-to-understand manner. On the other hand, it establishes and defines a wide range of concepts that clarify what a typology is and how it works.

Very much in this book has, in my view, considerable transfer value for typological work with dance. It systematizes and expresses many of the looser thoughts and opinions I have had about typology as a method. I will try to pull out some points which are particularly relevant from my point of view. Before we go into this, there is one point to mention: The Adams brothers look at a typology as a system of groups at the same level, at the type level, and do not work with any hierarchical system of genres and branches as we do. They call a hierarchical system like ours taxonomy but discuss taxonomies only briefly. Most of the terms we include here apply their kind of typology, but in my view, still retain transfer value. They will primarily have validity for the type level and not for the levels of genres and branches.

Features from Qualitative Classification

WYA and EWA have a main claim that is repeated over and over again: Typologies are always made for specific purposes. The brothers think that a good typology should be made for a limited purpose. If a typology is needed for two different purposes, one would often have to typologize the same material twice and have one typology for each purpose. In other words, there is not just one correct or beneficial way to typologize a material. Consequently, the quality of a typology can be measured in how well it serves its purpose. According to experience, this can only be assessed by using it and improving it along the way (Adam & Adams 1991:49).

Are Types Natural or Artificial?

One of the oldest debates about typology applies to whether types represent an ordering by nature or something artificial, that is invented by the typologist. Are types something existing in our material, something that we can discover, or is it an arbitrary grid that we put across the seamless fabric of nature for some purpose of our own, so that we are consequently the inventors. The Adams brothers believe that in all practicable typologies one will find moments of the natural as well as the artificial and that typologization is a mixture of discovery and invention (Adams & Adams 1991:67). In my opinion, this appraisal is also perfectly suitable for our Nordic dance typology. Some of our sections are clear divisions that we have discovered in the dance material. Others are sections we have chosen to make to avoid groups that become overly large and complex, and they may eventually

prove to be of use even if they do not stand out clearly in the material. The common waltz is obviously a natural type, while a part of the groups we have experimentally set up under *Other contra dances* are, so far, just an attempt at grouping dances with some similarities.

Polythetic Classification

The biologists probably were the first to formulate another insight around 1940. After having grappled with the concept of species for more than 100 years, they concluded that there is no single criterion for the species. A generation later, archaeologists came to the same results regarding types. What is called polythetic (opposite: monothetic) classification was established. Clarke has described the method as follows (1968:90): "it is possible to define a group of entities in terms of a set of properties such that:"

1. Each entity possesses a large but unspecified number of the particular set of properties.
2. Each property in the given set is possessed by large numbers of these individuals
3. No property in the given set is necessarily possessed by every individual in the aggregate.

By the terms of the third condition, no single property or attribute is necessary for the membership of a polythetic group. In other words, it is not possible to specify either necessary or sufficient conditions for "typehood" in a polythetic classification. For this reason, an abstract definition of *type* is virtually impossible (Adams & Adams 1991:70). Our dance typology is obviously polythetic: there is, for example, no need for a dance to have a couple-turning motif (*omdansing*) to be a member of the couple-turning dances (*omdansingspardansene*). We have pure promenade types (*promenadetyper*) in the couple-turning dances. A couple turning is also not enough for a dance to belong to the group. We have, for example, many contra dances with couple-turning.

The Essential Elements of "Typehood"

The Adams brothers identify a series of essential elements of "typehood", which are; "type concepts, type descriptions, type definitions, type labels, type names, type categories and type members" (Adams & Adams 1991: 30). I will examine these elements, discussing whether they are relevant and adaptable in work with dance typehood, and I will cite examples. The discussion will be based on my knowledge of Nordic and European social dance practice, and do not aim at universality. The Nordic typology has a complex structure that starts from the totality of Nordic folk dance as the genre to be classified. It goes down through a number of hierarchical levels, ending with the practised type. I will relate the discussion on elements of "typehood" to the level of the practised type even if it does have some relevance for other levels too.

> *Type concept* is the purely mental aspect of typehood. It is a body of ideas about the nature and characteristics of a group of entities which makes it possible for us to think of them in a collective way and under a collective label. (Adams & Adams 1991/2007:30)

The type concept in social dancing has strong roots in social interaction and is deeply embodied. When dancing is done socially in a party, the type concept is an organizing principle; the dance event is an embodiment of typology. Let us say four different dances are danced at a party: waltz, tango, polka and swing. They are the four types the dancers will use, and each of them may be danced more times, and many couples will dance them at the same time with small variations. Still a waltz is a waltz – it is conceived of as one of the dances on the repertoire, not as a group of dance realizations.

In video illustration 1, we see a folk music band competing in playing for dance. The tunes are announced in advance, but for the dancers that would not be necessary. As good dancers they immediately know what dance type belongs to the music. The band plays a waltz, a hamborgar, and a mazurka, which are well-known dance types for the dancers. The tunes are not only recognized as belonging to certain dance types, but the tunes are also in themselves specific melody types that the musicians know by name and or source. There will be large numbers of tunes to each of the dances, and dancers may also remember some of the most popular tunes. The source of the waltz played on this video was the local, renowned Bolstad musicians. It did not have a more specific name, so the band named it the *Strynsvogga,* the Stryn cradle. Sources and names for the two other dance types are also announced, and function as reference at least among the musicians. In this way there are two sets of types at play in the event, the dance types and the melody types, both of them working explicitly in structuring the event. The folk music band is locally based and therefore has a repertoire consisting of tunes that have been played for dance in the region. They do know about more or less similar versions of their melodies from other regions, and in this way, they will refer to informal transregional types, by saying for instance; "I heard a version of this tune played in this region under the name of …"

Video illustration 1, A realized typology: Spelemannslaget Fjelljom. Lagspel runddans Fylkeskappleiken i Sogn og Fjordane 2018. Jostedalvideo, Published on Mar 13, 2018. See: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fUNw7gOCobk (accessed 24 February 2019).

The dancers in illustration 1 are not only people from the local community where the competition takes place but also from other parts of Norway. Therefore, there are more variations in the dancing than there is just locally. There is a distinctive difference between how to dance the mazurka in Western and Eastern Norway, and even though most dancers here are doing the western version, often called polka (mazurka), and there are also some danc-

ing the eastern version. They are so different that dancers would perhaps see them as different types, even though they could be danced to the same music. There is also a difference in the selection of tunes and in the way they are played between east and west that experienced musicians and dancers may recognize. This is just one example of how the patterns of types become more complex when people meet across regions.

Type description. If a type concept is to be shared between two or more individuals, it must first be communicated in the form of a type description. This is a verbal and/or pictorial representation of the type concept which depicts as many of its known characteristics as possible. (Adams & Adams 1991/2007:30)

For the kind of practised dance typology discussed above, a type description will be partly explicit, partly tacit knowledge among practitioners, and how far this stretches from the local into the regional or international is different from dance type to dance type. Where the practised typology does not work, a description made by researchers is needed and will function more in line with the ideas from archaeology. These two principles were also used in the Nordic typology, at type as well as at higher levels.

Type definition is a set of characteristics that together provide sufficient basis for distinguishing a type from all other types. "Every type is theoretically capable of having a type definition: a statement or depiction of its diagnostic features which is sufficient to distinguish it verbally and/or pictorially from all other types. In archaeology, […] most types are never given a formal or explicit definition, even though it should theoretically be possible to do so. We are therefore obliged to say that most archaeological types have an unstated or implicit definition. (Adams & Adams 1991/2007: 30)

A strict type definition is not more helpful for dance typologies than for archaeological ones. A good description suits the purpose and aims better, being more flexible and adaptable. Precise definitions are hardly needed, and at type level the embodied and tacit knowledge may not be stable enough for defining, so even types of social dance may have unstated or implicit definitions.

Type label. Although it is not a theoretical necessity, useful types are nearly always given an identifying label consisting of a letter, number, word, or words. These labels make it possible to communicate the type concept from one person to another merely by stating, writing, or exhibiting the label, without having to repeat the full type description. In our usage, a type label differs from a type name in that it is purely arbitrary, and does not involve any component of description. (Adams & Adams 1991/2007:31)

Typology codes of the Nordic typology can be considered as type labels. We developed a code system which could use up to seven characters and represent six levels. The type code for "Ordinary waltz" is a combination of abbreviations in letters: OP stands for *Omdansingspardans* – (turning couple dances), N stands for *Nyere* (Newer), V stands for *Vals* (Waltz), f stands for

flermelodipardanser (dance types with more than one melody each), then there is a number, and finally the two letters which do not refer to anything other than order of elements. The abbreviations were used to make codes easier to remember at input and retrieval; for digital processing purely digital code might work better.

OP NVf 1a	Vanlig vals	Ordinary waltz

Type name. A type name performs the same function as a type label; that is, it provides a shorthand means of the communication of a type concept from one person to another. However, it differs from a type label in that it involves a certain element of description, and therefore is not wholly arbitrary. (Adams & Adams 1991/2007:31)

If we do not pay particular attention to choices of terms in a typology, a term may provide misleading associations and as such become misleading during practical work. Our type names are primarily keyword descriptions of the type, and few of them are sufficient basis for identification alone. We also know that local names of types may be different from place to place. The dance type that the Nordic Typology calls Polka consists mainly of a duple-metre two-measure turning three-pace steps, and this type has many different names throughout the Nordic countries; including *skotsk*, *hamborgar*, *hoppvals*, *hagervals*, *polkett*, *galopp*. The name polka was at the same time used as a local type name for the so-called *Polkamasurka* in triple time. The term Polka was the standard term used by the dancing masters and in folk dance manuals, which was why it was chosen as term of the typology. The local type names are complex matters indeed, and terminological type names need to be chosen with care and rely on good type descriptions (Bakka 2001:37–47).

Type level	OP NPf la	*Polka med to-taktsomdansing*	Polka with two-measure turning

Type members. A type member is an entity that has been identified as exemplifying the characteristics of a particular type and has therefore been put into that type category. In archaeological classifications, type members are nearly always artefacts or fragments of artefacts. They are, collectively, the physical aspect of "typehood".

Dance types members should most ideally be realizations of local dance concepts, a classification done by dancers who do the dances. The ideal material would then be films of realizations that would be the physical representation of each realization. There is, however, also a vast material of descriptions, notations prescriptions and drafts, in most cases aiming to convey something about a dance concept, and therefore not so directly connected to the realization. Such material, mostly fixed to paper, of course also will fill vital roles in classifying social dance in general, even if the source value is of another kind.

VWV and EWA claim that one type must have a concept, a description, a formulated or unformulated definition, a tag and/or a name and type member. We can imagine types of which we have not found examples, i.e. they are without type members. We call them unrealized types. We can also imagine a collection of similar phenomena or objects that are grouped and labelled without any type concept, type description or type definition. These we can call unformulated types. On this background, we can say that the elements of a typology, and particularly groups between the totus and the type level, are at the same time both discovered and invented.

Typologies with Historical Perspectives

A usual point of departure for making typologies was the wish to systematize source material in archives, as a basis for retrieving material following a researcher's or another user's request for this or that melody, ballad, dance, Stone Age tool or piece of pottery. Some of the items brought to the archives are collected with a name given by the users, so a first step may be to sort alphabetically accoridng to the name given. As we have seen, such local names are in many cases utterly confusing. Items with the same form may have many different names and items with different form may have the same name. In most cases it is similar or different forms that are interesting to retrieve and not similar or different naming alone, which then requires a classification based on form, a typology. The question I pose in this article is how grand projects of classification, parallel to those in other disciplines of the early twentieth century, could add a significant new branch to dance research, but now helped by digital technology.

The qualitative, deeply drilling, and mostly narrowly focused research of the mainstream can hardly cope with the challenges dance history faces when leaving the western sphere. My African students, in particular, raise strong concerns about how their histories cannot be written with the conventional use of written historical sources. While dance and music permeate all aspects of African life, it has been treated with the colonial indifference and negligence which fall upon dance in the Western world. The wealth of dancing documented on film in Africa through the twentieth century already constitutes a substantial corpus. The potential for new documentation of dance and music that represent strong continuities with the past is nearly unlimited. Such documentation is, however strikingly neglected, while commercial music video productions based on Western ideals are taking front stage through their strong presence on the internet.

Archaeology has classified material from the past into typologies to establish relative chronologies for object forms (Murray & Evans 2008:403). Comparative and historical linguistics has described the development of the Indo-European languages from prehistoric roots up to the present (Robins

2013:556–580). Folklore has shown how many folklore genres are shared across nations and continents. Dance history is still to no small extent build upon a narrow European canon of excerpts, descriptions and to a slight degree upon large-scale classification and systematization of actual form material. If dance history is going to face the challenge of establishing methods to deal with regions of the world where written historical source material is really scarce, there is a need to adapt methodologies similar to those used in linguistics and archaeology; it is essential to study the actual forms. In dance, the forms available mainly as twentieth- and twenty-first-century film material, but reconstructing processes and forms of the past through a systematic analysis of relatively recent material has been done by other disciplines. Dance may have different challenges compared to other disciplines, but they may be overcome. An example from the Nordic field is how the different distribution of certain dance motifs can be used, supported by some metadata, to show which of the motifs are older or newer (Bakka 2012 274–280). Classification of large dance materials from African countries, coupled with investigation about the distribution of certain dance patterns and with demographic data, could reveal processes pointing back in history. The experience from our Nordic project does not stress the ephemerality of dance, but rather its tencacious elements that have stayed in practice for centuries with minor changes in structural form.

Generative Dance Cores

Dictionaries define the term generative as "having the power or function of generating, originating, producing, or reproducing", and I suggest that certain dance patterns have such power. It seems that the intrinsic structure of certain dance elements has a built-in potential to produce similar, often more complex, versions in parallel but independently. So far, my studies are based on only a limited material, the North and Central European couple-turning motifs of the so-called round dances that established themselves as a fashion at the end of the eighteenth century. I also, however, refer to Lisbet Torp's work which seems to demonstrate similar phenomena.

While mapping this complex and quite cohesive set of dance structures, I could see that they consisted of basic elements with a realized generative potential. That is, if factors such as beats, supports or svikts are added or dropped in an element, or if the order of factors is changed, the element becomes a new form or a new variant and may even take on another musical metre. We can find these forms and variants documented and can to some degree also follow the development with the aid of historical sources. They are amply documented in dancing masters' books, in folk dance collections and in film documentation. The whole large spectrum of forms and variants contained in the couple turning can be derived or predicted from the change

of factors in elements. It seems as if the generative potential of the motifs was fulfilled during the nineteenth century, and that there are not many unrealized variants.

Video illustration 2: if we add one beat and svikt to the Swedish *snoa*, we get the basic formula of a Danish *Sønderhoning* or a Norwegian *halvrund polka*, and so on. (A video will be published on the website of the Norwegian Centre for traditional music and dance and the link made available.)

The Danish ethnochoreologist Lisbet Torp analysed and surveyed the step patterns of a large corpus of European chain and round dances coming from many different parts of Europe. This dance genre corresponds to a category at the highest level of the Nordic folk dance typology called *Ring og kjededanser*. Torp shows how the dances of the genre have structures that are built from two small components: the travelling step and the hesitation step. To my mind Torp's analysis demonstrates the generative power of these elements as it unfolded within a genre that is also defined by other organizational and functional characteristics. Torp also analyses the compositional principles at work, which allow the wealth of different types.

Video illustration 3: The widespread step pattern called Branle simple. See: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1_wyypH_3LE.

Ephemerality or Stable Structures

Through my work with dance types and dance motifs as sources for the history of social dance, I have been struck by the stability of certain dance patterns. When comparing large numbers of descriptions, notations and films of dancing across time and space, one can see surprising patterns of stability, similarity and cohesion appearing, reminding us of how folklorists, archaeologists or linguists have been able to reconstruct deep historical layers based on stability in patterns. Such patterns, often very intricate, become visible only through classifications and typologies, which are the tools that can go beyond the borders of the written source material. There may be several reasons why dance research has not been able to lift projects of the necessary size. One is of course that the field did not have the prestige to raise money of that kind. The most significant attempt in a similar direction was probably Alan Lomax's Choreometrics project (Lomax, Bartenieff & Paulay 1969). The dance historian Mark Franko points to another discourse, which marked attitudes to dance in general through the twentieth century:

Nothing militates more against the claim of dance over its own history than the notion that dance is fundamentally ephemeral. Were we to accept the ephemerality of dance, then the history of dance itself becomes unnamable. Reenactment in dance testifies to the overturning of a long-standing trope of dance history and theory: dance has been much vaunted, but also subtlety maligned, as the quintessential art form of the immediate, transient, and vanishing present. Movement and vanishing

> are both contained in the phrase "the moment." But many dancers are now actively engaged with reclaiming their past rather than flying from it, and in this process they challenge the irremediable nature of dances storied transience. What has reenactment done to ephemerality? The aura that ephemerality has cast on the dance work in modernity is perhaps finally succumbing to its own intellectual and artistic mortality because of reenactment. (Franko 2017:8)

The attempts of American modern dance to get rid of the restraining technique of classical ballet were supported by Rudolf von Laban's work in creating a new expressive dance that could replace all kinds of old dances that did not suit modern society. Part of Laban's legacy was modern educational dance and its underlying dogma that working with pre-existing patterns was of less artistic value than creating the dance spontaneously. My claim would be that we work hard all our lives to acquire all kinds of movement skill at a sufficient level to cope with all the tasks we need to solve. Most of our actions are movement skills that we repeat over and over again and not improvizations of the moment. That is why movement patterns have stability. When I, as a young man, wanted to impress my wife by washing the floor and wrung out the wet cloth to get rid of excess water, she laughed at me, saying that the way I did it proved that I had not learned that from my mother. I think at least Norwegian women do have a shared way of doing it. Dance movements are not utilitarian, so you cannot judge the efficiency based on a concrete practical outcome such as with the wet cloth. It leaves us with a question about how to conceive the functioning of movement in our society, as a need for stable, well-acquired skills or as a space for individual creativity that does not call for training and stability.

Conclusions

This article argues against the ideas of social dance as an ephemeral phenomenon, trying to show how, just like folklore and archaeology, it has stable and generative patterns. Dance is immaterial in its appearance and presence; few or no material traces remind us of its latent presence when no dancing is happening, and it may therefore be considered ephemeral from that perspective. The movement activities that keep our daily lives running are for the most part realized thanks to skills acquired through even harder efforts; I therefore argue that our lives are anchored to skilled movements that require stability for our communities to function, and so does dance.

The main content of the article is a discussion about the tools of typology and classification and an attempt to describe and discuss the three central terms in humanistic classification: genre, type and motif. Social dance has been considered to be one of the folklore genres, and, for that reason I investigate how folklorists use and describe the three concepts. Even though I have not found any deep analysis of the concepts in folklore, the practice

shows a vague idea of genre, an emic point of departure for the type, and an open but still practically viable use of the term motif, applicable regionally but hardly globally. While folklore classifies the verbal content of its material, dance is abstract and has no verbal content; it is the movements that need to be classified. Just that aspect, the lack of the verbal as the main content, connects social dance to archaeology, which is the second discipline of comparison. The similarity here is the classification of what we could call abstract forms. The archaeologist works with material objects made for concrete purposes, not so apparent in dance. The aspect of differences in form that may be ascribed to different distributions in time and space is also a common trait of social dance. The emic basis established by practised and embodied dance types is also not so readily available for archaeology. The idea promoted by some archaeologists that suitable typologies should be made for specific purposes is, in my opinion, a helpful way of thinking even in dance research. Dance history was the purpose of the Nordic folk dance typology, and the purpose I am advocating to continue. When data is digitally stored, it is easily available for reformatting, for merging, and expansions in ways which could make it useful for new purposes. If we took inspiration from Tangherlini's idea of connecting a classified legend material to the storyteller's life histories, and tried to connect the dance repertoires to, for instance, the social, ecological, economic or political conditions of local communities of the Nordic countries, the already existing typology could be reformatted and redesigned rather than entirely remodelled. The principle of the polythetic classification has released many disciplines from the straitjacket of the consistently hierarchical typologies and would help solve practical problems in many local archival systems for dance.

We started and will end with digital humanities and repeat the term suggested above, cyber-choreology. Motion capture technology is already a functioning tool in this new subfield, based on generating data from measurements of movement with specific sets of advanced equipment; there is also equipment to measure the aspects of weight. The possibility of capturing movement data from ordinary, already existing film material would be an exceptionally captivating expansion of some of this technology. I suggest that the concept of generative movement cores have the power to generate clusters with similarity and cohesion. I have used the one-measure and two-measure turning techniques that developed in Central and North European couple dances as one clear example. I also suggest that there are stable cores, which may not have the same generative power, but that still have spread far in time and space, and perhaps other cores with other kinds of potential.

From my experience, I would claim that cyber-choreology in itself cannot identify such generative or stable cores through measurement of movement. The cores appear in practical engagement with movement, and through sorting and systematizing large amounts of dance documentation. They arise

from a combination of many aspects, different from case to case, including durations and weight as well as aspects such as relation to other dancers, the way motif-cells and motif-elements are combined and their overall function in dance types or groups of dance types. When powerful and compelling cores of dance movement have been identified, cyber-choreology can pose meaningful questions, and probably even search for the cores. This one crucial line of questioning is as relevant as the studies of perception and physicality of dance movement, where choreology takes on dance as a culturally-grown phenomenon of past and present.

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[1] The basis for this article is one I wrote in Norwegian in 1993 as part of a Nordic project for a typology of Nordic folk dance (Bakka, Egil. 1997:7–16). I thank my colleagues in the Nordic Association for Folk Dance Research for cooperation on the project, and Dennis Mululu Kioli for technical assistance with the article.

[2] I wish to avoid the term performance, which gives the association that a dance is danced not only for the dancers themselves but also for other people, such as an audience.

[3] Dance, playing a musical instrument, singing, storytelling, fairy tale, legend, proverb.

[4] The latter is a simplified explanation to give an impression of what a motif can be.

[5] This is a reference to "Location" in an electronic publication that does not have pages.

[6] This refers to the booklet in which this article was published in Norwegian. The typological work was already finished when this article was written in order to discuss methods.

Book Reviews

A Norwegian Church Biography
Arne Bugge Amundsen: Enighet og uenighet i 400 år. Kirkene på Langestrand. Novus Forlag, Oslo 2018. 155 pp.

The Norwegian cultural historian and folklorist Arne Bugge Amundsen is a leading expert on post-Reformation church life in Norway. In this book he has conducted a local study of church buildings over four hundred years. He calls the study a "church biography". The scene is Langestrand in Vestfold County on the west side of Oslo Fjord. This place bore the imprint of the noble manor of Fresje, in a county established in 1671 with Governor Ulrik Fredrik Gyldenløve as the first count. A sawmill and an ironworks grew up in Langestrand, making the place into an early industrial community. It differed from the nearby town of Larvik, which was the main town and had the main church.

As early as 1600 the owners of the manor of Fresje had begun hiring a chaplain to perform ecclesiastical duties there instead of in the main church. The question arose of whether a church should be built in Langestrand even though it was so close to Larvik. In 1642 the manor owner Niels Lange obtained permission from the Danish king to build a private estate church at Fresje. Larvik then acquired a town church in 1677, which became the count's church. Tensions could arise between the main church of Larvik and its clergy and the private chapel at Fresje. It became a place of worship for the industrial community, with the ironworks manager playing a prominent role. In 1698 Count Gyldenløve ordered the construction of a new church in Langestrand, which was completed at the beginning of the eighteenth century. The costs were partly covered by the count but to a large extent by the people of Langestrand themselves.

This place also saw the rise of religious counter-cultures of a pietistic kind. This can be seen in pictorial decorations in the church, for example, a detailed depiction of different phases in the passion of Jesus, donated in 1752 by the ironworks manager.

The ideas of the Enlightenment came along later, and in 1811 a royal decision to demolish the church in Langestrand. This took place in 1812 and a new church was dedicated in 1818. It would be given the name "The Church of Unity" because of the involvement of the local inhabitants in the construction of the church. There was still a great mental distance to the people of the town of Larvik and the ecclesiastical authorities there. Local people were anxious to maintain the independence and individuality of the community. In 1838 the count ceased to enjoy the ownership of the churches in the Larvik district and the local congregations became self-governing. One negative event for Langestrand was the closure of the ironworks in the mid-nineteenth century. The church survived, however, and was rebuilt in 1903. In 2018 it celebrated its bicentennial. In the course of four hundred years many external changes to the church buildings have occurred. What has been stable has been the local people's close relations and commitment to the church, in a

small place in the shadow of the larger and more influential town of Larvik.

The author has performed extensive archival studies and has thus been able to reflect local historical processes over an impressively long period of four hundred years. From the perspective of the industrial community, it is the internal solidarity that has given strength when there has been antagonism with the outside world in the form of the town of Larvik. The book, which is richly illustrated, is a fundamental contribution to microhistorical research. It can be recommended to readers with an interest in cultural history and local history.

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Aspects of Collapse

Kollaps. På randen av fremtiden. Peter Bjerregaard & Kyrre Kverndokk (eds.). Dreyers forlag, Oslo 2018. 271 pp. Ill.

This highly topical and thought-provoking volume consists of seventeen relatively short articles, or more correctly essays, by a total of eighteen authors, of whom only three are women. Applying different perspectives and representing a variety of academic disciplines, the authors, who are mainly working at Norwegian institutions, discuss *collapse* as an idea and as a possible future reality. However, the Norwegian basis of the book does not mean that the analyses only concern Norwegian matters. In fact, the empirical data and the analyses are global in scope. The volume is edited by the social anthropologist Peter Bjerregaard and the folklorist Kyrre Kverndokk. Other authors' contributions cover a spectrum of disciplines ranging from social anthropology, cultural history, comparative literature, gender studies, and folkloristics to botany, geology, and psychology.

Our natural environment is in a state of rapid and dramatic change, not least because of human intervention. Human influence on the earth's geology, biodiversity, and climate has created a new global uncertainty. Concepts such as climate crisis and climate catastrophes form part of the narrative of a dystopian future in the media and the political discourse. The desire for sustainable development and a future that can build on today's society, without causing any friction, goes hand in hand with the unpleasant question of whether the world as we know it will collapse and the radical steps that humankind must take to avoid such a collapse. That is the basis of this volume.

The term *collapse*, which has been used frequently for political purposes in recent times, is often associated with something frightening and irreversible. However, as the authors of the volume argue, past collapses and contemporary taking place around us show that a collapse can also offer opportunities to see the world in a new light. Paradoxically, *collapse* is not just a destructive event, but can also be a creative force. The climate crisis has shown, for example, how an expected collapse gives rise not only to the development of new technology, new forms of housing, and new jobs, but also new forms of interaction.

The short introduction presents the learning goal of the book: to offer a kaleidoscopic perspective on collapses that includes everything from extinction of species to personal and psychological collapses. It also provides a brief overview of the concept of Anthropocene, the meaning of which is described as an understanding of the world where history and evolution, culture and nature can no longer be kept separate from each other.

The chapters in the book are relatively short, around 10–15 pages with a few exceptions. This means that some basic premises for academic articles have been skipped, such as descriptions of methodology and the material on which

the articles are based. The structure consisting of many short essays based on widely differing disciplines may initially cause problems for the reader in understanding how to read each individual text, especially when it is not clear how the articles are arranged in relation to each other. This means that it sometimes takes energy to jump between articles, for instance when a text about the extinction of the great auk in relation to loss, melancholy, and meanings of extinction narratives in the Anthropocene is followed by a discussion of what a synthetic material like plastics can tell us about temporality, the Anthropocene, and capitalist values.

Each essay is illustrated with a picture, or rather an art photograph. Unfortunately, the quality of the paper is such that it does not do justice to the poetic photographs. The relationship between the image and the respective essay therefore seems somewhat vague.

Since there are so many essays it is impossible for a review to consider them all. What follows is therefore a summary of some of the seventeen contributions, with a selection that is somewhat representative of the different disciplines.

The anthropologist Thomas Hylland Eriksen begins the volume by writing, with reference to Joseph Tainter's *The Collapse of Complex Societies* (1988), that we have a lot to learn from the rise and fall of previous civilizations. For example: The bigger a system becomes, the more expensive it will be to administer, and also, the larger the population becomes, the more everyone needs to work to support themselves and their families. Eriksen takes the same optimistic stance as Tainter as regards the idea that the collapse of a civilization does not necessarily mean a regression or a worse life. Rather, the impending collapse can be seen as a blessing in disguise, because a down-turn in economic growth and consumption can instead prove to have a positive impact on the quality of life.

The geologist Henrik H. Svensen argues the thesis that if we are to understand the Anthropocene, we need more knowledge about previous geological periods and variations in climate. A period that began about 11,700 years ago, which was officially given the name of the Holocene at the end of the nineteenth century, and which some say ended when the great acceleration in population growth, and the consequent increase in carbon dioxide emissions, took off during industrialization and especially in the decades following the Second World War. With the Holocene as a backdrop, Svensen says that we can better understand the climate changes that occurred during the twentieth century and are now continuing in the twenty-first century. The Holocene was not a paradise, but an epoch of great natural variations such as hot and cold periods, floods, volcanic eruptions, and famines which influenced mankind in various ways. The difference between the Holocene and the Anthropocene is that the latter is dominated by mankind and by human interventions in nature. What the consequences will be and whether these can be likened to, say, major volcanic eruptions in the past, are issues that deserve attention.

The psychologist Ole Jacob Madsen's contribution proceeds from collapse as a psychological phenomenon and discusses how climate change affects the human psyche. A common explanation, says Madsen, why people do not react more to the climate threat is that people's fears are mainly directed at immediate threats here and now instead of towards abstract future scenarios. In this way, spiders and terrorism provoke more fear than climate change, even though the latter is in fact a much greater threat. In recent years, however, awareness and anxiety about the climate threat have increased in populations worldwide and, as history has shown, human flexibility and adaptability are significantly greater than is often assumed.

Past collapses of societal and value systems which once seemed unshakable have shown that humans have nevertheless been able to adapt to other ways of life under new conditions.

The folklorist Kyrre Kverndokk shows how depictions of states of disaster, such as what happened in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, are similar to depictions of war and apocalyptic future scenarios taken from the world of film and fiction. The dramaturgy by which catastrophes are depicted follows a certain pattern that we can recognize from previously established notions of how a catastrophe will play out, with chaos, looting, and violence as taken-for-granted highlights of the narrative. However, these cultural schemas not only affect how disasters are interpreted and presented; according to Kverndokk, who quotes the hazard researcher Kathleen Tierney, they also contribute to the actual course of the disaster and how it is managed by the authorities with the aid of soldiers, police, and relief workers. This was seen, for example, in the way thousands of soldiers patrolled New Orleans after the devastation caused by Katrina. In the media depictions of Katrina, there was no room for *communitas*, to use Victor and Edith Turner's terminology, no mention of all the displays of care and compassion. A disaster does not automatically mean a collapse of civilization or morals, but can, on the contrary, give rise to new forms of interaction between people.

In order to understand today's concerns about an uncertain future and the new conditions that climate change will most likely entail, research is needed from different perspectives, not only in the natural sciences, biology, meteorology, and geology, but also psychology, cultural history, anthropology, and archaeology. As we read in the article "The Doomsday Document" by Kristian Bjørkdahl, postdoctoral researcher at the Centre for Development and Environment in Oslo, knowledge about the environment and climate change has to a large extent been presented with the aid of technical-scientific graphs – a legacy, says Bjørkdahl, from the first major report, *Limits to Growth*, published by the modern environmental movement in 1972. Computer-based systems analyses create an abstract picture of the state of the world, a picture that few people can comprehend, which means that knowledge about the climate does not reach out and does not help us to understand either our own motives or ourselves. Bjørkdahl argues for a model of knowledge that includes rather than excludes, and that does not require a university degree in statistics.

In addition to these readable contributions, it is also worth mentioning an interesting article about the extinct but mythical great auk by the social anthropologists Gro Ween and Arnar Árnason, and the archaeologist Tim Flohr Sørensen's captivating and thought-provoking essay about the prospect of how long atomic waste must be managed. I was also fascinated by the art historian Ingrid Halland's article discussing how plastics as materiality are connected with the Anthropocene and constitute a plastic turning point with catastrophic existential implications. Finally, I would also like to single out the social anthropologist Arne Alexej Perminow, who writes about people's local responses to and understandings of change and impending collapse, which cannot automatically be interpreted in the context of climate discourses but should also be understood in the light of the forces that people themselves believe they are surrounded by.

It is not easy to summarize a book that moves between so many different disciplines and topics of knowledge. Having read the volume in its entirety, I have definitely gained a broader knowledge of contemporary and historical perspectives on collapses and crises. In addition, I have enjoyed reading it. At the

same time, it leaves me somewhat perplexed. Although the editors begin by stating clearly that they have not sought to coordinate the perspectives of the different articles, if they had been arranged thematically they would have given a deeper and more systematic understanding of the climatic and ecological crises and collapses that we are said to be facing. I understand both the idea of keeping the gaps between the disciplines open and the problem of a thematic arrangement. This would not necessarily require grouping the articles according to the different scientific disciplines but could be done in other ways. When a book is multidisciplinary like this, in a positive sense, some aspects necessarily end up being neglected. The broad and boundary-crossing approach is thus both beneficial and detrimental to readers who expect an in-depth analysis of collapse as a historical and contemporary phenomenon. The book should thus be regarded as a scientifically based collection of essays to be read with an open and inquisitive mind. With that kind of attitude, any reader is assured of a rich and rewarding experience.

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The Art of Listening
Kompetensen att lyssna. Georg Drakos & Helena Bani-Shoraka (eds.). Carlsson Bokförlag, Stockholm 2018. 224 pp.

Kompetensen att lyssna owes its inception to a two-year project, between 2014 and 2015, led by Georg Drakos, an ethnologist from Stockholm University. The project that was carried out within the framework of the Swedish Cultural Council with focus on "Culture for the Elderly" focused on the application of narrative praxis as a model to create forms of mutual knowledge exchange between professional practitioners from different areas within health and social care, art and science. The aim was to contribute to the development of an effective communication between health and social care practitioners and different groups of care receivers, including elderly and those affected by inherited or acquired disabilities to surpass the quality of life among them.

The overarching theme of this volume is listening as a resource, and the ways in which health and social care practitioners can communicate more effectively with care receivers through becoming better listeners. The central focus is on the importance of using narrative praxis as a model to facilitate communication with, especially, those who have lost their ability to narrate due to old age or ill health, with the aim of providing them with an opportunity to be heard even when words are missing.

The volume consists of three parts. Part one, including the first three chapters, presents the reader with an overall perspective on narrative praxis as a model, a brief background on the theoretical and methodological perspectives on narrative praxis in health and social care, and narrative development in a multilingual context, respectively. Part two, including six chapters written by different authors, provides the reader with empirical examples of how health and social care practitioners use narrative praxis methods when interacting with elderly and patients affected by disabilities of different types. The third and last part, consisting of two chapters, is based on the foregoing statement on narrative praxis as a model and the outline of its methods which presents the reader with a further developed description into the model and provides the reader with important insights into how health and social care practitioners can further develop their communication skills and become better listeners.

In the first chapter, the reader is introduced to the idea of narrative praxis as a model and how it can facilitate communication between health and social care practitioners and different groups of care receivers. In this introductory chapter, the ethnologist Georg Drakos and the sociolinguist Helena Bani-Shoraka present a short background to what narrative praxis is and how its application as a method in health and social care can ensure that elderly have a voice. Narrative praxis is defined as "the way staff listen and relate to narrative in their professional practice" (p. 13, my translation). Narrative is introduced as the most prominent means to communicate "who we are and we want to be", however, despite its importance, it is all too often that care receivers' narratives within health and social care remain unheard and untold (p. 14, my translation). It leads to the argument that although sufficient resources and staff with high competence is a requirement to ensure high quality of care, focusing on care receivers' personal narratives is a way to ensure care receivers' "well-being, security and dignity", the core values of health and social care (p. 17, my translation).

In the same line of thought, in chapter two, Drakos further elaborates on the question of how to become a good listener when the narrator has lost the ability to narrate, and when one's historical identity is seemingly lost in the midst of illness. Drakos presents, among others, a brief history of "narrative turn" and "performative turn" and points out the ways in which a performance-oriented approach to narrative and listening invites us to shift our attention to *how* people appear in their own narrative rather than focusing, only, on *what* they narrate. Narrative is the primary component of social interaction, and those who fail to meet the standards of a "real narrative", inevitably, are deprived of a voice and experience different degrees of exclusion. Narrative is a selective act of presenting the parts of our life experiences that are the most meaningful to us. Sometimes, however, it is the untold parts of the story that are the most meaningful parts. In this chapter, Drakos reminds the reader of the importance of defining the meaning of narrative and narration and what forces in care receivers' environment can enable or disable their narratives from being told and heard.

In chapter three, Bani-Shoraka deals with multilingualism in health and social care. The crux is that multilingualism in health and social care is an asset rather than a hindrance although multilingualism is not a well-defined concept within the health and social care field. This is due to a vague understanding of what multilingualism is and how it functions in different fields, contexts and situations. With the help of referring to a real-life example within a retirement home, Bani-Shoraka illustrates the ways in which multilingualism as a resource enables caregivers and care receivers to communicate effectively through speaking the same language, sharing common imagination, and experiencing a feeling of familiarity. Multilingualism is introduced as a resource in health and social care as it provides care receivers with an opportunity to be actively engaged and recreate and relive their experiences from the past to the present.

Part two, consisting of chapter four to nine written by Ninni Svensson, Gunilla Ryden, Karin Renberg, Anne-Charlotte Keiller Wijk, Katrin Rosemaysdotter, and Stanislaw Przybylski Linder, respectively, provides the reader with practical examples of how using patients' own "resources" contribute to the engagement and well-being of elderlies and those affected by different types of disabilities. One thing that these chapters have in common is to show how health and social care practitioners use narrative praxis methods to communicate effectively and interact with elderly and those affected by disabilities of dif-

ferent types. The chapters visualize application of the different methods of narrative praxis model in their different lines of work within health and social care sector while they presents an individual take on the importance of narrative praxis. Within the description of their professional practices, the writers intentionally do not refer to the narrative praxis model itself. Instead, they illustrate the application of the model's various tools in their daily practices, providing the reader with a good overview of how narrative praxis is applied in real life practices. The six chapters also have in common their reflection on the importance of facilitating the care receivers, based on their conditions and needs, with different tools to regain their "voice".

In chapter ten, Georg Drakos reviews the narrative praxis model and the importance of its application in different occupational practices within health and social care. By referring to the four types of tools that this model offers – listening and interaction, participation and observation, free expression of the self, and presence and performance – Drakos analyses the examples provided in the previous chapters and portrays how they initially correspond to the study of narrative in different contexts.

In the last chapter, Drakos and Bani-Shoraka summarize the previous chapters by concretizing what being a good listener in health and social care means. In order to become a good listener in health and social care sector, one needs to move beyond the standard means of communication through using different means of interaction instead of solely focusing on standardized communication methods. Although the writers recall the limitations within health and social care sector and discuss how lack of time is often an objection that is difficult to ignore, they argue that time is not just a scarce commodity. Time can be a resource if caregivers consider it as a tool rather than a barrier. The question then is not just about having time but also about taking time.

This volume stays faithful to its title and the research questions that are posed throughout the book. Through a combination of theoretical and methodological approach, this book oscillates between the theoretical perspectives on narrative praxis in health and social care, and the practical examples of how to apply the model in real life situations. The reader is introduced to a combination of methodological and practical perspectives on narrative praxis and its application in health and social care. It can be seen as a brief yet hands-on toolbox where both instructions into how to apply narrative praxis in daily activities and reasoning behind it is presented. It is a very interesting read as one can reflect on or even relate to the information and examples presented from personal experiences.

One may critique the lack of opposite opinions and potential challenges of the application of this model in different real-life situations, and argue that it is unlikely that *every* approach to narrative praxis and listening is a successful practice. Georg Drakos addresses this shortage in the last chapter by clarifying that presentation of the successful examples is more inspiriting than recalling the unsuccessful results. It will, however, be as inspiring and educational to share the failure and reflect on how to avoid such outcomes in the future. The book presents the reader with a handful of references which may put it at risk of being less sought after in academia.

Despite the occasional repetition, the information presented in this volume can easily capture the reader's interest. It is a practical tool box which can be used by different groups of audiences who are interested in bringing theory to practice.

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Boundaries and Alcohol

Anders Gustavsson: Historical Changes in Alcohol Contacts across the Swedish-Norwegian Border. Novus Press, Oslo 2019. 61 pp. Ill.

This new little book by Anders Gustavsson examines the border between Norway and Sweden with respect to alcohol consumption. The presentation is historical and descriptive, based on material from a research project called "Cultural Encounters at the Border". Much of the research material comes from interviews, court records, and newspapers in south-west Sweden. The press in Strömstad and Uddevalla may serve as an example.

The study starts with descriptions of labour migrations at the end of the nineteenth century, when jobs were to be had in Norway in sawmills, brickworks, quarries, and farming. Many young Swedish males set off to earn a living in the neighbouring country. Women also found places working in families. Many Swedes stayed on and started a family together with a Norwegian partner, others returned, and some crossed the border many times during their life. Alcohol tends to flow freely in homosocial contexts, and that was the case here too. Gustavsson tells of young men who drank up most of their wages. Of course there were also well-behaved men who went back home and supported their families with what they had earned. In that respect, this labour migration was similar to emigration to America, Australia, and South Africa in the same period, but no comparisons are made here with long-distance journeys of that kind.

During and soon after the First World War, the amount of alcohol consumed on the other side of the border increased even more. The countries around Sweden introduced prohibition laws during the period from 1908 to 1919, while in Sweden a rationing system was introduced after the failure of a 1922 referendum to impose prohibition there too. However, prohibition breeds curiosity and, at least in Finland, never has so much alcohol been consumed as during prohibition. Swedes smuggled large amounts of alcohol to Norway and were helped by an extensive network of boats from Denmark, Germany, and elsewhere. Smuggling is a fascinating topic to which Fredrik Nilsson, among others, has devoted attention in recent times. Gustavsson's account of smuggling is nicely complemented by Nilsson's detailed depictions of life aboard the smuggling boats and the technical conditions for good communication between commanders, smugglers, and recipients – while making sure that no one else heard. Occasional Swedes likewise earned extra cash by smuggling illicitly distilled spirits to their Norwegian neighbours on the other side of the border. Alcohol was a coveted commodity which could be useful in business deals.

During the Second World War the border between Norway and Sweden was closed once again. But people on both sides realized that the Gestapo only kept surveillance on the official crossing points, leaving the large expanses of forest between them unguarded. For those with local knowledge it was not risk-free but still relatively easy to cross the border and sell spirits, especially under cover of darkness. The same paths were used to bring Norwegian resistance fighters to safety in Sweden. Alcohol functioned as a means of payment between Swedes and Norwegians, for example for food and other goods which were in short supply in Norway but plentiful in Sweden, where everyday life was not affected in the same way by the war. Even the Germans were affected by all the shortages in Norway and were therefore willing to use alcohol to pay for sought-after Swedish goods. Not even the customs men were God's best children. They turned a blind eye to the smuggling or even smuggled goods

themselves. Moreover, alcohol could be used as a bribe if one wanted to achieve something shady.

Even after the troubled period in the first half of the twentieth century, alcohol has played a part in the interaction between Norwegians and Swedes. In Norway, Maundy Thursday (the day before Good Friday) is a public holiday, but it is not in Sweden. Therefore, hordes of young Norwegians of both sexes can easily cross the border to Sweden on their day off, buy huge amounts of alcohol and consume much of it while in Sweden. In recent years it has even been decided to close the shops of Systembolaget, the Swedish alcohol monopoly, in the border zone, in order to avoid the fights and traffic chaos resulting from this liquor rally every Maundy Thursday.

It happens occasionally that the staff of Systembolaget go on strike, sometimes for weeks, so that Swedes have to go to Norway to purchase strong drinks. Boat tourists naturally bring alcohol home, perhaps within the legally permitted limits, perhaps as contraband. As an ethnologist, Gustavsson naturally operates at the most mundane level and therefore has access to information about what hobby sailors and holiday boaters have in their drinks cabinets. Nobody on holiday needs to stay sober for days at a time, and at sea it does not matter. It's a time for relaxation, after all!

The book deals with alcohol consumption in western Sweden and southeast Norway over a period of approximately 150 years. We see how spirits have been of great significance in male communities, as a means of payment and as something by which to earn a living. We also see how women after the Second World War became more involved in this, and nowadays are just as guilty drinkers as the men.

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Private Archives

Enskilda arkiv. Charlotte Hagström & Anna Ketola (eds.). Studentlitteratur, Lund 2018. 187 pp. Ill.

Enskilda arkiv, or "Private Archives", published by Folkrörelsernas Förbund and edited by Charlotte Hagström of Lund University and Anna Ketola of the Scanian Archive Association, is an elegantly constructed book. It follows a well thought out chronology in two directions: one from historical time through the present day towards the future, and one from the delivery of material via the processing of the material to the point where it is made accessible to the public. The structure leads one's thoughts to a coordinate system of archival work over time. An updated archive manual of this kind is particularly welcome in view of the fact that thirty years have passed since the publication of *Folkrörelsernas arkivhandbok – arkiv och framtid i förening* in 1988; changes have taken place in practically everything in this sector, from the public assignment of the archives and their target groups to practical archival management and the day-to-day work of the archivist. The job I myself began at the end of the 1990s shows very little similarity to the job I am doing today, and I can scarcely imagine what it was like in the 1980s.

The less positive sides of the book include the colourless look, even slightly dusty, adjectives that an archivist does not like to see in this context today. Associating archives with something colourless feels unfair and outdated; a visually attractive appearance would have been more than welcome, in order to achieve a fresh renewal in this respect too. Despite the appearance of the book, *Enskilda arkiv* contains nine good articles by eleven knowledgeable writers.

In the foreword, the editors say that the book is intended as a handbook "for and about private archives" (p. 7). There are three primary target groups for the

book: students in archive studies, creators of private archives, and archive employees. Hagström and Ketola have succeeded well in their mission of finding writers who can shed light on the field from different angles. As an archivist, I can say that, in practical terms, the book does not bring very many surprises. The various phases and processes of the work described here are familiar to me. What is new for me, coming from Finland, was the introductory chapter on the history of the individual archives in Sweden, and the concluding chapter on visions of the future, which offered an opportunity for personal reflection. However, an archival employee with less or no experience can certainly benefit from this handbook, and I can also imagine that it is useful for students and people building up archives.

Samuel Edquist gets us off to a good beginning with the history of how private archives (established by companies, social movements, and private individuals) arose in Sweden. He demonstrates that it has been a flexible module where different factors have affected each other. Among other things, increased historical consciousness, an ever-stronger democracy and a society in change have staked out the path that enabled the emergence and existence of private archives. Edquist also reveals an important power perspective, namely, that the archives are by no means impartial, that they are often founded for political or ideological reasons, and that it has always been a matter of choosing, of selecting. This is an important aspect in view of all the voices that do not make themselves heard in the archives – the documents which, for political or ideological reasons, have not been considered worthy of preservation, and either have been explicitly destroyed or were never collected. "Private archives are no less problematic than public archives as sources for the real conditions that the archives are envisaged as reflecting," writes Edquist (p. 26).

In the following chapter Karin Englund and Anders Gidlöf describe how organizations in Sweden took shape during the twentieth century. From temperance movements and women's unions, Sweden moved towards organized trade unions and sector associations in business and state and municipal administration. There are a number of concrete examples of how private archives arose in local and regional social movements and businesses. The chapter also addresses the position of private archives in relation to the National Archives.

In chapter four Gidlöf and Maria Boman describe the importance of planning and management, for instance by drawing up a document management plan. With the help of process descriptions, one can map the flow of information and see when in a work process different types of documents arise, and in connection with this plan preservation and discarding. Involving the entire organization and getting people to describe their work operations seems to be an almost Quixotic tilting at windmills; it is important here for the document manager to be prepared to encounter displeasure and incomprehension from the employees. There are many cases of "if not": "If the staff of the archive founder does not understand how to use the document management plan, it will not be followed. If the archivist in the final archiving does not use the plan in the cataloguing, the work will be more difficult" (p. 63). Several years ago, when my own employer introduced an electronic document management system, a lot of people rolled their eyes. No one does that any longer, and the digital official archive, to which we employees contribute, is formed as a natural part of our daily activities. We create our documents in a common system and save them under different process names. It is neither difficult nor particularly time-consuming, but it took time to make it work.

In chapter five, Boman continues with what should be borne in mind when deliveries and donations take place. Contact with the donor or archive founder is an elementary measure in order to get an all-round view and retrieve all the metadata. The legal aspects (ownership, possible reservations, etc.) must be investigated and contracts and agreements signed. She also surveys the optimal storage for different types of material – paper, sound, photographs, digital files, etc. "Preserving something means that it is supposed to remain in a legible and understandable condition for a very long time, a thousand years or more. For digital material the life expectancy is estimate to be only 3–7 years if no action is taken" (p. 80). Boman refers to the National Archives' recommendations for more information on the best storage format for electronic data. Chapter five concludes with a few words about keeping a rough inventory and the importance of separating damaged archival material from healthy material. Digital material, for example, should always be opened via a quarantine computer to avoid the transfer of any viruses.

In chapter six, Boman describes the work of cataloguing: discarding, cleaning and various archival schemes. It is perhaps the most manual-like chapter in the book and can be very useful for all those who need guidance in cataloguing archives.

In chapter seven, Örjan Simonson and Christina Sirtoft Breitholtz reflect on different materials and their life span, optimal storage methods and threats to them. This chapter touches on the same areas as chapter five, but chapter seven has a more historical touch – although one may wonder if we need to know that "ink was already in existence 4500 years ago in China and Egypt and is a mixture of soot or carbon black (pulverized carbon) dissolved in water or oil and with the addition of an adhesive as a binder". It might have been enough to say that it is soluble in water and therefore sensitive to moisture. Other writing materials are also presented in detail, as well as the best conditions for long-term preservation. Paper is and remains the form that draws the longest straw as regards durability in historical retrospect. Paper lasts for centuries. Optical and magnetic storage units last about ten years, it says here (Boman's estimate was 3–7 years). We are given concrete knowledge about migration, emulation, and conversion of digital data, as well as an explanation of the OAIS model. This chapter is clearly the most informative regarding IT; archiving digital material requires foresight, surveillance, and action – it is not a question of stowing the material on a shelf in a magazine forever; it has to be regularly transferred to newer storage media and formats with a view to long-term storage. In chapter eight Eva Tegnhed elucidates how archives can be made accessible from every conceivable aspect. She considers the changing self-image of archives; instead of being a passive supplier of archival material, archives today want to be active, relevant to society, communicating their contents to ever wider target groups, often on their own initiative, for instance through educational activities. It is clear that Tegnhed has worked extensively in public contexts and in direct contact with visitors to archives. She knows what a visitor can find difficult: everything from illegible handwriting to thinking source-critically, or assimilating content without images, or simply understanding that it is about real events and people. Those who want do everything themselves need different guidance and help. Some do not even know what they are looking for and some do not want to do any research themselves. The archives also have – nowadays, one might add – a social function, as a place for socializing or meaningful leisure, where the archive material itself is not the most important thing.

The author also addresses the problem of the archivist's so-called objectivity – aspects which, at least in Finland, are highly topical in the field. From saying as little as possible about the content of the various archives, in the name of objectivity ("If something was highlighted, it meant that everything else was hidden", p. 153), there has been a switch to giving a detailed description of the contents – today it is even believed that this is one of the archivist's most important tasks. "It is important to consider, and to state openly, that the archivist is never entirely objective in his or her role, although neutrality of course is sought as far as possible," writes Tegnhed (p. 153). Making specific material accessible, via an exhibition, online or through a presentation, is of course also a choice. With such choices one can influence the general perception of what is interesting, and this is also a power position to keep in mind.

In the concluding chapter, Maths Isacson and Peter Olausson reflect on the future of the archives in terms of their strengths and weaknesses. Some of the threats mentioned are the ever-decreasing membership of non-profit organizations, the restructuring of government authorities, companies, and associations and, not least, "analog memory loss". "The difficulties in reading and interpreting older handwritten archival material can be a major obstacle to an interest of asking for older documents, which in turn is detrimental to the function of archives in society" (p. 177). It is worth thinking about this threat. Other threats mentioned are the effects of immigration (e.g. increased multilingualism requires increased resources) and – very fleetingly – GDPR. While private archives are not subject to the principle of public access, as state archives are, membership lists and other documents with personal data require special caution.

Of course, Isacson and Olausson also see a great deal of future opportunities, including high levels of education, increased life expectancy, improved public health, internationalization, digitization, etc. Many of the threats and possibilities prove to be two sides of the same coin. To make the threats into possibilities, the archives must monitor the surrounding world closely. "The archives can do so, for example, by initiating campaigns to encourage people to document their own lives, by offering the storage of both digital and analog material and by presenting individual people's experiences as important to society at large" (p. 184).

The last chapter, as I said, gave me pause for personal reflection. My first reflection is about the archive visitor of the future. Although the level of education is certainly higher than ever before, literacy has, at least in Finland, fallen drastically, particularly among boys. Without going into detail about the causes, it is relevant in this context that there are growing numbers of young people who cannot assimilate long texts. I see this as a threat not only when it comes to handwritten archival material, but reading in general. No one reads the classics any more, they watch Netflix. Increasingly, it is images that surround us, both as impressions and expressions. Words seem to be an endangered phenomenon. Another threat connected to this is that the interest in humanistic subjects is being undermined by strange prioritization, with mathematics and entrepreneurship ranking higher in society than, for example, knowledge of the mother tongue, history, or foreign languages. In the archives, on the other hand, the mother tongue, history, and language skills are of indisputable benefit, and in life as a whole. When young people are rewarded for studying mathematics instead of reading, there are of course effects in the long run – youngsters are smart and choose what benefits them in

society. But will they be future archive visitors?

In pace with growing demands for accessibility, the archivist is increasingly pushed into a corner where various categorizations and registries are prohibited; the data protection act says that religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs, ethnic origin, etc. are sensitive personal data. At the same time, there may be explicit pressure from researchers, for example studying the history of LGBT people in the archives. How do you work properly with people – some of whom may be alive – within these rather uncomfortable frames?

Of course, there are many possibilities. I see the archives as a future resource for schools, for research, for business, and for social interaction. I hope that the archives have a bright future. One observation with which I will conclude is that the field is increasingly being managed by a wide range of specialists, who create the archiving process in cooperation. You do not need to have a guilty conscience because you are not an expert in IT when you have a master's in Nordic literature, just as an IT support person does not need to feel ashamed of not knowing the entire history of Christmas traditions. At archives today there are often departments where different stages of the process are handled: collecting, work with the collections, customer service and outreach activities, IT, communication. Perhaps that is the direction we are taking? We are moving away from the image of a lone archivist who, in the 1980s, handled the entire archiving process from start to finish in his or her office. Today we are cooperating across knowledge boundaries in order to create the best possible cultural heritage for the future. I would like to think that the word *together* is the keyword of the future.

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The History and Future of Tradition Archives

Visions and Traditions. Knowledge Production and Tradition Archives. Lauri Harvilahti, Audun Kjus, Clíona O'Carroll, Susanne Österlund-Pötzsch, Fredrik Skott and Rita Treija (eds.). (Folklore Fellows' Communications No. 315). Academia Scientiarum Fennica. Helsinki 2018. Ill. 384 pp.

The edited volume reviewed here addresses the role of tradition archives in the formation of knowledge both historically and in the future. The work was done within the international "Archives" working group, which was established in 2013 as part of the *Société Internationale d'Ethnologie et de Folklore,* SIEF (www.siefhome.org). In this volume there are contributions from several countries in northern and central Europe, namely Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Latvia, Norway, Romania, Switzerland, and Sweden. In addition, from outside Europe, Canada is represented. The lectures were presented at four panels at the SIEF Congress in Zagreb, Croatia, in 2015.

In the introduction, Clíona Carroll from Ireland presents the main lines of the eighteen articles, which are divided into four different main sections. These are entitled: 1) "Tilling the Soil – Words of Introduction"; 2) "Bringing the Harvest Home – Insights from Past Collection Practice"; 3) "Fields of Cultural Identity – Archival and National Policies"; 4) "Seeds for Future Practice – Recent and Future Challenges for the Tradition Archives".

In the first section, "Tilling the Soil", the Canadian folklorist Maryna Chernyavska begins with general observations about folklore archives and then goes into particulars concerning the Ukrainian folklore archive in Canada, founded in 1977 at the University of Alberta. She points out especially that archives and folkloristic research go hand in hand and are not separate activities as she has found to be the case elsewhere.

The second section, "Bringing the Harvest Home", which contains seven essays, presents several case studies from different archives. We are shown examples of working practices for collecting and archiving and how these can change over time. Thoughts about the future are also included. Marleen Metslaid begins by analysing developments in the newly created subjects of ethnology and folkloristics during the 1920s and 1930s, after Estonia gained independence in 1918. Collection took place through both the Estonian National Museum and the Folklore Archive that was founded in 1927. Both institutions were tasked with participating in the construction of the new nation. An extensive network of local informants responding to postal questionnaires was established in the 1930s.

The Swedish ethnologist Susanne Nylund Skog in Uppsala has conducted a special study of Karl Gösta Gilstring's (1915–1986) private folklore collection and the extensive correspondence that he had with the informants. This applies in particular to the childless widow Elsa Linnéa Frideborg Pihl (1901–1974), who was especially active during the 1950s. Gilstring wanted to save stories about old traditions before they disappeared completely.

The Estonian literary scholar Liina Saarlo has studied the collection of Estonian folksong traditions during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. One prominent collector was Jakob Hurt (1839–1907). Repertoire studies were performed in the twentieth century, with the singers Anna Lindvere (1878–1955) and Sohvi Sepp (1871–1959) occupying a special position.

The Norwegian folklorist Åmund Norum Resløkken has studied three questionnaires distributed by the project "Words and Customs" 1934–1947. The intention was to collect narratives about the Christmas goat. All the answers consider the question of whether the Christmas goat should be considered a demon or not.

The Estonian folkorist Ave Gorsic tackles the question of studies of folk belief during the Soviet period in the history of the country from 1940. The new ideology ruled that folklorists should study working-class folklore, revolutionary topics, and war songs. This excluded studies of folk belief. These survived on a limited scale and gained new life again in the 1980s. Studies of folk medicine were also included.

The Swedish folklorist Agneta Lilja analyses collection strategies at the Institute of Dialect and Folklore Research, in Uppsala, abbreviated as ULMA, founded in 1914. It sought to rescue a vanishing folk culture in rural Sweden through fieldwork and questionnaires. The instructions to the informants were comprehensive, strictly controlled by the archivists. Lilja, however, draws attention to a paradigm shift that took place in the 1970s. Attention was then focused on individuals and their narratives, instead of collective descriptions, and on changes in contemporary society. The instructions were no longer intended to exert the same control as before. The first questionnaires about working-class culture were distributed during that decade.

The third section, "Fields of Cultural Identity", contains three essays. The question concerns how collections in the tradition archives can further the production of cultural identities. The Irish folklorist Kelly Fitzgerald and the Finnish folklorist Niina Hämäläinen have written a joint paper comparing Ireland and Finland. These countries have a similar history as new nations needing to build up and reinforce their national identity. For this purpose, folklore has been an important instrument. The authors' conclude: "In both Ireland and Finland, Folklore Studies led to a renewed sense of national pride and growth in the recognition of the

native language in each country" (p. 200).

The Swiss folklorist Konrad J. Kuhn studies knowledge production in the form of collection policy among earlier scholars of Swiss Volkskunde, especially the first professor of the subject in Zurich, Richard Weiss. The national focus of the research is particularly evident through the establishment of the *Atlas der schweizerischen Volkskunde* in 1936. The multicultural orientation became prominent in a country with four different languages.

The fourth main section, "Seeds for Future Practice", consists of seven essays that look forward to new challenges in the digital society of the future. The Norwegian linguist Eldar Heide sees great potential for new research if more of the material in the folklore archives is digitized. Previously collected material can be used to shed light on new questions.

The Romanian ethnologist and folklorist Laura Jiga Iliescu has studied tales of supernatural encounters and what can be gained from archived documents discovered in the folklore archives founded in Bucharest in 1928.

The Latvian folklorist Sanita Reinsone has been the leader of the Digital Archives of Latvian Folklore, established in 2014. It represents an extension of the Archives of Latvian Folklore, founded in 1924. It contains comprehensive material collected from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. The Digital Archives of Latvian Folklore have recently conducted campaigns, with the help of radio and television, to make the material known, to reach new volunteers, and to collect material from our own times.

The librarian Catherine Ryan and the folklorist Críostóir Mac Cárthaigh represent Ireland. The latter is the Director of the National Folklore Collection (NFC) in Dublin. The two authors raise the question of how to make the historical collections accessible and interesting to today's researchers, and also to the general public by electronic means. By 2017, about 17 per cent of the material in Irish and about 14 per cent of the English material had been digitized. Great work has also been done on compiling a usable index (thesaurus).

The Swedish folklorist Fredrik Skott considers ethical issues related to the digitization of previously collected tradition material. It is important to protect the individuals who told their stories, as well as those who are mentioned in the third person. Ethical aspects have become even more relevant as the narratives in the archives have changed from being collective descriptions to concern personal experiences and reflections. The pronoun in the questionnaires used to be the indefinite "one" but this has been replaced by "you". The archives can apply two methods to protect individuals: anonymization and selection. The latter means that certain material that is perceived to be problematic is exempted from digitization. Skott mentions, for example, a large body of material with negative stories told by outsiders about *tattare* (roughly "tinkers"). In Sweden, there is legal protection for material that is less than fifty years old.

The Norwegian folklorist Audun Kjus discusses principles, including ethical aspects, for future digitization at the Norwegian Ethnological Research (NEG) archive where he works, which was founded in 1946. The archive has collected material in the form of responses to postal questionnaires sent to a few hundred correspondents who have replied from different parts of Norway.

The Irish folklorist Clíona O'Carroll, director of the Cork Folklore Project, discusses principles for how audio/visual interviews can be digitized, based on experience from the Cork archive.

In conclusion, this comprehensive volume is of great value for the broad discussions that are conducted on the important content of tradition archives in different countries. How can this be

used in future research and also constitute an important source of information for a broad public? That question is particularly relevant today because of the extensive digitization that has begun in many places and will continue during the coming years.

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Jørgen Moe and Folksong

Ørnulf Hodne: Jørgen Moe og folkevisene. Novus forlag, Oslo 2019. 420 pp. Ill.

The term "Asbjørnsen & Moe" is firmly established as a unit in the literature on folktales. This can be broken down into Per Christen Asbjørnsen and Jørgen Moe – editors of the classic collection of Norwegian folktales, *Norske folkeeventyr 1–3* (1841–1844), to which the term actually refers. The two men collected, edited, and published a large number of tales and legends. Their collection was epoch-making, planting a number of folktales in the public consciousness. Moreover, by incorporating elements of dialect, it was also significant for the formation of a Norwegian written language.

As a folklore collector, the clergyman Jørgen Moe (1813–1882) took an interest in more than the folktale tradition. He also collected folksongs, that is to say, he recorded the lyrics, but as far as we know he never noted the tunes of the songs. In 1840 he published *Samling af sange, folkeviser og stev i norske allmuedialekter*, a collection of songs in peasant dialect, but this does not contain very many "real" folksongs. The folklorist Ørnulf Hodne has now written a book about Jørgen Moe as a collector and publisher of folksongs. Hodne took his doctorate in 1976 with a dissertation about Moe and folktales, and he has returned to this important figure over the years. Hodne, in short, knows his topic.

The book is the result of a remarkable event. In the spring of 2018 a find was made in the basement of the Department of Folklore at the University of Oslo, a collection of fair copies of material from what was then Norsk Folkminnesamling, the folklore collection founded in 1914. The material had been recorded by all the famous Norwegian collectors, but also by a great many others. Among the documents were folksongs recorded by Jørgen Moe in the 1840s, which was thus the incentive for this book by Hodne.

This substantial and sumptuously designed book actually consists of three sections. The first one contains Hodne's insightful account of Moe and his times, his collecting trips, and some of his main informants who have long been well-known names. Jørgen Moe was out collecting ballads in Hardanger in 1846 and in Telemark and Setesdal in 1847. Hodne describes the journeys in detail, but with too many and too long quotations for my taste. The portraits of the singers are especially worth reading. Hodne's descriptions are mainly based on the Swedish ballad scholar Bengt R. Jonsson's posthumously published study, *Vil du meg lyde: Ballads*ångare *i Telemark på 1800-talet* (2011). It is just a pity that Hodne has not proofread his Swedish quotations.

The second section of the book deals with the folksongs (*viser*) recorded by Jørgen Moe, arranged according to genre by Hodne, with the ballad and its sub-genres as the obvious classification principle. "With a couple of exceptions, all the ballads presented in this book are previously made fair copies of his [Moe's] own originals," writes Hodne (p. 241), which I interpret to refer to parts of the basement find. Many ballad texts, by the way, have been previously printed, several of them two or three times. Other genres are "*Stev*" (single-verse songs), "Other types of folk-

songs", and "More modern folksongs of mixed content", the latter two being remarkably imprecise categories in a scholarly edition.

After the texts of the ballads come the editor's comments, song by song, expertly executed. Some remarks are drawn from the fair copies of the original recordings, but only those which, according to the editor, "are most important" (p. 241). The archive class mark and, in the case of the ballads, the TSB number as well, is systematically stated. Some summary ballad narratives are directly translated from TSB, *The Types of the Scandinavian Medieval Ballad* (1978). Oddly enough, the songs are numbered in the commentary, but not in the main text, which makes it unnecessarily difficult to move from a comment to the text of the song in question. The opposite path also gives the reader some annoying extra work, although all the songs are listed in the table of contents.

The ballad texts as worded by Moe are interspersed with a dozen works of art inspired by ballads, the oldest from the first years of the twentieth century, the latest from the 1950s. The illustrations show, among other things, how significant folksongs have been as motifs in contemporary Norwegian art.

The third section of the book contains Jørgen Moe's published texts about folksongs. There are six pieces, reproduced in facsimile from Moe's *Samlede skrifter* from 1877: the introduction to the 1840 edition of the ballads, the accounts of the collecting journeys in 1846 and 1847, an article about "Hemingsvisene", a portrait of the informant Blind-Anna, and the article "Visit to a Peasant Wedding". Once again, the editor has made it laborious to find one's way in the book, because the table of contents does not specify the individual contributions, stating only that the section contains Moe's published works on folksongs. Bewilderingly, the section begins with the table of contents in Moe's collected writings, but the reader is not told which of the listed articles are reproduced in this book.

Today Jørgen Moe's texts about folksongs are primarily of historiographic interest. The greatest benefit for a present-day reader comes from Moe's description of his meeting with the informant Blind-Anna (Anna Ivarsdatter Oppedal) from Oppedal in Hardanger. Through Moe's account we learn something about how her rich repertoire of songs and stories was documented. We can also read about what she was like as a person. Since the songs were for a long time considered more interesting than the singers, Moe's portrait of Blind-Anna is unusual for its time.

With his book, Ørnulf Hodne has erected a monument to Jørgen Moe as a collector of folksong texts. Having access to this reference work it is easy both to survey Moe's contribution as a whole and to find particular details in the material he collected. An index of persons and songs would have made the book even more useful.

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Post Socialist Experience

Jenny Ingridsdotter: The Promises of the Free World: Post Socialist Experience in Argentina and the Making of Migrants, Race and Coloniality. Södertörns Högskola, Huddinge 2017. 300 pp. Ill. Diss.

Many studies of migration document the experiences of third-world, 'non-white', ex-colonial subjects seeking asylum or better living conditions in the advanced economies of the Northern hemisphere. In interesting contrast, Ingridsdotter's *The Promises of the Free World: Post Socialist Experience in Argentina and the Making of Migrants, Race and Coloniality,* deals with

'white', Eastern Europeans who, in the wake of the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991, left Russia and the Ukraine, travelling South to a not entirely freely-chosen new life in Argentina. The latter has its own complex colonial history and, despite often claiming to be the most 'European' country on its continent, enjoys peripheral rather than secure first world status. The 'relocationary trajectories' of Ingridsdotter's subjects, moreover, were complicated by major financial and economic breakdown in Argentina in 2001, meaning that, unexpectedly, their move was from one crisis or 'dislocatory' situation to another.

The work provides variously sourced background information on Argentinean history, viewed largely through the prism of migration, thereby contextualising the Menem government's readiness to accept what turned out to be about 10,000 ex-Soviet migrants, under Resolution MI 4632/94. We learn that the Spanish first arrived in what was to become Argentina in 1516, with settlers gaining independence three hundred years later, after which successive national governments strongly fostered immigration. Their goals were largely economic, although frequently intertwined with the desire to create a population as 'white' and 'European' as possible. Perhaps surprisingly, although in line with Argentineans' own tendency to forget them, Ingridsdotter doesn't mention the pre-independence importation of Africans, [often via Brazil]. At the beginning of the nineteenth century [when slavery began to be abolished] they comprised around 30% of Buenos Aires' population – suggesting that in some circumstances economic profitability could over-ride other preferences. But, as Ingridsdotter does report, from the mid nineteenth century at least, economic growth, initially in the agricultural and then in the industrial sectors, was seen as highly congruent with specifically western European immigration, the fostering of which was even demanded by the 1853 constitution. Europeans were understood as the key bearers of modernity, whilst migrants with indigenous backgrounds from neighbouring states represented backwardness. So too had the country's own indigenous population which was 'virtually annihilated by the Argentinean state at the end of the nineteenth century', its land often militarily appropriated in what Ingridsdotter refers to as a period of 'settler colonialism'. The positive encouragement of migrants from Europe reduced somewhat during the twentieth century – subsidy and land provision schemes were curtailed and visa requirements introduced and sharpened to discourage the wrong kind of newcomers [anarchists for example, and East European Jews]. The percentage of those born overseas has now greatly decreased from its early twentieth century high. Nonetheless, Resolution MI 4632/94, passed before the 2001 economic crisis [and possibly in the expectation of compensatory financial reward from first world states unwilling to absorb an ex-Soviet exodus] appears largely congruent with a long established positive evaluation of at least some types of immigrant.

Although apparently connected to both its patterns of immigration and global economic trends, the nature of Argentina's own economic development is less firmly sketched. Just how did a country which, at the beginning of the twentieth century, enjoyed booming export markets and higher per capita incomes than France or Germany, become characterised by recurrent economic [and political] crises, including

that of 2001? Despite the author's interest in 'coloniality,' and assorted references to a globally widespread shift to neo-liberalism, this reader was not entirely clear how far the crises were caused by endogenous factors and how far by external relations to other more powerful economies, and institutions like the IMF.

Against the background of the general historical material, Ingridsdotter's research centres on her small sample of eight male and six female respondents, all but one Buenos Aires based, who arrived, mostly with other family members, between 1996 and 2001. They were internally differentiated by age and thus by whether their educational experience was entirely Soviet-based or not, and by the kind of jobs they held before migration and at their time of interview. Ingridsdotter does mention taking Russian lessons with one respondent 'to get a better understanding of her working life' and attending some events at 'the Russian embassy and other Russian and Ukrainian cultural associations and restaurants in Buenos Aires'. But the bulk of the original data she presents is drawn from her sample's interview-stimulated 'narrations' of their experiences. This is occasionally supplemented with 'auto-ethnographic' reference to the emotions the respondents evoked in her. And by comparison of their situation with her own as a privileged 'white' Swede who has, for reasons and in circumstances not fully explained, apparently lived in Argentina for quite some years. Most subjects appear to have been interviewed [in Spanish] only once, and often in public spaces – parks and cafés, rather than their own homes [which even when visited are not described – did their interior decoration, I wonder, 'speak of' a nostalgia for homeland or not?]. So, *Promises of the Free World* is not principally a field-study in which the researcher independently observes and participates in multi-faceted aspects of their subjects' lives over time. Nor does it systematically attempt to directly observe how the local population, officialdom or the media views or interacts with them.

It may be that the central focus on a limited number of interviews was influenced by practicalities. Ingridsdotter suggests she originally looked for Russian and Ukrainian subjects because they were easy to identify, but then found they frequently suspected her motives and were hard to get to talk to her. The snowballing approach she had hoped to use largely failed, partly because the migrants lacked suitable contacts they could refer her to. She does mention people who got jobs through relatives and acquaintances or who worked for members of the earlier, already established, Ukrainian and Russian diaspora. One eventually became friends with other migrants whom she then found had had similar experiences to her own. But Ingridsdotter generally suggests 'the interviewees did not have much of a relationship with peers who had arrived at the same time as they had from Russia or Ukraine', and that connections with the earlier-established migrants and their collective institutions were sparse and often mutually suspicious. So, perhaps we don't get a 'community study' partly because there wasn't really a *community* of recent settlers to study. But more 'positively' Ingridsdotter feels she can relate her work to the Swedish ethnographic tradition of concentration on oral narratives. Moreover she sees the latter as relatable to the main theoretical orientation driving her work. This is discourse theory and particularly the [post-structuralist, post-Marxist] Political Discourse The-

ory [PDT] originally associated with Laclau and Mouffe.

Discourse perspectives suggest we access the world through discourses which, by influencing action, substantially shape the character of the social and material world as well as depict it. Discourses can exert power; not least through their potential to make what is socially constructed and potentially changeable appear as 'essential', given, unalterable. Of particular interest in the context of this study, PD theorists hold that identities, which subjects may feel to be 'natural', are actually contingent and discourse-dependent. For example, different 'racial' discourses may make the person who is 'self-evidently' 'black' in one society count as 'mixed-race' in another – raising the question of whether there is anything outside of the field of discourses themselves that contributes to accounting for why one interpretation should be dominant in one context and a different one in another. Why, to cite another relevant example, did 'the language and symbolism of state socialism [change] for that of a free market economy' and what 'dislocatory events' led to the replacement of discourses of cold war competition by those of inevitable neo-liberal victory? Ingridsdotter's own work sometimes explicitly refuses to 'go behind' the version of reality her respondents present her with. Speaking of their accounts of their Soviet lives she says 'this does not mean that I take either their words or the factual circumstances to be the truth of what happened. Rather I am interested in how discourse interacts with our personal narratives and construction of meaning.' Elsewhere, however, she provides 'external' data to substantiate or help explain their accounts. So, what kind of narratives did Ingridsdotter's respondents mobilise to understand the unanticipated circumstances in which they found themselves and frame the ways they chose to respond to them?

Ingridsdotter's older respondents mostly report, with some nostalgia, their rather privileged lives as valued higher-educated professionals in the old Soviet Union. They tell how, as the latter fragmented, the old economic system failed, and once secure jobs disappeared, they suffered hardship, uncertainty, violence and disorder – providing the motivation to move. They had wanted better opportunities for themselves and particularly their children whom they sometimes hoped to save from compulsory military service or the detrimental health effects of Chernobyl. Several mentioned their own spirit of adventure. But though their flight was freely chosen, they shared some characteristics with refugees as well as economic migrants; they would have remained in their homeland had it not been subject to major political and societal upheaval. As ex-Soviet era citizens they also lacked the freedom of movement of the international business professional. They would have preferred Canada, the USA or other parts of Europe as their destination but these were closed to them. So they arrived in an Argentina about which they knew very little, but which was prepared to accept them without expensive visas or prior employment contracts. They made decisions as to how to act, but only within the constraints of what was, and what they perceived to be, available to them. Nonetheless most arrived with hope – which was soon to be dashed.

All of those migrating as adults report hard and disappointing early experiences engendering many negative emotions. They seem to have arrived with little economic capital, to find the state help they had been led to expect

by, for example, the somewhat mysterious 'migration agencies', failed to materialise. Did Argentina's own economic difficulties play a role, or as some respondents suspected, had money given by the international community been misappropriated by the government or the diasporic organisations? On arrival they struggled with accommodation, not least because 'to find a place to rent in Buenos Aires…one had to present a guarantee from someone who owned properties, preferably in the capital.' Lacking such contacts, they mainly stayed in the very poor quality 'Family Hotels' or boarding houses with their shared facilities. A couple camped out at their place of work. Even more unexpected and resented were their employment difficulties. Despite what they saw as Argentina's need for their skills, the new arrivals' Soviet qualifications were not recognised. Hoped for support to help them retrain, re-qualify and regain professional status also failed to materialise. Initially hampered by their lack of Spanish, they thus mostly found gender-specific lowly manual, service and domestic sector work, where they often reported themselves as being poorly treated. As the economic crisis kicked in, competition with locals, including those who previously would have shunned these kinds of work, increased, though the migrants apparent reputation for honesty and hard work may have continued to help them here.

Ingridsdotter reports that the majority had gradually improved their housing and also their occupational status, by the time of their post crisis interviews [between 2012 and 2014]. However, only one of the older respondents [remarried to an Argentinean] had regained the kind of position they had originally enjoyed in the Soviet Union. The younger migrants who had moved with family and completed their education in their new homeland did better, as is reflected in their current white-collar occupations. We are told that they were generally 'more connected with their life in Argentina, reflecting a more positive view of the country and its future'. However, the citations from their interviews principally concern memories of early hardships and one declares his desire to leave.

Some of the most interesting parts of Ingridsdotter's analysis depict how her subjects coped with their initial and for many, continuing disappointment. Though substantial numbers of the ex-Soviets who had migrated to Argentina at the same time as her respondents did move on elsewhere, the latter, in general, did not now think that they would do so. They thus often consoled themselves by recognising that things could have been even worse – they hadn't become shanty-town dwellers for example, whose levels of deprivation had surprised and shocked them on arrival. Some argued that even during the 2001 crisis things were still better for them in Argentina than they had been after the Soviet collapse. The analysis also unpicks ways in which, despite feeling hard done by, respondents managed to maintain a positive – even superior – self-identity as morally dignified subjects. Whilst migrant groups often gain practical support and a sense of communal and individual self-worth via their religious affiliation, Ingridsdotter reports only two attempts – one successful the other not – to obtain help via a Ukrainian-related church. Self-affirmation strategies seem to be entirely secular. Gender divides could become accentuated with masculine strength and feminine charm underlined – Slavic women were praised for having better taste, dress sense and posture than other

Buenos Aireans. Those who had been professionals still positively identified as such ['I still feel like a doctor on the inside'] even when others failed to acknowledge their cultural capital. They, and most especially two respondents 'who did not have a background in highly professional careers', also asserted their resilience, and their previously mentioned honesty and capacity for hard work, contrasting it with the 'very relaxed' attitude of the locals. One had seen 'large families' begging and says 'you just want to kill them, because they are not handicapped, they have their bodies, they are young and they do not want to work… The only thing they know is how to make babies'. In these narratives ex-Soviet migrants were poor because of circumstances beyond their control. Those they condemned, because of their moral failings. Ingridsdotter's subjects were indignant that they had not received more help, but also proud to have survived on their own, often linking their ability to do so to their homeland experiences. They claimed their Soviet past admirably adapted them to the rigours of what Ingridsdotter terms Argentina's competitive, individualising, neo-liberal economic order. Sometimes, however, their socio-historical understanding seems to have slipped into something more deterministic. One argues that 'all Russian people, they already have that [strength to go on fighting] in their blood, they have it in their DNA', another suggests that those from the Nordic and Soviet countries are 'a strong race'.

In fact issues of European status, ethnicity, 'race' and colour are variously woven into the respondents' understanding of their situation and, particularly for those who had done least well economically, into their personal feelings of self-worth. One suggests her own European birth trumps many Argentineans' pride in their European ancestry. For others the 'whiteness' they had not thought about, or had taken for granted in their homeland, they now found favourably, if potentially precariously, assigned to them in their new society. In a complex system of 'racial' structuring where 'race' can affect economic opportunities, whilst economic standing [and sometimes political affiliation] can influence 'racial' or colour categorisation, they learned that life would have been much more difficult had their skin or their hair ['non-removable asset[s]'] been darker. But with, for example, shanty dwellers routinely called 'black' regardless of phenotype, they may have worried about the effect of any further lowering of their economic position on their 'racial' status. Ingridsdotter suggests that her subjects' stress on commitment to hard work might be viewed in this context, arguing that 'to present oneself as a trustworthy worker can be understood as a strategic positioning of whiteness and the entitlements and trajectories a white position brings about in an unequal society'. She further explains that earlier settlers had legitimated their appropriation of natives' land by suggesting the latter lacked a suitable work ethic, thereby associating the non-white with the lazy. This association more recently played out in tendencies to scapegoat 'welfare scrounging' migrants of indigenous background from neighbouring countries for Argentina's economic difficulties. Some of Ingridsdotter's own respondents themselves use derogatory racial terms such as '*cabecitas negras'* [little black headed ones] to condemn welfare recipients. Colour or 'racial' designations can become metaphors for moral worth.

'Race' is a subject particularly suited to a discourse perspective and overall, Ingridsdotter's treatment of its role in Argentinean national discourse and her respondents' lives is interesting. However, maybe she rather underplays the complexity of the range of phenotypical classifications which other commentators suggest Argentineans use. I'm also uneasy about the way she herself tends to elide the concept of nationality with 'race' and almost never refers to ethnicity. Should one speak of a Peruvian or Bolivian 'race'? Is the employer who says Russians are hard-working necessarily 'racialising' them or simply identifying them in terms of their place of national origin? When first world Northern states worried about accepting large numbers of ex-Soviet citizens to their countries was it, as Ingridsdotter claims, because they saw them as 'off white' or rather because they were viewed as ethnically, i.e. culturally different? Even should Argentinean discourses tend to elide their use, I favour the ethnologist holding on to distinctions between 'race', nationality and ethnicity so that they can point out this particular intersectional configuration.

Of further possible concern is the wide range of circumstances claimed to exhibit 'a logic of coloniality'. For Ingridsdotter this logic, or maybe we could say ideology, seems to centre on purported, sometimes 'racially' linked, distinctions between those deemed to be 'modern' or 'western' and the [less valued] 'rest' who 'lag' behind. In this usage 'modernity' could happily replace 'coloniality'. 'Coloniality' could then be reserved for ideologies *legitimating the relations of exploitation* which causally contribute to initiating or maintaining the differences between those defined as modern and superior, and those seen as backward and inferior. Thus it does seem appropriate to see a 'logic of coloniality' when the state-backed settlers justified their advantageous appropriation of the indigenous population's land, in terms of the latter's supposed lack of a proper work ethic. But I'm more doubtful about claiming this 'logic' operates, as Ingridsdotter suggests, between the EU and Ukraine, given the latter's relative underdevelopment is generally viewed as an outcome of historical incorporation within the Soviet economic and political system and not its exploitation by the west. When migrants stress their educated status, are they necessarily mobilising discourses of 'coloniality' or rather referring to a core identity acquired in Soviet society? And when some complain that Argentinians are 'twenty years behind the times', this seems less designed to legitimate relations of exploitation than account for their own lack of success. If it is, as Ingridsdotter claims, a mobilisation of a colonialist ideology, then it's an example of its adoption by a rather powerless category to boost its self esteem.

I conclude that the major virtue of this dissertation is that it begins to open a window onto a distinctive migrant situation probably unknown to many readers, also clearly showing [though who would have thought otherwise] that 'global economies affect locally lived lives'. As with much doctoral research, the sample size is small, and its representativeness unknown. So one particularly looks for depth and subtlety of analysis. And indeed Ingridsdotter struggles valiantly with her theoretical tools to make the most of her original data, although the latter, as I have already hinted, is somewhat limited by its almost total focus on her respondent's

own volunteered accounts of themselves. Such a constraint makes the book's use of other, secondary material to offer comparative data on migrants' experiences in Argentina and elsewhere, helpful. Even more important is the variously derived background information on the Argentina context – important at least to anyone who holds that one has in part certainly to stand outside a discourse to understand why it has the character it does.

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Communal Singing in Denmark

Fællessang og fællesskab. En antologi. Stine Isaksen (ed.). Sangens Hus, Herning. 228 pp. Ill.

The central word in this Danish volume – *fællessang*, roughly "community singing" – has no counterpart in Swedish. It is not equivalent to the Swedish *allsång*, which was coined in *Dagens Nyheter* in 1927 after a competition among the readers of the newspaper and which has become a term for organized sing-along sessions where the singing itself is at the centre. The Danish *fællessang* has a broader meaning and above all a longer history. The term describes the communal singing that has occurred – and still occurs – in different popular movements, but also in schools and especially folk high schools. The term *alsang* has also been introduced to Denmark, with roughly the same meaning as the original Swedish word.

Communal singing and community is thus the theme of this book – broad enough to encourage varying perspectives, sufficiently limited for the articles to touch on each other. The authors come from different disciplines: musicology, ethnology, history, comparative religion, music teaching, etc. Surprisingly, the differences in outlook are scarcely noticeable in the texts, perhaps because intradisciplinary concepts are largely conspicuous by their absence. The reader will find no examples in musical notation, which anyone who can read music will regret. Song titles are constantly cited, and if the music had been provided it would be easy to get an idea of how the songs go.

The first author is the historian of song Kirsten Sass Bak, who paints the historical background. She tells us that the roots of the communal singing tradition can be found in the clubs that began to be set up in the 1770s, following the English model, to sing party songs. Also important for the establishment of the custom was the pietistic revival a few years into the nineteenth century. Through communal singing, the hymns of H. A. Brorson (1604–1764) were revised. The greatest impact, however, came from the great reformer N. F. S. Grundtvig (1783–1872). His hymns and his educational programme, in which communal singing was at the centre, had virtually the whole nation singing together. His work for the folk high schools, where communal singing was cultivated, deserves particular mention.

The fundamental importance of Grundtvig is obvious throughout this collection of articles. Almost every author refers to him and his pleas for communal singing. This is especially clear in the historian of religion Katrine Frøkjær Baunvig, who devotes her essay to "Grundtvig's view of singing and the meaning of the congregation for community". She argues that, without insight into the hymn writer N. F. S. Grundtvig and his motives for the renewal of hymn singing, it is impossible to understand the multifaceted activity of Grundtvig in other spheres. With the congregation's singing as a starting point – or rather as a model – he worked to create singing communities, chiefly in the folk high schools.

Another important factor behind the emergence of *fællessang* – namely, the political history of Denmark – is covered in three articles. In a highly readable contribution, the ethnologist Tine Damsholt describes how patriotism was expressed in song and how the singing sometimes developed in response to national events, while at other times it was the singing that propelled events. She begins with the Napoleonic Wars and the Battle of Copenhagen which Denmark lost against England in 1801. That turbulence engendered what she called "mobilizing songs". The sense of national commitment – in which singing played an important part – was greatest in the capital but soon spread to the rest of the country. The Three Years' War of 1848–1851 in Schleswig-Holstein was another major event for the composition and singing of songs. This period was followed by the establishment of the folk high schools, where many of Grundtvig's ideas were implemented. He was "a wholehearted supporter of the national idea or cultural relativism, that there is no ideal society for everyone, but that each nation must find its own true destiny" (p. 82). According to the author, he avoided the foreign word "national" and instead spoke of "Danish" and "Danishness".

Damsholt divides the songs into two categories (p. 71): one with "we" and "our", aiming to mobilize the people in the defence of the fatherland, another with "I" "and "my", singing the history, nature, and language of the fatherland. The first category is older. As will be known, Denmark has two national anthems, one of which, *Kong Kristian stod ved højen mast* (King Christian Stood by the Lofty Mast), belongs to the first group, while *Der er et yndigt land* (There is a Lovely Country) belongs to the second.

The second article on the relationship between politics and singing, written by Else Marie Dam-Jensen, deals with *Den Blaa Sangbog*. This "Blue Songbook" was first published in 1867 and appeared in 20 editions, the last of which was issued in 1946. It was aimed at the "Danish-minded" population of Sønderjylland – and was of course politically explosive in the years when the area belonged to Prussia, that is, until 1920. Dam-Jensen relates the background, history, and – not least – the use of the book. A driving force behind many of the editions was the language association Sprogforeningen i Sønderjylland, founded in 1880, which worked to provide the province's Danish speakers with books. Around 1900 the German authorities were exerting particularly heavy pressure on the Danish-speaking group. Communal singing in Danish could be prosecuted. The contents of the songbook were adjusted to conform to the law – some songs were even printed with warning signs.

The third article about politics and singing is by Puk Elstrøm Nielsen and concerns communal singing during the occupation years. Inspired by the Swedish sing-along at Skansen and by comparable events in Norway, an evening of community singing was arranged in Aalborg at the beginning of July 1940, just a few months after the Nazi occupation. The singing was led by a male-voice choir. The idea was to create a community by singing, or rather to strengthen Danish solidarity in the face of German superiority. Some 1,500 people attended the event. Three more sing-along evenings were held at the same place that summer, the last of which assembled 10,000 people. The idea spread quickly, to places like Haderslev in Sønderjylland, where 6,000 people met to sing together one evening in the middle of August 1940. In Haderslev the singing had a strong political charge – the Blue Songbook and its use had prepared the country for singing in community. The culmination of this movement came on 1 September, when no fewer than 700,000 Danes assembled for communal singing events

around the country, and at precisely 6 p.m. joined together in Grundtvig's *Moders navn du er en himmelsk lyd* (The Name of Mother is a Heavenly Sound) – a melodious song, far from being a rousing march. This national revival through communal singing influenced the government, which wanted to encourage the movement without letting it become too anti-German. A committee for communal singing was set up but it failed to have any major significance. For me at least, even though I have read a great deal about Denmark during the occupation years, this expression of resistance was an unknown part of history.

Not everything in this volume, of course, is about communal singing of a political kind. The book also includes essays about communal singing in the labour movement and in the women's movement. The ethnomusicologist Lene Halskov Hansen from the Dansk Folkemindesamling gives a knowledgeable account of the position of communal singing in the ballad (*vise*) tradition as a whole. Among other things, she highlights ballads with choruses sung by all those present. The volume ends with an article about communal singing in today's Denmark.

It ought to be obvious that this is a highly readable collection of studies about a phenomenon that can surely be said to be a secret outside Denmark. How many non-Danes, for example, can sing along without the support of the songbook in the lyrical *Danmark, nu blunder den lyse Nat* (Denmark, Now Slumbers the Twilight Night) or Carl Nielsen's wonderful *Tit er jeg glad* (Often I Am Happy)? The book gives a certain insight into what the singing Dane is like, if one can put it like that. The many song titles cited in the articles are a valuable discovery, inviting closer acquaintance.

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Memories as Processes

Ingar Kaldal: Minner som prosesser – i sosial- og kulturhistorie. Cappelen Damm Akademisk, Oslo 2016. 189 pp.

Ingar Kaldal is professor of history at the University of Trondheim. In 2016 he published this book, the title of which means "Memories as Processes – in Social and Cultural History". Kaldal's previous research has mainly been in the field of social history, focusing on the history of labour and industry. In this book he has assembled his experiences of working with memories, which in some form or other constitutes the basis for research on the past and which, through oral history, has become an increasingly common source material in the discipline of history. As a social historian, his reasoning about methodological perspectives on memories as source material comes close to ethnological and folkloristic research.

Narrated memories can be audio-recorded, filmed, noted down, stored in archives and museums or in the researcher's recording device, phone, or computer. Kaldal systematically examines the various methodological aspects, both opportunities and difficulties, of the use of this type of material for historical research.

For this reviewer, an ethnologist, the book does not really present very much new knowledge. What I feel instead in reading it is the pleasure of recognition as I often nod in agreement.

Kaldal goes about his task thoroughly, starting with a discussion of what memories really are, and here he notes that what we remember really is a *selection*, made on the basis of certain criteria, of what we have experienced and what we could potentially remember. Memories are thus what someone *makes* into memories, and something that interpretation makes into parts of the perception of a lived life and parts of a narrative. To summarize, it can be said that the book, as Kaldal himself presents his

ambitions for it, is about *how* we remember and *why* we remember as we do. A major theme is how memories are shaped by, and also help to shape, power and social and cultural conditions.

The eight chapters of the book consider – and virtually exhaust – everything that a researcher may need to take into account when working with memories as source material. Chapter 2 is a history of research, outlining how an interest in memories, and research based on memories, has emerged and evolved. He actually begins with the Greeks, how history far back in time was transmitted orally. He also examines the emergence of folklore studies in the Scandinavian countries during the twentieth century, how an interest in workers' history arose, partly as a result of the Norwegian Folk Museum's collection projects in the 1950s and the Nordic Museum's collection of worker's memoirs starting in 1945. It may be mentioned that Kaldal, when discussing what worker's memoirs stand for, relies heavily on Bo G. Nilsson's dissertation *Folkhemmets arbetarminnen: En undersökning av de historiska och diskursiva villkoren för svenska arbetares levnadsskildringar* from 1996.

Subsequently, during the 1970s, historians took a growing interest in collecting and building up source material through interviews, a method that had long been applied by ethnologists. At that time it was also common to encourage people to dig into their own history, a movement that in Sweden came to be described as *digging where you stand*, after the title of a book by Sven Lindquist.

Romanticism, nationalism, exoticism, noticing previously invisible groups, critique of society and confirmation of the labour movement's struggle are examples of ambitions and aspects that have influenced the collection of narrated memories and research based on them. As Kaldal sees it, this has involved (1) using memories to describe a reality objectively and neutrally, (2) writing a "new" history, critically and with a bottom-up perspective, and (3) reflecting on how memories and history based on memories are produced on certain premises, such as a specific logic and stylistic devices, which determine the image that is conveyed.

Memories are created, formed, interpreted, and used in processes, and the processual aspect is something that Kaldal comes back to at many places in the book, so that the reader can correctly understand what memories are and what they do, in society and in our lives. An important aspect of the function of memories is that they remain and evolve through communication and by becoming part of narratives. This is how we can most easily retain memories, and by far the easiest way to do this is to link the memories to a place. Places are concrete and visual and they help us to remember.

How do memories relate to culture? Kaldal, who is not primarily a scholar of culture, is perhaps a little vague on this issue. Memories are like "connective tissue" in cultures, he says in an attempt to describe culture with the help of weaving metaphors. Large and dominant memory narratives may have shaped mindsets and patterns of action in entire cultures, but what holds a culture together can also be found in the details, in the small fibres of the weave, which are not visible without a magnifying glass. This is really the only occasion in the book when I would have liked to see a deeper discussion.

What do memories do? That question is discussed from three angles: first, that they can describe something in the past – facts, information, and stories about something; second, that all memories were created and shaped in the time, the setting, and the society from which they come; third, that the memories themselves have created, shaped, and influenced something – in our lives, in cultures, and in society. Perhaps we are what the memories have made.

In chapter 6, Kaldal reasons about a crucial part of the research process, namely, the interpretation of the material. He starts by stating, in somewhat extreme terms, that there are no bad historical sources, just bad interpretations. He starts interpreting memories by proceeding from the three planes on which memories act: they tell us *about* something, they develop *from* something, and they have been active *in* people's lives, and thus have helped to shape societies and cultures. The discussion in chapter 6, on different possible interpretations, is in many ways the most interesting and important part of the book. Here he also discusses the advantages and disadvantages of different sources, depending on the researcher's intentions, as well as the significance of credibility, the context, and the intertext. Kaldal also reminds us how intractable and complicated memories can be to interpret, since narratives can be both contradictory and illogical, as well as containing silences. Everything that makes interpretation tricky must be considered, and here he touches on the concept of deconstruction. As a complement to the concept of deconstruction, Kaldal proposes decentring. Decentring is about looking at what seem to be margins, corners, and nooks in the image presented by the narrative.

The last two chapters of the book deal with calls on researchers to collect memories and use the material in research, and how to go about doing this, including ethical and legal aspects. Here the author generously shares his experience. He also urges readers to search for source material in archives and museums.

All in all, the book advocates that we as researchers should investigate so-called "ordinary" people's everyday lives, past and present, which is not too bold an exhortation for an ethnologist, and to be aware of how this can be done. I feel great sympathy, for example, for a section right at the end, which is about discovering the alien in what is taken for granted. As a reviewer, I cannot feel anything but satisfaction in reading such a systematic and lucid account of the potential of a research trend, and the pitfalls it entails. This sterling book should definitely be used as a handbook in the teaching of methodology in many humanistic disciplines.

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Religion as an Equivocal Praxis in the European Union

Helene Rasmussen Kirstein: Distinktionens tilsyneladende modsætning. En etnologisk undersøgelse af religionsbegrebets flertydighed som mulighedsbetingelse for europæiske kirkers position i EU's demokrati. Det Humanistiske Fakultet. Københavns Universitet 2016. 147 pp. Diss.

There is an interesting premise to this ethnological analysis of how the conceptual complexity of "religion" is played out in what the thesis writer Helene Rasmussen Kirstein calls the European churches performing an equivocal praxis within the democracy of the European Union. The keyword in the title of the thesis, distinction, is applied in a surprising way and it has nothing to do with its use in another adjacent field of cultural analysis, the more well-known one associated with the sociologists Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Pascal Daloz, among others, concerning social distinction among various players and how that kind of distinction is marked by an internal hierarchy in the social field.

This thesis forms a variation and adaptation of the system-building of the Danish ethnographer Thomas Højrup called life-form analysis, a formalism with a strong structural bent, which in the field of cultural analysis in this millennium must be seen as something of

an oddity. Højrup, and those who follow his theory – who form quite an impressive group of researchers in Danish ethnology and cultural analysis – view culture from a strictly structural point of view. Culture according to Højrup (in *State, Culture and Life-Modes* (2003) is seen in the following way: "The solution offered by life-mode analysis to the paradox of the culture concept demands an unusual mode of thinking. This solution, although building upon the 'mode of production-social formation' concepts of historical materialism, also transcends it. Life-mode analysis combines ethnological fieldwork with concepts from the theory of science to elaborate a new concept of class. From being a classificatory concept, 'class' is transformed into what philosophers call an intentional terminal concept."

The "trick" consists of a move which transforms group, sub-culture or class analysis into a dialectical life-mode analysis. As I wrote in an earlier review in *Ethnologia Scandinavica* (2013) of another proponent of this theory, Jesper Graubæk Andresen, *Formbegreber i spil: En vidareutvikling af livsformsanalytiske tanker*, instead of classifying empirical data, the analysis elaborates structures of theoretical relations and their conceptional end-points or "intentional terminals", a term derived from the theory of science. So, as the theory goes, for each mode of production, life-mode analysis develops distinct life-modes, each containing a conceptual world and praxis. Although, as Højrup notes, these life-modes contrast with each other culturally, taken together they constitute each other's conditions of possibility in a self-reproducing social mode of existence.

So, how does Rasmussen Kirstein handle this grand theory of life-modes as constituting a distinct life-mode in the field of churches, transcendental belief and religion and together with other identifiable life forms a whole system or a social mode of existence? A clue to a possible answer might lie in the fact pointed out by Andresen that life-mode analysis also has its shortcomings. It has not hitherto, for instance, been able to capture the general rules which could be applied to specific and rather permanent constructions such as a city or a religious sect.

Following Højrup et al., Rasmussen Kirstein understands praxis as a key concept in her analysis, describing a subject-object relationship wherein the ends and means of the subject are enabled by the subject's specific position in the larger context or system. The concepts discussed are understood as complex. This means that they cannot be defined unambiguously. Instead they are characterized by having different, historically specific connotations. This view might seem to come close to a more postmodern or post-structuralist idea about fleeting signs and endless chains of signification, but the overarching idea here does not lead in that direction at all.

From a classic life-mode analysis point of view, the pivotal phase of reasoning is the concept-laboratory in which the main concepts of the theory are set up to be cleansed from any historicist or relativist background into one in which the concepts are tested as to their potential value to the theory. This phase is here performed in a way which must be understood as an aberration from the general theory in question. It is true that there is a certain digression of concepts going on in the thesis. But when we move further into the text there is an emerging sense of redundancy coming into focus, concerning an analysis of certain dichotomies affecting these "European churches", dichotomies such as religious–secular, private–public, inclusive–exclusive, ends and means and so on.

What is most noticeable is that Rasmussen Kirstein's analysis builds up to quite a formulaic resolution which is echoed throughout the thesis, namely

that this play of concepts, or rather dichotomies, is indeed to be seen as two sides of the same thing, a two-way street in which what from the outside might look like something ambiguous is really a condition of possibility for the praxis in question. Thus, what is arrived at is a notion of a subject, the European churches, as being positioned in an intersection between faith and action, the individual and the common, the symbolic and the social, and in the end, the specific and the general.

Rasmussen Kirstein prefers the Danish word *greb* (grip, grasp) instead of *begreb* (concept), which can be seen as another move away from the Højrupian life-mode formalism towards a softer, more historicized form of cultural analysis. But at the same time this historicizing does not go very deep. An important notion used in the thesis is the characterization of Christianity in the Middle Ages as revolving around a dichotomy of religious–secular in which monks and nuns represent the religious side whereas the parish priests' world is one seen in its own time as profane. This view of course is in contrast to the same dichotomy as it is used today, in which priests are also included in the religious field. But such a historicization is in itself, although interesting, not enough, at least in my view, to ground and explain the concepts in play from a historical point of view. More concepts would have been necessary to add to the analysis on this point in order to give a more comprehensive outlook on the world view of the Middle Ages as a contrast to today's more secularist world (as is argued in the thesis).

An odd technical feature of the thesis is the researcher's habit of writing herself into the discourse, noting how she makes her different steps in the analysis, and also referring both in advance to later chapters and retrospectively to those discussed earlier on, in a way which adds a meta-level to the thesis which seems unnecessary and only increases the strong sense of redundancy of the text.

As to the ethnographic content of the thesis, an important part consists of a couple of short, but quite engaging reports of a visit to a church in Brussels, the so-called *Chapel for Europe*, which is situated close to the EU headquarters. The description focuses on the cacophony of the group of people praying to Our Lord in different languages in the church services.

Of the ten chapters of the thesis the central one thematically is the fourth. It deals with something called particular universalism and is a competent analysis of how the dialogue between the European Union and the churches in Europe is organized and played out in conjunction with a general idea of a secular, democratic society in which the churches have accepted this special position of being both inside and outside, both exclusive and excluded, as Rasmussen Kirstein calls them in the discussions of e.g. social policy and environmental issues. These latter issues, one might add, are today some of the forces which are driving this whole "package" of politics, the social and the religious as separate but at the same time connected fields into quite new territories in the form of climate change which, as we know, has taken a more ominous turn in recent years.

To play a little with a concept also central to this thesis, the new ultimate signifier of the world we are inhabiting is more and more formulated as a question of CO_2, the greenhouse gases the globe is letting loose at this moment. This concern of rising CO_2 levels must then be addressed in quite new ways, when it comes to science, common sense, praxis and religion. This is something which this thesis discusses from an odd angle which nonetheless is an important contribution. The thesis speaks of the belief in God's creation and people being the children of God and so on. But what about the rest of the crea-

tion, the whole flora and fauna, the ecosystem, the rivers and glaciers and so on? Here the Christian and the non-Christian are faced with the same task of trying to understand and find solutions to problems which are mounting. The "Praise God for the turtle" prayer described in the text as a way forward might at first seem a little too sentimental in relation to the consciousness that is required now. But that could be because one is too accustomed to a more rationalistic discourse in these matters for this kind of approach to really start to sink in.

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Verses in Swedish Autograph Books

Bengt af Klintberg: Verser i svenska poesialbum 1820–1970. Kungl. Gustav Adolfs Akademien för svensk folkkultur, Uppsala 2018. (Acta Academiae Regiae Gustavi Adolphi 191.) 144 pp. Ill.

Over thirty years ago, Bengt af Klintberg published an article about the verses written in autograph books, which are known as "poetry albums" (*poesialbum*) in Swedish, or in Swedish-speaking Finland as "souvenir books" (*minnesböcker*). In order to do so, he first had to collect a great many of these verses, which are called *minnesverser* in Finland. It is worth mentioning the different naming practices because quite a lot has been written in Swedish-speaking Finland about this kind of poetry.

Several hundred verses in over three hundred albums were collected for a radio programme in 1968. To make this large mass of material manageable, it had to be systematized in some way. The result of this time-consuming work can be seen in the index of first lines that has now been published. The approximately 550 verses are thus alphabetically arranged by the first line. The verses cover the period 1820–1970. The albums were collected from the general public and many of them were subsequently returned. The major part of the albums come from the period 1880–1910. This may be because they were particularly popular at the time, but it could also be due to the specific collecting method used here.

In the introduction to the index, af Klintberg says a little about the cultural history of the autograph book and changes that occurred during the long period that is documented. This is a custom that attaches great significance to friendship, a tradition that was initially practised by both men and women but, through time, was mainly restricted to slightly older girls and then ended up as a pursuit of young girls in the first years of school. Similarly, the habit of writing or collecting verses in autograph books spread from the upper classes in the early nineteenth century. At the end of that century it reached bourgeois girls and at the beginning of the twentieth century it became common among rural and working-class girls. Bengt af Klintberg does not analyse the pictures that went with the verses, despite the fact that they were often beautifully decorated. In the twentieth century they were accompanied by "scraps", known as *bokmärken* (literally "bookmarks"), in Sweden, *glansbilder* ("shiny pictures") in Swedish-speaking Finland; these were collectors' items, a way of showing one's power and placing one's "friends" in the "right" category. The finer the picture, the higher its value and the value of the "friend".

The message of the verses was at first moralizing and religious, but these later gave way to more humorous and realistic verses, and finally they could almost be rather risqué through allusions to a future marriage partner. Schools were without doubt the main forum for the dissemination of verses. Girls copied them from one album to another, and thus they became generally known and variant forms arose.

Several of the verses derive from established authors, some of them very well known, but through time the verses could be "home-made" or at least anonymous and very short.

This index is recommended to anyone who wants to know more about the frequency of verses in autograph books, where they came from and what was their original form. This can eliminate the irritation you feel when you can't think of the name of a person who wrote a particular poem. The book also provides an index and illustrations.

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Incidental Ethnic Encounters
Satunnaisesti Suomessa. Kalevalaseuran vuosikirja 97 (Incidentally in Finland). Marko Lamberg, Ulla Piela & Hanna Snellman (eds.). Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, Helsinki 2018. 325 pp. Ill.

In its introduction, the Kalevala Society ("Kalevalaseura") yearbook 2018 declares that it will focus on serendipities. Although the editors emphasize the importance of accidental moments in the shaping of traditions and various cultural features, the book ultimately deals with historical perspectives on the idea of multiculturalism in Finland. The topic is, without a doubt and without the editors writing it explicitly, a reaction to the massive international migration flow that occurred in Europe in 2015. Social scientists and researchers in folklore studies, ethnology, and cultural history realize that international migration has always existed and has meant not only cultural clashes but also cultural encounters, exchanges, and adaptation processes. The topic of this book is various incidental ethnic encounters in Finland over time. It focuses mainly on history, and out of seventeen articles, only three deal with contemporary occurrences.

Since the yearbook is published every year in Finnish, it is no doubt a challenge to find alternative authors every year to write on the chosen topic. In some cases, as in 2018, the individual articles vary widely from one another; the grand topic this year "Incidentally in Finland" (in Finnish: *Satunnaisesti Suomessa*) is very loose. Maybe a bit too loose? The articles do not connect smoothly, which makes it difficult to write a cohesive review. The articles rather present individual examples of typical contemporary research based on historical Finnish scholarship in the humanities. However, this does not mean that the individual articles are not good; most of them are. Above all, they are informative, and a reader learns tons of new things from the history of Finland and the kingdom of Sweden. I concentrate on presenting some of the articles in the book for their special relevance to historical anthropology and ethnology.

The first section of the book, "Encounters", includes an article by Risto Blomster and Kati Mikkola on the Finnish lay collector Matti Simola and offers a profound study of the process of folklore collecting. Blomster and Mikkola follow micro-historical traces of one lay collector, Simola, who specialized in Roma culture. For years, Simola wandered with Roma families in the Finnish countryside, and from an early age he wrote down the Roma songs and customs he witnessed. As the authors show, Simola's documentation was first and foremost for himself, as he did not originally intend to send his materials to the folklore archives. However, he ended up sending his vast writings, including personal diaries and documentation of the Roma way of life, to the Finnish Literature Society. His works were long seen as difficult to interpret, particularly because the authenticity of the Roma folklore in his collections was

questioned. Examples like Simola and his personal collection not only remind researchers about the serendipity involved in the creation of archival materials but also underline the significance of archival policies.

It is slightly confusing why the article by Anne Ala-Pöllänen follows Blomster and Mikkola for it discusses one of the rare forms of contemporary ethnic encounters in Finland. Ala-Pöllänen scrutinizes cultural encounters between Filipino and Finnish seafarers on Finnish vessels. The reader is introduced to seafaring as an occupation and is offered a brief historical overview of the industry. In modern times, seafarers have become international workers largely due to salary costs; Filipino seafarers' willingness to accept lower wages has priced Western seafarers out of jobs. As a result, on modern vessels, people of various nationalities work alongside each other and share extended periods of time together. Ala-Pöllänen's article is scientifically compelling, partly because it is an extract from her recent doctoral dissertation (*Happy Ships? Etnografinen tutkimus suomalaisista ja filippiiniläisista merimiehistä suomalaisilla rahtilaivoilla*, 2017). It is also intriguing to see the authentic "ethnic encountering" that occurs on these vessels.

The next article again takes the reader back to history. Perhaps the most captivating article in the book, this deals with Rosa Emilia Clay, the first ethnically African Finn at the end of the nineteenth century. Anna Rastas and Leena Peltokangas co-wrote an excellent micro-historical study on Clay, a woman who experienced numerous external reactions to her skin colour during a time of colonialism and explicit racism. The article begins by discussing the stereotypical idea of Finnish ethnic identity, whiteness, which Rosa's appearance challenged. Rosa Emilia Clay was the daughter of a British man and a Namibian woman, and she was adopted by a Finnish missionary couple. When the missionary family returned to Finland with their newly adopted child, the local newspapers headlined Rosa as a "Christianized mulatto"; in late nineteenth-century Finland, Clay's skin colour was significant news. However, living in an upper-middle-class family afforded Clay a proper education, and she graduated from a teacher training college. She later migrated to the USA where she lived among other migrant Finns. Clay was the in-betweener in various ways. She was black, that is, of inferior race at the time, yet educated, in other words, upper-class – the two non-typical features in late nineteenth-century Finnish society. Often a problem with historical studies of marginality and marginal individuals is that one can see a tendency to interpret deviances from the norm *as the norm*. However, this article succeeds in avoiding this and it presents Clay's biography critically and sufficiently contextualized. The authors do not try to convince us that Finnish society was open and tolerant, which it was not, at the end of the nineteenth century.

The article by Any Lahtinen takes a contrasting perspective and focuses on Hieronymus von Birckholtz, a German-born noble man who moved permanently to Finland at the end of the sixteenth century. The article focuses on tracing the marital exchange of the daughter of Klaus (Klas) Fleming, a Finnish-born member of the Swedish nobility and an admiral, and on how von Birckholtz encountered enormous resistance from the Flemings. Lahtinen is the only author in the book who clearly points to the central theme of "incidental encounters" through her examination of von Birckholtz's life. At the same time, the article sheds light on multiple realms of upper-class culture in Sweden at that time, as Finland was a part of Sweden until 1809. Hieronymus von Birckholtz was accused of marrying for money and was suspected of being a spy in his spouse's family. However, he successfully married up and secured his standard of liv-

ing. From the perspective of a folk culture researcher, it is instructive to be reminded of upper-class cultures, too. Unlike the folk, the upper classes were able to read and write and they left personal documents, which makes source criticism different.

Lahtinen's article is situated in the "Life Paths" section, as is Veli Pekka Toropainen's study of the seventeenth-century Finnish upper class and its random links to non-Finnish persons. In his article on the bourgeoisie widow Elin Såger, Toropainen highlights the economic power and decision-making abilities female matriarchs had in the seventeenth-century ironworks. Although the article does not deal much with foreign influences on Såger's actions, it indisputably shows how visionary one woman was in creating and maintaining one of the largest and most successful ironworks in the country.

The last section of the yearbook, "Visits", covers sporadic encounters with foreigners passing through Finland. One example of this kind of encounter is the travelling salesmen in Finland, who were often Russians or Russian-origin Jews and Tatars. Johanna Wassholm's thorough article on Tatars as traders is an excellent example of grass-roots encounters between two distinctively different cultures, that is, white Protestant Finns and Turkic-speaking Muslims. Wassholm's sources are old newspapers and news about Tatar traders. Although Tatars sold items that commoners wanted and, for that matter, the locals accepted them, the press interpreted Tatar trade negatively. Tatars were suspected as working under the command of Russian authorities. The last section of the yearbook, "Visits", ends with Kalevala's publications in Swedish, compiled by Liisa Laukkanen and Harry Lönnrot.

The final chapter of the book, which works independently and is always added to the yearbook, is the Kalevala Society's annual report. I found this quite intriguing for two reasons. First, providing exact financial numbers to readers is an excellent example of the open democracy and transparency that the Nordic states are famous for. Second, this section reminded me that openness is culturally "natural" and familiar to us. Of course, this is not to say that corruption and conspiracies do not exist in open democracies and its humanistic institutions. However, if all institutions, societies, and groups, whether governmental or private, worked and acted as the Kalevala Society does, we would happily embrace them.

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The Publication of Religious Books during the Reformation

Reformasjonstidens religiøse bokkultur cirka 1400–1700. Tekst, visualitet og materialitet. Bente Lavold & John Ødemark (eds.). Nasjonalbiblioteket, Oslo 2017. 293 pp. Ill.

The historian Bente Lavold and the cultural historian John Ødemark have edited a volume about the religious book culture at the time of the Reformation in Denmark and Norway. The book was published by the National Library in Oslo in 2017, five hundred years after Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the door in Wittenberg.

Bente Lavold has written the introduction to the book, with a brief presentation of the different chapters.

In the first chapter the historian Øystein Rian surveys the implementation of the Reformation in Denmark-Norway. The king became the powerful leader of the church. This was particularly evident in the church ordinance that was issued in 1537. Censorship was introduced, with instructions as to which books were approved. These were the Bible and the writings of the Reformers Luther and Melanchthon. These books

were printed in Copenhagen from 1536 onwards, while Norway had to wait until the seventeenth century before the first printing press was started. Norway did not have a church ordinance of its own until 1607, and then it was basically a copy of the Danish one.

In the second chapter, the scholar of religion Gina Dahl examines the books owned by Norwegian clergymen in the period 1650–1750 and analyses this from the perspective of diversity or restriction. Because of Lutheranism, textual knowledge became important, and it could be found in books. A total of ninety book collections have been surveyed. The majority of the books were in Latin or German, written by German Lutheran theologians. In addition, some books were published in Holland, written by Calvinists. Gina Dahl argues that there was both openness and restrictiveness in the acquisition of books.

The cultural historian and folklorist John Ødemark analyses a book from 1674 by the Norwegian theologian Johan Brunsmand, *Køge Huskors* (Domestic Affliction in Køge), concerning stories of devil possession which is said to have occurred in a period of seven years, 1608–1615, in the Danish town of Køge. The veracity of these narratives was questioned during the author's lifetime (1647–1707). The content of the book was classified by critics as "fiction", "a curious witchcraft story", or a suspect "folk legend".

The Latin scholar Espen Karlsen describes the status of Latin in Norway from the Middle Ages until the Reformation period. During the Middle Ages, Latin dominated in the Catholic church. The most important book collection in Norway was at the Archbishop's see in Trondheim. This was destroyed in a book burning in 1537 when the Reformation was being implemented. A catalogue is preserved, however. After the Reformation, Latin strengthened its position as a language of learning, known as Neo-Latin.

The historian Lars Bisgaard analyses translations of the edificatory medieval book *Consolatio Animae* and of the post-Reformation satire *Peter Schmied und Adser Bauer*. The latter dialogue expresses strong criticism of the medieval Catholic church. *Sjælens Trøst,* the Danish translation of the Latin *Consolatio Animae*, was published in 1425 and *Peder Smed og Adser Bonde* was translated from German to Danish and published for the first time in 1559 and subsequently in 1577. *Consolatio Animae* appears to have been translated within the monastic world for didactic purposes. In the other book Peder the smith teaches Adser the farmer what he should believe about medieval church customs such as requiem masses, Purgatory, letters of indulgence, pilgrimages, holy water, and so on. This is a didactic comedy, but the translator is unknown.

The linguist Elise Kleivane discusses the position of the Bible in the Middle Ages among both laypeople and scholars. She argues that the Bible was known to laypeople even before the Reformation, when the entire Bible was first translated into the vernacular languages. Although the whole Latin Vulgate was not translated into any Nordic language in the Middle Ages, some of the books of the Bible were translated. It was also known to the people orally through sermons and expositions of the Bible in the vernacular and visually through church art.

The art historian Henning Laugerud studies visual culture in Denmark-Norway in the post-Reformation period. This includes illustrations in books such as the new editions of the Bible published in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as well as illustrated prayer books. The background to these editions is Luther's argumentation for the use of images to convey the message of faith. There is thus continuity back in time to the Catholic Middle Ages. An innovation after the Reformation was the altarpieces consisting of framed biblical

texts instead of figure paintings. This is a visual expression of symbolic character.

The historian Bente Lavold studies the use and reuse of images in religious books in Denmark-Norway in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Repeated use is called pictorial migration, which is cross-confessional. Many post-Reformation woodcuts were based on medieval originals.

To sum up: the theme of several essays in the book is that the Reformation in many respects was not such a revolutionary innovation as historical research has previously suggested. There are instead several links back to the Catholic Middle Ages, which can be studied through the books that were published. Change was not the only crucial result of the Reformation, as there were also various examples of continuity or connections over time. One strength of this book is that it is explicitly interdisciplinary, in that the authors come from several different fields in the humanities and can thus complement each other in their analyses.

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Memory, Recognition, and Solidarity in Nowa Huta

Agnes Malmgren: Efterklang/efterskalv. Minne, erkännande och solidaritet i Nowa Huta. Språk- och litteraturcentrum, Lunds universitet, Lund 2018. 310 pp. Ill. Diss.

In her dissertation, Agnes Malmgren has investigated life-worlds and mnemonic acts among inhabitants of the Polish city of Nowa Huta – a place bursting with controversy and black poetry, and born of the Stalinist passion for steel, the working class, and social engineering. The city was founded in 1949 around the gigantic steelworks named after Lenin, with the objective of counterbalancing the high culture of Kraków and the backwardness of the countryside. Its wide avenues and monumental architecture aimed to arouse political respect, while the residential areas with their green courtyards, playgrounds, and convenience stores would give residents a good life. In 1951, the city became a suburb of Kraków, but there it was associated with social problems and the noxious emissions from the steelworks.

To this day, the socialist visions and ambitions are still clearly visible in the urban landscape. The local history of political resistance is also sedimented in countless memorials and symbols. Over the years, Nowa Huta has been admired and scorned, loved and detested. In recent years, however, it has seen some gentrification and is beginning to acquire a cool retro reputation. The dissertation is said to derive from a sense of wonder about the contradictory images of the place, the way it is "squeezed" and "entangled" in grand narratives and power relations. This is examined in the tradition of "the anthropology of events", with affectionate descriptions and shrewd analyses of settings in Nowa Huta, the inhabitants' mnemonic acts, and the constant staging of the past in museum exhibitions, role-playing, and commemorations.

The foundations of the study are carefully presented in an introductory chapter, a background chapter, a chapter on theory, and a chapter dedicated to methods and materials. Because of this long run-up, it is not until chapter 5 that the reader becomes seriously acquainted with the life-worlds and mnemonic processes of the inhabitants. By then, however, many insights are gained into Nowa Huta's complex history, its topography and architecture, the political context on both local and national level, and Poland's mnemonic landscape. Malmgren begins by discussing the struggle

for representation in contemporary Polish historiography. Still, Nowa Huta's past is depicted in a seemingly "objective" way in the background chapter. We can read about how the city was built up, when thousands of farms on fertile soil were expropriated, while propaganda films enticed young people with promises of housing, jobs, and community. The desperate need for skilled labour meant that even critics of the regime found a safe haven here. The optimism and the zest for adventure were worn down by hard work, makeshift dwellings, and the hateful mud that both bricklayers and directors were squelching in. Nowa Huta never became a model socialist city. Instead it grew into an increasingly strong base for the opposition and the Solidarity (Solidarność) movement, with waves of strikes and protests.

The enigmatic title, with its subtle combination of a sonic and a geological metaphor (*efterklang* means a lingering note and *efterskalv* is the aftershock of an earthquake), is not explained, but it hints at the basic theme of the dissertation: investigating the repercussions of the fall of the People's Republic of Poland in 1989, which so clearly characterizes the situation of being squeezed in between the socialist and the oppositional narrative about Poland. Memory work is unusually intensive in Nowa Huta, and there are still struggles about the meaning and legitimacy of the past. Not all memories are welcome in the public sphere. With curiosity and respect, the author observes how Nowa Huta's inhabitants relate to and continually (re)create the place through their narratives, their meetings, and everyday pursuits, such as sitting and chatting on a park bench.

The purpose of the dissertation is formulated in a long and rather sweeping line of argument; the overall goal is to "tell about how people in Nowa Huta handle memories of the communist era and the transformation" and to examine "the justifications and effects of the mnemonic acts" (p. 21). The purpose is then clarified and operationalized through several chapters, discussing various research questions, for example, the emotional expressions and moods that accompany memory work, or the objects, garments, and places that enable the presence of the past in the present. The study is thoroughly grounded in previous research, including ethnological works; however, a more in-depth dialogue with Maryam Adjam's *Minnesspår* would have been interesting to follow.

The empirical material for the study derives from extensive fieldwork in Nowa Huta between 2010 and 2017. The rich material consists of about twenty interviews and field notes from extensive observations – of public exhibitions, events, and church masses, small-scale gatherings, coffee breaks, conversations on a park bench etc.– and also blogs, films, media texts, advertisements, and so on. Reflexivity and careful contextualization help to illuminate how the material came into existence and how it is interpreted. Malmgren mentions her own sense of being "entangled" in the field, among other things her "chronic ambivalence" about the People's Republic or an abundance of religious and patriotic symbols. The book is enriched by the atmospheric photographs: a grey street outside someone's home, a windswept square where a lone male figure can be glimpsed behind black underwear on a washing line, the huge pipes at the steelworks, a rainy avenue, some heart-warming portraits of the interviewees, and so on. Here I would like to see a discussion of source criticism in regard to the role and function of the pictures (e.g. their semiotics). Focusing on certain motifs in the dissertation is a form of "monumentalization", but the presentation can also contribute to the "black poetry" that already surrounds the district. The author could also have considered possible conse-

quences for the photographed persons, due to the breach in anonymity.

The theoretical inspiration derives from phenomenology, memory studies, place studies, narrativity, and other broad research fields, but Malmgren applies an eclectic and pragmatic approach based on her interest in small-scale mnemonic acts, locality, and collective representations. Although this is somewhat heterogeneous, it mostly works out well in the analysis. Central concepts include life-worlds and intentionality in the spirit of Michael Jackson's phenomenology, Victor Turner's liminality and communitas, and of course memories and recollections, with references to scholars such as Paul Ricoeur, Maurice Halbwachs, Astrid Erll, and Hannah Arendt. Moments of memory with an intensification of emotion, often with a streak of nostalgia, are put in perspective by the term "events" . Paul Connerton's reasoning on the sedimentation of the past in the urban space, the body, and the senses, is applied consistently and skilfully in the analysis. The dissertation also explores recognition and solidarity in different communities such as the nation, the local community, the neighbourhood, or the group of friends. Recognition is, alas, not distributed equally, whether in Nowa Huta or in Poland as a whole, where mainly male-coded and oppositional memories are monumentalized. Several of Malmgren's "interlocutors" feel that both they themselves and their place are diminished or rendered invisible.

The organizing principles in the empirical chapters are not completely clear, as similar themes recur in several chapters. On the other hand, we are given a deeper understanding of the premises and predicaments of mnemonic work during the reading, when the themes appear again. Chapter 5 examines the engagement of the local activists in Nowa Huta and their transmission of the rich, troublesome, and proud history of the place, for example in retro-cafés. Some enthusiasts regard the district's avenues, benches, and milk bars with a lyrical and poetic gaze; others think that life there has been good despite the obvious pollution and the smell from the steelworks. The tradition of social community is fondly nurtured and the place is shielded, as far as possible, from national politics. There are certain exceptions, however. For example, many residents joined the feminist "black protest" in 2016, when black underwear was hung on clotheslines to protest against the restrictive abortion laws.

Chapter 6 gives insights into one of the debates about the socialist past of Nowa Huta. When a square was to be named after the local 1950s "working-class hero" (later canonized in a film by Andrzej Wajda), the opponents argued that the man was a front figure in the Stalinist productivity frenzy and ideological correctness. Politicians, activists, and ordinary residents got involved in the issue. Malmgren portrays and contextualizes the debate and sheds further light on it with the aid of her interviews. What is the value of recognition, when memories and people are used for the projection of political and cultural projects?

In Chapter 7, seven interlocutors' talk about their lives in the People's Republic is presented. There are recurrent descriptions, in nostalgic and poetic terms, of Nowa Huta's avenues, benches, roses, and fountains, everyday joys and communities, work, apartment, home phone, street lighting, schools, and scouting activities… This is contrasted with the oppression by the system, the pacification caused by the martial law, the endless queuing for goods, the fear, the fatigue, the resignation – and, last but not least, repeated confrontations with power. Malmgren shows how memory alternates between large and small matters, between injustices, horrors, absurdities – and the knowledge that the structures did not always get the last word.

Chapter 8 is devoted specifically to the memories of the Solidarity movement, which revolved around the trade union that gathered ten million members in the 1980s. Malmgren analyses the monumentalization of the city space and the memorial ceremonies of the 2010s under the auspices of the church, with rather bombastic patriotic rhetoric. But the thrill of the chapter comes from a group interview in 2012 with seven elderly gentlemen, "the conservative grassroots of the movement". The men recall the epic and romantic character of the struggle for freedom, democracy, and human dignity, but perhaps what they mourn the most is the sense of affinity in the everyday opposition. In their opinion, the strong community of values was lost when market economy reforms began. They complain about unemployment, social divisions, empty churches, failing patriotism, political powerlessness, and moral decay, along with commercialism and Pride parades. Malmgren presents (always with impressive sensitivity and respect) the gentlemen's bitter tales of the present inhospitable and unjust time, totally lacking in solidarity, and their palpable nostalgia for the bygone sense of agency and recognition. An interesting question posed in the chapter is whether the experience of a polarized world can be inscribed in a person's habitus and transferred to a continued quest for opponents, struggle and "communitas". Malmgren is rather sparing with this kind of reflections bringing in the current situation in Poland, but they do contribute substantially to the value of the study. I would also have wished for a clarification of how the author views the relationship between solidarity as a theoretical concept and the Polish Solidarity movement, which here seems to personify the societal solidarity – but, inevitably, large groups were still excluded from the warm embrace.

In the closing chapter, Malmgren emphasizes that all memory work deserves attention. Claiming the right to regard one's life with attention and perhaps a moment of praise, regardless of the political circumstances in which this life took place, is an expression of caring for the self. And the listeners get an opportunity to ponder on the imprint of circumstances on their own lives, which is always an instructive experience.

Agnes Malmgren's dissertation is a substantial, comprehensive, and exciting study of how the past calls for people's attention through its lingering materiality, and how it is continually conjured up in our mnemonic acts. Malmgren succeeds in writing in a way that is impregnated with theory, while simultaneously being highly personal. The evocative style, rich in metaphors, engages and touches the reader. Another strength of this dissertation is the wealth of the material and the nuanced analyses – always respectful to the interlocutors, but razor-sharp vis-à-vis power orders of various kinds. With her focus on solidarity and recognition, she offers tools and inspiration to reflect on historical events characterized by both liminality and continuity, and experienced in a marginalized locality. In a time of societal processes that are increasingly moving towards crude and polarized pictures of the past and the present, this is a very welcome contribution.

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Team Spirit in an Arms Factory

Niina Naarminen: Naurun voima. Muistitietotutkimus huumorin merkityksistä Tikkakosken tehtaan paikallisyhteisössä. (English abstract: The power of laughter. An oral history study of collective meanings of humour at the former industrial community of Tikkakoski arms factory). Työväen historian ja perinteen tutkimuksen seura. Helsinki 2018. 427 pp. Diss.

On Independence Day in Finland, the Finnish Broadcasting Company shows the film *Unknown Soldier*, based on Vino Lynna's novel *Tuntematon solitas*. One of the main characters comments on the soldiers who are fighting the continuation war against the Soviets, that the Finnish soldiers are "the puppets of Tikkakoski". The Tikkakoski mill manufactured submachine guns, patented in 1930 worldwide, known as the Suomi submachine gun. The reason I started this review by talking of a pacifist novel of war, published in 1954, is that this dissertation, *The Power of Laughter* is about the same Tikkakoski factory referred to in Väinö Linna's novel. It was a proud boast of the factory workers; everybody knew where the machine guns were made, in Central Finland, nowadays a part of Jyväskylä municipality.

In this doctoral dissertation, the folklorist Niina Naarminen shows the reader how important the laughter and jokes were for the factory workers' identity. Nevertheless, she concludes that the jokes and the joking tradition come from the agrarian background of the factory workers. The factory was closed in 1991, having operated since 1893. It was known as an arms mill, as guns were manufactured between 1918 and 1989. First guns were made for the Whites during the Finnish civil war. It was a rather confusing situation, for most of the workers in the manufacturing process were politically reds, socialists, and still they made arms for their enemies. Some of the workers were put in prison camps, but if you kept your mouth shut, you could still work in the factory.

After World War II, guns were made for hunting and other leisure activities. Like all industry in Finland, the Tikkakoski factory started to manufacture products for the Soviet Union as war reparations, and the factory started to make the Tikka sewing machine, mainly for the Soviet market. That manufacture ended when Russia did not have sufficient money to pay for the products.

There are three main questions in this study. The first question is how the humour tradition functioned as the culture of denial in the oral history of the Tikkakoski factory. Secondly, there is the question of how the mill workers' oral tradition of humour changed when the working community and its communality underwent change. Finally, the author asks how unemployment is reflected in the communal oral tradition and the social relations, and whether it is different from the oral tradition of those who retired before the closure.

The methodology she uses consists of the tools of oral history and social history, with terms such as popular memory and shared histories. In addition, she speaks of deindustrialization in Tikkakoski municipality. She also mentions that there was a Finnish army garrison, the air force, but only to say that the children of the military regulars belonged to a different caste, and the mill workers' kids felt inferior to them. However, Naarminen does not consider whether the geographical location of the garrison was dependent on the Tikkakoski arms factory. In my opinion, it would have been very interesting if there were a correspondence.

The book has seven chapters. The introduction is quite long, containing the theoretical framework of the study and the concepts and the methods used, to which Naarminen devotes 143 pages, undeniably giving a thorough analysis of the matter. The material of the study consists of 31 interviews and 27 filmed recordings. There is one man at the centre of this study; he is said to be a good speaker and has many humorous details of everyday life in the Tikkakoski mill. Naarminen spent her early life in Tikkakoski municipality, and as it was a small community she knew almost everyone she interviewed. Her informants include her mother and grandmother as well. She thus had a thorough

pre-understanding of the field in which she was working. As an insider, this study is without question an example of autoethnographic research.

The author finds that the humour and laughter are very important in the routine of tedious factory work. Niina Naarminen is writing about oral history in a metalwork plant in the Tikkakoski factory. Oral history in this case is mainly the different kinds of jokes and amusing stories. She writes that these jokes and humorous stories have carnivalistic features. In chapters V and VI, Naarminen analyses the material, examining how the humour functions as contextualized communality and how deindustrialization influenced the humour and the humorous tradition. She is interested in the major changes in society and how the people came to terms with the changes in their lives, and what the oral history and the tradition of humour give to people who are processing these changes in a life with an uncertain future.

Naarminen has worked with this topic in all her academic research; she has written all her theses about the Tikkakoski factory, starting with her bachelor thesis. The research material is detailed. Self-reflection is needed, and she manages this very well. She uses Alessandro Portelli's concept of radical oral history, where the researcher is a resource of the analysis, the researcher is a part of the study and her reading influences the study material. Portelli is very popular in current Finnish folkloristic research.

What kind of humorous tales did the workers tell on the shop floor, and what did they laugh at? Naarminen finds it very similar to the humorous stories of old peasant folktales, trickster stories. There are also carnivalistic traditions, and traditional folktales like the haughty employer who is taught a lesson or the arrogant worker who gets his comeuppance. The most popular jokes on the shop floor were of a sexual nature. Women were a small minority at the Tikkakoski factory, working in the downstairs halls. So all the women were at the centre of attention in jokes as well; they had to tolerate a certain amount of sexual harassment, but they could not be offended by it.

The final conclusion is that the laughter and joking ended when the factory was closed. Those who had already retired still told jokes about their work and of their workmates. Unemployment was an occasion for shame; the sight of former colleagues was painful, reawakening the sorrow of losing a job, and if there was any humour it was somewhat bitter. The humour was after all a way to get through the boring working shifts.

This dissertation can be placed among studies of the oral history of a community. The researcher has found similarities to the old trickster stories and shows that jokes and humour are important as everyday practice in a community, bringing out the team spirit and strengthening the feeling of the togetherness. The team spirit shows in the humour with the community.

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Norwegian Black Books

Ane Ohrvik: Medicine, Magic and Art in Early Modern Norway. Conceptualizing Knowledge. Palgrave Historical Studies in Witchcraft and Magic. Palgrave Macmillan, London 2018. 302 pp. Ill.

How do you treat toothache? What is the procedure for making ink? How do you get lucky at cards? How do you see if a sick person will survive or die? How do you get women to love you? Black Books from the early modern period reflect hopes and fears, interests and needs. The books usually contain charms, prayers, recipes and rituals, knowledge that was considered (at least

by some people) to be important for solving problems in everyday life.

Handwritten Black Books, in Norway often called Svartebogen or Cyprianus, are in focus in Ane Ohrvik's *Medicine Magic and Art in Early Modern Norway*, published in the series Palgrave Historical Studies in Witchcraft and Magic. The period she studies is 1650–1850. The material mainly consists of Black Books from the manuscript collections of the National Library of Norway in Oslo and the Norwegian Folklore Archives.

Oddly enough, there are few large studies of Black Books. However, there are some articles and books (for example Thomas K. Johnson's *Tidebast och Vändelrot: Magical Representations in the Swedish Black Art Book Tradition*, 2010). There are also several printed collections of charms that are largely based on Black Books, for example Anton C. Bang's *Norske hexeformularer og magiske opskrifter* (1901–1902) and Ferdinand Ohrt's *Danmarks Trylleformler* (1917). Furthermore, witchcraft and magic is still a vital field of research to which researchers such as Bente Gullveig Alver, Linda Oja and Göran Malmstedt have contributed with important studies in recent decades. In Ane Ohrvik's study, however, magic as such is not at the centre and thus the many rituals and charms found in the Black Books are only mentioned in passing. Instead, the focus is on the Black Books as books. Ohrvik thus approaches research fields such as book history and the history of knowledge.

One point of departure for Ohrvik's study is that Black Books not only should be considered as reflections of knowledge held by individuals. They also reflect how the writers chose to present this knowledge as material objects, as books. As Ohrvik clearly shows that the manuscripts were given the form and structure of a book, with titles, chapters, headings and so on. Sometimes there are even tables of contents, introductions and also statements of the authors in the handwritten Black Books. Different binding techniques were used; some of the Black Books have soft paper covers, others have decorated leather bindings. It is also the paratext that is in focus in *Medicine Magic and Art in Early Modern Norway.* Ohrvik's main aim is to examine how knowledge is presented.

Is this really interesting? Is it even possible to arrive at new knowledge about the Black Books without studying the rituals, charms, charms and recipes? I must admit that I changed my mind on this matter. From first being somewhat sceptical of Ohrvik's choice of focus, my view now – after reading the book – is the opposite. There is no doubt at all that Ohrvik, by focusing on the paratext, contributes much new knowledge of magic in general and of Black Books in particular. Her study is innovative and will, I believe, in all likelihood help to revitalize the research field(s).

In addition to an introduction and a conclusion, *Medicine Magic and Art in Early Modern Norway* consists of seven chapters in which Ohrvik discusses various aspects of Black Books. Well-informed, well-formulated, and inspiring, Ohrvik discusses knowledge cultures in themselves but also how they are expressed in the Black Books. What are, for example, the connections between the Norwegian Black Books, the German *Kunstbüchlein*, the Italian *secreti* books and printed *grimoires*? What significance did the strict censorship in Norway-Denmark have on the Black Books? Who owned the Black Books, who wrote them, how and why? In the chapter "Attributing Knowledge" Ohrvik discusses how, and not least why, many of the Norwegian Black Books are attributed to Cyprian. In "Situating Knowledge" she studies the placement of knowledge in time and space. Particularly interesting is her discussion of magic and Wittenberg – in Sweden too there are legends about the Wittenberg

school, where priests were said to have been educated in magic.

Ohrvik also discusses other authorization strategies, for example format, bindings and textual styles. One of the most interesting chapters, "Instructing Knowledge", discusses the reading instructions one can find in some Black Books. The instructions in particular make it clear that the books were also intended to be read by other people than the writers. Furthermore, Ohrvik also studies how the knowledge in the books is organized. Many Black Books are built up as practical handbooks – with titles, headings and a table of contents. In short, the books encourage practical use. She convincingly links the Black Books to literary conventions. At the same time, she places them historically and culturally.

During the reading of Ohrvik's book I have been thinking about differences and similarities with respect to Swedish Black Books. Why are there far more Black Books preserved in Norway than in Sweden? In Sweden most of the Black Books seem to have the character of notebooks; many of them were obviously made to be carried on one's person and have no prefaces, table of contents etc. Ohrvik's study is limited to larger manuscripts (six leaves, at the minimum) but to what extent are there also less comprehensive Black Books in Norway? Furthermore, as Ohrvik convincingly shows, Cyprian is central in the Norwegian Black Books. However, in Swedish Black Books Cyprian is seldom mentioned – why? Comparisons like those clearly fall outside Ohrvik's study. However, I hope that someone in the future will conduct a comparative study of Black Books in the Nordic countries as I am sure it would further enhance the understanding of the phenomenon.

In summary, Ane Ohrvik's book is detailed and often complicated discussions. However, the book is also richly illustrated and, not least, very well written – it is a delight to read! The study not only provides knowledge about the Black Books in themselves, but also how magical practitioners viewed magic and how they conceptualized magic as something useful and important. Ohrvik's book is highly recommended. I hope that the readers will not be limited to students and researchers as I am sure that also a historically interested public would appreciate *Medicine, Magic and Art in Early Modern Norway.*

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A Cultural History of the Bedbug

Klaus Reinhardt: Bedbug. Reaction Book, London 2018. 189 pp. Ill.

It is probably erroneous to conclude, as Carl Linnaeus did, that the bedbug, *Cimex lectularius,* is a relatively recent invasive species in Europe, originating in India. Historical sources indicate that the bedbug already existed in the Mediterranean region in antiquity. There are early archaeozoological traces from ancient Egypt about 3,600 years ago. Pliny the Elder also mentions bedbugs. Archaeologists have found bedbugs when opening old coffins and during excavations. They are depicted in Renaissance literature. The bedbug was ubiquitous in Sweden in the days of Linnaeus, both in simple crofters' cottages and in fine palaces, as he stated in his lectures in the 1740s. In his book *Skånska Resa* (1751) he describes them as "base vermin".

Linnaeus mentions several means to repel them, recommending the fungus fly agaric, which was used as an insecticide in Uppsala in his time. In the nineteenth century bedbugs were rife in workers' homes and peasant cottages all over Sweden, constituting a major sanitary problem.

Nobody likes bedbugs, but one cannot fail to be fascinated by them, par-

ticularly the biocultural domains to which they give rise. A researcher who has enthusiastically studied bedbugs is the German entomologist Klaus Reinhardt of the University of Dresden. He has devoted much research to bedbugs and has also taken an interest in their relationship to humans and the culture they have generated. He has previously written, for example, about bedbugs in literature. It is natural, of course, that someone doing research on human parasites should also take an interest in how they are perceived by the people who are their hosts. Reinhardt is certainly the right person to write a monograph about them in the publisher's wonderful series of beautifully illustrated books about the cultural history of animals.

Someone may find it contradictory to regard bedbugs as "culture". But there is an abundance of evidence to show that this is the case. The evidence just has to be sifted, and that is what the author has done. The fact that these bugs like to live in beds even gives them erotic connotations, at least in popular culture. Read the entertaining chapter "Bug Sex". They have also left traces in literature. Franz Kafka's short novel *Metamorphosis* (1915) is said to have been modelled on the bedbug. In a more sinister way, bedbugs have also affected literature in Sweden, as Dan Andersson died because the hotel staff did not air his room after they had fumigated it with hydrogen cyanide. As usual in this publisher's series of animal books, the illustrations are well chosen. Our annoying "friends" have also inspired popular art. There are even close-up photographs of these animals in the book.

People throughout the ages have tried to fight them by magical means, using poisons from the vegetable kingdom and various trapping devices. One would think that, with pest control companies like Anticimex and with modern methods, the bedbug should be eradicated in our part of Europe, but this is not the case. We unintentionally bring them home from our travels, and many of us have had to decontaminate our suitcases and clothes on returning home. It is said that bedbug traps were tested in student accommodation in Lund a few years ago. We continue to relate to them, and in this way they will continue to make their mark on our cultural history. No matter what you think of human parasites, you cannot fail to be fascinated. This book gives good insight into man's relationship with them.

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Manifesto for Militant Musicologists

Musiken som förändringskraft. Manifest för en aktivistisk musikforskning. Susanna Välimäki, Sini Mononen & Kaj Ahlsved (eds.). (Acta Musicologica Militantia 2.) Forskningsföreningen Suoni rf., Helsingfors 2019. 157 pp. Ill.

This book is so different from other reviewed publications that I shall begin by describing it from back to front. The last piece in this collection of essays is by Sini Mononen, musicologist and music critic, and also one of the editors, and it is entitled "The Researcher as an Agent of Change". Mononen describes with great enthusiasm what is presumably the background to the book, and also to the group that lies behind its publication: the Suoni research association. Mononen delivers scathing criticism of today's university system, which in her opinion is characterized by "scientific management", which restricts the creativity of researchers and their ability to participate with their expertise in the construction of society. Researchers are steered by things like "publication policy and administrative solutions". This restriction, Mononen says, is in stark contrast to the ability of music to inspire "creative thinking and multifaceted research". She also argues that "the aca-

demic reward system and the pre-defined career ladder encourage a calculating attitude" in the researcher. In this dystopian situation, a researcher can even find it "difficult to shake off the sense of defeat".

No such fate, fortunately, appears to have affected Sini Mononen or, for that matter, the other authors of the volume: Susanna Välimäki, Juha Torvinen, Kim Ramstedt, Saijaleena Rantanen, and Kaj Ahlsved. They all write in an optimistic tone and with a tangible desire to change the circumscribed role of the researcher. The antidote that Mononen proposes is a "practice-oriented critique of institutions", which means that researchers themselves create new working conditions in new institutional contexts of the kind that their own association is an example of. A crucial factor in this is fruitful collaboration with colleagues, as exemplified in this volume. The collegial embrace is evident in the fact that the book is available in both Finnish and Swedish – the Finnish-speaking volume is number one in the series with the telling name *Acta Musicologica Militantia*.

Speaking of languages, it should be mentioned that two of the authors have relatively recently gained a doctorate in musicology at the Swedish Åbo Akademi University: Kim Ramstedt, who has written about music clubs and disc jockeys in Helsinki, and Kaj Ahlsved, whose topic is music and team sports.

The subtitle of the book contains the word "manifesto", a term that has hardly been sighted since the 1970s. The manifesto for "activist music research" is summed up in ten snappy points at the back of the book and is described in more detail in the introduction. It is addressed to the individual researcher and thus charges him or her with personal responsibility to achieve the desired change. Or should one say, it encourages the researcher to work with an awareness of his or her own potential to bring about change. The goal is almost utopian, as is the nature of a manifesto. Researchers should work with great moral integrity, with a duty to protect the surrounding world and with a focus that extends beyond the narrow confines of the scholarly community. "Ask yourself in what way your research makes the world a better place" is one of the exhortations (p. 137).

Besides the introduction, the book has nine articles, each of which describes an area in which the activist musicologist can operate: as a critic, as a popular educator, as a historian, as an environmental activist, and so on. Most of the contributions have a manifesto character, that is to say, calling on people to do the "right" work to bring about change. At times the authors share personal experiences from their own fields, although rarely with examples of their own research as part of the process for change. The author who writes in most detail about her own research is Saijaleena Rantanen, in her paper about the researcher as historian. Rantanen has, among other things, studied singing in the radical labour movement among Finnish emigrants in the United States, mainly in the anarcho-syndicalist Industrial Workers of the World – where the Swedish-American songwriter Joe Hill was also involved. She has studied the songs as they are preserved in some printed collections, but notes that the material has not attracted much attention in Finland and finds an explanation in the radical messages of the lyrics. As an activist musicologist she has collaborated with a contemporary music group that has revived these songs from the first years of the twentieth century.

Kaj Ahlsved has been working for a number of years as a music teacher, music critic, blogger, and the like. He draws on his own versatile experience in his essay on "the researcher as a media player, working with popular enlightenment and musical fostering". He urges readers to engage actively in the so-called third task of the university (interaction with the surrounding society) and

to expand their register. "The activist musicologist sees potential in everything from expert assignments to criticism and from tutoring at vocational colleges to guest lecturing in secondary schools" (p. 110). His comments on music education are particularly readable, as he advocates an emancipatory line and recommends teaching musical craftsmanship that also includes elements of critical thinking.

With one's own memories of the revolutionary 1970s, it would be easy to describe the book and the research association as a young rebel with no chance of penetrating the thick armour of the academic republic. But I choose to read the texts attentively and I have tried to convey their content objectively. The authors' underlying criticism of the current conditions for young researchers deserves to be taken seriously. It is indeed true that the publication policy, with the natural sciences as the norm, and the accompanying bibliometric indicators make humanist researchers anxious. It is also true that activities outside academia, such as popularizing and criticism, do not have any career value for those who want to remain in higher education. The authors of this volume have not only understood this, but have also found other ways to do meaningful work and they want to share that through this book.

It will be exciting to follow the association and its members. There is no shortage of drive and ideas. Those who wish to read the manifesto can go to www.suoni.fi/publikationer.

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Royal Power and Sámi Settlement
Thomas Wallerström (med bidrag av Ulf Segerström och Eva-Maria Nordström): Kunglig makt och samiska bosättningsmönster. Studier kring Väinö Tanners vinterbyteori. Instituttet for sammenlignende kulturforskning. Novus forlag, Oslo 2017. 322 pp. Ill.

Professor emeritus Thomas Wallerström at the Institutt for historiske studier, Norges teknisk-naturvetenskaplige universitet (NTNU), Trondheim, Norway, is an archaeological scholar with an interest in northern issues. Wallerström has now written an academic testament by problematizing Väinö Tanner's winter camp theory from 1929. In his preface to this book, "Royal Power and Sámi Settlement Patterns: Studies concerning Väinö Tanner's Winter Camp Theory", he states that Tanner's theory is wrong. The ethnologist Kerstin Eidlitz Kuoljok has already discussed Tanner and criticized his theory in 1987 and 2011. Wallerström's work might be seen as kicking in open doors, as both of them falsify Tanner's theory. But his research takes new steps.

What about Tanner for those who do not know his earlier work? He lived between 1881 and 1948, a geographer, a geologist and a diplomat, who visited the Skolt Sámi winter dwelling in the border area between Russia and Finland in the north. Petsamo is now under Russian jurisdiction. Tanner saw the Skolt Sámi winter dwelling as an archaic traditional system, a pre-state institution, and he created his theory based on his empirical material. The *siida* stayed in a winter camp from December to April, and this was common to all Sámi in a hunter-gatherer society. The Skolt Sámi used the term *siida* during Tanner's stay in the region, but there might be some confusion as to what a *siida* is. There are several definitions. The linguist Konrad Nielsen explains *siida* as a "camp, consisting of one or, as a rule, several families of reindeer owners with their reindeer, when the herd or a particular part of it is kept together and watched from the family tents; as a rule, each family has its own tent." We do know that the word *siida*, *sit*, *sijte* is old and wide-

spread in Sápmi. The ethnologist Helmer Tegengren adopted Tanner's result and created his famous work *En utdöd lappkultur i Kemi lappmark* (1952). Many scholars interested in Sámi history used Tanner's model, but did not actually check the sources until Eidlitz Kuoljok did so in her article from 1987 and her book *Den samiska sitan och vinterbyarna* (2011) and now Wallerström in 2017. When Wallerström's group made their investigation of the winter camp, they based their work on vegetation history, historical sources and archaeology. A winter camp for five months must use a number of woods to keep the heat indoors and cook food in tents or houses. If this assumption is right, one should see traces in the evidence of vegetation history in the ground, in the turf and pollen. They chose three different localities, Árviesjávrrie (Arvidsjaur), Ruonala and Markkina (today in Finland), and all three places correspond to what could have been winter camps for the Skolt Sámi. The results clearly show that the number of people cannot have been so large, and written sources cannot corroborate the theory that these places were pre-state winter camps. Wallerström's perspective might be one-sided, in view of the progression in Sámi history from royal decrees, a perspective later than the pre-state winter camp Tanner suggested. It is necessary, I would say, to have read Eidlitz Kuoljok's book first, before you read Wallerström. Eidlitz Kuoljok views the Skolt Sámi *siida* as a Russian construction and she disregards Tanner's theory. Wallerström closes the Tanner door and opens up for new alternative hypotheses and interpretations by asking: "Why, for example, might not winter settlement have been dispersed over extensive areas under suitable conditions?" Wallerström has done exceptional work, using several interdisciplinary research methods and giving the academic field new questions to answer.

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