

Arv
Nordic Yearbook
of Folklore 2018

ARV

Nordic Yearbook of Folklore

Vol. 74

Editor

ARNE BUGGE AMUNDSEN
OSLO, NORWAY

Editorial Board

Lene Halskov Hansen, København; Fredrik Skott, Göteborg;
Suzanne Österlund-Poetzsch, Helsingfors (Helsinki);
Terry Gunnell, Reykjavík

Published by

THE ROYAL GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS ACADEMY
UPPSALA, SWEDEN

Distributed by

eddy.se ab
VISBY, SWEDEN

© 2018 by The Royal Gustavus Adolphus Academy, Uppsala
ISSN 0066-8176
All rights reserved

Articles appearing in this yearbook are abstracted and indexed in
European Reference Index
for the Humanities and Social Sciences ERIH PLUS 2011–

Editorial address:

Prof. Arne Bugge Amundsen

Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages

University of Oslo

Box 1010 Blindern

NO–0315 Oslo, Norway

phone + 4792244774

fax + 4722854828 e-mail: a.b.amundsen@ikos.uio.no

<http://www.hf.uio.no/ikos/forskning/publikasjoner/tidsskrifter/arv/index.html>

Cover: Kirsten Berrum

For index of earlier volumes, see

<http://www.gustavadolfsakademien.se/a>

Distributor

eddy.se ab

e-post: order@bokorder.se

Box 1310, 621 24 Visby

Telefon 0498-25 39 00

<http://kgaa.bokorder.se>

Printed in Sweden

Textgruppen i Uppsala AB, Uppsala 2018

Contents

Articles

<i>Line Esborg & Katrine Watz Thorsen</i> : Editorial. New Perspectives on Scandinavian <i>Skillingstrykk</i>	7
<i>Siv Gøril Brandtzæg</i> : Singing the News in the Eighteenth Century. A Media Perspective on Norwegian Skilling Ballads	17
<i>Astrid Nora Ressem</i> : From Crowded Streets and Seasonal Fisheries to Remote Paths and Kitchens. The Trade in Skillingstrykk	45
<i>Kristiina Savin</i> : Paintings in the Heart. Early Modern Swedish Broadside Ballads of Wonders and Accidents	71
<i>Östen Hedin</i> : Songs in Swedish Volksbücher and Chapbook Stories	87
<i>Hans-Hinrich Thedens</i> : Broadside Ballads and Singing Styles. Examples from the Norwegian Collection of Folk Music	105
<i>Karin Strand</i> : With a Rough Piece of Twine. <i>Skilling ballads</i> on Malefactors: The Case of Brita Christina Wanselius 1827	123
<i>Knut Aukrust</i> : Life Prisoner and Master Thief: Constructions of a National Hero	149

Book Reviews

<i>Andersson, Matts</i> : Farbror Otto (Gunnar Ternhag)	181
<i>Bartens, Hans-Hermann</i> : Tschuden und andere Feinde/Sagen aus Lapland (Ulrika Wolf-Knuts)	183
<i>Eriksson-Aras, Karin</i> : Ljudrum (Dan Lundberg)	184
<i>Granbom-Herranen, Liisa</i> : Proverbs in SMS messages (Wolfgang Mieder)	189
<i>Gustavsson, Anders</i> : Folkloristic Studies in Scandinavia (Ulrika Wolf-Knuts)	196
<i>Havsteen-Mikkelsen, Mette Eriksen</i> : Sømandskoner i Marstal (Anders Gustavsson)	197
<i>Hodne, Ørnulf</i> : Påskefeiring i Norge (Anders Gustavsson)	198
<i>Jakobsson, Ármann</i> : The Troll Inside You (Camilla Asplund Ingemark)	201
<i>Koudal, Jens Henrik</i> : Skæbnesyfoni og krokodillepolka (Sigbjørn Apeland)	202

<i>Kristoffersen, Eirik: Kampen om folkeminnesamlingen (Göran Sjögård)</i>	205
<i>Löfgren, Jakob: ...And Death proclaimed (Tuomas Hovi)</i>	207
<i>MacNeil, Kristina Sehlin: Extractive Violence (Trude Fonneland)</i> ..	211
<i>Malmstedt, Göran: En förtrollad värld (Anders Gustavsson)</i>	212
<i>Resløkken, Åmund Norum: "Ein lut av det nære levande livet"</i> (Anders Gustavsson)	214
<i>Röhrich, Lutz: Begegnungen (Bengt af Klintberg)</i>	216
<i>Saarinen, Jukka: Runonlaulun poetiikka (Pekka Hakamies)</i>	217
<i>Vahlo, Jukka: In Gameplay (Simon J. Bronner)</i>	219
<i>Zachrisson, Terese: Mellan fromhet och vidskepelse (Anders Gustavsson)</i>	222

Editorial

New Perspectives on Scandinavian *Skillingstrykk*

Line Esborg & Katrine Watz Thorsen

Skillingstrykk are attracting renewed scholarly interest in contemporary Scandinavia, from a range of different disciplines (see Kjus 2010; Savin 2011; Nilsson 2012; Ramsten *et al.* 2015; Brandzæg 2018, Thorsen 2018). In the autumn of 2015, a collection of seemingly omitted prints was rediscovered in the Norwegian Folklore Archives¹ at the University of Oslo; two shelf metres of Norwegian and other Scandinavian *skillingstrykk*, never fully catalogued or contextualized, waiting to be put to use anew. Implemented in the cultural history curriculum the following spring term, a whole range of new cultural history perspectives emerged through the BA student papers.² At the same time the National Library initiated collaboration on cataloguing the corpus of both institutions, sharing our renewed interest in this valuable but long-neglected genre of popular printed songs. The institutional collaboration resulted in a seminar entitled “News and Entertainment, Gossip and Emotion” at the National Library, co-hosted by the Norwegian Folklore Archives on 15 March 2017.³ This special edition of *Arv* is a result of the interdisciplinary conversations emerging from this seminar.

Between Print and Oral Traditions

As David Atkinson and Steve Roud have pointed out, the genre is an interface between print and oral traditions (Atkinson & Roud 2016), formerly disregarded as a popular genre by musicology and literary scholarship, while folklorists collecting folk poetry favoured age (epic medieval ballads) and orality. It could even be argued that “the potential dichotomy of oral vs. print goes to the very heart of folk song scholarship” (Roud 2016:5). The institutional archival care during the centuries has varied, often labelled as ephemera or haphazard parts of other small print collections. The definition or name regarding this genre of folk songs is not straightforward. *Skillingstrykk* is a distinctive Scandinavian term which does not easily translate, whether in concept or format, in relation to the Anglophone tradition (broad-

side ballad). This edition of *Arv* is the first to address the problem of translation.

As a generic term, the Scandinavian *skillingstrykk*, refers to printed popular narratives in verse, often in the form of sentimental and sensational songs (Strand in Ramsten *et al.* 2015:10). They are small printed pamphlets, often a folded single sheet of inexpensive paper with printed texts on each side. It would contain one or more often several songs, sometimes accompanied by a prose text describing the theme of the song in more depth. They were in circulation from the seventeenth century until the mid-twentieth century, although the bulk of preserved prints stems from 1870 to 1910. Although no longer in print, they are still sung.

The title page often had a characteristic look. It would list how many ballads the pamphlet contained, often including long narrative titles that give a detailed impression of the themes of the ballads. They often took up a lot of the space on the title page, and could also contain an illustration. Especially prints concerning a news story have these more fact-based prose texts accompanying the ballads. It is clear that these front pages are meant to double as a tool for advertising, and to underline the association with a news story (Nilsson 2012:34; Brandtzæg 2018:101–102).

Another common feature is that each text is introduced by directions to a tune, instead of musical notes giving reference to a contemporary and familiar melody. This could also be a melody from a ballad that had proved especially popular.

The pamphlets were sold cheap, and the name *skillingstrykk* comes from this, they were sold for one or a few *skilling*.⁴ All texts that could be sold could become *skillingstrykk*; hence the wide range of themes within the genre. *Skillingstrykk* would offer news, entertainment, frightening tales, emotions and drama. The only common denominator is the way it was distributed. They could be sold at markets, in the streets, and by travelling salesmen. The texts would describe crimes and royal weddings, clever crooks and regretful sinners. They were a source of news, as well as entertainment and educational messages. They could also offer love stories, religious messages, convey moralizing thoughts and they could – often cautiously – promote political satire, debate and societal criticism.

The large editions and the growing purchasing public from the seventeenth century onwards indicate that “amidst the story-telling and the folk-songs, reading and writing had entered the fabric of popular culture” (David Vincent in Roud 2016:3; see also Fet 1995; Briggs & Baumann 2009).

Heritage from Below

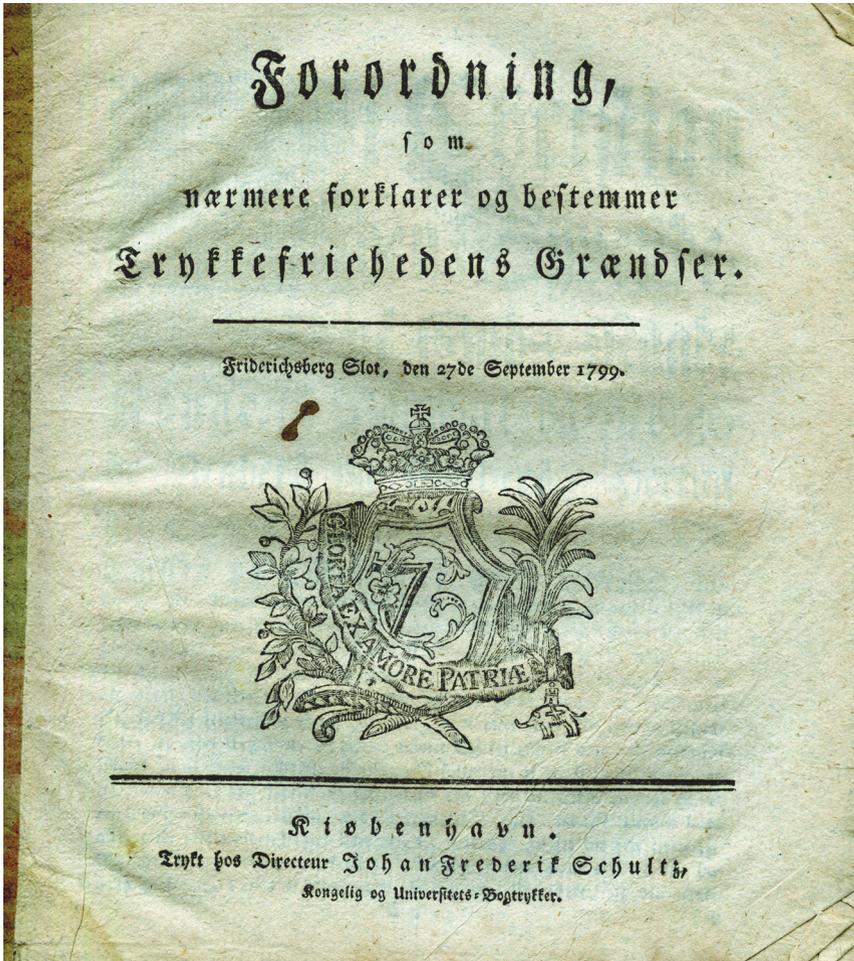
As a genre and a medium, *skillingstrykk* made news, information, entertainment and gossip circulate within a society. The prints could move between centre and periphery, between high and low in society. They were objects of commodification, and at the same time being rewritten, collected, shared and borrowed. The form of the ballads made them easy to remember. They rhyme, there is a rhythm to them, a clear narrative and a schematic form. These factors made it easy to adapt them to different themes and topics, and to create different variants. The person selling would sing it, at the same time personalizing it, and underlining the performative aspects of this tradition.

Skillingstrykk are arguably a source of great historic value, although neglected as historical documents (Thorsen 2018; Brandtzæg 2018). The songs they contain is part of the history of our musical heritage, but the prints are further more sources of knowledge on social and cultural history, the history of mentalities and of piety. They are a part of book and print history, and at the same time providing historical knowledge about new forms of media of communication like “the digital revolution”. Yet these prints have been marginalized as an insignificant popular culture. The language is simple, the wording unsophisticated, sometimes with last-resort rhymes and awkward lyrics. The theme often filled with drama and emotions. On the other hand, the songs were broadly circulated and – unlike other media – avoided censorship. Thus, the *skillingstrykk* may have functioned as a rather independent medium, even a democratic liberation (Nilsson 2012:38) giving voice to the people enjoying an unprecedented freedom of the press.

As modest and popular publications, they would pass under the radar of censorship. As Krefting has argued (2014, 2018) the print media of the eighteenth century display a surprisingly broad spectrum of genres. They were explored and developed playfully, in a game of ambiguity, criticism and jest. This development of genres occurred regardless of the strict limitations on freedom of the press, through censorship and regulations of postage and privilege which opened up for a great variety of voices and employed a number of different textual strategies and genres (Krefting *et al.* 2014; Krefting 2018).

The majority of *skillingstrykk* were published without a named author, or used a pseudonym. When the censorship was lifted in Denmark-Norway in 1770, the king himself saw the free press as a useful disciplinary tool that could make people obedient and devout. The freedom of the press was seen as “the most effective means to spread enlightenment and useful knowledge among all classes of citizen”. In 1799, however, the royal head of state found it imperative to limit abuse with a decree explaining “the limitations of the freedom of the press” (*Forordning som nærmere forklarer og bestemmer Trykkefrihedens Grændser*):

It is with the utmost displeasure we learn that our laws concerning this are still being incessantly transgressed, and that some malicious persons with culpable impudence



1. The royal decree imposing restrictions on the freedom of the press: *Forordning som nærmere forklarer og bestemmer Trykkefriehedens Grændser*, Copenhagen, 1799.

daily assail and deride everything that is sacred and venerable in any community of citizens, and constantly spread false ideas, and try to propagat erroneous notions about the most important subjects for the human being and the citizen; whereby the less enlightened part of the common people, especially the inexperienced youth, can easily be led astray and corrupted (1799:4).

Policy violations were punished hard. The small, seemingly insignificant printed songs seem to have escaped censorship. *Skillingstrykk* and other kinds of street literature can therefore be one of the best sources to gain insight into a popular mentality at specific points in time (Roud 2015:1). They provide a unique access to popular views on current events in life and society.

A Participatory Medium

It has been argued that *skillingstrykk* can be seen as our first example of mass media (Espeland 1999; Alver 2003:96; Nilsson 2012:32; Brandtzæg 2018:94). They were a source of news and current events, ranging from murder, fires, the sinking of the *Titanic*, or a celebrity coming to town. News like this is only one of several sub-categories of *skillingstrykk*, and other popular topics include other forms of entertainment, and could be about love, women, songs written by criminals while in prison, satirical and humorous themes. They could convey news in a simple and personalized way, and make it publicly available. Sold by street vendors, often singing the ballads themselves in the street and market places, helped to make the news even more available to the broader audience.

In the same way that news and attitudes to different events are distributed through social media today, *skillingstrykk* represented a democratization of media culture. Through these prints people could express themselves and discuss events large and small, even though many then, as is the case with today's social media, called it a vulgarization of the public debate. The prints presented their perspective in a simple form and with a personal angle, they were sold cheap or passed on for free, much like the way we use social media today, as regards availability, form and purpose. Another comparable aspect is the anonymity of the prints – the author was rarely mentioned by name. In this respect, *skillingstrykk* are the closest historical equivalent to our time's social media, where sources and source criticism have been placed in the background. Much in the same way that social media is being accused of being an unreliable news source, *skillingstrykk* could contribute to destabilizing the social structures of the day. Furthermore, they were shared among friends and neighbours, performed as song and able to travel large distances. This type of performativity and sharing culture is typical of today's social media. Social media flows across time and space due to the escalating speed of technology.

In an age where fake news signifies a time when journalism is undergoing large changes – many would call it a crisis – and the printed newspaper is in the process of being phased out, it is interesting to see how the earliest printed news media would relate to the distribution of news. *Skillingstrykk* ceased to be the predominant genre when other forms of media came: newspapers, the telegraph, radio. Studies of the development and prevalence of *skillingstrykk* may make it easier to understand the mechanisms behind today's medial changes .

Material and Immaterial, Long-lived and Ephemeral

When the historian P. A. Munch collected ballads and folk songs for his 1848 publication *Norske viser og stev i Folkespråk*, the *skillingstrykk* were not included. Munch did not view them as a sufficiently authentic expression of the common people (Brandtzæg 2018:99). Like the romantic folklorists, Munch seems to have favoured the oral tradition. Most of the singers, on the other hand, “had a wide range of songs in their repertoires, including popular song of the day” (Roud 2016:7). Around the mid-nineteenth century these *skillingstrykk* had their biggest production range.

Despite large editions of this mainstream culture, *skillingstrykk* are in many ways ephemeral. They tend to focus on the immediate and the contemporary. A prominent example of the contemporaneous is titles such as “An entirely new news story!” or “A new ballad”, which are quite common. The very paper they were printed on was often of poor quality, and they would not necessarily have had much value when the ballad was memorized or the news had past. The prints were not necessarily meant to be preserved, but to be used, performed. Hence the materiality has not been the focus, but the singable song, the news, the wonders, the moving story.

As the reader will note, the articles use different versions of the term, from favouring the domestic terms *skillingstrykk* and *skillingssive* (Ressem, Thedens), the Anglophone *broadside ballad* (Hedin, Savin, Aukrust) to proposing a new term, *skilling ballad* (Brandtzæg, Strand). With reference to the lack of prior Scandinavian debate in translation, we have chosen to display the variety regarding translation and thus explore the challenges of this new expanding interdisciplinary interest, instead of trying to rectify.

Proceeding from a range of different case studies, applying different perspectives, each article critically examines the same analytical object of popular printed songs in a Scandinavian context.

In the first article in this volume, “Singing the News in the Eighteenth Century: A Media Perspective on the Norwegian Skilling Ballads”, Siv Gøril Brandtzæg begins by discussing the state of the field of the genre and its marginal position in academia at odds with its popular use, its spread across time and its wide geographical circulation. She proposes *skilling ballad* as a possible term for *skillingstrykk* in translation before turning to an in-depth discussion of the important 18th century subgenre of news ballad, demonstrating how a close reading of the material can help us to a better understanding of social tendencies and cultural mind-sets from our distant past.

Astrid Nora Ressem’s “From Crowded Streets and Seasonal Fisheries to Remote Paths and Kitchens: The Trade in *Skillingstrykk*” examines how the prints were spread, sold and distributed. Although *skillingstrykk* are closely

connected to sale, there has hardly been any research on the trading prior to Ressem's work. Her article focuses on the trading and the sellers of the prints in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Norway, exploring different groups of sellers and the inherent paradox in the surprisingly little contemporary documentation about this mainstream culture despite its massive spread and popularity.

The third article, by Kristiina Savin, entitled "Paintings in the Heart: Early Modern Swedish Broadside Ballads of Wonders and Accidents", investigates monsters and other wonders as objects of meditation according to the Lutheran model of meditation. The article also relates broadside ballads to the question of orality and to the survival of wonders as a popular motif, despite the fact that their divine origin was denied in natural sciences of the late seventeenth century.

Östen Hedin's "Songs in Swedish Volksbücher and Chapbook Stories" attempts to unveil elements of song-making and folk song culture in these imprints, making available, for the first time, the first line of songs in Swedish chapbook stories in the same way as those of the broadsides, unveiling how their hitherto neglected songs were spread.

Hans-Hinrich Thedens' "Broadside ballads and Singing Styles: Examples from the Norwegian Collection of Folk Music" offers insight into sound recordings of popular Norwegian broadsides at the National Library, investigating how they were collected, catalogued and performed. He examines when and in which parts of the country they were recorded and how they feature in the collection and its catalogue. Using recordings of one such song, the singing styles used by traditional singers from all over the country are described. Its last part looks at the position of these songs in the folk music circuit and the Norwegian public space in general. Surprisingly, they are still not fully accepted as a part of the folk music repertoire.

Karin Strand's article "With a Rough Piece of Twine. Skilling ballads on Malefactors: The Case of Brita Christina Wanselius 1827" concerns a certain category among the heterogeneous repertoire of cheap song prints (*skillingtryck*) in Sweden: songs on crimes and malefactors, focusing particularly on the representation of female delinquents and their crimes. Searching for the story behind the printed words, the study sheds light on the relation between the actual events and their representation.

In the final article, "Life Prisoner and Master Thief. Constructions of a National Hero", Knut Aukrust takes a Bakhtinian approach to the heroic status of Ole Høiland in Norway, drawing on broadside ballads and other contemporary print media. The article investigates the narratives that enabled Høiland to attain his status as a trickster figure among the poor in 19th-century Norway.

Line Esborg

Associate Professor of Cultural History

Senior Adviser, Norwegian Folklore Archives

Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages

Faculty of Humanities, University of Oslo (UiO)

PB 1010 Blindern, 0315 Oslo

Norway

Line.esborg@ikos.uio.no

Kathrine Watz Thorsen

MA Museology and Cultural Heritage Studies

Ifor Evans Hall Site, University College London

109 Camden Road, London NW1, 9HZ

England

thorsenkw@gmail.com

References

- Alver, Ivar 2003: Nyhets-skillingsviser og sanger som omhandler norsk-svenske relasjoner. *Studia Musicologica Norvegica* 29 (01), 96–140.
- Brandtzæg, Siv Gøril 2018: Skillingsvisene i Norge 1550–1950 – Historien om et forsømt forskningsfelt. *Edda* 105 (2-2018):93–109.
- Briggs, Asa & Peter Burke 2009: *A Social History of the Media. From Gutenberg to the Internet*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Espeland Velle 1999. Skillingsvisene – vårt eldste massemedium: Arbeidssanger. *Norges musikkhistorie*, vol. 3: 1870–1910 *Romantikk og gullalder*, pp. 286–293. Oslo: Aschehoug.
- Fet, Jostein 1995: *Lesande bønder. Litterær kultur i norske allmugesamfunn før 1840*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
- Krefting, Ellen Marie, Aina Nøding & Mona Renate Ringvej 2014: *En pokkers Skrivesyge. 1700-tallets dansk-norske tidsskrifter mellom sensur og yringsfrihet*. Oslo: Scandinavian Academic Press.
- Krefting, Ellen Marie 2018: News versus Opinion. The State, the Press, and the Northern Enlightenment. *Travelling Chronicles. News and Newspapers from the Early Modern Period to the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Paul Michael Goring, Siv Gøril Brandtzæg & Christine Watson, pp. 299–318. Leiden: Brill.
- Kjus, Audun 2010: Eksempelet Sofie Johannesdatter. *Tidsskrift for kulturforskning* 9(2): 91–101.
- Kverndokk, Kyrre 2015: *Naturkatastrofer. En kulturhistorie*. Oslo: Scandinavian Academic Press.
- Näslund, Shirley 2010: Den mångstämiga monstervisan. Rösler, intertexter og kontexter i skillingstryck om sällsamma skipnaden. *Arkiv för nordisk filologi* 125, 127–154.
- Nilsson Hammar, Anna 2012: *Lyckans betydelse. Sekularisering, sensibilisering och individualisering i svenska skillingtryck 1750–1850*. Diss. Lund: Agerings Bok-förlag.
- Piø, Iørn 1994: *Visemageren. 1800-tallets skillingsvissekonge, Julius Strandberg*. Copenhagen: Strandberg Forlag.

- Prøysen, Elin 1974. *Folkelige viser. Et utvalg sangtradisjon fra Alf Prøysens samlinger*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
- Ramsten, Märta, Karin Strand & Gunnar Ternhag 2015: *Tryckta visor. Perspektiv på skillingstryck som källmaterial*. Uppsala.
- Roud, Steve 2016: Introduction. *Street Ballads in Nineteenth-Century Britain, Ireland, and North America. The Interface between Print and Oral Traditions*, ed. Atkinson Davis and Steve Roud. London: Routledge.
- Savin, Kristiina 2011: *Fortunas kläder. Lycka, olycka og risk i det tidigmoderna Sverige*. Diss. Sekel Bokförlag.
- Thorsen, Katrine Watz 2018. *Historien kan ei oppvise mage. En analyse av skillingstrykk som dokumentarv*. Master Museologi og kulturarvsstudier, UiO V2018.

¹ Norsk Folkeminnnesamling (NFS)

<https://www.hf.uio.no/ikos/tjenester/kunnskap/samlinger/norsk-folkeminnnesamling/>.

² The BA-papers are available at

<https://www.hf.uio.no/ikos/tjenester/kunnskap/samlinger/norsk-folkeminnnesamling/skillingstrykk/>.

³ <https://www.facebook.com/events/235960490188562> also initiated collaboration with Siv Gøril Brandtzæg's research project *Norwegian Broadside Ballads*.

⁴ *Skilling* refers to a former Nordic currency in use from around 1515 to 1875. From 1625 the *skilling* coin became the smallest entity.

Singing the News in the Eighteenth Century

A Media Perspective on Norwegian Skilling Ballads

Siv Gøril Brandtzæg

Abstract

This essay delineates the role of the *news ballad* in the development of an early modern media culture in Norway. By defining the news ballad as a conveyer of accurate intelligence, the essay shows how skilling ballads conveyed news before the newspapers, and it asks to what degree skilling ballads changed after the coming of the first printed newspapers in the 1760s. The essay explores the functions the earliest news ballads may have had in eighteenth-century society, and it argues that these multifaceted but entirely unstudied texts should be given recognition in the history of the development of a Norwegian media culture.

Keywords: news ballads, eighteenth-century news culture, accurate intelligence, execution ballads, nascent social media

In the small municipality of Fosen in Trøndelag on 22 May 1777, a woman's head is severed from her body and placed on a stake. Her name is Dorothea Brynnelsdatter, and the decapitation was her punishment for the infanticide of her three bastard children. This story is certainly extraordinary from a modern perspective, but it was also newsworthy in its eighteenth-century context: although neonatal infanticide was not uncommon in the period – society's condemnation of extramarital sex and its consequences made murderers of many desperate women – a decapitation was a fairly rare occurrence in the kingdom of Denmark-Norway, even after the infamous death of the liberalist reformer Johann Friedrich Struensee.¹ However, despite its potential public appeal, the story of Dorothea's crime and punishment actually does not appear in the extant copies of the newspapers that were circulating in this period. The only surviving print item which does report her cruel fate – i.e. the only publication that communicated her life and wrongdoings to contemporaries – is a skilling ballad (*skillingsvise*) kept at the Gunnerus special collections library in Trondheim, Norway.

(Brynnelsdatter; Dorothea)
En
Bodfærdig Synderinde;
ved Navn
Dorothea Brynnelsdatter,
veemodige
Klage-Sang
over
Hendes Børne-Fødseler i Døls-
maal, og Drab paa trende af dem,
det hun har begaaet i ugift Stand,
hvorfore hun er tildoimt at halsbugges
med Dre, Hovedet at sættes paa Stage,
men Kroppen at nedlægges i Jorden,
hvilket skal skee paa Koebergs-Høngen
sidst i Maji-Maaned 1777. med Vi-
dere, som Wiisen ommælder.

Forfattet under den Melodie:
O Kiære Siæl! frygt aldrig meer, ic.

Trondheim, trykt Aar 1777.

V box 33:988

1. En bodfærdig synderindes, ved navn Dorothea Brynnelsdatter, vemodige Klage-Sang over hendes Børne-fødseler i Dølsmaal, og Drab paa trende af dem... (printed in Trondheim, 1777).

This skilling ballad is a small and unassuming print item of four leaves, measuring 11 × 18 cm, dried and browned with age. The title page gives the name of the woman, the place and the approximate date of the execution. She is “sentenced to beheading at the ear, her head to be put on a stake, but her body to be laid in earth, which will happen at Røebergs-hougen in late May 1777.”² When we open the ballad, we get a unique perspective on contemporary views of bastardy and infanticide. The song in 27 stanzas is narrated by the “delinquent sinner” herself, and thus pretends to offer a first-person account of the killing of the three infant sons: “As they were born/I laid my hand on their Mouths,/and thus separated them from the life/given to them by God.”³ As the ballad approaches its climax, the execution, the narration is given in the present tense, dramatizing the moment of beheading: “Here I kneel before the Axe,/my Head will be placed on a Stake/as a warning-sign for others.”⁴

Although the ballad is rich in details about the wrongdoings and cruel fate of its protagonist, it leaves us with multiple questions: who wrote the text – it goes without saying that this defamatory ballad was not written by Dorothea herself – who arranged for it to be published, and who printed it? What motivated its creation: was it purely sensationalist – feeding the minds of a public hungry to see a fellow citizen pay for her wrongdoings? Or was it primarily created for informational, didactic or commemorative reasons? Does the paratextual record of the place and approximate time of the execution imply that it could have been produced prior to the beheading and that it functioned as an *advertisement* for the upcoming event? Was it, as the dramatic present tense of the narrative tempts us to imagine, a ballad written for the *occasion* itself, i.e. the execution, and was it sold and even performed in connection with the decapitation? Was this ballad perhaps the last thing Dorothea heard as her head was placed on the block? Less macabre, albeit equally important, are questions of a more general nature: how does this particular ballad relate to the genre in general, and is it representative of European print culture in the period? How were ballads read, sung and circulated by a contemporary audience, and how should modern readers approach these precious print items and the histories they convey?

These questions are important for one reason above all others: they have not been previously addressed. The current field of research on the Norwegian skilling ballads is marked by longstanding neglect. Unlike in other European countries, where scholars from various disciplines have studied the ballads for decades, the genre has been marginalized in Norwegian research to the degree that we can talk about a scholarly lacuna. Not a single academic book about the Norwegian skilling ballads has ever been published. The texts have not been subject to any thoroughgoing research projects, and the scholarly output on the genre is confined to a handful of articles, mainly published in non-scholarly outlets, plus a few small collections

of transcribed ballads, published in the 1970s and 1980s, with short introductory material.⁵ Most of what is written on skilling ballads has been aimed at a non-academic and regional audience; they have mainly concentrated on mid-nineteenth-century ballads, and they have had a limited impact in describing the significance of the genre with regard to Norwegian cultural heritage. In Norway, then, the skilling ballad has been ignored in scholarship and, literally, been reduced to a footnote in the history of Norwegian literature.⁶

The marginal position of the skilling ballads in academia is at odds with its position in the national cultural history. The skilling ballad might very well have been the most popular literary genre the country has ever seen in terms of spread across time and wide geographic circulation: the first known Norwegian skilling ballad was printed by Christiania's first printer in 1643, but already in the sixteenth century, ballads from Denmark (and possibly Sweden) probably circulated in Norway, indicating that the history of the skilling ballads in this country spans more than 400 years.⁷ The genre was born two centuries before other popular genres such as the novel, and – because of their unique systems of distribution and circulation – many of these ballads travelled across the country and sometimes beyond the national borders. The longevity of the genre might be because of the diverse practice of skilling ballads in early modern society: before the establishment of the print press in Norway in the mid-seventeenth century, the ballads circulated in oral culture, as one of the main channels of entertainment for a broad public. As the ballads were printed they continued to be performed with well-known melodies by the publishers themselves and by hawkers and travelling singers, who sold them for a skilling or two (hence the generic title “skilling ballads”, where a skilling equals approximately a penny in the early modern period). In the transition from oral to printed culture, the skilling ballads retained many of the qualities from the oral culture in which they originated, such as the inclusion of memory-triggering devices, rhymes and rhythm, narrative formulas and openness to variations and adaptations.

In addition to this dual role as both printed texts and musical performances, many of the ballads had a third and equally important purpose in the sense that they conveyed easily comprehensible news stories and gossip on domestic, regional and national topics: crimes and executions, state elections and small political matters, major city fires and minor fires, major shipwrecks and small boat accidents, natural disasters and minor accidents, and so on. In fact, because of the late development of printed newspapers in Norway – the first of which were established in the 1760s – the news ballad *predated* the newspaper in reporting news: it provided the public with intelligence of a varied nature several decades before the printed newspaper entered the scene, and this alone should give the skilling ballad an extremely important position in the national history of the development of media cul-

ture. Even after the instigation of the printed newspaper, the skilling ballad offered an alternative take on news conveyance: carrying simple and often highly personalized news stories that were probably sung and sold in public places, the ballads transmitted news and gossip for the illiterate and poor, and they could thereby function as substitutes for the less accessible, more expensive printed newspaper.

The following essay will discuss this important subgenre of skilling ballads, the news ballad. I have chosen to focus on the eighteenth-century news ballads from the Gunnerus special collections library in Trondheim since these works are on the brink of a new phase in their history because of a current project to digitize this collection.⁸ The digitization is underway but not completed, so the following essay is based on investigations of the physical material as well as studies of the printed catalogue (Molde 1981). The corpus of eighteenth-century news ballads in this archive is fairly small, but I would suggest that the material from this exact period is particularly interesting for what it might tell us about the role of skilling ballads in the development of an early modern media culture: how the news ballad conveyed intelligence before the instigation of the printed newspaper; in what ways the mediation of news changed after the newspapers entered the scene in the 1760s; what kinds of news were prioritized by the ballad authors, and how a reading of the news ballads can bring us closer to understanding social tendencies, temperaments and cultural mind-sets from our distant past.

This article discusses these issues, whilst at the same time offering a basic account of the news ballad as a genre – its paratext, its formal features, its themes – as well as a tentative analysis of the primary functions of the news ballad in an eighteenth-century context. The first part of this article is concerned with defining the genre, and in the second part I perform close readings of a selection of news ballads, emphasizing the ballads from the latter part of the eighteenth century. Defining and classifying all the different *types* of Norwegian news ballads is a task for the future: we need a fuller overview of the approximately 28,000 skilling ballads in the five major collections,⁹ and, ideally, access to digitized facsimiles of the currently unavailable material across several collections in order to fully grasp the characteristics of the genre. But for the time being, an investigation of the eighteenth-century news ballad in the Gunnerus collection can serve as a starting point to shed light on a highly neglected part of Norway's national cultural heritage.

A Brief Note on the Translation of the Scandinavian Term “Skillingsviser” as “Skilling Ballad”

Before defining the news ballad, it is necessary to say a few words about the Norwegian *skillingsviser* as such, not least since the translation from Scandi-

navian to English complicates a straightforward generic characterisation. First of all, a *vise* is distinct from a *ballad*, which in a Scandinavian context refers to an older tradition of medieval balladry, i.e. ballads with a strict metrical pattern that circulated as part of an older folkloric tradition. Second, a Scandinavian *skillingsvise* is not a broadside: it is not printed on one side of a single sheet of paper, as is the case with the British early modern equivalent, but rather carries printed text on both sides of the paper. Moreover, a *skillingsstrykk* – which is the preferred term for a *skilling* ballad qua print product – could, and indeed often would, consist of a gathering of songs, often two or three, which required more than a single sheet.¹⁰

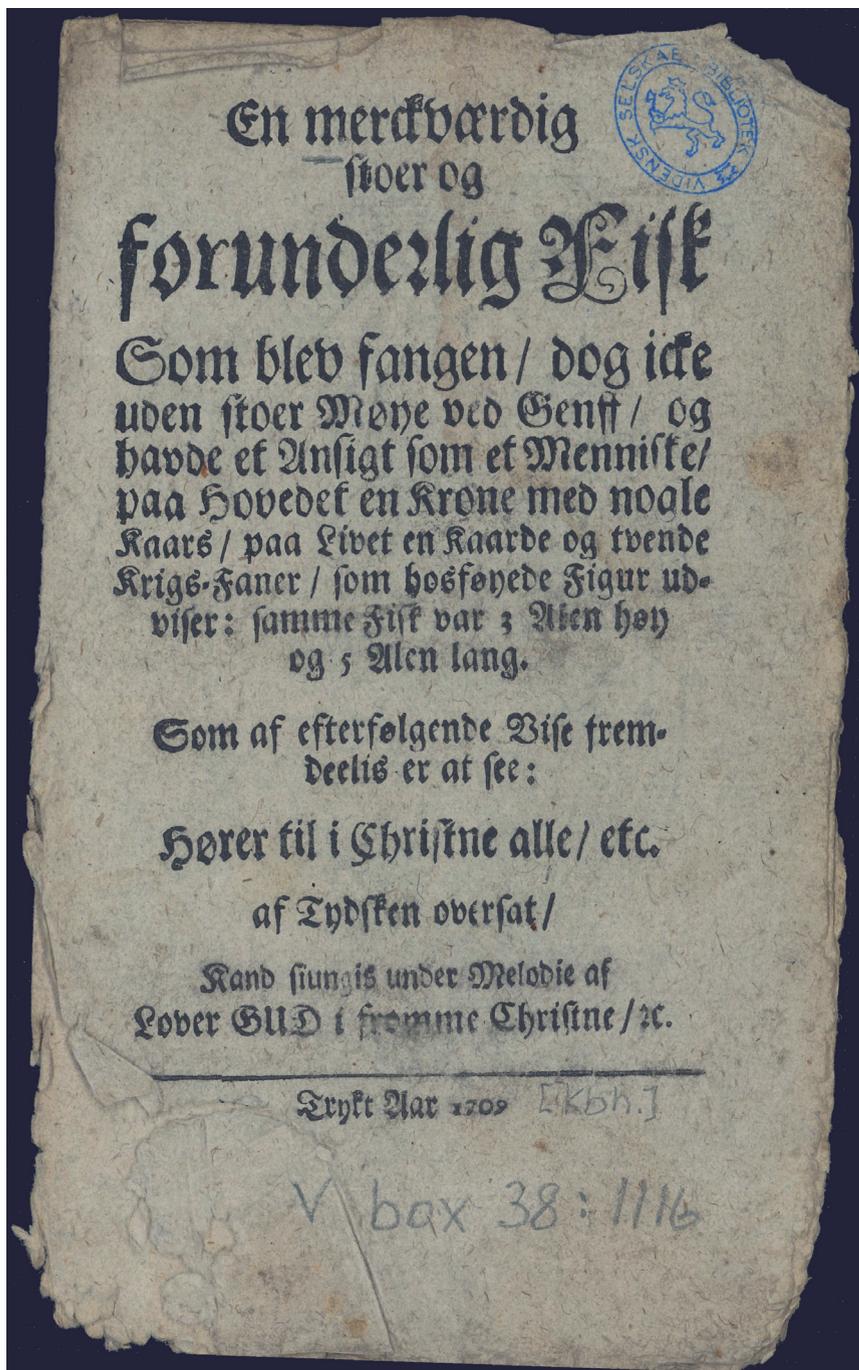
Given that a *skillingsvise* is not a broadside we should, I suggest, refrain from using that term. *Chapbook* is one alternative term, particularly appropriate for those prints that contain a collation of songs, some of which were bound. The binding process was, in most cases, performed after the songs had been sold, and (as is the case with the Gunnerus corpus), was usually done by librarians for preservation rather than by early purchasers. The British chapbook could be both bound and unbound, so in terms of format the Scandinavian *skilling* ballad is close to the chapbook. However, the term chapbook fails to capture the performance aspect of the genre. *Slipsong* is another contender, referring to a small collection (slips) of song. The term “song” is more in line with the Scandinavian use of the term “vise” than the stringent term “ballad”, and “slip” is (at least from the outset) less connected to the broadside format. The problems with using the term *slipsong* in a Scandinavian context arises when we consider the Anglophone genre which this term is meant to cover: according to scholars, the *slipsong* proliferated in the eighteenth and nineteenth century and is generally considered to be a later development of the seventeenth-century broadside ballad (Jones 2002, Nebeker 2007). The Scandinavian *skillingsvise* also proliferated in the same period – the heyday of the genre was in the latter part of the nineteenth-century – but, importantly, there are much earlier examples of *skillingsviser*, stretching as far back as the 1550s, and even these earliest examples are collections of songs. Another important differentiation between the Anglophone *slipsong* and the Scandinavian *skillingsvise* is that the *slipsong* is differentiated from the traditional broadside ballad in that they were mostly printed in white letter, i.e. with modern, roman types rather than black-letter (gothic) letters, whilst they retained the tradition of one-sided printing (broadsheets).¹¹ The Scandinavian *skilling* ballad, on the other hand, retained black letter well into the nineteenth century and (in Norway) even into the twentieth century, and it was always published as a two-sided print. Lastly, the term *slipsong* has not really caught on in Anglophone scholarship – even recent accounts of the generic terms (for example Jones 2002) refrains from using the term and instead chooses to discuss the late tradition of broadside ballads – which means that dubbing the Scandinavian texts

“slipsongs” could linguistically alienate the Scandinavian tradition from the Anglophone one.

In conclusion, we might say that the Scandinavian tradition is not really comparable to the Anglophone tradition, at least as far as format is concerned. In lieu of a better term, this article chooses to use the term *skilling ballad*, but an Anglophone reader can choose to think of it as the Nordic equivalent of the English broadside ballad. The Scandinavian skilling ballad undoubtedly shares with the English broadside ballad important similarities in terms of themes, distribution practices, assumed audience and functions in society: as is the case with the Anglophone broadside ballad (both the early, black-letter ballads and the later white-letter ones), the Norwegian *skillingsviser* were cheap prints circulating in large numbers and they were aimed at a broad audience. Like their Anglophone broadside ballad sibling, the Scandinavian skilling ballad provided a unique perspective on early modern society, and the popularity of the skilling ballads, as well as their unique hybrid character as literary texts, media texts and musical compositions, makes them historically exceptional. As such, they deserve to be included and studied in the Anglophone tradition of the broadside ballad. When I have chosen to use the term *skilling ballad* in the following article – and *skilling print* when referring to the ballad qua print item – this is mainly to avoid confusion for English scholars of the broadside ballad, many of whom are deeply concerned with format, as well as to retain an element of the Scandinavian generic term, referring to the low retail price with which they were associated.

The News Ballad: A Preliminary Definition

A news ballad (*nyhetsvisen*) in a Scandinavian context can be defined as a literary text that reports, mediates, comments upon or moralizes about particular incident, whether it be an accident, a crime, an election, a war, and so forth.¹² The news reported could be of a domestic, local, regional, national or international kind; what matters for the definition I want to pursue in the following is the texts’ suggestions of the actuality of the event through indications of time and location. In the strictest sense, a news ballad gives an exact date and place of the incident in the title page and/or in the text itself, emphasizing both temporal and spatial specificity. Those skilling ballads which lack a dating of the event can, I suggest, still be categorized as a news ballad when other details are in place, such as information about the exact location and/or the names of the people involved; the same can be applied to prints which mention the date but refrain from naming the location, though this is more rare. Of the total of 95 skilling ballads from the eighteenth century held in the Gunnerus archive, 35 are news ballads in the strict definition referred to above, but the number is higher when the undated texts



2. En Merkværdig stor og forunderlig Fisk som blev fangen/dog icke uden stoer Møye ved Genff, og havde et Ansigt som et Menniske... (printed in Copenhagen, 1709).



are added to the equation: 745 of the ballads in this archive are undated, i.e. they give no date in the imprint line and/or in the title (Molde 1981). Although the majority of these undated texts are from the nineteenth century, further research is likely to bring forth a greater number of eighteenth-century news ballads in the Gunnerus archive.

The obvious question that arises from the above definition of news ballads as a conveyer of “accurate” intelligence is: accurate according to what? Does accuracy equal reliability, i.e. do the news ballads report true things from real life? A brief look at the Gunnerus skilling ballads from the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, most of which are printed in Copenhagen, suggests the opposite. Eight of the eleven ballads printed before 1750 indicate that in the earliest phase authors were prone to report on fantastical and sensational news the truth of which is easy to discard in hindsight. A Copenhagen ballad from 1709 reports on a “strange fish” with a human face (see figure 2); another one from 1719 reports on a calf born with a human head.¹³ In spite of the meticulous details, the given location as well as the lavish (and, for many modern readers, hilarious) illustrations, none of these are news ballads: in addition to being fantastical to the highest degree, they lack a date in the title page and/or main text. There are, however, borderline cases from the same period. A ballad on the birth of a malformed child in Copenhagen in 1720 displays a meticulous attention to detail: in addition to a lavish woodcut showing the grotesque lumps on the head and deformed feet, the title page gives the exact place and time of the happening, down to very street and the exact hour of the day.¹⁴ Whether this is a fantastical tale of a monstrous child, or a sensational report on an actual medical case, is hard to tell. However, in some cases, the *insistence* on the truthfulness of the account is a warning signal, at least to the modern reader, as is

the case with the 1720 Copenhagen print called *A truthful and very strange and great miracle seen on a boy child born this year in Dantziger Werder by Dantzig, who was three times transformed before the priest during baptism*.¹⁵ The song is laden with medieval religious symbolism (the child is transformed into a lamb, a fish and a scythe), and the “truthfulness” here should be seen in the context of a society in which religious belief still dominates culture.

The news ballads from the later eighteenth century, which is the main emphasis of this article, are also deeply spiritual and often tendentious, offering consolation and conveying moral lessons. I would argue, however, that the late eighteenth-century news ballads differ significantly from the earlier ones in their engagement with accuracy. The truthfulness of the story conveyed in the ballad which introduced this essay, on the execution of the woman accused of infanticide, is confirmed by the local church book for the year 1777, where Dorothea’s death is inscribed; surviving criminal records establish the details of her crime, and a handful of books on regional history suggest that her fate has been well-known in her municipality.¹⁶ All of the news ballads analysed in the following relate incidents the truthfulness of which can be confirmed by historical documents and/or more recent secondary sources. Not only do historical documents confirm the *content* of the news items – the number of casualties and the nature of the event – they also show that the ballads gave accurate dates and locations of the events they report.

As we shall see, the adherence to truthful news reporting is often balanced against the tendency to moralize and defame, particularly in the news ballads relating criminal acts and punishment. In these news ballads, many authors were clearly under an obligation to provide a moral lesson, which would involve speculating about the motivation of the crime. But where the reporting is coloured by the didactic regimes of their day, the details that are given are generally truthful, as shown by scholars working with the genre in Denmark and Sweden. As pointed out by Iørn Piø (1969) the two foremost features of the Danish news ballads are “contemporariness and truthfulness”; the news ballads “are in most cases very credible”.¹⁷ In her recent book (2016) on Swedish skilling ballads, Karin Strand has done meticulous research into historical documents and she convincingly maps the correlation between events described in Swedish skilling ballads and the reality they relate to. What I would like to suggest, then, is that the material studied in this article, the eighteenth-century news ballads in the Gunnerus special collection, is comparable to the Danish and Swedish news ballad in terms of accuracy, and as such we might conclude that there is a collective, Scandinavian tradition of news ballads in this period. The fact that Norway was under Danish rule in the eighteenth century is also acutely important, particularly with regard to the news ballads on crimes, where the laws of the king-

dom of Denmark-Norway affected the sentencing and punishments described in the Norwegian ballads.

Emphasizing the shared generic features and cultural and societal context of the Scandinavian news ballads does not, however, mean that we should rule out a national or even regional perspective. With regard to the news ballads, it is particularly interesting to consider the instigation of Norwegian newspapers in the 1760s, founded more than a hundred years after the first papers were printed in Sweden and Denmark.¹⁸ How did the establishment of official printed organs for news affect the transmittance of intelligence in the news ballads, and what was the relationship between the two genres? These questions are too complex to be answered in the context of this short article, but for now I would suggest that the corpus of news ballads in the Gunnerus archive indicates a correlation between the establishment of a regional newspaper in Trondheim in 1767, and a rise in the publication of news ballads in the same town. The decade following the instigation of Norway's longest running newspaper, *Kongelig allene privilegerede Trondhiems Adresse-Contoirs Efterretninger* (*Adresseavisen* for short), is by far the most prolific in terms of extant news ballads in the Gunnerus collection: 13 of the 35 ballads, i.e. more than a third of the corpus, were printed in the 1770s. As will be discussed below, most of these 1770s ballads deal with local incidents – executions, murders and accidents from the region – and they were probably issued from the same press as the newspaper, although this is not stated in the title page.

Intriguingly, none of the news stories conveyed in the Trondheim-printed ballads are recorded in the local newspaper. This means that the ballads provide *exclusive* reporting of certain events, some of which involve state affairs that would have been in the interest of the public to hear about, such as executions. Why were these events not reported in the newspapers? Future studies will hopefully establish the relationship between the printed newspaper and the news ballad; for the Gunnerus collection, for example, it is necessary to investigate the business of Trondheim's first "privileged" printer, Jens Christensen Winding, and his involvement in the printing of eighteenth-century skilling ballads alongside the printing of *Adresseavisen*. Perhaps the newspaper refrained from reporting executions because it was restrained by the strict rules of censorship that prevailed in eighteenth-century Denmark-Norway – or maybe they "delegated" this form of news conveyance to ballad authors.¹⁹ For now I hope to contribute with a conclusion on the most important similarity between the two mediums, and again it concerns the issue of accuracy. The shared adherence to truthfulness in newspapers and news ballads from the late eighteenth century, is, I suggest, where we find the most interesting point of distinction between news ballads and other types of ballads as well as news ballads and fiction in general: where realist fiction aims for the plausible or credible – to reflect or mirror

reality in order to create a sense of verisimilitude – newspapers, on the other hand, are expected to be *truthful*.²⁰ If we give the news ballads a place alongside the newspapers as conveyers of accurate details on contemporary issues, we risk undermining their generic status as fiction, but at the same we open up the possibility for these ballads to function as micro-historical portals to our past.

What the Title Page Can Tell Us: Paratextual Features in Eighteenth-century News Ballads

The title page of a skilling ballad contains details that can help us identify generic features as well as speculate about the way in which a contemporary audience comprehended the genre. The news ballad shares the paratextual patterns of most other ballad types of the period, emphasizing the title with bold typefaces and providing the title of one or two suggested melodies with which the ballad can be performed. The melodies mentioned on the title page were usually known in their time, and one particularly popular melody could appear on numerous title pages. McIlvenna (2016) refers to the use of familiar tunes as a musical basis for the news ballad lyrics as *contrafactum*, and states that this was “more than merely a technique to aid in memorisation; it was used by ballad writers in a conscious attempt to manipulate the memories of their listener-singers” (277). Moreover, certain melodies were chosen “because of the cultural and emotional association they carried with them” (277–278). In the case of Norwegian news ballads depicting deaths or crimes, we can observe that the title pages often suggest that they are sung to the tunes of much-used hymns. The execution ballad that illustrates this article, for example, proposes “O Kiære Sjæl! Frygt ikke meer” (“Oh dear soul! Fear no more”), which might have served the purpose of strengthening the didactic content of the lyrics within the ballad.

Most of the prints have decorative elements on the title pages, but few of them have elaborate illustrations in the form of woodcuts. The decorative elements are rarely a good match to the content of the song: a 1749 ballad from the Gunnerus corpus with a male name written in particularly beautiful gothic, ornamented letters and decorated with a lemon tree, turns out to be a defamatory execution ballad where the named man is beheaded for incestuous crimes with his daughter.²¹ All of the ballads have an imprint line which contains various information about the year and place of printing. Moreover, the titles in news ballads function as miniature tales, giving the main outlines of the news story depicted in the ballad, as well as often providing the chronology of the events. The degree of details given in the titles varies according to the nature of the event. Unusual murders depicting gruesome crimes could be described in meticulous detail, with titles sometimes appearing like court reports:



En Kort Betragtning

over den

gruesomme Tildragelse paa Gaarden Grøn-Svea i Leuthen Sogn paa Hedemarken,

hvor en Pige, 14ten Aar gammel, som gruesomt havde faaet i Sinde at vilde tage sine egne Forældre af Dage, for siden at kunde raade sig selv desbedre, har overtalt en Dreng af elleve Aar, hvilken var i Huuset tilligemed Hende og var Hendes Sødfkende-Barn, for en Belønning af 40 Knappenaaler, til at slaae sin Møster, hendes Moder først i Hovedet med en Øxe, hvilket skeede; da hun med en Jern-Hakke gav det andet Slag, og continuerede siden indtil Konen efter over 30 Slag døde, og siden af dem blev henlagt i Fæchuset, indtil Mandens Hiemkomst, som aabenbarede denne fæle Gierning.

Singes efter den Melodie:

Med Sorgen og Klagen holdt Maade.

Trykt Aar 1777.

V. box 40: 1186

A brief Reflection on the gruesome Event at the Farm of Grønsvea in Leuthen Parish, where a Girl of fourteen callously got into her mind to kill her parents so she could take control of her own life, and she persuaded a Boy of Eleven who was in the House with her and was her cousin, for a reward of forty Pins, to beat his aunt, the girl's Mother, first in the Head with an axe, which happened; and the girl gave the second blow with an Iron hatch, and continued until the Woman died after receiving thirty blows, and was then placed in the Hen-House until the return of the Husband, who revealed this horrible deed.²²

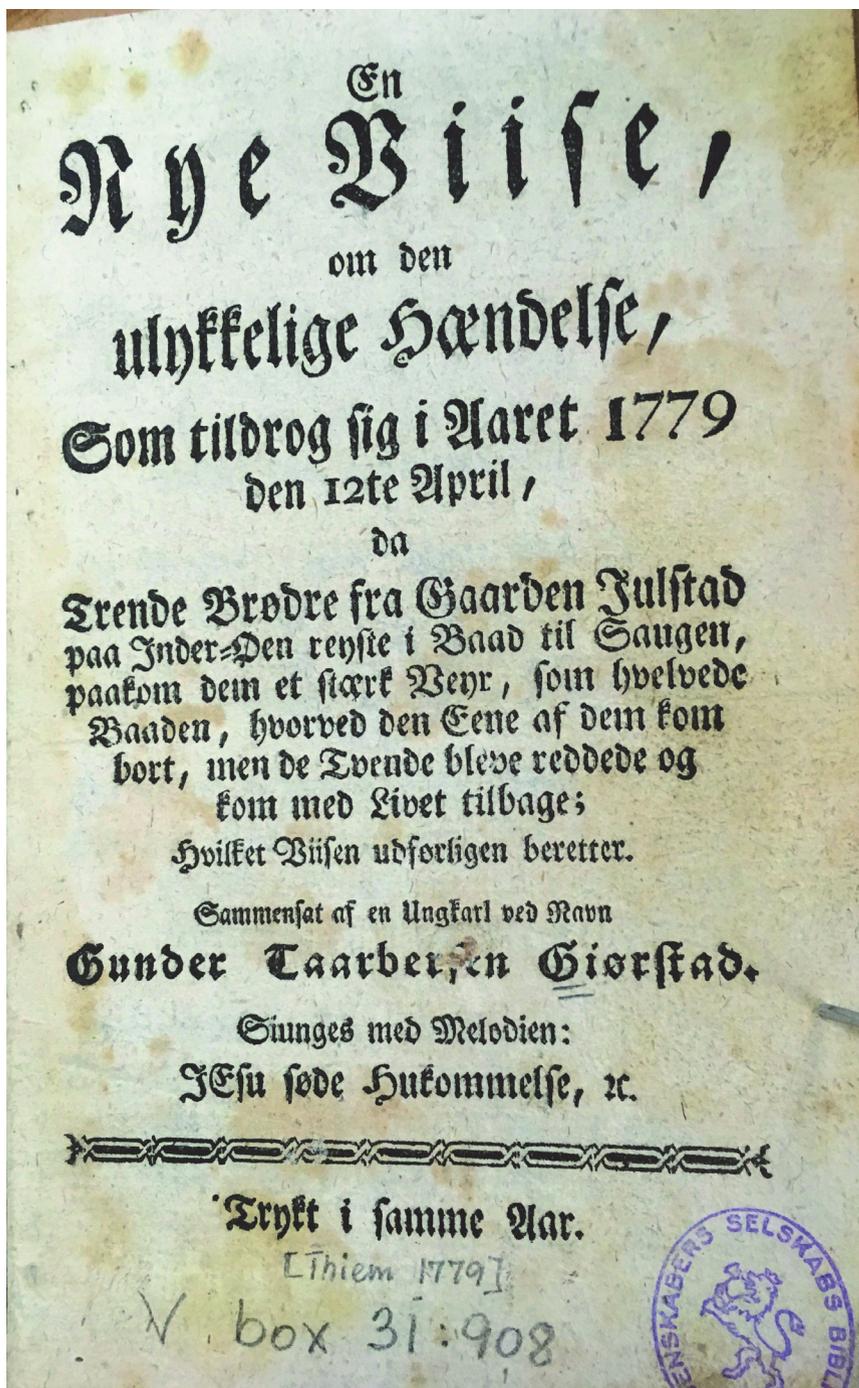
The imprint line does not give a date for the event, but a sense of accuracy is nevertheless provided in the details naming the locality (the farm, the parish, the county) as well as the age of the perpetrators and the relationship between them. The macabre details are part of the news ballad's paratextual scrupulousness, but this feature is also clearly a promotional device. Iørn Piø writes that news ballads "seek out the sensationalist in everyday matters, emphasizing morbid and morally despicable details from which ethical principals or warnings can be drawn."²³ A fourteen-year-old girl turned murderer is hardly an "everyday matter", but Piø's argument about sensationalist content and despicable details is certainly apparent in the print above, and so is Piø's point about the ballad's propensity to engage in ethical debates. Like many other news ballads, the one above balances on a knife edge between accurate reporting of events and moralistic campaigning: the emphasis on the words "gruesome", "callous" and "horrible" shows how objective news reporting gives way to condemnatory attitudes on criminal affairs. The ballad author also assuredly establishes the motivation behind the crime (the young girl had "callously got into her mind to kill her parents so she could take control of her own life") – a statement which could have been extracted from official criminal records, but is more likely to have been taken from gossip, or (just as likely) have been the creation of the author, eager to pass judgement for promotional purposes. Thus, the news-laden paratext shows how authors would blend the "objective" and accurate discourse of a newspaper with the sensationalist and moralistic discourse that belongs to contemporary popular and didactic literature, the result of which is a synthesis unique to this genre.

Another noticeable paratextual feature that the ballad above shares with most other news ballads of the period is the extremely long title. Torunn Eriksen (1986) suggests that the long titles are indicative of the way in which oral culture and storytelling has influenced the printed ballads, indicating that they take their cue from folktales (66). This argument is important with regard to the hybrid quality of the skilling ballads and their place in a longstanding folkloric tradition. But it also ignores the skilling ballads' status as print items, and we should thus consider the resemblance to other works within contemporary international print culture: popular continental and British prose stories (such as the eighteenth-century bestseller, *Robinson Crusoe* from 1719) were presented with title pages containing long, de-

scriptive titles, including detailed catalogues of content as well as what we would now call spoilers. As was the case with the promotion of British novels, the long, often sensationalist titles of news ballads were perhaps a way to draw in a browsing customer at a market stall or a window of a printer's office where a purchase could be made – or the titles could function for performance-based advertising: like newspapers, skilling ballads are known to have been hawked on street corners and in market places, where a flamboyant vendor was given the task of shouting out the titles (“hear, hear, about the gruesome murder...”), or even singing them. More research is needed to unravel the logistics of vending skilling ballads in Norway, but there is little reason to believe that the peddling was less colourful in Norway than in other Nordic countries with similar traditions that have been investigated by scholars (see, for example, Danielson 2015).

Most news ballads have titles which are unique to the content they are conveying, i.e. there is a correlation between the title and the particular incident described within the text itself. Nevertheless, there is one recurring *main* title worth noting for its specific relationship to the concept of news, namely the title head *New Ballad (En Ny Viise)*, which appears on numerous prints from the Gunnerus corpus.²⁴ The title can even be found on some of the oldest prints from this collection, from 1593 and 1623.²⁵ Variants of this title could be *A brand new song (En splinterny Vise)*, or *A very new song (En gandske Ny Viise)*. My suggestion is that these titles are part of the news ballads' emphasis on contemporaneity, which is echoed in another recurring paratextual feature: many ballads state that they are “printed this year”, or “printed the same year” (“trykt i dette Aar”, “Trykt i samme Aar”). The motivation behind this phrase is clearly to create a sense of novelty, but the idiom should not be taken at face value: future scholars can be sure to find texts which have been reprinted with this phrase years after its initial release, demonstrating that an old skilling ballad could sometimes be declared to be fresh from the press when it was, in fact, conveying old news.

Whilst most of the title pages of skilling ballads give details about the place and/or time of printing, there is one element that is often missing: the name of the author. In the case of the eighteenth-century ballads, the lack of an author's name is part of that particular period's practice, where authors were rarely mentioned in relation to their literary works. But in a broader context of printed ballad culture it is also fair to say that the question of actual, named authorship is of less importance for understanding the skilling ballads than is the case with more erudite literature throughout history: the ballads take their cue from oral culture, where the idea of collective creation and adaptation is favoured over individual originality. This does not mean that the issue of ballad authorship should be ignored, but it must be approached and investigated on its own terms.



4. En Nye Viise, om den ulykkelige hændelse som tildrog sig i aaret 1779 den 12te April... (printed in Trondheim, 1779).

Those news ballads specifically relating local accidents or the deaths of private citizens sometimes name a local person as the author. In a ballad about a boat accident involving six people in the municipality of Stod, Trøndelag, the title page gives Baard Andersen as an author, and he is styled “the oldest school-master in the municipality of Stod.”²⁶ There are also examples of news ballads where grieving parents are mentioned as the authors: a 1796 commemoration ballad about a young man is “through Song depicted by the dead Boy’s Father, Jacob Johanson Kiilen.”²⁷ A news ballad about a boat accident in 1777 names “a good friend” as an author.²⁸ A ballad reporting on the small boat accident in the municipality of Trøndelag names a “bachelor” on the title page, and it is worth noting that he is styled a “compiler” (“*sammensatt af...*”, see figure 4).²⁹ This phrase – a fairly frequent one on skilling ballads – signals a humbler, more practical approach to authorship than is the case with more erudite literature with named authors; it portrays the author as a journalist, “compiling” the available information into a text. Even more outspokenly modest, albeit potentially less honest, are the title pages where the author declares him- or herself to be the one who has “naively authored” (“*Eenfoldig forfattet*”) the ballad in question.³⁰ This is a much used paratextual device in British and continental popular literature of the early modern period – “naive” or “simple” is, in this setting, easily translated into “unassuming” and “natural” – and, as was the case with the eighteenth-century novel, it might have been a posture to sell more prints, or a device to avoid repercussions from the tribunals of criticism.

A Bridge between the Private and the Public, the Specific and the General: The Purpose of the Eighteenth-century News Ballad

Most of the eighteenth-century news ballads dealing with accidents and deaths have, unsurprisingly, one crucial element in common: they are deeply spiritual, and – as is made clear both on the title page and in the stanzas – the main motivation behind these publications is consolation and didacticism. Many skilling ballads appear to have been written for specific, semi-private occasions such as funerals, and can be thus be defined as occasional poetry (*leilighetsdiktning*). A ballad concerning the death of six people in a boat accident in the parish of Stod (1751) – the earliest news ballad printed in Trondheim to survive in the Gunnerus archive – makes the motivation behind the publication clear on the title page: it is meant “as encouragement for all, but most importantly as comfort to the grieving families”.³¹ Another song about a boat accident in the same area some decades later (1779, see figure 4) has some resemblance to a dirge, which suggests it was written for the funeral service of the dead man.³² In one stanza, the writer speaks directly to the grieving family: “You who are his parents/and

who loved your son dearly/You saw him leave/never to return again.”³³ But in the last ten stanzas, the writer speaks to a broader religious community, preaching, as it were, the importance of patience in the face of adversity. In this discourse, we clearly see the way in which these types of news ballads have inherited some of their phraseology from medieval Latin Christian discourse, particularly with its insistence on *memento mori*: remember your own mortality, and resist your desire for earthly goods and vain pursuits. However, in the last stanza, the ballad changes mode from spiritual longing to more public issues concerning contemporary calamities: “Many examples we have/of incidents which also took place *this year*,/Incidents involving fire and water:/and in Trondheim, a man was murdered.”³⁴ This ballad is certainly an example of occasional poetry written for a specific event, but the author also turns to more general themes, broadening both the thematic horizon and the range of addressees.

The blurred lines between public and private discourse – and a joint attention to both the occasional and the general – are typical of many news ballads. Although they are concerned with a *specific event* (indeed, we have already identified this as a main feature of news ballads), this does not necessarily mean that they are aimed at a very specific audience. In fact, the act of printing the ballad in itself signals non-specificity with regard to a potential audience. The skilling print discussed above might, perhaps, have been distributed in relation to the funeral in question, but it was probably sold elsewhere as well: given that printing was a costly undertaking in the period, it is unlikely that ballads were printed solely to be handed out at a private event, like more modern funeral programmes or keepsakes. There was an eighteenth-century version of this kind of “private” print matter, the funeral verse (*Liig-psalme*), but this genre was mostly reserved for a prominent and affluent segment of the public. A common man from a small parish dying in a fjord, on the other hand, was more likely to be memorized in a skilling ballad which could be appreciated by his peers.

The most extraordinary cases of public matters depicted in news ballads are those texts that deal with executions. As McIlvenna (2017) reminds us, in the early modern period an “execution was performed in the most public of places and indeed its public, visual, didactic role was central to its purpose [...] early modern public execution existed to benefit its viewers morally and spiritually through the destruction of the body of the criminal, both during life and after the moment of death” (279). The ballads written in relation to specific executions can be read as a printed extension of the punitive ritual itself. The execution ballads convey a warning about the importance of living a life free from sin and crime, and they do so by dramatizing the voice of the repentant criminal about to be executed for his or her wrongdoings.

The Norwegian execution ballads found in the Gunnerus archive share this trait with execution ballads published across Europe in the early modern

period onwards, where the main function of the ballad was to provide a warning of divine retribution. There is, however, one astonishing element of the Norwegian (and also Danish) execution ballads I have found so far which separates them from other European execution ballads: some of them announce beheadings that have *not yet taken place*.³⁵ In a print reporting a murder of a Russian man in Trondheim, the perpetrator – a local man named as Erik Hansen Rokstad on the title page – is sentenced to “beheading by sword, and his body to be laid in earth at the place of the execution, which will happen in Trondheim on 10 January 1776.”³⁶ The provision of an exact future date suggests that the text might have functioned as an advertisement for the upcoming event. The phrase highlighting events “which will happen” is also found in other execution ballads from the same period. The title pages of ballads on infanticide by two women in Trøndelag both suggest that the ballads were written some time between the sentencing and the actual execution: in 1775 Margretha Halstad “is sentenced to beheading and her head will be placed on a stake, but her body laid in earth; the rightful punishment of *which will happen* at Steenberget outside Trondheim in February 1775.”³⁷ On the title page of the ballad about the aforementioned Dorothea, the woman who suffered the same cruel fate two years later, we read that the execution “*will happen* at Røebergs-hougen in late May 1777.” (See fig. 1.)

Intriguingly, there is some evidence to suggest that ballads relating to executions in most European countries were retrospective, and that the use of the future tense in execution ballads is exclusive to the Scandinavian tradition.³⁸ Further study is needed here, but for now we can at least conclude that the use of the phrase “which will happen” as well as the absence of a specific date on the title page suggests that the ballads were written some time between the sentencing and the execution itself, and that the ballads might have functioned as a promotional device to draw an audience to the event. An interesting question is whether the use of the future tense also means that the songs were sold where the decapitation took place. Swedish scholars have established that location-specific vending was fairly common, particularly with ballads relating to crimes or disasters (Danielson 2015:30–32), but the Swedish examples mainly concern retrospective news ballads, i.e. ballads which depicted an event that had already taken place, and where the ballad performed *in situ* served a commemorative function. In lieu of studies on location-specific vending in Norway, we can choose to take our speculations even one step further and ask whether the ballads might also have been *performed* at the scene of events. The libellous tone in these songs suggests they are *nidviser*, judgment songs that might have been used to defame and shame the criminal subject. The question, then, is whether these defamatory songs served a function as part of the punitive ritual. Was there a ballad singer/vendor in place at the execution site, selling these songs as a form of merchandise, and possibly performing them?

This remains an open question, but there is at least one thing we can perhaps rule out, namely, that the audience took any part in performing these songs. According to McIlvenna (2016) the news ballads that promoted audience participation were mainly those with a refrain or with repeated lines at the start and at the end of the song, because they were easy for an audience to memorize (324). The absence of these performative elements in the Norwegian execution ballads – none of which include a refrain or repeated lines – means that audience participation is highly unlikely. We can also assume that the criminal subject herself took no part in the singing of these songs, should they have been part of the punitive ritual – in spite of the fact that they were indeed written in the first person, present tense: “I, poor Sinner! Here, solemnly step forward,/With tears on my Cheeks,/for my evil sins” opens the ballad about Margretha, and it continues: “I now bid farewell/to this World; I now have to die/for my infanticide.”³⁹ The voice of Erik Hansen Rokstad, likewise, is highly dramatized: “Now for such hasty wrath/I suffer here today”, and he bids: “Come Death! Come Sword/cut off my pitiful Head.”⁴⁰ The motivation behind the first person narrative in execution songs and other ballads on crime, as well as their specific place in eighteenth-century ballad culture, has been briefly but convincingly argued by Strand (2016), who concludes that the use of first person narrative is first and foremost a rhetorical device (125). I have found evidence to suggest that the Norwegian material also uses present tense for sensational and didactic effects. The ballad of the man executed for incest can serve as an example. The title page introduces this ballad as *A Delinquent Sinner’s Farewell-Song, namely Ole Nielsen Hindbjørgen, who had engaged in incestuous activities with his own Daughter and was, therefore, on May 1749, in Singsaas Parish, executed by Sword, and his Body laid in the Fire to be burnt.*⁴¹ The execution has (as stated in the title page) already taken place, but in the stanzas the beheading is dramatized in the future tense, as something about to happen: “Therefore, I must now walk/to receive my fair reward/To have my head cut off/and then a Fire will be my Grave.”⁴² Perhaps the ballad was printed for the upcoming event, but then reprinted with a different title page referring to the event of the (near) past – but, it is more likely that the rhetoric of contemporaneity is first and foremost a device aimed to sensationalize and moralize. The appearance of the future tense in such retrospective news ballads can thus serve as a caution for historians: skilling ballads can be gateways to the past, portals that carry voices that are rarely mediated elsewhere – but they were also, essentially, produced for entertainment. Future scholars will undoubtedly have to negotiate between the alluring discourse of contemporaneous and subjective melodrama and the more mundane issues of saleability that is a unique part of the eighteenth-century news ballads.

Conclusion: The Eighteenth-century News Ballad in the Context of Modern (Social) Media

If newspapers write the first draft of history, then skilling ballads record the histories that did not find a place within this foundational narrative: none of the incidents referred to above – the executions, the stabbings, the incestuous crime and the boat accidents – were recorded in the newspapers circulating at the time. Perhaps it is here, then, that we can consider the skilling ballads as Norway's very first mass medium. As alternative mediators of news in their day, these texts are the closest we come to an historical equivalent to the mediation of news in social media today, both in terms of accessibility, popularity – and controversy. A modern equivalent to the news ballads could be the individual spectator recording a severe accident or a crime on his phone, and broadcasting it on platforms without the normal rules of decorum, which shape (or are supposed to shape) the practice of official media outlets. Like the early modern skilling ballad, the news items on social media are enjoyed on their own terms: spread and shared in a semi-private sphere, and adapted and tweaked according to the subjective preferences of the mediators and re-mediators.

The variable degree of adherence to editorial rules, journalistic norms and accuracy forms another point of comparison between news ballads and modern social media. The eighteenth-century news ballad could be marvellous to the point of absurdity, as is the case with much of the news spread and falsified in social media – or, it could be profoundly accurate, as is also the case with much of the news spread on social media (despite their bad reputation). The eighteenth-century Scandinavian news ballad seems to have gone through a development from the former to the latter outlook, and perhaps we can adapt this progress to predict one possible evolution of today's volatile media landscape. As I have tried to suggest above, the news ballad in its nascent phase (in the early eighteenth century) presented mostly spectacular news on fantastical animals or monstrous children, but from the mid-eighteenth-century onwards – and corresponding exactly with the instigation of the printed newspaper and the emergence of Enlightenment ideas – the producers of news ballads changed their discourse. From this period onwards the news ballad appears, at least in paratextual terms, as a go-to medium for accurate news reporting. Whether the propensity for false or inaccurate news conveyed in today's social media will prevail, only the future can tell, since we are still very much in the midst of a paradigmatic media shift.

In any case, we can conclude that the news ballads might have functioned both as serious rivals to and important substitutes for the printed newspapers for an eighteenth-century audience, and for this reason alone they deserve a chapter of their own in early modern Norwegian media history. Importantly, the news ballad also shares with the newspaper what we might call the curse

of ephemerality: that which is news also quickly becomes *old* news. The ephemeral quality of the news ballads might be the main reason why this type of ballad has not survived the wear and tear of time to become national evergreens, as is the case with some of the more universal and timeless skilling ballads. Who wants to sing about a minor boat accident in the district of Trøndelag, when you can perform an ageless song about undying love? The news ballad is different from many other ballad subgenres – love ballads, drinking songs and shanties – most of which are invested with a more universal, timeless appeal. Thus, the usual survival mechanism of the skilling ballads – their safe haven as part of a performative, oral culture – does not fully apply for the news ballads. As I have tried to show in this article, however, these texts are all the more interesting for what they can convey about historical events, social conditions and cultural mind-sets of our past.

Siv Gøril Brandtzæg

Post doctoral researcher

Department of Language and Literature

Faculty of Humanities, Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU)

7491 Trondheim

Norway

siv.brandtzæg@ntnu.no

References

- Alver, Ivar 2003: “Nyhetsskillingsviser og sanger som omhandler norsk-svenske relasjoner.” *Studia Musicologica Norvegica* 1, pp. 96–140.
- Amundsen, Svein Schröder og Reimund Kvideland (eds.) 1975: *Emigrantviser: Samla av Svein Schröder Amundsen og Reimund Kvideland*. Oslo.
- Brandtzæg, Siv Gøril 2018: “Skillingsvisene i Norge 1550–1950: Historien om et forsømt forskningsfelt”, in *Edda: Scandinavian Journal of Literary Research* 2/2018, pp. 93–109.
- Christensen, Kari 1993: “Skillingsviser og Liigvers – kvinnestemmer fra en svunnen tid”, Harald Nissen and Monica Aase (eds.) *Til Opplysning: Universitetsbiblioteket i Trondheim 1768–1993*, pp. 178–184. Trondheim.
- Dahl, Willy 1985: *Trivialiteter. Fra den norske masselitteraturens historie*. Oslo.
- Danielson, Eva 2015: “Att försörja sig på skillingtryck”, Märta Ramsten, Karin Strand and Gunnar Ternhag (eds.) *Tryckta Visor: Perspektiv på skillingtryck som källmaterial*, pp. 19–38. Uppsala.
- Engen, Arnfinn (ed.) 1981: *Vaagn op Arbeider! Tiden er nær: Skillingsvisa i arbeidarkampen*. Oslo.
- Eriksen, Torunn 1986: *Skillingsviser: En analyse av folkelige viser, basert på samlinger av skillingstrykk fra Nord-Norge*. Master thesis. University of Tromsø.
- Eriksen, Torunn (ed.) 1981: *To skilling for en sang: Folkelige viser i Nord-Norge. Et utvalg skillingstrykk ved Torunn Eriksen*. Tromsø.
- Espeland, Velle 2007: “Vandringssongar og tiggervisar – song og identitet nederst på rangstigen”, *Norsk Folkeminnelags Skrift* 21, pp. 58–72.

- Gunnes, Helga 2008: *I tonene er tårer, i ordene er sukk: sentimental skillingsvisesong som meningsfull musikkutøving i dag*. Master thesis. University of Oslo.
- Jones, Angela McShane 2002: "The Gazet in Metre; or the rhiming newsmonger: The English Broadside Ballad as Intelligencer", Joop W. Koopmans (ed.), *News and Politics in Early Modern Europe (1500–1800)*. Leuven.
- Kjus, Audun 2010: "Eksempelet Sofie Johannesdatter", *Tidsskrift for kulturforskning* 9, pp. 91–101.
- Krefting, Ellen, Aina Nøding and Mona Ringvej 2014: *En pokkers skrivesyge. 1700-tallets dansk-norske tidsskrifter mellom sensur og ytringsfrihet*. Oslo.
- Krogh, Tyge 2000: *Opplysningstiden og det magiske. Henrettelser og korporlige straffer 1700-tallets første halvdel*. Copenhagen.
- McIlvenna, Una 2016: "When the News was Sung", *Media History* 22:3–4, pp. 317–333.
- McIlvenna, Una 2016: "Ballads of Death and Disaster: The Role of Song in Early Modern News Transmission", J. Spinks, C. Zika (eds.), *Disaster, Death and the Emotions in the Shadow of the Apocalypse, 1400–1700*. London.
- Melhus, Alf C. 1943: *Tyge Nielsson: Norges første boktrykker. Til 300-årsjubileet for de eldste norske boktrykk*. Oslo.
- Ministerialbok for Inderøy prestegjeld 1762–1802*. 730/LO273 Arkivverket, Statsarkivet i Trondheim. Digitalarkivet.no.
- Ministerialbok for Stadsbygd prestegjeld 1751–1790*. 646/LO605 Arkivverket, Statsarkivet i Trondheim. Digitalarkivet.no.
- Molde, Hanna Sofie 1981: *Skillingsviser 1558–1951 i Det Kgl. Norske Videnskabers Selskabs Bibliotek*. Trondheim.
- Nebeker, Erik 2007: "The Heyday of the Broadside Ballad", ebba.english.ucsb.edu.
- Nielsen, Lone, Camilla Søs Krarup and Ewelina Szyburska Solgaard 2011: "De melankolske mordere". Student assignment published online at docplayer.dk/40507714-De-melankolske-mordere.html.
- Piø, Iørn 1969: *Produktionen af Danske Skillingsviser mellem 1770–1821 og samtidens syn på genren*. København.
- Prøysen, Elin (ed.) 1973: *Folkelige viser: Et udvalg folkelig sangtradisjon fra Alf Prøysens samlinger*. Oslo.
- Solberg, Olav (ed.) 1996: "*O Sørgelige tider! O trengende stand*": *Krigsviser og andre skillingsviser frå Stryn*. Gjøvik.
- Storsve, Stein 2002: *Vestfoldhistorie for en skilling (1841–1951)*. Tønsberg.
- Strand, Karin 2016: *Brott, tiggeri og brännvinets fördärv: Studier i socialt orienterade visor i skillingtryck*. Stockholm.
- Sørnes, Torgrim 2014: *Mørkets gjerninger. De henrettede i Norge 1772–1782*. Sandnes.
- Warner, B. William 2018: "Truth and Trust and the Eighteenth-Century Anglophone Newspaper", Siv Gøril Brandtzæg, Paul Goring and Christine Watson (eds.), *Travelling Chronicles: News and Newspapers from the Early Modern Period to the Eighteenth Century*, pp. 27–50. Leiden.

¹ Sørnes (2014) estimates that 31 executions took place in the years 1772–1783, which is, roughly, the period under scrutiny in this essay. See also Kjus 2010 for a discussion of judicial practices and execution ballads (*skafottsanger*) from the nineteenth century.

² “Hun er tildømt at halshugges med Øre, hovudet at sættes paa Stage, men Kroppen at nædlægges i Jorden, hvilket skal skee paa Røbergs-hougen sidst i Maji-Maaned 1777.” From *En bodfærdig synderindes, ved navn Dorothea Brynnelsdatter, vemodige KLAGE-SANG over hendes Børne-fødseleer i Dølsmaal, og Drab paa trende af dem* (printed in Trondheim, 1777, V Box 33: 988). The term “V Box” refers to the physical location of the ballads in the Gunnerus collection.

³ “Jeg udi deres Fødsels-Stund/Min haand lagt paa deres Mund,/Og skildte dem ved Livet,/som Gud dem dog har givet.”

⁴ “Nu jeg for Øxen knæle maae,/Mit Hoved skal paa Stage staae/Til Varsels-Tegn for andre.”

⁵ The most important collections of transcribed skilling ballads which include brief introductions on the genre, are Eriksen 1973, Amundsen & Kvideland 1975, Eggen 1981, Solberg 1996 and Storsve 2002. There are also some articles where specific subgenres of skilling ballads are discussed in brief: Espeland 2007, Alver 2003, Kjus 2010 and Christensen 1993. In his book *Trivialiteter: Fra Den norske masselitteraturs historie*, Willy Dahl has a short chapter on the skilling ballad (1986:9–18). Two master’s theses have been written on the genre (Eriksen 1983 and Gunnes 2008). For an analysis of the reasons why the genre has been neglected in Norwegian cultural heritage, see Brandtzæg 2018.

⁶ The skilling ballads are not mentioned in the most important books on the history of Norwegian literature, the six-volume *Norsk Litteraturhistorie* (1923–1955) by Bull, Paasche, Winsnes and Houms; neither does it appear in Beyer and Beyers *Norsk litteraturhistorie* (1970). In the monumental, eight-volume *Norges Litteraturhistorie* (ed. Beyer), only four pages are dedicated to the skilling ballad (volume 3, 568–571), and in the most recent book, Per Thomas Andersen’s *Norsk Litteraturhistorie* (2012, 1st ed., 2001) skilling ballads are not mentioned at all.

⁷ The religious ballad “En Merkelig Viise om den yderste Dommedag” (1643) was one of the first print items from Tyge Nielsson (1610–1687), the Dane who established the first print press in Christiania in 1643. See Melhus 1943:14 and 16.

⁸ I am currently involved in a project to digitize this collection, in collaboration with the Gunnerus special collections library. The digitization will result in a database, and the work is part of the project “Skillingsvisene i Norge, 1550–1950: Den forsømte kulturarven”, financed by the Norwegian Research Council (project number 274962).

⁹ For estimates and information about the collections, see Brandtzæg 2018.

¹⁰ For a discussion of the term *skillingstrykk* versus *skillingsvise*, see Brandtzæg 2018 where I present the case for choosing the term *skillingsvise*, arguing that this term is best suited for capturing the unique hybrid quality of the genre in a Norwegian context. See also Karin Strand in this volume.

¹¹ According to Angela McShane Jones, the roman-letter type ballad completely replaced the black-letter ballad by 1700, and this, together with the fact that from then on the ballads were “printed on slips of paper rather than folio sheets”, led important ballad collectors such as Pepys to lose interest in the genre (2002:140–141). As Jones convincingly argues, though, these changes in format and typography did not mean a decline in the production of ballads in England: “though black-letter ballads certainly declined in number from the end of the seventeenth century, this was a change in typeface and format, not a decline in the genre” (ibid., p. 141).

¹² The generic term *news ballad* has been convincingly criticized by Jones (2002) who contests earlier views on the functions of the eighteenth-century political broadside ballad as “news intelligencers”; rather, she argues, they were “doing something different” from the newspapers: “the ballad functioned primarily as entertainment, instruction, comment, explanation and complaint, not as a vehicle for information” (p. 146). While I agree with Jones that the function of the broadside ballad is more complex with regard to news conveyance than is the case with the printed newspaper of the period, I also suggest that national differences need to be considered. Jones writes, for example, that the eighteenth-century Anglophone ballads “were rarely dated”,

whereas exact dating is very much present in the Norwegian variants. I would thus argue that the Scandinavian term “nyhetsviser” might be used with less caution than is the case with the English term “news ballads.”

¹³ *En Merkværdig stor og forunderlig Fisk som blev fangen/dog icke uden stoer Møye ved Genff, og havde et Ansigt som et Menniske...* (printed in Copenhagen, 1709, V box 38: 1116), and *Et underlig Spectacel hvorledis en Koe haver født en Kalf her uden for Staden paa Vester Broe/og samme Kalf haver haft et stort støcke Kiød i Panden/og derunder sad tvende Øyen/og en Mund hafde hand efter et Menniskis mund* (printed in Copenhagen, 1719, V box 38: 1118).

¹⁴ *En underlig skabning, seet paa et Barn som blev født til Verden den 13 Sept. 1720, Kl. 7 om Aftenen i Teylegaardsstræde udi Kiøbenhavn...* (printed in Copenhagen, 1720, V box 38: 1119).

¹⁵ *Et Sandfærdigt og meget forunderligt stort Mirackel seet paa et Dreng-Barn, som indeværende Aar er født udi Dantziger Werder ved Dantzig, hvilket blev tre Gange forandret for Præsten ved Daaben førend det blev døbt...* (printed in Copenhagen, 1720, V box 39: 1121).

¹⁶ *Ministerialprotokoll for Stadsbygd prestegjeld, 1751–1790* reveals that her full name was Dordi Brynjulfsdatter Råsshällan, and that she was executed on 22 May 1777. Historians Sørnes 2014 (190–195) and Rein 1999 (671) have brief notes on Dordi’s biography.

¹⁷ “Aktualitet og troværdighed” er skillingsvisens “to væsentlige karakteristika, de vil være og er i mange tilfælde også sande” (Piø 1969, 48).

¹⁸ *Ordinari Post Tijdender* was the first weekly newspaper established in Sweden in 1645, and in Denmark the first newspaper is considered to be the monthly *Den Danske Mercurius*, established in 1666. Even though the early modern Danish newspapers circulated in Norway at the time, the establishment of a national media culture should not be overlooked. The first newspaper in Norway was *Norske Intelligenz-Seddel*, first published in Christiania in 1763. The same decade saw the establishment of a number of regional newspapers, including one from the municipality of Trondheim. For the most recent account of the development of the Norwegian newspapers and journals in the eighteenth century, see Krefting, Nøding & Ringvej (2014).

¹⁹ Another issue is whether skilling ballads were published on a regular basis, like the newspaper, and perhaps even published by subscription. Christensen 1993 suggests that printer Winding monthly distributed skilling prints to regular customers (p. 179), but it is difficult to know the veracity of this since it is not clear where Christensen takes this information from.

²⁰ For this distinction between newspapers and fiction I am indebted to Warner (2018:27). The parallel I draw from newspapers to news ballads is, however, entirely my own construction.

²¹ *EN bodfærdig Synderes Afskeeds-Sang, navnlig Ole Nielsen Hindbjørgen, som havde bedrevet Blodskam med sin egen Slegfred-Datter, og derfor den 20. Maji 1749, udi Singsaas Sogn, blev henretted med et Sverd, og Kroppen lagt paa et Baal at opbrændes...* (printed in Trondheim, 1749, V box 35: 1022).

²² *En Kort Betragtning over den gruesomme Tildragelse paa Gaarden Grønsvea i Leuthen Sogn paa Hedemarken, hvor en Pige, 14ten Aar gammel, som gruesomt havde faaet i Sinde at vilde tage sine egne Forældre af Dage, for siden at kunde raade sig selv desbedre, har overtalt en Dreng af elleve Aar, hvilken var i Huuset tilligemed Hende og var Hendes Søskende-Barn, for en Belønning af 40 Knappenaaler til at slaae sin Moster, hendes Moder først i Hovedet med en Øxe, hvilket skeede; da hun med Jern-Hakke gav det andet slag, og continuerede siden indtil Konen efter over 30 slag døde, og siden af dem blev henlagt i Fæehuset, indtil Mandens Hiemkomst, som aabenbarede denne fæle Gierning...* (1777, V box 40: 1186). See Sørnes 2014 for a discussion of this criminal case.

²³ “Nyhedsviserne søger med forkærlighed sensationen i hverdagen, den gruopvækkende, den moralsk forkastelige eller en sådan hvorudaf en morale eller advarsel kan uddrages” (Piø, 66).

²⁴ See for example *En Nye Viise om den forunderlige og mærkelige spaadom af Martin Zadeck en Svidser ved Solothurn* (printed in Trondheim, V box 31: 919.); *En Nye Viise om Juule-Aftens Feyde i Kiøbenhavn 1771* (printed in Trondheim, 1772, V box 31: 912); *En Nye Viise i anled-*

ning hvad der er skeet i Kiøbenhavn den 17de Januarii 1772... (printed in Trondheim, 1772, V box 31: 929); *En Ny Viise, til Efterretning om hvad der skede i Aaret 1793...* (printed in Trondheim, 1794), and *En meget artig Nye Historisk Viise om et par Ægtefolks ulige Kiærlighed...* (V box 32: 934).

²⁵ *En ny deilig oc gudelig Viise...* (printed in Copenhagen, 1593), and *En ny Viise om Guds Ord oc sin Lemmers elendige Vilkaar...* (printed in Copenhagen, 1623). See also the oldest surviving ballad printed in Norway: *Tvende nye lystige, men sømmelige Viiser...* (printed in Trondheim, 1750). None of these are news ballads in the strict definition of the term, but they show the currency of the titular phrase emphasizing novelty from the earliest period.

²⁶ “Sangviis forfattede af Baard Andersen, ældste Bøygde-Skolemester i Stoeds Gield.” From *Døds Tanker over den hastige Døds Tilfælde som skeede paa Bye-Fiorden den 7 Octobris Ao. 1750...* (printed in Trondheim, 1751, V box 31: 904). The veracity of the boat accident in Stod is confirmed in the surviving church book for the local area of Stod, where the names and ages of the four men and the girl and the boy, are given.

²⁷ “Under Sang forestillet af den Dødes Fader, Jacob Johanson Kiilen” (printed in Bergen, 1796, V Box 34: 1001).

²⁸ *En Sørgelig nye Viise om ... Karl Roland Olsøn Ulstad...digtet af hans gode Camerat* (printed in Trondheim, 1777, V box 10: 273).

²⁹ “Visen er samensatt av Gunder Taargersen Giørstad.”

³⁰ See for example *En Veemodig Nye Viise* about a fire in 1755, “Eenfoldig forfatted af en blind Karl udi Biongen, ved Navn Christen Olsen Tindberg” (V Box 9: 267).

³¹ “Til Opmuntring for Alle, men i sær til Trøst for de igienlevende Bedrøvede.” From *Døds Tanker over den hastige Døds Tilfælde som skeede paa Bye-Fiorden den 7 Octobris Ao. 1750...* (printed in Trondheim, 1751, V box 31: 904).

³² *En Nye Viise, om den ulykkelige hændelse som tildrog sig i aaret 1779 den 12te April, da trende Brødre fra Gaarden Julstad paa Inder-Øen reiste i Baad til Saugen...* (printed in Trondheim, 1779, V Box 31: 908). The veracity of this accident is confirmed by the *Ministerial-protokoll for Inderøy prestegjeld 1762–1802* where the name and age of the deceased is given.

³³ “I som hans forældre er,/og havde eders Søn ret kiær,/Skulde see ham at drage hen,/men ikke komme meer igien.”

³⁴ “Exempler har vi mange faa,/Som har og hendt i dette Aar,/Der har nue skeed med Ild og Vand:/I Tronchiem blev og myrdt en Mand.”

³⁵ Some examples of Danish news ballads depicting future executions are given in Lone Nielsen, Camilla Søs Krarup and Ewelina Szyburska Solgaard 2011 *De melankolske mordere*, a student assignment published online which provides a handful of examples of Danish execution ballads. See also Krogh 2000.

³⁶ “Han er tildømt at miste sit Hoved med Sværd, hans Legem at nedgraves i Jorden paa det Stæd han bliver henrettet; hvilket skeer udi Tronhiem den 10de Januarii 1776.” From *En veemodig Klage-Sang af Erik Hansen Rokstad...* (printed in Trondheim, 1776, V box 35: 1021).

³⁷ “Hun er dømt til at miste sit Hoved, som skal sættes paa Stage, men Legemet nedgraves i Jorden; hvilken velfortiente Straf hun skal udstaae ved Steenberget uden for Tronchiem i Februarii Maaned 1775.” From *En bedrøvet Synderindes navnlig Margretha Nielsdatter Halstads veemodige Klage-Sang, over hendes begangne Barne-Fødsel i Dølsmaal, og udøvede Mord paa sit eget Foster...* (printed in Trondheim, 1775, V box 35: 1023). See Christensen 1993 for the criminal proceedings of Margretha Halstad.

³⁸ This was the hypothesis in a collaborative paper on the European execution ballad written by Una McIlvenna, Juan Gomis and myself, and presented at the conference European Dimensions of Popular Print Culture (EDPOP) in Utrecht in June 2018. McIlvenna has worked extensively on pan-European news ballads, and has not seen any other examples of the use of the future tense in execution ballads.

³⁹ “Jeg arme Synderinde!/Veemodig kommer frem,/Med Taarerne paa Kinde,/For mine Synder

slem” // Nu maa jeg Afskeed byde fra/denne Verdens Jord; nu maae jeg Dø/den lide, som begik Barne-Mord.”

⁴⁰ “Nu for saa hastig Vrede/Jeg lide maa i Dag”, and “Kom død! Kom Sværd at meie/mit usle Hoved af.”

⁴¹ *EN bodfærdig Synderes Afskeeds-Sang, navnlig Ole Nielsen Hindbjørgen, som havde bedrevet Blodskam med sin egen Slegfred-Datter, og derfor den 20. Maji 1749, udi Singsaas Sogn, blev henretted med et Sverd, og Kroppen lagt paa et Baal at opbrændes...* (printed in Trondheim, 1749, V box 35: 1022).

⁴² “Derfor maa jeg nu hen gaae,/Min fortiente Løn at faae:/At mit Hoved hugges af,/Siden er et Baal min Grav.”

From Crowded Streets and Seasonal Fisheries to Remote Paths and Kitchens

The Trade in *skillingstrykk*

Astrid Nora Ressem

Abstract

This article is a study of how *skillingstrykk* were spread, sold and distributed in the nineteenth century and the first part of the twentieth century in Norway. The understanding of *skillingstrykk* is closely connected to trade, and the article sheds light on different groups of sellers by examples and glimpses of characters, groups and milieus involved in the sale of songs in print, from the street boys and beggars to the more well-off publishers and booksellers.

Paradoxically there is little contemporary documentation about this mainstream culture despite its massive spread and popularity. By studying the trading we see the outlines of underground and mass culture, entertainment and business in a great blend.

Keywords: hawkers, pedlars, publishers, street singers, vagabonds, *skillingstrykk* and *killingsviser*

Introduction

The understanding of *skillingstrykk* today is strongly connected to trade; they were cheap ballad prints for sale, sold on streets, marketplaces and in people's homes. However, there has hardly been any research or studies on the trading and the sellers of *skillingstrykk* in Norway. Our knowledge of this activity is close to zero, and there has never been any attempt to assemble sparse knowledge into a more overall picture. In this article my aim is to start the work of examining how *skillingstrykk* were spread, sold and distributed. It must be seen as a contribution to open up this field for research and to gain insight into the diversity of this market. I will explore different groups of sellers by examples and glimpses of characters, groups and milieus involved in the sale of ballads in print in the 1800s and the first part of the 1900s, from the street boys and beggars to the more well-off publishers and booksellers. Who were they, what kind of life did they live, and how did they trade? So far, the sources available are mostly secondary sources. I am sure that further research in this field will reveal more contemporary comments and information on the trade, but until now it seems that much of the

activity operated under the radar of normal documentation. For now we have to rely on and interpret anecdotes and stories told in retrospect in addition to studies on *skillingstrykk* in general and nearby fields of research.

The Term *Skillingstrykk* and Previous Research and Studies

The most frequently used term in Norway today for commercial prints, including songs, is *skillingstrykk*, commonly translated as *broadside*, within English culture described as “a single sheet of paper printed on one side” (Atkinson & Roud 2014:xiii). Some of the *skillingstrykk* match this description, but most of the song prints circulating in Norway were sheets folded in two, or sometimes in four, resulting in four or eight pages. A *chapbook* is “most commonly of between eight and 24 pages and of correspondingly small dimensions, issued without stitching, binding, or added cover” (ibid.: xiii). A *skillingstrykk*, therefore, seems to be somewhere in between a broadside and a chapbook, with some exceptions. The word *skilling* refers to the cost of the print; it was something inexpensive that anyone could afford, like a penny. Directly translated into English, the term would be something like *a print for a penny*. Since it is the established term in Norway, I will use *skillingstrykk* throughout this article. However, I must add that the term *skillingstrykk*, as a collective concept for this genre of prints, first emerged in Sweden in the 1880s (Strand 2015:11), and probably appeared during approximately the same period, or even later, in Norway. Other names for *skillingstrykk* and *skillingsviser* (ballads printed on *skillingstrykk*, songs for a penny) were street songs (*gateviser*), leaflet prints (*flyveblad*), songs for kitchen-maids (*tjenestepigesanger*), market songs (*markedsviser*) and plebeian songs (*allmueviser*) (Ressem, in press).

These prints and songs can be defined and described in relation to a number of different categories, as listed by David Atkinson and Steve Roud: “format and typography, genre and literary history, printing and mode of sale, readership and audience, subject and theme – or, more broadly, production, distribution, and reception” (Atkinson & Roud 2017:xiv). In Norway, *skillingstrykk* have been used in research on folksongs in working life (Gjøstein Blom 1977), on emigrant songs (Amundsen & Kvideland 1975), industrial conflicts (Engen 1981), in research on political events within the Norwegian-Swedish Union (1814–1905) (Alver 2003), scaffold songs (Kjus 2014) and songs about natural disasters (Kverndokk 2015). Others have written about *skillingstrykk* in a local context (Bjørnstad 1979; Eriksen 1980; Solberg 1996; Storsve 2002). Songs from *skillingstrykk* as part of identity have been studied by the folklorists Reimund Kvideland (Kvideland & Porter 2001) and Velle Espeland (2007) and the musicologist Helga Gunnes (2008). Research that concerns the practice of selling includes the literary scholar Olav Solberg’s article from 1984 about the navy poet

Ferdinand Iversen and Reimund Kvideland's article from 2005 about Bänkel singers (see References). However, others have done research on nearby activity, and it has been particularly useful to study Thor Gotaas's work on barrel organists (2002) and vagabonds (2004), travellers making their living by wandering the roads and paths, entertaining, begging and selling.

The trade in skillingstrykk was part of a bigger market of other cheap prints and trivial literature, distribution of political and idealistic leaflets, and small household goods such as reels and whisks. The trade was also a part of entertainment in backyards, streets and marketplaces. The distinction between the roles of being a singer and a seller is not clear. Steve Roud points out for nineteenth-century England:

the street literature sellers existed within a multitudinous world of street vendors offering a huge array of articles on a daily basis. Ballad sellers belong with these others because they all offered items for sale, but from another angle they also belong with street musicians and singers on account of their shared involvement in music and song. The musicians and singers "sold" only their performances (we would nowadays call them buskers), rather than a tangible product such as a broadside, but the distinction is never very clear because individuals would move from one group to the other as circumstances dictated (Atkinson & Roud 2017:50).

Norwegian environments and conditions may have been different, but the problem for discussion is still the same. There was also a thin line between begging and selling. Gotaas writes that many vagabonds took pride in looking at themselves as hawkers. Selling from the doorstep or kitchen table, even the smallest of items or some skillingstrykk had a kind of status about them. Some of the hawkers had contempt for those who travelled with no sellable knick-knack at all in their bags, as they then were only lazybones and beggars. During the early 1900s there were clear distinctions between tramps with a few saleable items as a pretext, officious pedlars with a nose for trade, and the more professional and successful shopkeepers. Thousands of wanderers travelled around every nook and cranny touting all kinds of oddities (Gotaas 2004:199–200). Even the publishers and booksellers had different roles and could be songwriter, printer and publisher, singer and pedlar all in one person. The different categories I have chosen to use – such as beggars, vagabonds, hawkers, pedlars, publishers and booksellers – are in other words by no means absolute. Many of them could fit into more than one group, moving between these under different life conditions.

Noisy Street Singers

Street musicians, singers and hawkers stuck their necks out. Heated newspaper articles and debates uttered displeasure over the terrible noise from the street singers and skillingstrykk sellers. As Bishop Jacob Neumann

(1772–1848) writes in *Bergens Stiftstidende* in 1842, recollecting his time in Copenhagen: “the hawkers and old women selling almanacs and street songs, which they sung themselves with more or less rasping and detestable voices so that possible buyers could learn the tune”¹ (my translation). And even the content of these songs was annoying for many. An anonymous author of a newspaper contribution in *VG* in 1878: “The readers of this newspaper are well acquainted with the way in which songs are offered for sale at marketplaces and in small bookstores. [...] The street songs seek attention by claiming that the songs are new, of current interest and modern, but mostly the songs have been printed several times before. They might seem attractive in their cheapness and simplicity, but they have no value at all. Buying these prints and songs are the worst way of spending money” (my translation). Obviously this shows a difference between classes and taste, and it is part of a long discussion and process about singing style and the educational effect of songs and singing, lasting throughout the nineteenth century. In crowded and noisy places, it was crucial for a seller to be noticed. Loudness was an obvious choice. Other features could be the art of narration, the beauty of a voice or visual effects. The newspaper writers point towards the loud ones, and probably they were the most common in crowded milieus. Vic Gammon writes that “The ballad seller had to compete with the multifarious noises of the street and market, which would have included other traders hawking their wares, other street musicians, and the not inconsiderable sounds of manufacture, trade and transport” (Gammon 2017:129).

The trade in skillingstrykk was for some also connected to criminal activity. Otto Blehr describes in the article “Sørkedøler i Kristiania” (People from Sørkedalen visiting Oslo, 1974) about the young lad Iver, only fourteen years old, who had to deliver goods by horse and wagon to different addresses in Oslo. He mentions particularly the address Grensen 3 which had a huge stable for horses. Many farmers gathered and there was a lot of noise and fuss, and Iver was afraid of being robbed. The same backyard was full of liquor and clock dealers, skillingstrykk sellers and so on. You could also buy comic magazines like *Vikingen* and *Krysser'n*, besides some naughty magazines. (Blehr 1974:8) This is a memoir from an elderly man about a very young man’s experiences, and the vivid description is coloured by that, but there are several stories which places the skillingstrykk trade in the rougher parts of the towns. In addition a good skillingstrykk seller and singer could attract a crowd of people, and while their focus was on the performer, pickpockets could see their chance to steal. In England “a number of court cases attest to the reality of the link between ballad singing and pickpocketing” (Gammon 2017:137).

In later literature, there are a few descriptions of some of the persons standing out from the crowds of street sellers and entertainers. Two of them



“Wergelandsgutten”, printed in the weekly magazine *Allers* in January 1904 (Saugstad 1966:11).

are “Mikkel” and “Wergelandsgutten” (The Wergeland Lad). In the book *Byoriginaler* (Town eccentrics and marginals, 1966) by the journalist, revue historian and local historian Haakon B. Nielson and in the journalist Even Saugstad’s book with the same title (2008), we find descriptions of personalities like the rebel with the nickname “Mikkel” who survived by selling songs and stories on leaflets and booklets when times were rough, but this was described as only a sideline activity while entertaining in the cafés in Oslo.² Another outsider was “Wergelandsgutten”. He was a central figure at Christiania market in Oslo in the 1830s; a 140 cm short fiddle-playing lad speaking and singing with extraordinary sensitivity and passion, according to descriptions.

The Wergeland lad’s real name was Anders Larsen (1816–1903). His nickname was given to him because Henrik Wergeland, a famous Norwegian author, Director General of Cultural Heritage, editor-in-chief and debater, had taken a special interest in him. Henrik Wergeland described him as one of the genius from the depths of poverty (“Genier fra Armødens Dyb”), a talent who needed to be rescued and given the opportunity to exercise all his abilities (Gotaas 2008:10). However, the boy himself didn’t seem to want to be saved, at least not in that way, so he just con-

tinued his life on the road with wild fiddle playing and dissolute partying, often in conflict with the representatives of law and order. Wergelandsgutten used to find a spot in Oslo, often on a box so that he could stand out in spite of his shortness, and then start to entertain. He could attract an audience both with his fiddle and with his voice; singing, telling stories, reciting poems or preaching. His memory was extraordinary and so was his knowledge of the Bible; he could capture his audience for hours preaching like a priest. His performances were successful if it brought him some liquor, tobacco, money and food. Thor Gotaas writes that Wergelandsgutten also sang *skillingviser* (ibid.:14). It is unsure, however, whether he also was a part of the selling and trading of *skillingstrykk*. To sell sheets, you needed cash to obtain the goods for resale. But you didn't necessarily need a lot to buy some *skillingstrykk* for resale. In 1911 a short piece was published in several newspapers:

An empty bottle for 9 Norwegian kroner.

A poor man, walking around selling books, songs and different small objects, woke up one morning with only one empty bottle as his only property. He sold the bottle for 3 Norwegian øre,³ used the money to buy 3 songs from a song publisher/tradesman, sold the songs for 30 øre, bought 5 small booklets for 6 øre each and sold them for 30 øre per booklet. He kept on like this during the day until the afternoon came, and he had 9 kroner (*Øieren*, 6 September 1911, my translation).⁴

We don't know the truth of this story and how realistic it is. But it probably tells something about the economy in trading in small things, odds and ends, and that the trade in songs was a part of a wider repertoire of small things and possibilities. Still you needed something to get what you could sell, as Vic Gammon writes: "From the ragged chanter to the bookselling country-agent, all must down with the cash *before* they received the goods" (Gammon 2017:133).

Wergelandsgutten supported himself by selling his performance of a popular song, but maybe not the sheet for distribution with the song printed. Anyway, he was a part of the trade indirectly by spreading a song that could also be bought on a *skillingstrykk*. Wergelandsgutten mostly stayed in Oslo, but now and then he headed for the country road, and he was one of many vagabonds supporting themselves by begging, music and storytelling.

Hawkers, Vagabonds and Beggars

Thousands of *skillingstrykk* were carried around in leather bags and chests by men and women with country roads and paths as their place of work, for survival or for wealth. As mentioned in the introduction, the line between begging and selling could be vague. Travellers moved in this field, crossing the line depending on where they were in the social hierarchy of travellers, their economic situation and other life conditions. In his book *På loffen*:

Landstrykere og vagabonder langs norske landeveier (Bumming around: Tramps and vagabonds along Norwegian country roads, 2004), the folklorist Thor Gotaas describes the life and ways of tramps and vagabonds from the Middle Ages up to the 1970s, the relationship and hierarchy amongst them, how they interacted with the established society, and their skills in begging and selling. For this article, the parts about trading techniques are of particular interest, as it is likely that these skills also were in use by the ones who sold skillingstrykk. I also find the description of milieus relevant and the way they embodied themselves, for instance with nicknames, also common among known skillingstrykk personalities.

The vagabonds had a large social circle but were careful with intimate relationships as there was a greater risk of exposing more of one's personal background. They moved between all strata of society, but they often kept their name of birth to themselves. Nicknames were more common than birth and family name amongst the tramps. Aliases flourished, and it was important to hit spot on. There are records of eight different nicknames for one vagabond or hawker. They could be names telling where they came from, the name could describe their size or other physical characteristics, particular behaviour, food and drinking habits, temper, interests and intelligence, or it could be related to activities in their past (Gotaas 2004:84). Gotaas claims that friendliness was shown towards the travellers by the people in the countryside in the 1800s and throughout the 1900s. Well-off people felt compassion and there was a saying: "they are people like me and you."⁵⁵ And poorer people had their own history of suffering and hunger and could easily relate to the vagabond's life situation. The ones with the least gave the most. There was also the mystique surrounding the vagabonds; unpredictable and enigmatic, and their lives seemed sad and romantic, exciting and boring at the same time. And they often had stories to tell. The tramps could be quite strategic when arriving at a village or a town; how to talk, how to knock on the door, and most important *when* to arrive to be sure to have a meal. Singing and humming a tune on the doorstep was a long existing custom and privilege for the poor (ibid.:88). Hawkers needed to be good at judging character and human nature. They were close to beggars in manners and temper, and the same person could shift between the two roles, but the hawker needed to keep in mind that he was in the trading business. His approach was driven by this; from the moment he knocked on the door till he left the house, it was important to show the utmost shrewdness. The trading could not feel constrained. After entering he rattled off some formulas or stanzas, like "Skrepparvisa": "Good day you good people / don't be upset / that I am so boldly arriving / and entering your home"⁵⁶ (my translation). The hawkers rested a couple of days each week; Mondays were bad for trading, and Sundays were good resting days. Some carried a weight of up to a hundred kilos, but the average weight was thirty to forty kilos, carried in leather bags. In

winter time sledges could ease the burden. The keenest hawkers and pedlars could be on the road for twelve to fourteen hours a day (ibid.:201, 203).

Before further research is done, we can't be sure how relevant this is for the trade in skillingstrykk, but I believe that many of the ones travelling with small prints were in the same situation as the ones Gotaas describes. Some travelled heavy with thin and light folded papers with songs printed on them in between the heavy stuff, others with only their storytelling and repertoire of popular songs to offer.

A different kind of sources to explore in activity regarding skillingstrykk in Norway is the popular and huge amount of articles and books on local history. South-eastern Norway, close to the border with Sweden, is one of the areas that is well covered by the author and journalist Dagfin Grønset (1920–2008). He is known for his simple, concrete way of writing, with vivid descriptions of human fates in their settings, and he was a bestseller in the 1970s and 1980s. One of the characters he presents in his book *Villmark og vinløv* from 1988 is Karl Holberg, alias “Stora-Mesteren” (Great Master). Dagfin Grønset describes Stora-Mesteren as a popular wanderer and visitor in Finnskogen, an area around Trysil, close to the Swedish border. He was in the Värmland battalion in his youth and knew the border area from way back like the back of his hand. For years, in springtime, Stora-Mesteren came wandering across the border and announced his arrival by blowing his brass trumpet with a sound that carried far away. He was a stately man with a long red scarf, feather in his hat and with great shiny buttons in his jacket. Grønset writes that he was eagerly welcomed; he came with hustle and fun, full of imagination, wit and repartee, visiting Finn crofts, cottages and farms. Stora-Mesteren had his own way when visiting people's homes; always walking backwards through the door with his heavy chest, richly decorated with brass fittings, on his back. “Any Christians around?” he could ask, and start to quote words from the Bible. If the response failed, he laughed unrestrainedly and predicted the road right to hell. But as Dagfin Grønset describes, the ones who knew him enjoyed the grand opening and waited excitedly for the next move. If he was in the right mood he could dig up small wooden figures he had made himself from his deep and dark chest; counts, barons and other noblemen. He put them on a tray and told them off, one after another, finishing off with the bishop, a bare-faced and red-faced character he had on a thread, swinging over the kitchen table to his lively chuckles. He sang – rough and rusty – but melodiously, preferably his own songs, verses about things that had made an impression on him, such as a hazardous balloon voyage or about a kind and warm-hearted farmer's wife. He sold his ballads for 25 øre (Grønset 1988:27–29).

Grønset writes about Stora-Mesteren with warmth and a twinkle in his eye. Writing with compassion can both be the strength and the weakness of this kind of literature as a source, when even descriptions of rough

lives are part of great storytelling and a touch of sentimentality. But Grønset also gives us an idea of the harshness of life that led Stora-Mesteren to become a wanderer off the beaten tracks. People from Trysil thought that he came from a good family, but he went mad while studying theology. For many years he worked as a fortune teller, juggler, illusionist and drummer at Swedish markets, before he withdrew to the quiet forests (ibid.:30).

With Barrel Organs and Cartoons on the Road

Stora-Mesteren used his woodcut puppets as a grand finale when he entertained. Other travellers had other supplies for their singing and selling. Small figures and items for entertainment or sale could fit into any hawker's leather bag or wooden chest together with the thin and nearly weightless skillingstrykk. Some carried heavier weights, as we have seen up to a hundred kilos of items for sale. Other travellers carried instruments or tableaux on their back when wandering around. Above we have seen that Wergelandsgutten carried his fiddle around, and later we will see that guitars became popular as an accompanying instrument, but above all, barrel organs were the most frequent instrument on the roads. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the barrel organ had spread to nearly every remote corner in Europe. Barrel organs were often called *positiv* in Norway and Sweden, and the person turning the handle to make the sound come out was a *positivhaler*. The barrel organists often walked from market to market. They walked and carried their instruments through snow and all kinds of weather, on roads and paths.

Barrel organs weren't necessarily combined with singing or the selling of skillingstrykk. They could play instrumental dance tunes or instrumentals accompanying acrobatic practices on horses, the showing of a dancing bear etc. One important advantage was its loudness; it could be heard from a long distance and attract an audience. But it still competed with other sounds. Rudolf Muus (1862–1935) describes how excited he and his friends were in childhood over the Christiania Market in February. Muus was a popular writer of trivial and popular literature, and he also wrote descriptions of city life, e.g. *Gamle Kristiania-minder* (1923). Youngstorget in the centre of the capital was like a wavy anthill. In a discordant choir sounds of megaphones, bagpipes, toy trumpets and barrel organs streamed out, all begging for attention. Muus retells an episode from the 1870s, where an old and ill-placed woman stood on the outskirts of the market place, grinding a rusty barrel organ, singing terribly out of tune. Nobody stopped. Then a good-natured man on the plump side came asking if he could borrow her instrument for a while. He sang amusing songs and attracted a huge audience that roared with laughter, clapped and sang along.

After fifteen minutes he stopped, sent his hat around and gave the money to the old woman. The generous and entertaining singer was a famous comedian at the time, Johannes Brun (Muus 1923:28–31). According to Thor Gotaas it was very rare to see a prominent person do such a thing. Grinding a barrel organ at the time was only for the poor and needy (Gotaas 2002:35).

We know that songs of the repertoire from a barrel organ could be popular skillingsviser like “Neger-slaven” (The negro slave) and “En drankers hytte” (A drunkard’s cottage). And we also know that some combined entertaining on a barrel organ with selling skillingstrykk. Kvernsmyhr, also called “Stortigger’n” (Big beggar) because of his fabulous ability for begging, was one of them. Under the heading “Originalen Kvernsmyhr” (The eccentric Kvernsmyhr), Thor Gotaas gives a description of a turbulent life (Gotaas 2002:72–74). Kvernsmyhr got gangrene after an accident during the building of Bergen railway and had to amputate his legs at the knees. Already while in convalescence, he did as many cripples have done before him: he wrote a ballad about his misery. Kvernsmyhr knew that there was a potential living in the ballad business and he wanted to be self-reliant. Shortly after the accident he presented himself as a singer and seller of skillingstrykk. The trade went swimmingly. His cut-off legs proved the content of the lyrics and strengthened the experience of misery. Soon he expanded his performance to include a barrel organ, and with his own song as a trademark, a new phase of his life begun. He worked systematically and planned for a life of leisure in his old age. During the 1920s he spread his savings between several banks, his income from singing and selling skillingstrykk and playing his barrel organ amounted to 5,000 Norwegian kroner, a large sum at the time. However, like many others, he lost a lot of his savings during financial crashes and bankruptcies.

Kvernsmyhr was harmless and didn’t make any trouble, according to Gotaas (*ibid.*:73). Housewives in the eastern part of the capital were constantly reminded of him; until the late 1920s they could bump into him and his barrel organ in their backyards. He used to sleep in a hammock and fastened the strings between the drying racks. Sometimes it led to an unpleasant meeting with the police, but mostly he got along with the constables. In the summer of 1928 he became a newspaper celebrity. He left Oslo with some vagabonds to loaf around Østfold County with his barrel organ and his sack filled with skillingstrykk. In Sarpsborg it went overboard with a party in the heat of the summer, with liquor, fried bacon and singsong. The police were called and the local newspaper covered the happening. The article shows some of Kvernsmyhr’s status. Most of the article was about him, and he was called a handsome traveller, while his mates were dismissed as ordinary tramps. At the police station they found that he had six deposit books. His fortune after the bankruptcies was halved to 2,500 Norwegian kroner,



Sketch by C. F. Diriks, 1867: “Markedsbillede, Fornøielsesbod” (*Rudie* 1980:18).

but even this amount was a good annual salary in late 1920s. Kvernsmyrh became a prosperous man by singing and selling skillingstrykk and playing the barrel organ.

Another group of travellers with particular equipment who also brought skillingstrykk with them are the “Bänkel” singers. They were probably rare in Norway; at least there are few reports describing their activity and presence. The folklorist Reimund Kvideland’s article “‘Bänkel’-søngarer i Norge” (Bänkel singers in Norway, 2005) presents sources about this kind of entertainment in Norway. The German word “Bänkel” means a small bench or stool for the singer to stand on while performing. In addition he or she used a fabric with painted episodes from the ballad, like a cartoon. The stool and the cartoon are the main characteristics of a Bänkel singer. While singing, the performer pointed at the cartoon with a stick. The performance was free, but an assistant sold skillingstrykk during the performance, or the singer sold them afterwards. Bänkel singers performed in markets, streets and squares, but some of them also travelled to the countryside. Kvideland renders a sketch by C. F. Diriks (1841–1895) from a market in Oslo in February 1867 (the old Kristiania market). This shows a body of followers encircling a man with an outstretched fabric including a ballad title and a cartoon. The title was “Den fryktelige Morderen Glorius. En sann Hændelse

udi Ungarn” (The terrible murderer Glorius. A true incident in Hungary). This song is known from skillingstrykk in both Norway and Sweden.

Kvideland also has an example from Bergen in the 1850s and 1860s. From a childhood memory of street entertainments, there is a story about Trimolini with his stick. The assistant of a barrel organist used to hang a painted fabric on a house wall, pointing at the cartoon while the singer and musician performed a song about the duke from Paris murdering his wife. The songwriter was the Dane Adolph Recke and the song was well known from skillingstrykk. Reimund Kvideland reflects that the tradition of showing the story in pictures while singing is known throughout the 1900s (Kvideland 2005:152–160). The singer, poet and collector Alf Prøysen (1914–1970) tells a story from his childhood of a visit to a local charity bazaar. For the first and only time they had been promised artistic entertainment. A dressed-up man and woman entered the room, and suspended a sheet filled with figures on the wall. The man lifted a pointer towards the figures and started singing “Der er en pige, der er en dreng, der er en brude-seng” (There is a girl, there is a boy, there is a wedding bed), and followed up with a ventriloquist skit before they continued with singing (Prøysen 1959:94).

It is easy to imagine that using illustrations together with texts and/or performance was an effective way to attract audiences and buyers. However it is uncertain how widespread it was as it depended on equipment and access to illustrations. Most likely this was for the well-established traders and entertainers.

Song Writers and Wandering Pedlars

Some ballad writers and skillingstrykk sellers had stronger positions and stood out more from the crowd than others. It could be because of their qualities as writers, performers and traders, but some of them also had a special aura around them. These qualities also gave them a special relationship with the printers because they knew that their songs would sell well. I will present four well-known skillingstrykk sellers, all of which fits into the main myths of their kind: the master thief, the navvy, the reporter in rhyme and the blind entertainer.

The Master Thief Gjest Baardsen (1791–1849)

During the nineteenth century, several jailbirds distinguished themselves as master thieves, story tellers and song writers. The most famous one is Gjest Baardsen. He had a kind of Robin Hood myth around him which was a crucial part of the aura and stories that surrounded him, and gave boost to the sale of songs written both by him and by others. Baardsen made his first robbery when he was in his twenties, and then followed an exceptional series

of burglaries and thefts. He was often caught and arrested, but just as often he managed to escape, according to his own account he ran away from prison 57 times. In 1827 he was sentenced to life imprisonment with hard labour. The sentence was to be served in Akershus Festning in Oslo, a medieval castle and fortress, known to be the strictest prison in Norway in the 1800s.

In 1845, after 18 years of slavery behind prison walls, Gjest Baardsen was reprieved. From then on, he supported himself as a writer, publisher and pedlar, all in one person. He started writing an autobiography already while in prison, and he also wrote books about the traveller's language and prisoner's life. Even before he was released, Gjest had made a deal with the printer and publisher Malling, and with the manuscript *Fængsel og Frihed: I tvende Qvad, forfattede af Gjest Baardsen Sogndalsfærn: Priis 6 β* (Prison and Freedom: in two songs, written by...: 6 skilling), 24 pages including a preface and two songs, all written by himself, he was ready to build up his life in freedom. In a couple of days 2,000 copies were printed which according to the deal was equally shared between the publisher and author. Gjest Baardsen claims that he sold a couple of hundred prints before even leaving Oslo (Gjelsvik 2000:487). The prints were sold out while in Drammen, and he had 1,000 more printed before he went on, and the same happened in Skien and Arendal. In his biography *Jakten på Gjest Baardsen* (2000) the author and journalist Erling T. Gjelsvik wonders if Gjest is bluffing about his sales success or if he was an extraordinarily persistent pedlar, but inclines towards the latter and refers to an eyewitness description: The enterprising Gjest Baardsen climbs up on the churchyard wall and strategically, trying to reach as many as possible at the same time, starts to tout *Fængsel og Frihed* just as the congregation come out of church after morning service. Not necessarily successful, the combination of a churchgoer and a persistent jailbird's autobiography might not have been approved. Gjelsvik describes Gjest Baardsen as an entertainer: joker, fibber and braggart. Gjelsvik goes on to state that singing and song writing were sides of Baardsen's talent he seemed to have taken in dead earnest. Reactions from his audience must have been diverse; the most religious and law-abiding were probably provoked, but Gjelsvik states that at his best, Gjest must have been quite amusing, and his monkey tricks could conjure up a harsh everyday life (ibid.:283).

Like many other biographies of Gjest Baardsen, Gjelsvik's builds on anecdotes from where Baardsen travelled. Within the limits of this article I cannot go through all sources available on him, but it seems that most of the sources, both anecdotes and biographies, uphold the already established myths of an adventurous, smart master thief, stealing from the rich and giving to the poor, and a great entertainer. Gjelsvik is one of few that give us a glimpse into Baardsen as seller of his own songs. And what we know for sure is that he wrote songs. He began writing songs in the 1820s and

continued until he died in 1849. Selling songs gave him a good income both during his years in Akershus fortress and after, and his greatest successes were “Jeg beilet engang til en Pige så skjønn” (I once courted a maiden so sweet) and “Grusomme skjebne” (Gruesome/Cruel fate), both laments about cruel fate and deceitful sweethearts. The legendary Gjest Baardsen is still discussed and written about and his songs are among the most popular and typical of hits from the 1800s.

The Navy Ferdinand Iversen (1873–1943)

The most productive Norwegian navy poet Ferdinand Iversen (1873–1943) is a good example of a migrant worker/construction worker whose writing and song making skills helped his family’s economy. Iversen was born in Oslo, but left home early to earn his living as a navy (migrant worker) at various Norwegian and Swedish railway-building projects. He married a cook working on construction and railway sites. The couple travelled together, working where they were needed until they had children, and they are an example of the mobility in the society around the turn of the century. Eventually they settled down in Rjukan in Telemark, where, apart from his position as a dynamiter at the Norsk Hydro Industries, Iversen wrote several songs, many of which were navy songs, songs connected to the work on the railways. The professor of Nordic literature Olav Solberg analyses some of his well-known songs and states that “Iversen presents the navy as hero, transforming by his hard work the wild nature into culture. The navy is depicted as a servant in the process of civilisation, and as a symbol of progress” (Solberg 1984:81). Later songs present a critical view of the industry and society in general and belong to critical working-class poetry. Iversen published his songs in magazines and newspapers, but he also made offprints of the songs he considered as most saleable – a financial risk, but also with a bigger potential profit if the song became popular. He then travelled around, selling his songs printed as skillingstrykk. This was at the beginning of the twentieth century and late in the skillingstrykk era, and Iversen didn’t seem to fit into the picture of a skillingstrykk salesman as poor, eccentric or marginal. He was just a talented writer with experience of hard manual labour in railway construction, and he knew both how to make songs that elevated the navy to a hero and also to arouse awareness of the harsh reality of the working class. His skills and ability to touch the right chord in his time made it possible to have an extra income from song writing and selling.

The Reporter in Rhyme Jumbo (1877–1955)

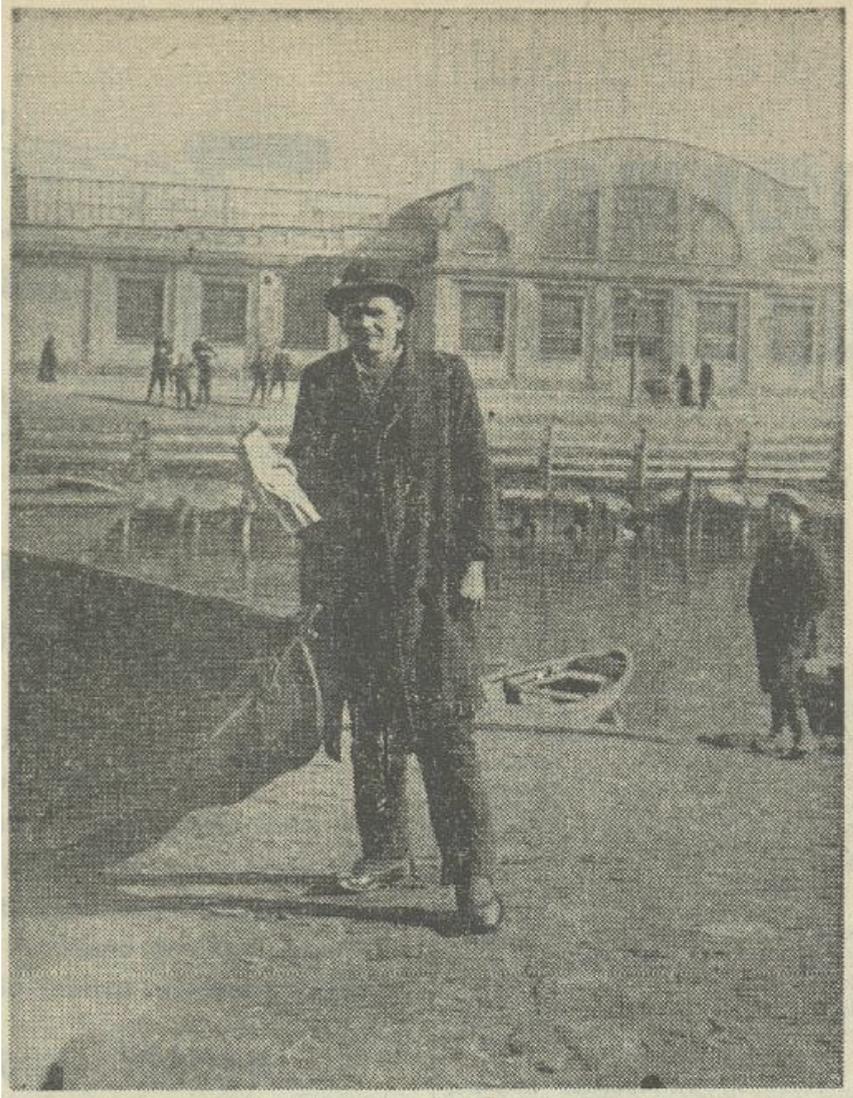
“Jumbo”, with the Christian name Anton Andersen (1877–1955), was a song writer and pedlar. His nickname was given to him after the giant elephant Jumbo which the king of circus, Barnum, bought in London Zoo in

1882. And according to late sources our Jumbo was a giant too, measuring 2.04 m (Nielson 1966:60). The broad-shouldered man is described as dressed in a floppy navvy hat, a black overcoat with sleeves that were too short and enormous boots, always with his coat, jacket and vest open. According to the journalist and historian Haakon B. Nielson (1906–1981), his self-confidence as a poet was strong, and there was a saying about him that he was the Norwegian Champion of song writing. At least he was a great reporter in rhyme. Jumbo could catch any event, big or small, and transform it into a song. He scribbled the words to a topical song in a post-office vestibule, on a bench in a park or against the wall of a house in a side street. Once finished, he hastened to some kind and amenable book printer who would print the song hurriedly. Before the ink was dry, he ran into town to sell what we today would call front-page news. The best customers were in the eastern part of Oslo, in the cafés and restaurants. Jumbo knew his audience and was accurate with texts appealing to the man in the street. His 10-øre songs were usually written to fit tunes known from popular songs such as “Ved Idas grav”, “Skjærsommersangen”, “Lille vakre Anna” and “Frøken Agnes udi dystre drømmer går” (Nielson 1966:60–63).

One of his masterpieces was a song he managed to write, print and sell about a big fire, *before* the fire was extinguished. On 15 September 1903 there was a terrible accident at Kongensgate 20 in Oslo. The building was destroyed by a violent fire, and many people perished in the flames. The help was delayed because of some misunderstanding in the fire brigade about the address. So before the fire was over, Jumbo was in the street, selling his skillingstrykk for 10 øre, and they went like hot cakes. The first page says: “A sad song about the dreadful accident during the fire in Kongens Gade [street] on 15 September 1903, where 10 persons were burnt to death. By Jumbo. Motto: A Costly Blacking was Boiled that Day”⁷ (my translation).

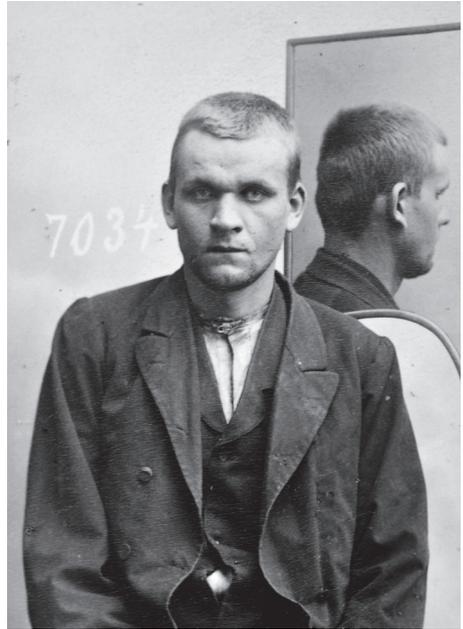
Jumbo did not limit his trading only to the capital. With his leather sack full of song prints, he travelled around and he was a well-known figure wherever he came, according to Nielson (*ibid.*:69). In particular he visited the great industrial plants and railway construction sites. He was popular amongst the construction workers and navvies, and the sale of songs went well. When he came back to Oslo after these expeditions, he wore elegant clothes and boots, enjoying his friends’ admiring glances. Jumbo’s political involvement was strong, and he could perform as the most radical public speaker, engaging workers from the eastern part of Oslo, agitating with a thundering speech.

Haakon B. Nielson does not give his sources, only generally speaking as his own interviews, articles and notes from newspapers, comic magazines and small prints. Oskar Braaten’s article “Gateviser” (Street songs) from 1938 was probably one of his sources on Jumbo. The Norwegian author Oskar Braaten (1881–1939) met Jumbo as a young man of fourteen or fif-



Anton Andersen alias Jumbo by Akerselva, 1910. Photo: Johannes Holmsen (*Arbeiderbladet* 4 February 1955, p. 6).

teen while working at the bookseller and publisher Bertrand Jensen in Oslo. Braaten admits that at first he viewed the songs and skillingstrykk as worthless trash and anticipated the first meeting with Jumbo with fear, but as an older man writing his article about streets songs published in 1938, he admits that a re-encounter with these despised ballads brings melancholy and nostalgia. He describes Jumbo as a proud, modest, poor and lonely person (Braaten 1938:122–125). Jumbo's song writing competitors criticized him;



Anton Andersen alias Jumbo, Kristiania Politikammer (Oslo police station) 1901–1902 (Justismuseet – The Norwegian National Museum of Justice).

according to Braaten it was out of jealousy because he could write much faster and better than them. Even the later famous author-to-be claims that he couldn't match Jumbo's way with the lyrics, and that his ability to reach his audience was extraordinary. In retrospect Braaten describes the songs, *skillingstrykk* and hawkers in a reconciliatory way and even with admiration. As early as in 1921 he portrayed the song writer and *skillingstrykk* seller Bams in a novel with the same title in a way that makes Jumbo change his name to Anthoni Bamzh, inspired by Oskar Braaten's romantic description.

At the website digitaltmuseum.no a photo of Anton Andersen alias Jumbo surprisingly comes up.⁸ It is a registration photo from Kristiania (Oslo) police station, taken in 1901 or 1902, now belonged to Justismuseet – The Norwegian National Museum of Justice. Anton Andersen with the nickname Jumbo was given a fine on 100 Norwegian kroner, which was large sum at the time, for having exposed himself indecently on the street.⁹ Jumbo is described as a day labourer, born 21 October 1877. His eyes are blue and his hair dark. Could this be our Jumbo and Anton Andersen, also born on 21 October 1877? The description that follows contradicts the picture we have been given of Jumbo. The jailbird Jumbo is only 1.85 m high, 20 cm shorter than descriptions of our *skillingstrykk* Jumbo. Instead of being a giant, the jailbird is described as medium-sized. Could it still be the same person? Or was there more than one Jumbo/Anton Andersen born in Oslo on the same

date? Is the giant-Jumbo not so big physically after all? Further research may reveal this, but so far it must be only speculation as to whether this could be an example of others taking a nickname because of the song poet and skillingstrykk seller's popularity, or the fact that Jumbo wasn't as big as he appeared to be by his admirers.

The Entertainer Blind-Fredrik (1878–1954)

Fredrik Johansen Øvrevold was born in Vestvågøy, Lofoten, in 1878. This was in a period when international interests and businesses for years had made conditions for construction workers in industrial enterprises in northern Norway harder and more ruthless. Famine in the last half of the nineteenth century made people from northern Sweden and Finland walk to the coast of Norway, where they sold their labour to the copper mill in Alta and the nickel works in Senja. Fredrik was born in a region solely known for its great fisheries, but workers suppressed by owners of fishing stations and powerful merchants left their homes in favour of the industries, in hope of a better life. In the 1880s a consciousness of a better society became stronger and the trade unions started to establish and hopes for change grew. These were the people and conditions Fredrik Johansen Øvrevold met on his wanderings from one construction site to another. But he was never a veteran in the fighting labour movement. He became invalid shortly after he came to work in the mines of Birtavarre, in 1899. He was severely wounded in an explosion, all over his body, and he was blinded. He did not get any compensation. But he still had full control over his fingers and voice, and they became his future rescue. From then on he was called "Blind-Fredrik".

Invalid and disabled people did not get much help from society, so many of them used music and singing as a career. Others who were disabled as a result of their work in the mines just drifted around the construction sites, hoping for food and a roof over their heads. They were accompanied by people with tents and fun fairs, "Clock Jews" selling clocks and jewellery, book sellers and people selling kitchen utensils and clothes. Blind-Fredrik was amongst many, in a kind of lumpenproletariat, a milieu with no shortage of liquor dealers and prostitutes.

The teacher and author Dag Skogheim and the author and journalist Kjell Sandvik published a biography of Blind-Fredrik in 1977. They describe his course of life after the accident as rather bohemian, but for the miners he was one of them. His fate could happen to anyone of them. While in hospital in Tromsø, he learned to play the guitar, and he became, above all others, the miners' singer and entertainer. Old miners describe his voice as great baritone. One of Blind-Fredrik's most popular songs, "Blind-Fredriks vise" (Blind Fredrik's ballad) is a description of his life and the accident that made him blind, and in the last stanza he begs for a helping hand. So it is his personal begging song, but also a song that became widely popular and pub-

lished in several song books, often without information about the author. But the police reacted. “Blind-Fredriks vise” was forbidden to perform and publish, probably both because the song revealed negative sides of the mining industry and because of the request for alms. The song could disturb public law and order. But when Blind-Fredrik was refused to sing his song, he peed on the street instead, blaming his blindness and using his handicap as a weapon and diversionary manoeuvre (Skogheim & Sandvik 1977:37). I cannot see that Skogheim and Sandvik give any information about the sources they had available, and I presume they based the biography on anecdotes, stories, interviews, texts about the general conditions amongst construction workers in the area and Blind-Fredrik’s own songs.

A couple of anecdotes establish him as a trader of skillingstrykk, and we know that his bag did not only contain songs; he also brought shirts, buttons and tablecloths he used to raffle or sell. An old navy remembers from his meeting with Blind-Fredrik in 1915 about his singing, playing and trading and that he was such a great singer and song writer. He states that Blind-Fredrik sold his songs on skillingstrykk, and the old navy once had them all, but lost them in a fire (ibid.:45). Aksel Trøite met him in 1922, first in Glomfjord, then in Trondheim and finally in Svolvær. Fredrik told him that it went well with both the dealing and the singing, and he had managed to save a decent amount of money, 15,000 Norwegian kroner (ibid.:38). He lost most of this in a bank crash some years later. When he went back on the road as an elderly man he only brought skillingstrykk with him and sold them for 50 or 25 øre. This was in the late 1930s. Blind-Fredrik died in 1954, 76 years old.

Well-situated Publishers and Booksellers

The nobility of the skillingstrykk traders were the ones that had more or less control over the whole process themselves. They were a versatile group just like the persons and settings described above, hawkers, pedlars, vagabonds, beggars, musicians and entertainers. Many of them were situated in Oslo, but we also had, for instance, Mikael Urdal in Tromsø, both publisher and pedlar. Many of them just took care of the publishing, printing and resale, like the publisher Bertrand Jensen at Pilestredet 7 in Oslo. Bertrand Jensen and his peers sold and published many things beside their books. As mentioned above, the author Oskar Braaten was working in Jensen’s bookstore in the late 1800s and early 1900s. He gives a vivid description of the activity in a store where skillingstrykk were printed and distributed for sale. Hawkers, singers and musicians from Norway, Sweden and Italy bought songs, fortune letters, dream books and surprise packages. The Italians were numerous, and they preferred fortune letters they brought along in their travels together with the barrel organ. But in general it was the skillings-

trykk that were the most important item for the pedlars and hawkers visiting the store, according to Braaten. Some 250,000 skillingstrykk a year was not unusual. When Bertrand Jensen expanded his business in the late 1800s, customers crowded in, and even more fortune letters and skillingstrykk were distributed. The small store often resembled a cabaret stage, as the songs needed to be tested and sung before they were bought. People passing Pilestredet 7 could witness the most fanciful and colourful execution of the hits of that time (Braaten 1938:121).

One of the central figures in the trade in skillingstrykk in the second half of the nineteenth century was Theodor Rose (1839–1924). He was a publisher, printer, salesman, collector, ballad writer and singer, and after his about 25 years in the skillingstrykk business in Norway, he had become a wealthy man. I let him represent the group of publishers, printers and booksellers, also dealing in skillingstrykk. This will give us a glimpse into the business in the western part of Norway too, in Bergen, and how the coastline had its own connections between north and south through the fisheries.

Theodor Rose came to Oslo from Copenhagen as a 21-year-old man in 1860. He started off in a newspaper printing office, but quite soon he set up his own printing office and opened two shops where he sold skillingstrykk and other publications. In 1872 he moved with his family to Bergen and established himself with a bookshop and an extensive business publishing skillingstrykk as well as popular fiction, penny dreadfuls and ephemerals such as popular series about slaves, “Indians”, robbers, romance and pirates. He also sold books on how to become an illusionist, and how to make a 60-year-old woman appear to be 18. On top of this, he also repaired instruments, broken glass and porcelain.

The fish trade was a large industry in Bergen, and it attracted fishermen, salesmen and buyers from near and far. Twice a year the event *Norlandsstevne* gathered fishermen and dealers to deliver, sell and purchase fish from the great fisheries in Northern Norway. During these events, Theodor Rose put up two stalls at the harbour, and since he was known to be a keen singer who gladly demonstrated the songs he had for sale, we can presume that he was actively both singing and selling from his stalls at the Bergen harbour. Rose developed a close relationship with the people from the coastal part of Norway in general, and the inhabitants of Northern Norway and the fishermen who travelled north to fish in particular. The cod fishing season in Lofoten attracted thousands of people, and besides the fishery itself, it was a huge marketplace (Ressem, in press).

Chief Librarian Victor Smith (1887–1937) wrote the following about Theodor Rose: “Every year as the time for the great fishing season approached, he left his shops in the hands of his children, and headed north to the fishing villages of Lofoten, where people crowded to meet him” (Smith 1933:246, my translation). The population of the small villages and towns

in Lofoten multiplied from mid-January to mid-April, when up to 30,000 fishermen, as well as casual workers, young boys, merchant men, craftsmen, pedlars, liquor sellers, illusionists, booksellers, photographers, clocksmiths, prostitutes and musicians gathered for the annual fishing season. We know that Theodor Rose was there; both from secondary sources and from his own *skillingstrykk*, but further research must be done in order to establish Rose and the other *skillingstrykk* traders amongst all the other merchants and performers in the Lofoten fishery. There are contemporary descriptions of booksellers and other merchants trading from everywhere, both on land and at sea, in fishermen's shacks, in general stores, in tents and sheds. There are vivid descriptions of fabrics draped over the boats, transforming them into small shops; streets filled with tents; signs advertising food, coffee and hot milk; other hidden signs advertising alcohol and charming girls. The few descriptions of the soundscape include shouts from the local post office, fishermen shouting at each other in their boats, the "Clock Jews" calling out in their mixture of languages, and other merchants praising the goods. A few sources describe musicians blasting out dancing tunes from their horns and other grinding their barrel organs (Ressem, in press). But there are no description of singing and the trade in *skillingstrykk*. Even if he operated under the radar of official documentation, he must have made good money. When he left Norway at the age of 47, back to his childhood Copenhagen, he moved into a grand Villa, "Villa Rose", living in prosperity until he died at the age of 85.

In Between and Under the Radar

Some individuals stand out clearly from the great amount of persons that most likely were involved in the trading of songs, small prints and other items like *skillingstrykk*. But many of the sellers probably just blended in; not all of the persons trading in ballads on small cheap prints were eccentrics and great singers and storytellers. It is probably the ones that stood out from the more anonymous gallery of hawkers, pedlars, chapmen and booksellers who were the ones that got their stories told. There might have been a kind of "otherness" about some of the *skillingstrykk* sellers. At least the stories told in retrospect highlight individuals with certain marginality or originality. Both the anonymous and the "celebrities" nonetheless played a role in the mainstream culture in their time.

The place of *skillingstrykk* and *skillingsviser* in singing, performing, begging and the trading of all kinds of stuff might be a part of the reason why the *skillingstrykk* became hard to get hold of in many ways. The street singing and entertaining are more described than the selling of prints in connection with singing. Begging was a bigger challenge to society than selling a song print here and there, if the poor could get hold of a few *skillingstrykk*

to sell, and more was written about begging. And the trading by hawkers and pedlars included so many more things than songs, that maybe the small and cheap prints were more or less overlooked by the authorities. But still, we see from this article that many of the traders made good money, and several of them became quite well-off.

In conclusion we might say that so far, the gap between the lack of normal documentation stands in contrast to the great spread and popularity of skillingstrykk in the 1800s and the early 1900s. There is a paradox in the fact that we talk about a mainstream culture and yet a cultural expression that is poorly documented. To get a better understanding of the skillingstrykk trade, we probably need more knowledge of the trivial and popular cultures in the period in general and also how trading in all kinds of stuff was carried out in both town and country. In addition we should look at skillingstrykk in connection with other small prints with both songs and prose that were in circulation; what was for free and what was for sale. Since trading is crucial in the definition of skillingstrykk we must pay attention to the distinction from prints given out for free, such as occasional verses, printed songs handed out at religious ceremonies, political meetings, idealistic organizations etc. In retrospect, looking at all kinds of small prints with songs, some in neat collections of skillingstrykk, others spread around in all kinds of contexts, it can be hard to define whether a print is a skillingstrykk or not. And the decisive question is: Was it for sale?

Cand. philol. Astrid Nora Ressem
Research Librarian
Department for Research, Music Section
National Library of Norway
P.O.Box. 2674 Solli
NO-0203 Oslo
Norway
e-mail: astrid.ressem@nb.no

References

- Aamot, Kristoffer 1947: En gammel visedikter. Jumbo alias Anthony Bamzh er 70 år. *Arbeiderbladet* 20 October 1947, p. 2.
- Alver, Ivar 2003: Nyhets-skillingviser og sanger som omhandler norsk-svenske relasjoner. *Studia Musicologica Norvegica* 29:96–140.
- Amundsen, Svein Schröder & Reimund Kvideland 1975: *Emigrantviser*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
- Arbeiderbladet* [Newspaper] 4 February 1955, p. 6.
- Atkinson, David & Steve Roud (eds.) 2014: *Street Ballads in Nineteenth-Century Britain, Ireland, and North America. The Interface between Print and Oral Traditions*. Farnham: Ashgate.
- Atkinson, David & Steve Roud 2017: Preface. D. Atkinson & S. Roud (eds.), *Street*

- Literature of the Long Nineteenth Century: Producers, Sellers, Consumers*, pp. xiv–xix. Newcastle upon Tyne, Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Atkinson, David & Steve Roud 2017: Introduction. D. Atkinson & S. Roud (eds.), *Street Literature of the Long Nineteenth Century: Producers, Sellers, Consumers*, pp. 1–59. Newcastle upon Tyne, Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Bergens Stiftstidende* [newspaper] 5 May 1842.
- Bjørnstad, Hans J. 1979: ... men kirkesangeren var pennefører. Små betraktninger omkring skillingsvisen i Nord-Norge – Nord-Norge i skillingsvisen. Værøy: Nordnorsk forlag.
- Blehr, Otto 1974: Sørkedøler i Kristiania. *Byminner* 1:5–16.
- Braaten, Oskar 1938: Gateviser. *St. Hallvard*, pp. 121–138.
- Dancke, Per 1943: En mestertyv som forfatter. Gjest Baardsen – en bibliografisk skisse. Offprint. For bibliofilklubbens medlemmer, Nationaltrykkeriet, Oslo.
- Engen, Arnfinn 1981: *Vaagn op arbeider! Tiden er nær. Skillingsvisa i arbeiderkampen*. Oslo: Tiden.
- Eriksen, Torunn 1980: *To skilling for en sang. Folkelige viser i Nord-Norge*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
- Espeland, Velle 2007: Vandringssongar og tiggervisar – song og identitet nederst på rangstigen. *Norsk folkemusikklags skrifter* 21:58–72. Oslo: Novus.
- Gammon, Vic 2017: Street Ballad Sellers in the Nineteenth Century. D. Atkinson & S. Roud (eds.), *Street Literature of the Long Nineteenth Century: Producers, Sellers, Consumers*, pp. 119–153. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Gjelsvik, Erling T. 2000: *Jakten på Gjest Baardsen. En biografi*. Oslo: Aschehoug.
- Gjøstein Blom, Ådel 1977: *Folkeviser i arbeidslivet. En analyse av visenes funksjon*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
- Gotaas, Thor 2002: *Lirendreiere og lurendreiere*. Oslo: Norsk folkeminnelag/Aschehoug.
- Gotaas, Thor 2004: *På loffen. Landstrykere og vagabonder langs norske landeveier*. First ed. 2001. Oslo: Spartacus.
- Gotaas, Thor 2008: “Wergelandsgutten” (1816–1903): Dyktig felespiller eller bare fyllefant? E. Saugstad (ed.), *Byoriginaler og personligheter i Oslo*, pp. 8–15. Oslo: Frie Fuglers Forlag.
- Grønset, Dagfin 1988: *Villmark og vinløv. Gluggsol over minner*. Oslo: Aschehoug.
- Gunnes, Helga 2008: “I tonene er tårer, i ordene er sukk.” *Sentimental skillingsvisesong som meningsfull musikkutøving i dag*. Masteroppgåve i musikkvitenskap, Universitetet i Oslo.
- Kjus, Audun 2014: Skafottsanger. Line Esborg & Dirk Johannsen (ed.): “en vild endevending av al virkelighet”. *Norsk Folkeminnssamling i hundre år*, pp. 323–333. Oslo: Novus.
- Kverndokk, Kyrre 2015: *Naturkatastrofer. En kulturhistorie*. Oslo: Scandinavian Academic Press.
- Kvideland, Reimund 2005: ‘Bänkel’-songarar i Norge. A. N. Ressem *et al.* (eds.), *Ballar & blue Hawaii: Folkloristiske og musikkvitenskaplege studiar tileigna Velle Espeland i høve 60-årsdagen 6. juli 2005*, pp. 151–160. Oslo: Novus.
- Kvideland, Reimund & Gerald Porter 2001: Working the Railways, Constructing Navy Identity. Luisa del Guidice and Gerald Porter (eds.), *Imagined States. Nationalism, Utopia, and Longing in Oral Cultures*, pp. 80–97. Logan: Utah State University Press.
- Muus, Rudolf 1922: *Gamle Kristiania-originaler*. Kristiania: J. Aass’ forlag.
- Muus, Rudolf 1923: *Gamle Kristiania-minder*. Kristiania: J. Aass’ forlag.

- Neumann, Jacob 1842: Om Gadeviser. *Bergens Stiftstidende* 5 May 1842, pp. 3–4.
- Nielson, Haakon B. 1966: *Byoriginaler*. Oslo: Cappelen.
- Øieren* [local newspaper] 6 September 1911.
- Prøysen, Alf 1959: Kunstnerisk underholdning. *Muntre minner fra Hedemarken. Viser på ei fjøl*, pp. 92–101. Oslo: Helge Erichsens forlag.
- Ressem, Astrid 2018 [?]. Street Singing and Selling in Seasonal Cod Fisheries: A Trade Operating Under the Contemporary Radar? S. Bonanzinga, L. D. Giudice & T. McKeen (eds.), *Suoni e Culture. Street Music and Narrative Traditions*. Palermo, Museo Internazionale delle Marionette. In press.
- Rudie, Gunnar (ed.) 1980: Fra Alf Bjerckes erindringer. *Byminner* 4:3–24.
- Saugstad, Even (ed.) 2008: *Byoriginaler og personligheter i Oslo*. Oslo: Frie Fuglers Forlag.
- Skogheim, Dag & Kjell Sandvik 1977: *Blind-Fredrik. Gruvesluskenes egen dikter og landets siste skillingsvisesanger*. Oslo: Tiden.
- Smith, Victor 1933: Theodor Rose: Litt om visehandel for et halvt hundre år siden. *Overbibliotekar Wilhelm Munthe på femtiårsdagen 20. oktober 1933. Fra fagfeller og venner*, pp. 241–249. Oslo: Grøndahl.
- Solberg, Olav 1984: “Blant de villeste fjelle...” – rallarvisediktaren Ferdinand Iversen. *Sumlen. Årbok för vis- och folkmusikforskning* 1984, pp. 67–81.
- Solberg, Olav 1996: “O sorgelige tider! O trengende stand!” *Krigsviser og andre skillingsviser frå Stryn*. Oslo: Norsk folkeminnelag / Aschehoug.
- Storsve, Stein 2002: *Vestfoldhistorie for en skilling (1841–1951)*. Vestfold historielag og Færder forlag.
- Strand, Karin 2015: Tidsspeglung, tendens och tradering: Introduktion till skillingtryck som källmaterial. M. Ramsten, K. Strand & G. Ternhag (eds.), *Tryckta visor. Perspektiv på skillingtryck som källmaterial*, pp. 9–17. Uppsala: Kungl. Gustav Adolfs Akademien.
- VG* [Oslo-based newspaper] 1 August 1878.

Website

Anton Andersen in Digitalt museum, Justismuseet – The Norwegian National Museum of Justice. <https://digitaltmuseum.no/021017281523/anton-andersen>, downloaded 15 June 2018.

¹ “... Kolportørraad af Kjørlingerne, der streifede Gaderne langs med store Kurve fulde af Al-manakker og Gadeviser, dem de selv avsang med mere eller mindre skurrende og afskyelig Stemme, for at Lysthavende kunde blive bekjendte med Melodien” (Neumann 1842:[3]).

² Oslo was named Christiania from 1624. From 1877 the name was written Kristiania in some official papers and from 1897 by local authorities. From 1925 Oslo again became the official name of the Norwegian capital. I will use Oslo in this article, except when it is about names of special places or events like the annual Christiania/Kristiania Market.

³ 1 Norwegian krone is 100 øre.

⁴ En tomflaske til 9 kroner. En fattig mand, som gaar omkring og sælger bøger, viser og forskjellige smaaterier, vaagnet forleden med kun en tomflaske som sin hele eiendom her i verden. Han solgte tomflasken for 3 øre, kjøpte saa for de 3 øre 3 viser hos en visehandler, solgte viserne for 30 øre, kjøpte saa 5 smaahefter a 6 øre stykket og solgte dem igjen for 30 øre pr. stykke. Saaledes fortsatte han hele dagen, til han om ettermiddagen hadde faat 9 kroner for sin tomflaske!

⁵ “De er mennesker de også”.

⁶ “Skrepparvisa”: “God dag godtfolk her idne / fortryt no inkje på / at eg so dristig kjeme / og ind te dykk må gå.”

⁷ “En sørgelig Sang om den rædselsfulde Ulykke under Branden i Kongens Gade den 15. September 1903 hvor 10 Personer indbrændte. Af Jumbo. Motto: En kostbar Skosvæerte blev kokt den Dag.”

⁸ Thanks to Siv Gøril Brandtzæg for sharing!

⁹ “mulkeret med 100 kroners bod for at have blottet sit lem paa gaden”. <https://digitaltmuseum.no/021017281523/anton-andersen>.

Paintings in the Heart

Early Modern Swedish Broadside Ballads of Wonders and Accidents

Kristiina Savin

Abstract

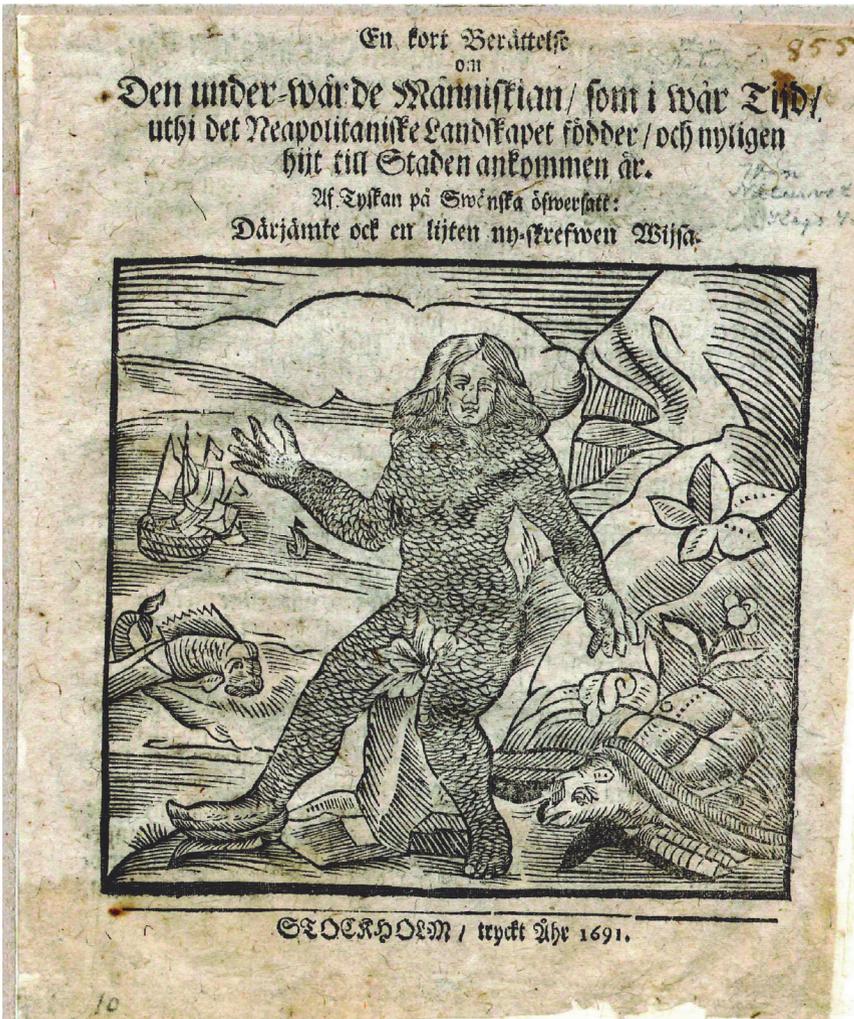
This article investigates the reception of Swedish broadside songs dealing with wonders and accidents from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Focusing on rhetorical strategies, the study suggests that these broadside ballads were designed to function as the basis for Lutheran meditation. The wonders and accidents are interpreted as the divine words of God, and the shocking images are used to create a strong visual and emotional appeal intended to influence the inner life of the audience.

Keywords: broadside ballads, Lutheran piety, monstrous births, religious meditation, wonders

Among the Swedish broadside ballads there is a category usually referred to as “ballads of wonders” (*visor om under*) (Jersild 1975:46). Most of them, printed between 1660 and 1820, present deformed animals and children, but there are also ballads of other sensational phenomena: a girl who had survived seven years without food, several men who transform into dogs, and a horse who has given birth to two human children. They all have a religious message, urging people to contemplate the wonders of God and repent their sins. The ballads were thus meant to cause a mental and moral change: to influence the audience’s thoughts, feelings and actions. But how were these simple texts to achieve this goal? What were the hermeneutic and rhetorical strategies that would make the wonders into a matter for a Christian’s inner spiritual life?

The Swedish philologist Shirley Näslund has shown in her studies of monster births that many broadside ballads have a structure similar to Lutheran sermons. The sermon was usually based on one or more texts from the Scripture. In the same way, the malformed bodies are used as the basis for songs: first the bodies are described and interpreted, thereafter the lessons are adapted to the spiritual state of the audience. It concludes with a prayer (Näslund 2010a, 2010b).

The aim of this article is to highlight the possible impact of another contemporary genre: I will claim that monsters and other wonders are used as



1. Title page of *En kort Berättelse om Den under-wärde Människian/ som i vår Tjd/ uthi det Neapolitaniske Landskapet födder/ och nyligen hijt till Staden ankommen är/ Af Tyskan på Swänska öfversatt: Därjämte ock en litten ny-skrefwen Wijssa* (Stockholm, 1691).

objects of meditation according to the Lutheran model of *meditatio* (Swedish *betraktelse*). An additional issue, in need of further explication, is the role of orality: the stories about wonders were designated to be sung. Here I will make an attempt to relate broadside ballads to the linguistic theory of Martin Luther, claiming that orality is fundamental to the ballads' presentation of the wonders as an object of meditation. Finally, I also try to answer the question how the wonders could survive as a popular motif in the ballads, despite the fact that their divine origin was denied in natural sciences of the late seventeenth century (cf. Savin 2011).¹

Meditating Wonders

A short story about the Wondrous Man (En kort Berättelse om Den underwårde Människian) was translated from German to Swedish and published in Stockholm in 1691. In the introductory prose, we get to know that a baby boy had been born with fish scales and other bodily defects in Apulia, in southern Italy. The malformation is given a scientific explanation. The mother of the child was a curious lady, fascinated beyond measure by snails, turtles and fish that she could see on the beach in her home county. Her tremendous preoccupation with these sea creatures, in connection with certain astrological influences, affected the fetus in her womb in such a way that it was born with fish-like deformities. The lady hid the child, but after six years he was brought out and shown at markets and fairs around Europe, according to the prose description. In the Swedish translation, the account of the natural physical causes of the malformations is completed with a ballad that points out that such “Wondrous things” seem to remind a man of something more than just of the physical causes. They remind him of God’s grace:

Hwad andra må härom åtskilligt tänka/
 Will jag min Hiertans Tanckar endast länka/
 Till dig/ min Gud/ och takka af all Hog/
 För all tin Nåd du synes mig påminna/
 Då iag det Under noga eftersinnar/
 Thet är mig nog.

Let other people think all kinds of things about this
 I want to fasten my heart’s thoughts onto God
 to you my God, thanking with all my senses
 you for your Mercy that you are reminding me of
 When I’m pondering this
 For me, that is enough.

The poetic ego of the poem is satisfied with meditating over the wonders without asking for secular explanations, even if he is aware that such are available. Wonders are accessible to the faith without such comments. Meditating is effective in itself. Here is a parallel to the idea of the cause of malformations in the mother’s eager “meditation and [...] pondering” about fish and sea creatures. The sensory experiences were seen at that time as something that had a strong effect on the person.

Christians should contemplate wonders – either through reading or in nature – and let their thoughts rise to higher spiritual truths. Such an approach to the physical world goes back to the ideas presented by Saint Augustine in *De Doctrina Christiana* (427), claiming that God has not created sensual things only to be enjoyed, but to be used as a way to God and the Christian truth. The Latin equivalent of the Swedish *betraktelse* is *meditatio*. This word was often used in the Early Modern Period and its signification could shift from repetitive half-loud reading of the Bible to a deeper self-reflection

in the light of the Christian truths. The starting point for meditation is the external word that is contemplated according to the model *lectio–meditatio–oratio–contemplatio* (reading–meditation–prayer–contemplation). This model has its roots in medieval monastic piety, but in Early Modern Europe it was a theological common property that was conveyed freely over the confessional boundaries. The Lutheran meditation, however, differs from the Catholic one. Instead of the older four-part schedule, Luther had proposed a three-part model: *oratio–meditatio–tentatio* (prayer–sermon–examination of experience). An important difference is that for Luther, the ultimate aim of meditation is not a spiritual contemplation of the truth (*contemplatio*), but an examination (*tentatio*) of the personal experience (Nicol 1984:99).

In Early Modern Europe, the *meditatio* technique was applied in its various forms in different areas from sermons and spiritual literature to poetics, music, emblematics and painting. A common topic for contemplation was the suffering of Jesus Christ, the crucifixion and his wounded body. Other widespread genres were death meditation and Hell meditation. Several of these meditation types could be said to have their counterparts among broadside songs. That way, for example, ballads about executions can be classified as a kind of death meditation (*meditatio mortis*), at least until the last decades of the eighteenth century, when the pattern changes and a more secular model of presentation, that puts more emphasis on sensation, emerges (Savin 2011:281–285).

Making Mental Images

The title page of a printed ballad about a wonder that occurred in Norra Åby in Scania, where a young woman, Ester Jönsdotter, lay in her bed for seven years without food and drink (1710), announces that the audience should pay attention to the starving maiden, miraculously supported by God, and contemplate this wonder, as well as all other wonderful workings of God. Man should ponder the events and “sketch” them in his heart:

Derföre du och bör Tig allan Tijd beflijta/
 At skåda hwad GUD gör/ Des Underwäreck och rijta/
 Uti dit hierta/ til Betrachtelse/ då wist/
 Tin GUD och HERre will Tig taga till sig sidst.

Therefore, you always have to try
 To look at what God is doing, and sketch his wondrous works
 Inside your heart, for meditation, then for sure
 Your God will take you to be with Him at the end.

In her survey of Christian meditation, *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400–1200*, the medievalist Mary Carruthers shows that the Latin phrase (*de*)*pingere in corde* was used by St

Jerome, St Augustine and other fourth-century theologians to describe the effect of the rhetorical figure of *evidentia* (in Greek *enargeia*), which creates vivid mental images and engraves them in the memory (Carruthers 1998: 133–135). This rhetorical figure is a fundamental component of meditations. The Swedish expressions *rita* (sketch), *måla* (paint) and *avmålning* (painting), which usually occur in ballads about wonders refer to this kind of verbal paintings. The Swedish translation of the Dutch classical scholar Gerhardus Johannes Vossius' *Elementa rhetorica* (1646), a mandatory textbook in all Swedish schools during the second half of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century, translates this rhetorical term with the word *afmålning*, i.e. painting (Vossius 1732:62–63).

The broadside ballad about Ester Jönsdotter is a good example of how wondrous events can become objects of sung meditation in the service of Christian faith. In the last verse it is apparent that the end of meditation is salvation. The view of God's wonders produces a series of spiritual effects. Through the enlightenment of the Spirit man is filled with wisdom and knowledge of God. Feeling confidence, his heart wishes to follow the commandments. The author of the ballad claims that the view of God's wonders makes the soul susceptible to the influence of the Holy Ghost. Indeed, in early modern Lutheranism, God's Word was perceived as being active in itself: it is not man's personal interpretation that activates the Word, but the word itself with its physical presence. Man becomes receptive to the effects of the Holy Ghost when the word of God is sung, read, mumbled or written. Through prayer and meditation, man enters into the word's field of action (Hägglund 1976; cf. von Lüpke 2014).

It should also be added that in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, the Bible and the devotional literature were usually read aloud. Christian meditation was performed as a half-loud repetitive mumbling, also called rumination (*ruminatio*). The moment of repetition and rumination was of greater importance to the meditation than the intellectual understanding (Hägglund 1994).

The case of the starving Scanian girl caused an extensive debate among doctors and theologians who inspected her bodily condition. The ballad, however, does not seek rational explanations of how a young woman could survive seven years without eating and drinking, but advises the audience to embrace the story with their hearts. This strategy of reception can be seen as a parallel to the Lutheran approach to the word of Scripture. The word of the Scripture, claims Martin Luther, opposing the long tradition of allegorical interpretations, is clear in itself – there is no need of learned interpretation, as the Word is accessible to everybody through the understanding of faith (cf. von Lüpke 2014).

The distinction between natural, unnatural and supernatural is not of major importance to the authors of the broadside ballads. Monstrous bodies can

be used as objects of contemplation because they attract attention and amazement, offering images to the public's inner eye. No matter how convincing natural physical explanations are given, there always remains the possibility of using the wondrous events as objects of meditation, leading the mind to spiritual truths. Here we find a possible answer to the question of how stories of wonders could survive naturalization in the second half of the seventeenth century when ever more phenomena that were previously thought to deviate from the order of creation were given natural explanations in physics. The ballad's main concern is not to investigate physical explanations of the natural phenomena, but to make a theological use of them, as was the case in other theological genres propagating the marvellous workings of God (Savin 2011:190–194).

A ballad about a monstrous calf, discovered in Södermanland in 1691, *Synda-ånger, Vthbrustin När dhen ynkelige, Förskräckeliga och allom Menniskiom Faßliga Misfödzel, sigh tilldrogh* (*Painful repentance, risen when this pitiable, dreadful and for all men shocking Monster was given birth*), urges the listeners to behold the course of nature and subdue their pride:

Träd här fram med öppna Ögon
Högfärd; fulla Menniskio Kropp
stick ey Finger i din Öron
men besee Naturens Lopp
hwad Gud dig här målar före
för dhet onda du mån göra.

Step here with open eyes
Human body full of pride
Do not put your fingers in your ears
But observe the course of nature
That God is painting here in front of you
For this evil that you may do.

The ballad states that no effort is needed to understand the significance of the monstrous calf; on the contrary, it is difficult to avoid its painful admonitions. Such an optimistic view of man's ability to perceive God's intentions in nature may seem surprising, as the signs and wonders of this kind were dismissed in scientific contexts, and given natural explanations. Monster ballads are meant to engage the audience's feelings and will. Therefore, the visual and affective appeal of the ballad here becomes more important than the logical reasoning of an intellectual interpretation.

The admonition "do not put fingers in your ears / but observe the course of nature" may seem illogical to a modern reader since the blocking of the ears does not prevent man from seeing. The sentence becomes understandable only when we relate it to the idea of nature as a verbal representation: the image that God "paints" is an image conveyed by words and intended to



2. Title page of *Synda-ånger / Uthbrustin När dhen ynkelige / Förkräkeliga och allom Menniskiom Fastliga Misfödzel / sigh tilldrogh i Södermanland Åhr 1691 uppå ett widibekant Ställe. Siunges såsom Ach hwad ont Man nu förnimmer* (n.p., 1691)

be sung. The monster's warning message will reach the audience through their ears. Thus, the man who puts his fingers in his ears neglects God's "paintings" as these are conveyed to him as words and tones of the ballad.

The ultimate purpose of meditation is not a knowledge of the monstrous details, but an in-depth reflection of the individual's relationship to God: the meditating person should not bewail the monsters, but her own sinful life, applying the teachings of the ballads to the status of her own soul: investigating the condition of it, regretting the sins and improving herself. The spiritual process is called penitence (*poenitentia*), a decisive step on the path of salvation.

God speaks to the sinful man through the signs of nature. The human being, in turn, is expected to see and hear this speech. For a modern reader, it may seem strange that a speech should be seen, but for a person with experience of classical rhetoric, this may have been unproblematic. Rhetoric provided a series of illustrative techniques that created verbal images for the inner eye. The most important among the many figures was *evidentia*. Within rhetoric, this term refers to an illustrative representation that convinces the audience through its sensible qualities. Detailed scenes are painted up through words and make the recipient feel like an eyewitness.

The word of God is visible like a painting because it utilizes the techniques of rhetoric, producing vivid and clear images in the audience's inner eye, that can be "considered" and memorized. Today, this idea may seem to be somewhat esoteric, but it probably did not appear so in early modern times, as it was based on the most basic knowledge of rhetoric, practised in early modern schools.

The oral speech serves as a model for communication between man and God. Melodies are indicated on the title pages. The majority of the ballad prints indicate religious melodies, of which one is particularly frequent: the penitential psalm *Kommen hit till mig, säger Guds son*, also printed in the Swedish hymnbook from 1695 (Näslund 2010a).

Internalizing the Word of God

From the last decades of the seventeenth century, the Swedish broadside prints were illustrated with woodcuts. Thus one could assume that the images also have been shaped to serve as meditation objects. Nevertheless, the texts primarily refer to the words as the objects of meditation. A well-known ballad, reprinted several times, *En Märckwärdig, Stoor, Högt-förunderlig Och Sällsynt Fisk (A Wondrous, Huge, Highly Marvellous and Rare Fish*, 1726, about twenty editions until the 1820s) is illustrated with a large detailed woodcut. The title page, however, claims that the miracle "is examined more carefully in the following ballad". The fish, caught near Geneva, had a human face, a crown on its head, and a sword and a

wagon with a cannon on its back. The ballad describes and interprets the strange details of the fish as warning signs of an imminent war.

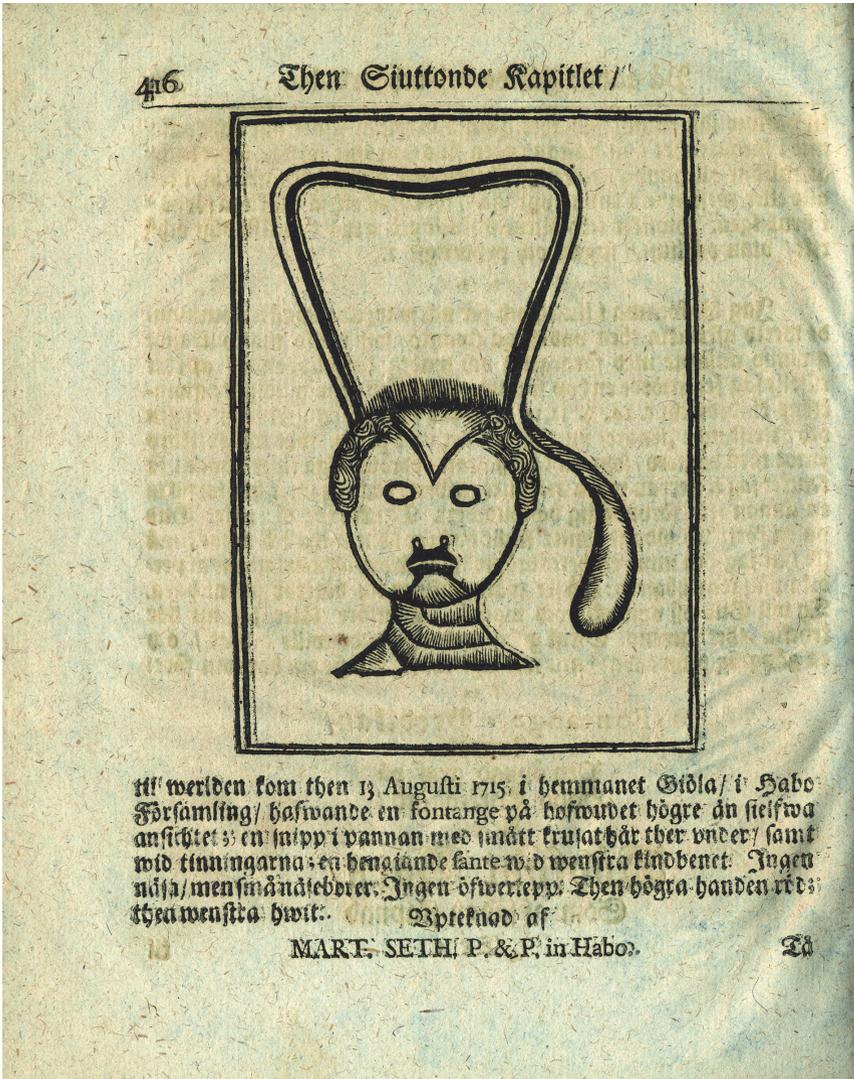
Sometimes ballads are called homilies. Vicar Martinus Seth's ballad *Fontange Predikan, Lemnad Vtu öpnad graf på Habo Kyrkiogård, Af ett Dödfödt Barn* (Sermon against fontanges, delivered from an open grave in the churchyard of Habo, by a stillborn baby) tells about a malformed fetus from Habo parish in Västergötland, born on 13 August 1715. The child was stillborn and had already been buried, but because the vicar Martin Seth wished to inspect its body, the grave was opened and a drawing of the fetus was made.

The words of the ballad are uttered by the fetus himself. God lets his creation speak. The monstrous child with his physical anomalies is "a miracle of the Almighty's word". The word of God is thus communicated through flesh and blood. Seth claims that God has depicted the sin of pride through the appearance of its body. The malformation of the child's head depicts the fashion of the time, a female ornament of bands, lace and flares called *fontange*. The design originates from Louis XIV's mistress Angélique de Fontanges. It can be seen as a verbal message, which means "a big evil", as Seth puts it. The sin of pride – the mother of all other sins – had since the first centuries of Christianity been attacked through a critique of fashion trends. In late antiquity, the church fathers Cyprian and Ambrose held polemic sermons against the women's use of cosmetics and extravagant hairstyles in Carthage and Milan.

The dead fetus is said to want to open his mouth in order to scare women and to wake them out of sin. The ballad emphasizes that the malformation is not due to "imagination", i.e. the influence of the mother's fantasies, but is a true sign of divine origin. In order to avoid divine punishments, women are admonished to refrain from their high hairstyles and men to lay down their powdered wigs.

Jag sedan öpna wil en munn
som kan förskreckia
I stolta Döttrar/ Er
och utu sömnen weckia;
Men stolta Döttrar I
hwad jag påminna wil
O märcker giömer grant
och legger öron til.

And then I want to open my mouth
That can scare you,
proud daughters
And wake you from your sleep
But you, proud daughters,
What I want to remind you of
Oh, please take careful notice
And lend your ear to this.



3. The reprint of the woodcut from Martin Seth, *Fontange Predikan* in Jesper Swedberg, *Schibboleth. Swenska Språketz Rycht og Richtighet* (1716).

The fetus asks the women to listen to its voice. Although the print is illustrated with a visually evocative woodcut showing the malformed head, the audience is encouraged to perceive the message by lending their ears. The idea of monstrous births as God's voice embodied in flesh becomes strikingly remarkable in one of the pioneering works of the Swedish language: the woodcut of this malformed child's head is reprinted in Bishop Jesper Swedberg's *Schibboleth: Swenska Språketz Rycht og Richtighet* (*Schibbo-*

leth: The Reputation and Correctness of the Swedish Language, 1716). The image illustrates the word *fontange*, but should still not be regarded as a simple illustration. The purpose of *Schibboleth* is to explain the Biblical language, the pure word of God, something that Swedberg and his colleague Martinus Seth even found in the malformed child.

The message of the fetus is intended to be sung. Although the text is called a sermon, it has become a part of a new media situation, circulating along new routes of dissemination and reception. Singing is a contemplative activity closely related to the practices of prayer, meditation and preaching. It is a way to internalize the divine warnings, imprinting them in memory through vivid and visually impressive images, supported by rhythm, rhyme and melody. The singing person preaches to himself.

For Martin Luther, music had a cosmological foundation: it is a gift of God to be used in the service of faith. The gospel is to be spread through *Singen und Sagen*, ‘by singing and saying’. The word of God gains its effect when circulated (*ym schwang*) as a living oral sound, aimed at both reason and heart. In the seventeenth century, the Lutheran ideas about music were conveyed through Philipp Melancthon, theologian and collaborator of Martin Luther. He emphasizes the special power of song, its ability to affect the senses and touch the feelings (Krummacher 1994:20). There is a close relationship between singing and the mental practice of meditation. Among the classics of Western music history there are a large number of toned meditations, such as Heinrich Schütz Jesus’ *Seven Words on the Cross* (1645), Dietrich Buxtehude’s *Memphis Jesus Nostri* (Our Body of Jesus Christ, 1680) and the *Matthew Passion* by Johann Sebastian Bach (1727).

There is an important difference between music and song, between listening and singing. Singing has a close relation to repentance and the improvement of the singer’s soul. The Swedish priest Olof Ekman passes sharp criticism on organ playing and other instrumental music during the mass. Such music fills the ears, but does not move the heart. It does not contribute to repentance as much as singing does, and should thus be restricted. Only singing can “wake up slow minds” to praise the Lord. Just listening to a song is not as effective as singing yourself. The Swedish church law of 1686 emphasizes that music should not dominate the service, otherwise the singing of the congregation would be disturbed (Savin 2011:200).

In order to characterize the use of shocking images and *exempla*, the German historian Jörg Jocher Berns has pointed out that early modern edification and education practices often aimed to evoke strong affects and mental pain (Berns 2005:25–56). In early modern Swedish broadside texts, we find a large amount of shocking images, both engravings and verbal descriptions, intended to arouse feelings of remorse and a fear of God’s punishments. The painful memories generated by imagination and meditation on

anomalous bodies, accidents and other dreadful phenomena remind man of the sins and the Lord's commandments.

Unlike the majority of contemporary broadside ballads, the song about the stillborn baby in Habo reports the author's name on its title page. As Margareta Jersild has shown, only a small number of Swedish broadside prints before 1800 contain information about the authors, the rule is, on the contrary, that the authors remain anonymous. Among known authors before 1800, there are a number of theologians and learned writers (Jersild 1975: 61–67). This leads us to the question of whether the broadsides about wonders should be considered a product of learned upper classes, an instrument of moral and religious control. However, as earlier scholars have pointed out, broadside ballads are highly heterogeneous and thus cannot be seen as representative of a single social group (Danielson 2015:11; Nilsson Hammar 2015:89–90). Given that crafting mental images belonged to the basic rhetorical skills and habits of the time, it should probably not have been difficult even for a half-educated person to compose a meditation on a wondrous event.

Memorable Accidents

One of the most widespread Swedish broadside songs tells about a girl who trampled on bread: *Ett sällsynt Straff, Wisadt på en högfärdig och sina fattiga Föräldrar föraktande dotter, uti en liten stad i Pommern, benämnd Sibbau 1759* (*A rare punishment, shown by a haughty daughter who despised her poor parents, in a little town in Pomerania, called Sibbau 1759*). The ballad gained great popularity in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Sweden and was published under somewhat varying titles in at least 35 editions, the latest in 1905.

The story is about a young maiden who is on her way to her poor parents with two loaves of bread. When she reaches a brook, she lays the bread down in it and steps on them in order to protect her new shoes. At the same moment, she sinks down in the bread, gets caught in there for ever and dies. The song could be viewed as a song giving news. The oldest Swedish source for the story about a girl who trampled on the bread is published in a newspaper *Någre nye avisor* (*Some recent news*) of 21 May 1657 announcing that a lady from nearby Flensburg, Ida Glansen, eighteen days ago, on 3 May 1657, had in that way suffered “God's righteous judgement”, and that her dead body still remains in the place where it has already been viewed by several thousand people (Hansson 1987). In a 1859 fairy tale by Hans Christian Andersen a story is added about what happened to the girl after her death. Standing as a statue in the devil's lounge in Hell, she suffered the torments until she was rescued by a small girl who cried over her.

The broadside ballads about God's punishments do not have happy end-

ings. The popular ballad ends with the girl getting caught in the mud and turning into a stone. The singer invites people to think about this story and to avoid the sin of haughtiness.

O människor, betänken er:
 högfärden låten fara,
 och synden, var I honom ser,
 han är en farlig snara.
 Låt pigans ofärd skrämma er
 från synd och stolthet mer och mer,
 om I vill himlen ärva.

Oh people, contemplate it
 Let the haughtiness go
 and the sin where you see it
 this is a dangerous trap
 Let the servant maid's misfortune scare you
 away from sin and haughtiness, more and more
 if you want to inherit the heavens.

The song is formed as an example story, an *exemplum* that is formulated as a warning. Such an instrumental usage of sensational events has a parallel in contemporary songs about more common accidents without supernatural elements. Two school boys drowned when they were about to take a cooling swim in Linköping brook in June 1686. The accident is recorded in *Twå Sorgelige Klage-Wijsor, Öfwer Twenne Unga Scholae Personers Dödh* (*Two sad ballads, about the death of two school pupils*). As an introduction, the boys complaining about the bitter death that occurred in the middle of swimming but thereafter they admit that they themselves were guilty of that – they were disobedient and did not follow their teacher's sound advice. They regret it but it is too late (Hedin 2004:18–19).

A song about a little boy's tragic death near Tranemo in Västergötland, printed in *Tree sköna Nyia Wijsor* (*Three beautiful new ballads*, 1687) tells that the child had fallen backwards in a big cauldron filled with boiling water. The dead person talks in the first person and asks everybody to stop and ponder over the death. He says that he was happy, had danced, sung and run, but suddenly the accident came "quick and difficult" and pushed him in the cauldron. The song is both a mourning song and a warning at the same time. These concluding stanzas clearly explain that the boy's "little and slender soul" is happy now in Abraham's lap in Heaven, but at the same time the boy is presented as an example to warn other children who should be careful not to have accidents:

Andre Barn til Exempel klar
 Sigh wachte för Olyckan snar
 At Döden ey hastigt och fort
 Som migh är händt/ them rycker bort.

For other children it is a clear example
 They should take care not to end in an unexpected accident
 So that death will not take them suddenly and quickly
 As is the case with me.

The warning songs are not aimed at the mourning relatives but the wider audience. Similar educational examples can be found from classical mythology, the Bible and historical descriptions of events. The two songs above can be compared to a broadside *Then älendige Icarus Stora Förmätenhet och olyckelige Företagande* (*The great presumption of poor Icarus and his unlucky enterprise*, 1702). From his father Daedalus the young Icarus received wings built of feathers and wax but he flew with them too near the sun, fell into the sea and drowned.

Even songs about factual historical accidents could be published several years after the accident, which shows that the message was assigned a universal applicability and that it was not only about spreading the news or dealing with the actual crisis situation. “O Lisbon! Your death will we never forget”, runs a line from *Det olyckeliga Lissabon* (*Unlucky Lisbon*) a broadside ballad that spread in Sweden several years after the great earthquake in 1755 (Broberg 2005). In the same way as spiritual literature, this song turns to a wide audience completely despite the fact that most of the Swedes who would possibly sing it had no personal connection to the event in question (cf. Hedin 2004).

To what extent does the configuration of Swedish broadside ballads depend on the specific cultural settings of early modern Sweden? Did Swedish ballads differ from their German, English or Danish counterparts? The interpretation of divine messages appears to have been similar in these countries (Razovsky 1996; Crawford 2005), but more comprehensive studies are required in order to clarify the development of prints and ballads in varying national and confessional contexts. A quick glance at English sources reveals some differences regarding narrative techniques and melodies. In England ballads of wonders were usually sung to secular melodies (Razovsky 1996). Histories were told from the third-person perspective, and thus lacking the typical features of Lutheran penitential meditation. A comprehensive comparison of broadside prints and ballads from different parts of Europe still remains a desideratum.

Kristiina Savin, PhD
Researcher
History of Ideas and Science
Lund University
Box 192
221 00 Lund
Sweden
Kristiina.Savin@kultur.lu.se

References

Sources (broadside ballads)

- En Andelig Wijsa [...] stäld öfwer Een Bonde Piga/ benämd ESDRE Uthi Norra Åby och Wämmenhögds Härads uti Skåne/ som nu uppå 7de åhret stedze legat til Sängz utan all lekamlig Mat eller dryck [...] Alla Christtrogna Menniskior til wählmeent underrättelse och Christeligt Efftertänckiande* (Lund, 1710).
- En kort Berättelse om Den under-wärde Människian/ som i vår Tjd/ uthi det Neapolitaniske Landskapet födder/ och nyligen hijt till Staden ankommen är/ Af Tyskan på Swänska öfwersatt: Därjämte ock en lijten ny-skrefwen Wijsa* (Stockholm, 1691).
- En Märckwärdig/ Stoor/ Högt-förunderlig Och Sällsynt Fisk/ Hwilken med stor Möda wid Staden Genff är fångad/ hafwandes ett Menniskio-Ansichte/ och på hufvudet en krona med trenne dubbla Kors [...].* (s.l., 1726).
- Piscator, Petrus Olai, *Then älendige Icari Stora Förmätenhet och olyckelige Företagande/ Förestält uti en Ny Wijsa/ Som siunges vnder then Thon: Migh gör stor Lust och Glädie then sköna Sommar Tijdh* (s.l., 1702).
- Seth, Martin, *Fontange Predikan/Lemnad Vtu öpnad graf på Habo Kyrkiogård/ Aff ett Dödfödt Barn* (s.l., 1716).
- Synda-ånger/ Uthbrustin När dhen ynkelige/ Förskräckeliga och allom Menniskiom Faßliga Misfödzel/ sigh tilldrogh i Södermanland Åhr 1691 uppå ett widtbekant Ställe. Siunges såsom Ach hwad ont Man nu förnimmer* (u.o., 1691).
- Tree sköna Nyia Wijsor/ Then Första. O Wandringzman och etc. Är een ynkeligh doch trösteligh Valetz-Wijsa/ Componerat och stält vthöfwer en lijten Vng Pilt/ som vthi Wästergötland icke långt ifrån Tranemoo/föll baaklänges vthi en skållande heet Watukiättel/ och brände sig til Dödz* (Linköping, 1687).
- Twå Sorgelige Klage-Wijsor/ Öfwer Twenne Unga Scholae Personers Dödh som i Linköpings Ström olyckeligen uthi watnet omkommo och borto blefwo den 10 Junij Anno 1686 Skrifne aff deras bekante wänner J.A. L.A. Sjunges som Wändt aff min Siäl at jämra sigh/ e& (Linköpingh, [1686]).*

Literature

- Berns, Jörg Jochen 2005: *Schmerzende Bilder. Zu Machart und mnemonischer Qualität monströser Konstrukte in Antike und Früher Neuzeit*. Roland Borgards (ed.), *Schmerz und Erinnerung in der Frühen Neuzeit*. München.
- Broberg, Gunnar 2005: *Tsunamin i Lissabon. Jordbävningen den 1 november 1755, i epicentrum och i svensk periferi*. Stockholm.
- Carruthers, Mary J. 1998: *The Craft of Thought. Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400–1200*. Cambridge.
- Crawford, Julie 2005: *Marvelous Protestantism. Monstrous Births in Post-Reformation England*. Baltimore.
- Danielson, Eva 2015: Att försörja sig på skillingtryck. Märta Ramsten, Karin Strand & Gunnar Ternhag (eds.), *Tryckta visor. Perspektiv på skillingtryck som källmaterial*. Uppsala.
- Hägglund, Bengt 1976: *Efficacia verbi. Frågan om Ordet som nådemedel i äldre luthersk tradition*. Bengt Hägglund, Holsten Fagerberg, Leiv Aalen & Ivar Asheim (eds.), *Kirken og nådemidlene. Festskrift til professor dr. theol. Leiv Aalen på 70-årsdagen 21. september 1976*. Oslo.
- Hägglund, Bengt 1994: *Meditationen och fromhetens praxis i stormaktstidens lutherdom*. Alf Härdelin (ed.), *Svensk spiritualitet. Tio studier av förhållandet tro-kyrka-praxis, Tro & tanke 1994:1–2*. Uppsala.

- Hansson, Stina 1987: Trampa inte på bröd! Lars Lönnroth & Sven Delblanc (eds.), *Den svenska litteraturen*, 1. *Från forntid till frihetstid: 800–1718*. Stockholm.
- Hedin, Östen 2004: Vackra versar om den förskräckliga olyckan – om olyckshändelser i skillingtryck. *Biblis: Tidskrift för bokhistoria, bibliografi, bokhantverk, samlande* 28, pp. 16–31.
- Jersild, Margareta 1975: *Skillingtryck. Studier i svensk folklig vissång före 1800*. Stockholm.
- Krummacher, Christoph 1994: *Musik als praxis pietatis. Zur Selbstverständnis evangelischen Kirchenmusik*. Göttingen.
- von Lüpke, Johannes 2014: Luther's Use of Language. Robert Kolb, Irene Dingel & Lubomir Batka (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther's Theology*. Oxford.
- Näslund, Shirley 2010a: Den mångstämmiga monstervisan – röster, intertexter och kontexter i skillingtryck om sällsamma skepnader. *Arkiv för nordisk filologi* 125, pp. 127–154.
- Näslund, Shirley 2010b: Monstervisan i retorisk och historisk belysning. *Rhetorica Scandinavica* 54, pp. 30–48.
- Nicol, Martin 1984: *Meditation bei Luther*. Göttingen.
- Nilsson Hammar, Anna 2015: En värld höljd i dunkel. Om skillingtryck, språk och historia. Märta Ramsten, Karin Strand & Gunnar Ternhag (eds.), *Tryckta visor. Perspektiv på skillingtryck som källmaterial*. Uppsala.
- Razovsky, Helaine 1996: Popular Hermeneutics: Monstrous Children in English Renaissance Broadside Ballads. *Early Modern Literary Studies* 2.3. <https://extra.shu.ac.uk/emls/02-3/razoball.html>.
- Savin, Kristiina 2011: *Fortunas klädnader. Lycka, olycka och risk i det tidigmoderna Sverige*. Lund.
- Vossius, Gerhardus Johannes 1732: *Elementa rhetorica, I Svenska Språket vttolkade, Och Then Studerande Vngdomen til tjenst i liuset framgifne*. Stockholm.

¹ The subject matter discussed in this article has previously been examined by the author in her doctoral thesis, see Savin 2011.

Songs in Swedish Volksbücher and Chapbook Stories

Östen Hedin

Abstract

This article focuses on the songs "hidden" in the collection of Volksbücher and Chapbook stories in the National Library of Sweden. Examples of different kinds of connections between stories and songs are given. Some of the songs actually turn out to have been published in chapbooks before they appeared as broadsides. In a survey of prose prints containing songs, the first lines of the songs are presented here together with the title of the story. One of the main purposes of the study is to increase access to this useful source material for research.

Keywords: chapbooks, Volksbücher, Swedish folk songs, book history, bibliography

The study of popular prose narratives, which in scholarly literature are referred to with the German term *Volksbuch* or the English chapbook, has primarily focused on textual strategies. The present study of "Sagor och berättelser" (Tales and stories), the vast collections of such material at the Kungliga biblioteket /National Library of Sweden, will attempt to unveil elements of song-making and folk song culture in these small, cheaply produced imprints and how their hitherto neglected songs were spread.

Introduction

Johann Joseph von Görres, a member of the Heidelberg romantic group, coined the term *Volksbuch* in his publication *Die teutschen Volksbücher* in 1807 to refer to a literary form that had its origin in a groundswell of popular literary expression (Görres 1807). In Sweden however Görres's term connoted something quite different, as borne out by the Swedish scholarly tradition in this field (Wingård 2011:412).¹

P. O. Bäckström published a bibliography of Swedish fairy tales, legends, adventure stories, dream books and ghost stories between 1845 and 1848 (Bäckström 1845–1848). Some one hundred years later, Jöran Sahlgren published his study of this genre, *Svenska folkböcker* (1946:8). He referred



1. Apollonius av Tyrus, 1747. This edition of Apollonius of Tyre contains a song about a rogue who wants to sell his wife to robbers.

to texts without songs or singable poetry as *Volksbücher*. Bengt R. Jonsson added yet another criterion – length (Jonsson 1967:601). Longer texts were *folkböcker* – *Volksbücher*, shorter ones *skillingstryck* – chapbooks. According to his definition, the most renowned Swedish *Volksbücher* were Helen of Constantinople, Carsus and Moderus, Apollonius of Tyre and Till Eulenspiegel.

Shorter editions of *Volksbücher* were widespread already in the late eighteenth century. Hanna Enefalk, in her recent work on this material, indicates that additionally even the term *skillingsagor* is used to refer to material of predominantly narrative character.² She dismisses the term *folkböcker* as antiquated and exhausted (Enefalk 2013:11–13). Wingård however finds the term useful in his broad study from 2011 of this often ignored literary genre in Sweden (Wingård 2011).

This study will not attempt to draw a terminological distinction between the various formats and types of material since all are a part of the same collection at Kungliga biblioteket. All material will be referred to as chapbook stories, which most frequently also signify the presence of singable poetry. The term “broadside songs” also appears in the scholarly work of this field. For the purposes of this study, the term “broadside” will be used to denote chapbooks with singable poetry, while chapbook stories will indicate that the material is primarily prose.

The Collection in the National Library of Sweden

The collection of Swedish chapbooks in the National Library of Sweden is divided into two parts:

Broadsides

Chapbook stories (CS collection)

The division into two parts has an old history and was made by the folklorist and librarian Richard Bergström in the second part of the nineteenth century.

The first part, dominated by singable poetry, contains about 15,000 prints (Jersild 1975),³ while there are about 2,000 prints in the other part, dominated by stories. The CS collection occupies about six metres of shelving. It contains prints from the end of the seventeenth century until 1906.

There is a card catalogue for the broadsides, with entries for the title of the print, the first line of the song, sometimes the name of the author, and the subject of the song. Chapbook stories are indexed only by the headwords of their titles.

The CS collection also contains some singable poetry that has not been catalogued or systematized in any way. Those songs are the focus of this study. They are examined in order to improve our knowledge of the tradi-

tions of Swedish folk song. The different songs presented in a survey are listed under the name of the story/stories with which they are associated, making it possible to study the connection between the stories and the songs. This can be done both from the perspective of the story and from the perspective of the song.

Explanations of the Survey Data

This survey lists all prints containing songs and also which songs they contain. The stories are arranged chronologically based on the first time the story was printed together with a song. The date and place of publication are given in brackets. If there is more than one edition of the same story with songs, the different editions are arranged chronologically after the first edition. The titles of the stories are sometimes very long and so cannot be presented in full in this survey. Moreover, the same story can have varying titles in different editions. In such cases the titles are standardized in accordance with the collection's index, but without inverting of personal names.

The songs are identified by first line, which may differ slightly from one edition to another. If the song also appears in broadsides, the most established first line is used. This makes it easier to identify the song in other contexts. The songs are numbered in order of their appearance in the prints. If the only printing information is something like "tryckt i år" (printed in this present year) the abbreviation n.d. (no date) is used and no place is mentioned. The abbreviation "ed." is used to show the number of editions in the collection.

Survey of Songs in Chapbook Stories

Kung Orres mandat (n.d. 3 ed.)

Om kung Orre kväder jag en visa

Ett lustigt samtal emellan tvenne unga hustrur (1687, 1690)

Skönste Chloris hör nu till

Helena Antonia av Konstantinopel (1699, 1707, 1727, 1746 Lund, 1772, 1802 Gävle, 1811 Falun, n.d. 2 ed.)

Paris han var en liten dräng

Apollonius av Tyrus (1747)

Där bodde en skälm ibland alla

Rosimunda (1764 Norrköping)

Ljuvsta nöje, sommarfröjd

Rosimunda (n.d. 4 ed.)

Sist när den sköna Celemena

Ölslag (1792, 1802 Gävle)

Mitt sinne friskt upp och på krogen

Julgröten (1800 Gävle, 1801 Falun, 1802 Gävle 2 ed.)

Vara tålig och sig nöja

Julgröten (1838 Jönköping)

O människa tänk väl därpå

Flyten ymnigt mina tårar

Julgröten (1859 Eskilstuna)

Det lyster mig att skriva en liten sorgesång

Julgröten (1864 Västervik)

Guds son är född i Betlehem

Det lider åt julen, man tydligen hör

Åter är den stora fest med sin fröjd och gamman

Att slakta och brygga och baka

Julgröten (1868 Växjö)

Det lider åt julen, man tydligen hör

Åter är den stora fest med sin fröjd och gamman inne

Enbusken (1824 Stockholm)

När man är fyllda 50 år

Enbusken (1836 Jönköping)

Ingen sällhet jorden äger

Kom sköna maj och blicka

Ljuva västan med sin fläkt

Enbusken (1851 Borås)

God dag söta vänner

Vem skall man tro i världen

Riddar Blåskägg (1829 Linköping)

Ack ve mig syndare arme, som så förspillt mitt väl

Riddar Blåskägg (1877 and 1883 Stockholm)

Och far min, salig, han var en skeppare, han, han

Trollpackor / Påsk-käringarne (1824 and 1829 Stockholm, 1835 Norrköping)

Hej mor Maja har du brännvin idag

Trollpackornas färd till Blockkulla (1846 Stockholm)

Om i viljen höra, god' vänner

Trollpackornas färd till Blockkulla (1851 Kristinehamn)

Hej mor Maja har du brännvin idag

Man hört berättas i alla tider
Täcka flicka vill jag fuller ha san

Sanct Pehr och Broder Lustig (1836 Uppsala)
Som en eld och som ett väder
Det lyser ett bloss både höst och vår

Sanct Pehr och Broder Lustig (1841 Linköping)
Stunder bortilar
Edwin kom där borta
Michaelsmässo-dag som faller in i år
Mårten Holk av ingen känd

Sanct Pehr och Broder Lustig (1846 Hudiksvall)
I skogen vid milan sitter far
På nattlig strand, vid svall och bölja
Då den bleka månens stråle faller

Sanct Pehr och Broder Lustig (1854 Sundsvall)
Och far min, salig, han var en skeppare, han, han

Sanct Pehr och Broder Lustig (1855 Falun)
Bonden han gick sig ut åt grönan äng
Och bonden körde till furuskog

Sanct Pehr och Broder Lustig (1859 Strängnäs)
Mars det är en alltför märkvärdig månad

Judas (1827 Uppsala, 1832 Västerås)
Magdalena på källebron

Abgarus (1829 Jönköping)
Lycksalig är den själ som tror
Jesus är min glädje-källa
Jag är ej mera min

Harpspelaren (1830 Kalmar)
Kuno, trogen systerkärlek
Härr Pädar går under borgalind
Herr Karl drömde om en natt en dröm

Abu-Casems tofflor (1831 Vadstena)
Jag salig dumboms son har känt

Abu-Casems tofflor (1839 Kalmar)
Jag satt och spann, då hände sig

Prins Flundra eller fiskaren (1831 Kalmar)
Men ack vad nöje är om sommaren

Prins Flundra eller fiskaren (1832 and 1843 Jönköping, 1845 Sundsvall)
Det bodde en gubbe i Västanfjäll
Vem vill ha mitt hjärta, kvinnor

Sex tjänare (1832 and 1852 Kalmar)
En vacker hustru hette Tora

Sex tjänare (1842 Falun)
Nordkölden bittra så mycket uträtter
Om sommaren sköna när marken hon gläds

Den lilla Guldfågeln (1832 Jönköping)
Varför så min gumma brumma
Må var och en sin hustru prisa

Flickan utan händer (1835, 1837 and 1842 Jönköping, 1849 Karlstad)
Stunden bortilar
Edwin kom där borta

Flickan utan händer (1837 Västervik)
Må vem som vill om bröllop kväda
Ack hur hastigt flyger ej minuten

Flickan utan händer / Förskräcklige mördaren (1866, 1868, 1873 and 1875
Stockholm, 1874 Karlskrona)
En ung man uti Ungerns land

Flickan utan händer / Förskräcklige mördaren / Isfarten (1884 Stockholm)
En ung man uti Ungerns land
Vill du lära dig skridsko åka

Tidningsläsaren (1835 Jönköping)
Jungfrun hon gångar på högan berg
Huru kan jag vara nöjder

Tidningsläsaren (1840 Stockholm)
I kyrkoherdens trädgård vid Taubenhain går ett av de nattliga spöken
Se dit, åt klippans branter
I en lund vid en bäck
Jungfrun hon gångar på högan berg
Huru kan jag vara nöjder

Krabbetåget (1836 Linköping)
Fritt må andra i sin svett

Carsus och Moderus (1838 Västervik)
I hyddan där borta av bokar omskyggad
Vinden blåser upp med hast

Drottningen och Bondflickan (1838 Jönköping)

Du som förvillad av kärlekens yra

Drottningen och bondflickan (1844 Eksjö)

Ingen vördar mer vår kung

Drottningen och bondflickan (1851 Norrköping, 1868 Luleå)

Vid sjutton år så kär jag var

Salomo och Markolfus (1839 Stockholm, 1846 Umeå)

Kung Salomo satt med sin spira i hand

Kung Salomo sade, det är mitt behag

Peter Fintligs äventyrliga resa (1840 Falun)

Fall lätta snöflock, fall

Det växte en lilja uti den grönskande dalen

Huru kan jag vara nöjder

En bergtagen flicka (1841 Västervik)

Jag var en fattig lantmamsell

En bergtagen flicka (1841 and 1842) Jönköping

Där gick en jungfru uti en hage

Ack, högsta himmel och fallande jord

En bergtagen flicka (1841 Linköping)

Kom, sköna maj, och blicka

Förgät ej mig o flicka som jag skänker

En bergtagen flicka (1841 Falun)

Det bodde en bonde i Grangärdes gård

Den Röda kammaren (1841 Linköping)

Jag var en äkta muntergök i mina unga dagar

Carl den Elftes syn (1842 Falun)

Stjärnorna blinka ner på min ödsliga stig

Ensamheten mig ej döljer

Döve-Måns och Madam Kryckewysterskas äktenskap (1842 Karlskrona)

Nu uppgår klar ljuset

Från valvet blickar månen vänligt ner

Sju sovare (1845 and 1854 Falun)

O värld du är så svekfull

Askungen / Cendrillon eller Glastoffeln (1846 Eskilstuna)

Det täcka könets skål vi dricka

Silekon och Nasti (1846 Gävle)

Tusslullerilull skällkossan min
I statsmän och I ämbetsmän

Himmelsbrev (1847 Falun)

Den grönskande, blomstrande fägnande vår

Himmelsbrev (1849 Karlstad)

Guds son är född i Betlehem på denna dag
Jag är som en lilja på marken uppvuxen
Se nu dit i kristna ögon

Policarpus (1847 and 1849 Falun, 1852, 1859 and 1861 Stockholm)

När två gånger hundrad från Christi börd

Gossen och träskålen (1850 Hudiksvall, 1859 Luleå)

Du son du dotter skulle Gud väl kunna

Snipp Snapp Snorium (1850 Linköping)

Med ögat blygsamt sänkt mot jorden
Brinnande för flickans fot jag föll

Den elaka hustrun och djävulen (1851 Uppsala, 1853 Stockholm)

Skymtar du för gluggen
I fjol vid jul då grisa min ko
Var jag mig en liten pilt

Den elaka hustrun och den onde (1886 Stockholm)

Skymtar du för gluggen
I fjol vid jul då grisa min ko
Var jag mig en liten pilt
Jag tänkte stolt vid femton år

En snål präst och en listig klockare (1851 Uppsala, 1859 Norrköping, 1854–1875 Stockholm 13th ed.)

Vi beordrades i hast

Prinsessan Snövit (1852 Kalmar)

Mitt klämda bröst kan knappast andas

Mästerkatten (1853 Norrköping)

Jag gråtit i veckor jag gråtit i sju
Rask och käck är Sveriges militär

Den ståndaktige tennsoldaten (1853 Söderhamn)

Jag minns den ljuva tiden

Rövarebrudgummen (1854 Kristinehamn)

Ack fåfängt kallar jag tillbaka tiden av min ungdom

Förvandlade kortleken (1858 and 1884 Stockholm)

Jag tänkte sällheten säkert bor där uppe i de gyllene palatsen

Förvandlade kortleken (1891 Stockholm)

Skänk en slant åt gubben, nådigaste herre

De elva fader- och moderlösa barnen (1865 Stockholm)

Blott en gång i detta livet

Moderskärlek blott den känner

De elva fader- och moderlösa barnen (1871, 1872, 1873 and 1875 Stockholm)

I torftiga stugan låg modern och grät

Geneveva (1867 Stockholm)

I kristna lärans första tider

Geneveva (1867 Stockholm)

Då kristna läran först förkunnas

Geneveva (1897 Stockholm)

På slottet Sigfridsborg så sälla bodde

Geneveva (n.d. Malmö)

På slottet Sigfridsborg så sälla bodde⁴

Jätten Gällas Döss (1870 Karlshamn)

Vid femton års ålder då sorgsen jag drog

Alprosen (1871 Stockholm)

Högt på Alpens isbelagda spira

I Chicago har en olycka hänt

Alprosen (1873 Göteborg, 1874 Gävle)

Högt på Alpens isbelagde spira

Emellan tvenne stora folk har länge förts ett krig

Alprosen (1874 Göteborg)

Högt på Alpens isbelagda spira

Med ingen på jorden vill jägaren byta

Alprosen (1876 Vänersborg)

Högt på Alpens isbelagda spira

Hör du min lilla flicka jag sänder dig en sång

Alprosen (1877 Gävle)

Högt på Alpens isbelagde spira

Du klagar, men du klagar dumt

Alprosen (1884, 1892, 1901, 1904 and 1907 Göteborg)

Högt på Alpens isbelagda spira

Robert eller Djävulen kallad (1872 Göteborg)

Amanda satt med en krans i håren

Vad flickorna de äro svaga

God' gossar ni är att beklaga

Arvtagerskan (1875 Stockholm)

Solen sig på högblå himmel sänker

En åsnas lycka (1876 Köping)

Vid femton års ålder blev stugan mig trång

Prinsessan på ärten (1877 Varberg)

Amanda satt med en krans i håren

Jag uti hemlighet länge burit uti mitt hjärta din sköna bild

Ulspegel (1891 Stockholm)

Vad är det som livar den matta blick, jo snus

En levnadssaga (1902 Sundsvall)

Tala ej om stora minnen

Jesu korsfästelse och död (1906 Malmö)

Jag sitter på stolen från morgon till kväll

Det galnaste jag sett är en kärring som ä' full

Vid foten av alpen i doftande grönska

Förtvivlelsen eller Arnold och Betty (n.d. Oslo)

Uti staden Memel bodde

Tunes

Sixteen of the 133 songs include some kind of tune direction. Nine of the songs have blind directions like "to its proper tune". The other seven have the following tune directions:

Hanar och hönor och kycklingar små

Tune for: Det bodde en bonde i Grangärdes gård (Den bergtagna flickan 1841)

Jag har en lantlig stuga

Tune for: Nu uppgår klar ljuset (Döve-Måns ... 1842)

Johannes han går sig åt skogen

Tune for: Ack ve mig syndare arme som så förspillt mitt val (Blåskägg 1829)

Den ängerfulle och förkrofsade Hustru-Mördarens
 W J S U, sedan han fick sin Döds Dom och
 innan han från Linköpings Slottshäkte
 utfördes till Afrätts-platsen d. 3 Febr.
 1825 att undergå det tygliga straffet,
 att mista högra hand, halsbuggas och steglas.

Slunges som: Johannes han går sig åt Fogen ic.

1. **U**a we mig syndare arme, Som så förspilt mitt wäl,
 Jag ligger i band och bojer, Både till lif och själ.

2. Mina ben de äro omgjorde, Med bojer och starka
 lås, Mitt hjerta är förkrofsat, Min själ är klämd så hårdt.

3. Jag finner ej någon lisa, Mig fräter mitt samwe-
 te smärt, Jag qwäder en sorglig Wisa, Om ett så grusligt
 mord.

4. Jag sökte mig upp en maka, Af redlig fräjd
 och skam, Jag snart denna godhet försaka, Med wäld Jag
 cog henne an.

5. Ev satan och ormen den lede, Wär första skam be-
 drog, Hans list och falska snara, En qwiana till början
 betog.

6. Jag råder af könet eder alle, Som båta namn ut-
 af man, Att ni eder Gud befaller, På det ni ej frestas
 kan.

7. När Ni er en maka will söka, Af dygd och redligt
 namn, Lät eder ej otro beweka, Derpå följer blygd och
 skam.

8. Mot Femte Budet jag brutit, Det Fjerde lika så,
 Men Jesu min broder gif nåde, Allt för Din död så
 swär.

9. Mina synder jag bekänner och ångrar Och för dem
 affy bår; Af mildaste nådige Fader, Fräls mig ifrån dies-
 wulens här.

10. Hur kan jag bekomma Guds nåde, Jag är den
 wift icke wärd, En sådan gerning att göra, Den osör-
 lättig är.

Min far han var en västgöte han han

Tune for: Mars det är en alltför märkvärdig månad

Min vän om du vill sällheten nå

Tune for: Vad är det som livar den matta blick, jo snus (Ulspegel 1891)

Sin lätta mantel breder aftonstunden

Tune for: På slottet Sigfridsborg så sälla bodde (Genoveva 1897, in two variants)

Results

The collection of chapbook stories includes 133 different songs. Most of the roughly 2,000 prints do not include any songs, but 143 have at least one song (i.e., approximately one in fourteen in the collection includes a song). In the 143 that do include songs, the number varies from one up to five songs. Roughly every fifth song has a clear connection to the story. For another fifth there is a looser relationship to the story. Slightly more than half of the songs seem to have no connection to the story with which they are printed. They may have been included simply because they were popular at that time. The study reveals that songs appear more often than previously was known.

Printings from the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

In the latter part of the seventeenth century, some variants of *Kung Orres mandat* were printed together with a song which according to Olof Rudbeck's *Atlantica* the peasants sang on Saint Knut's Day, the 13th of January (Rudbeck 1939:239). The song is also included in a variant of the publication entitled *Kung Orres redelige mandat*, printed in Norrköping 1683, and kept in the Zetterström collection of the Uppsala University Library.

The love song *Skönste Cloris* is known in print from 1691 before this examination.⁵ The collection of chapbook stories includes two earlier editions, the first from 1687 and the second from 1690. The story with which the song is associated is a conversation between two young wives who are both in troubled marriages. This dialogue between Eulalia and Xanthippe was originally written by Erasmus of Rotterdam and is found across Europe.

One of the songs in *Svenska fornsånger* (Arwidsson 1834–1842) is about the farmhand Paris. It was originally published in Danish in 1572. The first verse is included in the fifth act of Johannes Messenius' drama *Disa* from 1611. Some years later the song was included in the handwritten songbook of nobleman Bröms Gyllenmär. The song also occurs in nine dated editions

of Helen of Constantinople between 1699 and 1811, and two more editions without year of publication. The popularity of the book contributed to widespread knowledge of the song.

Svenska fornsånger (Arwidsson 1834–1842) includes a song with the title Johannes, about a rogue who wanted to sell his wife to robbers. The song is published in a few broadsides and also in Apollonius of Tyre (1747).

These four examples from the early printings in the CS collection all contribute to a better knowledge about the traditions of the Swedish folk song.

Connections between Songs and Stories

The CS collection reveals thematic overlaps between songs and religious stories/tales. The most obvious is the thematic connection as for example in religious prints. Judas contains a song about Jesus and the penitent Mary Magdalene. Since she was regarded as a prominent disciple the connections is obvious. The story of King Abgar of Edessa (Abgarus), present-day Urfa in Turkey, who according to the legend corresponded with Jesus, is followed by three religious songs. The same is true of the *Himmelsbrev* (Heavenly Letter) of 1849. The collection also includes two examples in the tradition of heavenly letters from the mid-nineteenth century. These letters were delivered directly from heaven with Jesus' own encouragement to convert. Heavenly letters were often displayed on a wall as a protection against accidents or carried when on dangerous missions.

An especially close connection between song and story occurs in the printing of Linköping Axel Petre's edition of *Riddar Blåskägg* (Bluebeard) 1829. The story tells about a violent nobleman who has the habit of murdering his wives. The song is called "The wife-killer's song" and was written by the Life Grenadier J. Ulin about the execution of the farmhand Anders Andersson in 1825. He had drowned his wife Katarina Andersdotter in Lake Sommen. The song was published in a broadside with the author's name in 1825, but in 1829 his name was omitted.

Some songs and stories are connected by a common author. In *Arvtägerskan* (The heiress) written by Wilhelmina Hoffman, the song is a summary in metrical form of the story. In *En snål präst ...* (A stingy clergyman), published in fifteen editions, a soldier song of Uppland has no other connection to the story than that they were both written by the same author, Johan Eric Ericsson.

Most of the stories have a traditional background and no individual author. Sometimes people with other functions, such as a translator or transmitter of a tradition, are mentioned in the print. Many are presented anonymously though the author(s) can easily be identified. Anonymously published stories sometimes cause confusion for libraries. *Julgröten* (Christmas porridge) was anonymously published in *Stockholms-Posten* on 15 January

En sann och mycket värtvärdig
Historia
om
en snål Präst och en listig Klockare,



Författad af
Bondgossen Johan Erik Eriksson,
Iemte en
Bewärings-Wisa.

Stockholm,
Hos E. Kihlberg,
Södermalmstorg.

1867



3. *En snål präst och en listig klockare*, 1867. The story of a stingy clergyman and a clever parish clerk is printed together with a soldier song. Both were written by the same author. The publisher Catharina Kihlberg (1797–1872) was an antiquarian bookseller at Södermalmstorg in Stockholm who also sold chapbooks.

1800. The author was Anna-Maria Lenngren. Carl Envallsson was listed as the author in Leonard Bygdén's *Svenskt anonym- eller pseudonymlexikon* (Bygdén 1898–1905:339), and so some editions have been catalogued with him as author.

Local Swedish Song Tradition

The chapbooks can be useful for identifying local song traditions. According to the title-page of the story *Sex tjänare* (Six servants) printed in Falun in 1842, the story follows two songs from Dalarna. The first one is *Nordkölden bittra så mycket uträtter* (The bitter cold in the north achieves so much). The second is *Om sommaren sköna när marken hon gläds*, also called *Dalavägvisaren* (The guide to Dalarna). It was written in the early 1660s by the vicar of Mora, Anders Vallenius. He poetically describes the parishes around the rivers Öster- and Västerdalälven. This song has had the longest life in the collection and is still sung in and outside of Dalarna.

Publishers and Printers

Many well-known publishers and printers of broadsides also produced chapbook stories. They include Pehr Olof Axmar, Ernst Peter Sundqvist, Jacob Gustaf Björnståhl, Nils Eric Lundström, Axel Petre, Per Adolf Huldberg, Per Elias Norman, Catharina Kihlberg, Emanuel Bruzelius, Pehr Hanselli, Wilhelmina Hoffman and Nils Lindström. Lindström was the owner of Malmö visförlag, one of Sweden's largest producers of broadsides and chapbook stories. He published *Jesu korsfästelse och död* (The crucifixion and death of Jesus) in 1906, where he has written three songs. The third song is a parody of Carl Wilhelm Böttiger's popular song *Vid foten av alpen i daldjupets grönska* (At the foot of the Alps in deep green valley), Lindström's version changing this into a happy drinking song. Lindström knew how to make a song popular. On the cover of the print he sets out his vision for his publishing company. Malmö visförlag is a business with a future that will ultimately provide the whole country with beautiful and happy songs, he tells us. He also advertised songs and speeches for family celebrations at affordable prices.

Conclusion

One of the purposes of this study was to increase access to this hidden and useful collection for research. Now for the first time the first lines of the chapbook songs are available in the same way as those of the broadside songs.⁶ It is now also possible to find out more about the context in which the songs were used.

Östen Hedin
 Librarian
 Public Programmes Department
 National Library of Sweden
 Box 5039
 SE-102 41 Stockholm
 Sweden
 osten.hedin@kb.se

References

- Arwidsson, Adolph Ivar 1834–1842: *Svenska fornsånger* 1–3. Stockholm.
- Bäckström, P. O. 1845–1848: *Svenska folkböcker och äfventyr* I–II. Stockholm.
- Bygdén, Leonard 1898–1905: *Svenskt anonym- och pseudonymlexikon. Bibliografisk förteckning öfver uppdagade anonym- och pseudonymer i den svenska litteraturen* 1. Uppsala. (Skrifter utgifna af Svenska litteratursällskapet 17.)
- Carlander, C. M. 1904: *Svenska bibliotek och exlibris* 1. Stockholm.
- Enefalk, Hanna 2013: *Skillingtryck. Historien om 1800-talets försvunna massmedium*. Uppsala. (Opuscula Historica Upsaliensia 51.)
- Görres, Joseph von 1807: *Die teutschen Volksbücher*. Heidelberg.
- Jersild, Margareta 1975: *Skillingtryck. Studier i svensk folklig vissång före 1800*. Stockholm. (Svenskt Visarkivs handlingar 2.)
- Jonsson, Bengt R. 1967: *Svensk balladtradition* 1. Stockholm. (Svenskt visarkivs handlingar 1.)
- Nilsson, Anna 2012: *Lyckans betydelse. Sekularisering, sensibilisering och individualisering i svenska skillingtryck 1750–1850*. Lund.
- Olsson, Bernt 1978: *Svensk världslig visa 1600–1730. Ett register över visor i visböcker och avskriftsvolymer*. Stockholm. (Skrifter utgivna vid Svenskt visarkiv 6.)
- Rudbeck, Olof 1939: *Atlantica*. Svenska originaltexten. På uppdrag av Lärdomshistoriska samfundet utgiven av Axel Nelson 2. Stockholm. (Lychnos-bibliotek 2.)
- Sahlgren Jöran (ed.) 1946: *Svenska folkböcker* 1. Stockholm.
- Wingård, Rikard 2011: *Att sluta från början. Tidigmodern läsning och folkbokens receptionsetetik*. Uddevalla.

¹ Rikard Wingård gives a detailed examination of the development of the *Volksbuch* concept in his dissertation.

² The term *skillingsagor* is used as a subject category by the University Library of Helsinki.

³ Margareta Jersild's dissertation about the melodies of Swedish broadside songs before 1800 contains a comprehensive description of much of the content in the broadside collection at the National Library of Sweden.

⁴ The five first verses correspond to *Genoveva* 1897.

⁵ See Jersild 1975:406 and Olsson 1978:112.

⁶ There is still no set model for how scholars refer to these songs. This lack of uniformity does not, however, impede the interested researcher from accessing this material.

Broadside Ballads and Singing Styles

Examples from the Norwegian Collection of Folk Music

Hans-Hinrich Thedens

Abstract

This article looks at sound recordings of popular Norwegian *skillingsviser* (broadside ballads) in the Norwegian Collection of Folk Music at the National Library. It examines when and in which parts of the country they were recorded and how they feature in the collection and its catalogue. Using recordings of one such song, the singing styles used by traditional singers from all over the country are described. The last part of the article looks at the position of these songs in the folk music circuit and the Norwegian public space in general.

Keywords: folk music archive, cataloguing, collecting, singing style, regional variations

Slowly but surely the genre *skillingsviser* is establishing itself in modern Norwegian folk music practice. Folk singers, both amateur and professional, are including a type of song into their repertoire that has until recently lived far away from the stages of the folk music contests and concerts. When these songs are introduced as *skillingsviser*, this refers not to a type of melody or text, but to the medium of the broadside they once were spread through. This is quite a novelty, as folk songs have mainly been classified by their function, even more so than by text content or musical or lyrical form.

In this article I look first at such songs in the Norwegian Collection of Folk Music, the archive I work at, and ask if they were collected and if so, how they have been catalogued. Then I look at how they were collected, where and when they were performed, and by whom. I will look at singing styles and briefly analyse recordings of one specific *skillingsviser*, before I discuss recordings of more recent performances and look at the position of these songs in the contemporary repertoire of singers inside and outside folk music circles.

Knowing our archive's history, it is almost surprising that any *skillingsviser* were collected at all. The songs spread on *skillingstrykk* (or broadsides) were either sung to well-known old melodies e.g. from religious songs, or they came with new, but popular melodies.

When Olav Gurvin (1893–1974), Norway’s first professor of musicology, established the archive in 1951, its purpose was not to collect anything new and popular, but to build a corpus of sound recordings of the oldest and least influenced music sung and played in the Norwegian countryside. The analysis of recorded sound was thought to give answers to the questions that had already been asked by the earliest collectors like the composer Ludvig Mathias Lindeman (1812–87): Why was the folk singing so different from what was taught at schools? (Thedens 2007). Why did the rural musicians not follow the common major and minor scales? The intention was to use modern scientific methods and apparatus to test various theories about what could have influenced their music on sound recordings instead of analysing transcriptions as all earlier folk music researchers had done. So the archive supplied the objects for research and the institution was called the Norwegian Folk Music Institute.¹

Gurvin had clear ideas about what melody types were useful for this purpose. An instruction manual for collectors specified this. The old ballads with their modal melodies were the most desirable and singers were to be asked if they knew any of these. More recent songs with modern melodies were explicitly undesirable.

In spite of this, we still can find some *skillingsviser* in the archive, but the way it is organized and catalogued does not make it easy to find them.

Cataloguing: How Are These Songs Categorized and/or Described in the Archive?

The main problem is that there aren’t any categories to identify *skillingsviser* in the database used for the folk music recordings. They cannot be classified by melody because their texts were sung to melodies people knew beforehand. Their only definition is the medium by which the text has been disseminated, and the recorded versions in the archives were learned in the oral tradition, often long after the broadsides circulated.

At the time of writing the Norwegian Collection of Folk Music has become a part of the Norwegian National Library. Together with the Norwegian broadcasting service NRK, we are developing a new database and have drafted new lists of categories for classifying the music in both archives. In this collaboration the term *skillingsviser* has come up many times, as the listeners to NRK’s folk music radio programmes commonly use it as a category and associate certain songs with it, mostly sentimental songs about tragic love stories. There is a need to include the term in the new system, but it will have to be in addition to other ways of classifying. The problem remains that we cannot identify these songs by melody. The texts can belong to various genres, but the melodies will overlap even more with other types of songs. The process of how and which melo-

dies were adapted to the texts on the broadsides has never been studied.

Until now most of the Norwegian folk music archives have used the database software “Fiol” which was drafted and developed in collaboration between many experts in the fields of instrumental music and song in both Sweden and Norway. In this application we use a tripartite system where we can classify recordings by melody type, text genre and dance type – the latter for use with films of folk dancing. While instrumental music is easily grouped by what kind of dance it accompanies, vocal melodies are much harder to classify. Functional songs such as lullabies and cattle calls have their obvious categories, but it is impractical to classify much inside a large category named “songs, psalms and *stev*”. In practice there are only a few types which are identifiable by form, like the four-line *stev* with its two distinct rhyme schemes, and in many cases ballads with their pattern of verse and refrain. Everything else can only be divided into smaller groups by means of text content. But again, there is no way to classify by the medium of *skillingstrykk*. In Fiol the category which probably contains most of the songs associated with it is called “other songs according to text content”. Here we find historical songs, love songs, moralizing songs and more.

So How Many of These Songs Can We Find in Our Archive?

In our database there are currently more than 800 items in this category. Searching directly for titles that contain “*skillingsvise*” results in one single hit in more than 47.000 records. Looking for the term in the commentary fields yields a slightly better result – but even here the collectors have put question marks and only guessed at the connection to the broadside medium. This confirms my assumption that this genre was not something the collectors sought out or asked the performers about.

The items where *skillingsvise* is mentioned in the commentaries are not necessarily what listeners today would put in that category either. The titles are “Det er kvinnen som regjerer” (It is the woman who will rule), “Fattigguten / Stakkars gut / Jeg er en liten fattig dreng” (The poor boy), “I Bohusläns skärgård” (In the islands of [the Swedish province] Bohuslän), “Prestens datter i Tabenhaug” (The priest’s daughter in Tabenhaug; from a radio program where folklorist Velle Espeland presents songs which were sung for children. He points out that this song came from Germany on a print and worked as a lullaby – in spite of its dark lyrics.), “Setervise” (Mountain pasture song), “Sigøynerguttens klage”, (The gipsy boy’s lament – to a melody very similar to “The Last Rose of Summer”), a song announced as a “newly composed *skillingsvise*” which tells the humorous story of a recent holiday trip, and “Svartbakkvisa”, a song about an execution.

In order to find more songs that might actually match what people understand to be *skillingsviser*, I looked at the titles in Elin Prøysen's book of *Folkelige Viser* (Popular Songs) (Prøysen 1973), which was published after the author's father, the popular singer and poet Alf Prøysen (1914–1970) had asked the readers of a popular magazine² to mail in song texts. Elin Prøysen's book adds the melodies to the songs he published. She writes that most of the songs in her book were printed several times (both on broadsides and in books), but still were sung in many variants. In her selection there are *rallarviser* – by Swedish railroad workers, emigrant songs, songs about sailors, love songs, news-songs about historical events like disasters, and moralizing songs. In our database I found some of these represented, but certainly not many, even though the time when people sent in songs was exactly when the Norwegian Folk Music Institute was collecting most of its holdings.

Collecting at Different Times and in Different Areas

Looking at our collection chronologically it is obvious that in the beginning of the archive's history, the modern was shunned and collecting these songs was discouraged. Later, when collectors worked more independent from the researchers in Oslo, it was more up to the performers to choose from their repertoire. In 1971 the archive became a part of the University of Oslo and its focus shifted from acoustical research to research into folk music instruments and history. The new staff were the historian Reidar Sevåg (1923–2016) and the traditional fiddle player and orchestra violist Sven Nyhus (b.1932). The archive then developed a closer relationship to the active folk music scene. But even in collections from around that time Nyhus³ keeps asking for lullabies and other old genres, while the singers would gladly sing more of the popular songs.

In the 1980s the private collector Atle Lien Jenssen (1956–2011) gathered songs in his home province of Hedmark on the border with Sweden. In his collection the popular songs dominated the repertoire, while Gurvin had mostly collected cattle calls in this area in the 1950s. The one area where these songs were plentiful from the earliest collections on is northern Norway with its coastal communities. In collections from central southern Norway – the area best known for its folk music – these songs aren't nearly as plentiful.

These central areas have dominated the folk music contests, and one would not expect modern popular songs in the earliest collections from areas like Telemark, Hardanger or Setesdal. But the surprising fact is that Aslak Brekke (1901–78), a prominent folk singer from Vinje in Telemark who had performed on the national radio channel and its folk music show many times, came to the university early on (1958) and chose mostly popu-

lar songs! I suspect that with his status the researchers did not dare to steer him too much.

Later recordings made by hired collectors for the Folk Music Institute in the central Norwegian valleys also feature both the old and the new. Åste Nisi of Tinnoset in Telemark was one of the most respected traditional singers, too, and had a large repertoire from a variety of genres, among them historical songs like “Titanic”. In Numedal, Hallingdal and Valdres singers in the 1950s and 1960s chose mostly popular songs, and the collectors Arne Bjørndal and Gudbrand Brager did not seem to mind. The singers from the west coast sing the modern songs along with a much larger repertoire of religious songs (as documented by Trygve Fischer and Bjørndal in the 1950s). In northern Norway, people just sang plenty of these songs and Finn Henry Olsen and Yngvar Mejland recorded them in the mid 1960s. The songs dominated some of these recordings, in others they stood side by side with religious songs and songs in Sami and Finnish.

Skillingsviser outside the Folk Music World

The way they have been (or have not been) collected also reflects the position of these songs in the folk music community in a way. Even in the 1970s movement to emancipate the lesser known local traditions and to make the contests more inclusive, they are still not accepted as a part of the folk music repertoire. Maybe they were not considered local enough. In any case, singers from areas where the skillingsviser were much used were not very present or successful at the folk music contests, or they simply chose other parts of their repertoire to perform there.

Skillingsviser were not heard much in mainstream Norwegian cultural life either. Alf Prøysen published these songs in the magazine mentioned above and performed them, but they were not heard much on radio or television – until they suddenly became massively visible with the LP series “Frem fra glemselen” (“Back from oblivion”, see Skjærstad 2000). With the old songs arranged in modern and popular ways these records sold more than almost any other Norwegian LPs at that time.⁴ The songs must also have been a part of the *Visebølgen* (the song wave) of the 1970s. Elin Prøysen’s book was published in this period and she was one of many young singers who wrote new songs and/or sang old *viser* (poetic songs). In a television series from 1976 she and singer-songwriter Stein Ove Berg discuss and introduce the old popular songs. In the programmes these are sung by professional singers, but not with classically trained voices. They do not sound like traditional folk singers at all, either. So this is where a closer look at the different singing styles is needed.

Descriptions of Folk Singing in the Literature

There are many descriptions of folk singing in introductions to folk music. They all have in common that they try to point out the differences from what the reader already knows about, and for a long time that has meant the style of singing that is taught at music academies. Today operatic and “Lieder” singing might seem just as exotic as folk singing to many, but I have not yet seen any texts about folk singing style that use a different starting point. The ethnomusicologist Ingrid Åkesson’s text from 1999 is about Swedish traditional psalm singing, but works very well as a description of the singing style in the Norwegian folk music scene as well. Åkesson points out eight factors (the following is a selective quote from her extensive description):

- The *vocal range* is close to the speaking voice and generally in a range which is natural for the individual.
- The *timbre* is often bright, which especially with female voices will give the impression that the singer is singing in a higher range than she is. The tone production happens in the front of the head’s resonance space, sometimes rather nasal.
- The *tone* is almost always straight and free of vibrato. The attack is often marked, especially at the beginning of a word or a phrase. The volume in folk singing is distinctively more constant than in trained singing. One often sustains the end tones of phrases, and especially the end tones of verses, with constant volume and without any *diminuendo*.
- Many singers sing on *voiced consonants*, sometimes even ornaments are placed on consonants like m and n.
- The *pronunciation* of sung text is close to spoken words. [...] Some singers *vocalize* consonants [...] Consonants acquire an after-sound (e.g. some, have) which often are sung on the after-beat or melisma. [...]
- It is common to sing with *ornaments* before and after the notes. [...] Characteristic of folk ornamentation is that the melismas are at least as often placed on non-stressed syllables or connecting words as on stressed syllables and content-wise important words.
- *Phrases* are divided by breathing and are usually delimited by marked attack in the beginning and a sustained note at the end. Breathing pauses also occur inside the phrases, sometimes between sounds instead of between words.
- Folk singers [...] have a capability of *transmitting the mood* of the text by ways of weaving together text and melody – one could say they are singing interpreting the content (the story?) of the song.
- The leading tone (or other tone places which temporarily work as lead-

ing tones) often has a variable intonation and is often sung quite unclearly (Åkesson 1999:11ff).

Norwegian musicologists' works on folk singing style come to similar conclusions,⁵ but there are a number of additions that can be helpful here: Lise Arnesen (Arnesen 1994) compares folk singing, *visesang* (untrained singing of modern, but non-pop songs) and Musical (theatre) singing from a tone production point of view in order to enable teachers to teach these styles by relating and contrasting them to the teaching of classical singing. Within the folk music singing styles she finds that the use of vibrato varies across genres. She observes that one can hear e.g. vibrato more often in the singing of religious melodies than in *stev* (67). She also sees differences between the rhythmical stringency in vocal genres: While a *vis* and even more so the dance songs depend on good rhythmical accentuation, singers are more occupied by the flow in religious songs and lullabies, so the rhythmical aspect is not as developed (69).

Ingunn Skjelfoss writes in her description of older singing styles in the province of Østfold that vocalizing is only held in esteem in certain circles, especially in church congregations (Skjelfoss 2006:44).

In his analysis of the intonation in a song by Aslak Brekke, Per Åsmund Omholt asks if our perception of old-style tonality might be caused by movement in pitch as much as by fixed pitches and their relationship. He suggests that the way singers move from note to note might be what distinguishes styles (Omholt 2015:54f).

Taking all these descriptions into account, how do the recordings of skillingsviser in the archive fit into this landscape?

General Impressions from Listening

With the genre being so difficult to define, I looked for some of the titles in Prøysen's book and some well-known skillingsviser and gathered a first impression of how they were sung by our sources.

My main impression is that singers use one singing style, or at least its main elements, on all of their repertoire. There are actually many performers who sing the best-known skillingsviser without any of the special characteristics of folk singing as described in the definitions quoted above. The singers use a uniform rhythm throughout and do not use ornaments to speak of. They make pauses, but they leave no doubt about the metre and there are no dramatic effects. The tonality appears to be plain major or minor.

Many use vibrato, but to varying degrees. Some have a natural tremble in their voices, especially the older singers. With others vibrato seems to be a conscious means of style. The sources with most of these songs in their rep-

ertoire live in the north or the east. These singers also seem to use the most vocalizing. Again these are my first impressions.

Then there are the singers from the central southern mountains and from the west. Here the style seems to be different. In the province of Hordaland the songs seem to be in a style similar to the religious songs that are so plentiful in that area, but it is difficult to determine which elements cause this impression.

In Valdres and Telemark the impression is different yet again. Here the style sounds as if it is taken from the *bygdeviser* (local songs) which are popular at least in Telemark. This would be the same phenomenon as in western Norway. But the style is clearly different from there. In these versions the rhythm is more flexible, the tone production is more nasal and the intonation appears different.

Regional Variations in Style?

In the literature we can find different opinions about the importance of regional styles – while these are considered extremely important in instrumental folk music:

Lise Arnesen sees regional variations in the use of ornaments: in Gudbrandsdalen and Østerdalen in the east, ornaments are not an important element of style, while singing in Telemark, on the other hand, is rich in ornaments. In Setesdal it is also more usual to glide from tone to tone (1994:74).

In his study written at the Norwegian Folk Music Institute Karl Dahlback finds gliding intonation in singing from Trysil in Hedmark on the Swedish border when using the institute's technical equipment (Dahlback 1958:90). He speculates on the differences between eastern and western singing styles based on the familiarity of cattle calls used in mountain pasture farming. In Trysil he finds such gliding intonation while singers in Telemark and Agder attack the notes much more directly (Dahlback 1958:94).

The singer and ethnologist Bodil Haug, on the other hand, is sceptical towards geography as determining style. In her study of singing in rural free congregations she does not find enough evidence of this in order and concludes that stylistic differences could just as well be individual (Haug 2006:40).

In his work on “song, singing style and character of voice” Ola Kai Ledang concludes his analysis of the use of leading tones stating that variation is most likely individual and not easily traced to regional style, at least from the amount of material he was able to study (Ledang 1967:74). The same is the case for rhythmical variation (84).

Ingunn Skjelfoss finds few grace notes in the recordings by Østfold singers but rather gliding intonation or attack (*glidende anslag*) (2006:69) – like what Dahlback describes for Østerdalen/Hedmark, which is geographically

not that far away. Faster ornaments are totally absent, while melismas are used to a certain degree (70).

The concept of singing style independent of the repertoire is not new. When Olav Gurvin built up the archive at the Norwegian Folk Music Institute, he not only intended to use modern scientific equipment, he also tried to “calibrate” the recording process. At the beginning of each recording session singers were asked to sing a well known patriotic song that the vast majority knew from school (Dahlback 58:46ff). The few who did not know “Blandt alle lande i øst og vest” chose a different song from the same genre. The point of this was to record a “neutral” melody as a benchmark for calibration. In the singing of this known melody the researchers could find the singers’ singing style elements against a neutral background, so to speak. In the active years of the institute Gurvin (1951), Karl Dahlback (1958) and Ola Kai Ledang (1967) published about their methods and results of their analyses and some of their results are quoted above.

Analysis

In the coastal areas, there is a clear broadside style with clear voice, vibrato and no ornaments, while in southern inland Norway the same songs are sung in a style transferred from older types of songs as well as the more recent *bygdeviser*. Ornaments, tonality and nasal voice are not adjusted to the new repertoire. In both cases the style seems to be regional or determined by what constitutes the majority of the regional repertoire. In the north the old songs were pushed out by the new ones which then took over to such a degree that the old singing style disappeared with the old songs.

In order to get a little further than these general statements, some more detailed analysis is necessary. From the songs represented in our archive I have chosen the song “Alvilde” as the object for at least a little closer scrutiny. It is one of the songs from Elin Prøysen’s book and one of the songs we have quite a few recordings of in our archive – even though none of these are described as *skillingsviser* in the catalogue.

The song tells the story of a young man who leaves his love to go to the city and serve in the King’s army. He soon forgets her and writes to her that she too had better forget about him even when she has given birth to his son. She dies and at the end of the song he visits her grave and mourns her.

I have found recordings of this song, also called “I året 1839”, from the west coast, from Telemark, Numedal, Valdres, Gudbrandsdalen, Hedmark and from northern Norway, all the way up to Troms. The singers we have recordings of were born between 1875 and 1934, most of them between 1892 and 1903. They would most likely have learned repertoire like this in the first decade of the twentieth century when the broadsides still were in circulation.

All singers are in agreement about the text. I have not noticed many variations, with the exception of the year in the first line (which Prøysen describes in the same way the singers in the archive use, and the city the protagonist travels to in order to serve the King. This is either Copenhagen or Christiania. Prøysen suggests that this could make the song Danish, as Norwegians would not have had any reason to serve the Danish king after 1814 (1974:69).

First I will look at the melodies the singers have used. Aslak Brekke uses the same simple major melody for all four lines of the verse. The other singers use longer melodies covering two lines. Half of these are in major and half in minor. All the three singers from Hordaland use a minor melody, as do the ones from Østerdalen and Hallingdal and the other singers from Telemark. The singers from Valdres, Gudbrandsdalen, Numedal and Nordland use major melodies.

These melodies must be based on the same “original” and just from listening they seem related, but when one looks at the motifs and the single notes, there are lots of rather large variations. They follow a general harmonic progression where the first two lines move from the tonic to the dominant, but not even that is without exception. This certainly makes sense and fits the theories about the variability of folk music: the storyline and most of the lyrics from the prints are constant, but the melodies from the oral tradition vary quite a bit.

In order to find out more about the singing style in these recordings, I used computer software⁶ to slow them down and to replay longer and shorter passages, down to single notes and even the attack of notes. I quickly found that Ledang’s findings have parallels in these recordings. A major style marker seems to lie in how singers transition from note to note, much more than in the pitch of single notes.

The Recordings

The best-known singer, Aslak Brekke (b. 1901, rec. 1958), sticks out in his way of keeping melody notes separate. Creating a graphic representation of the partial tones of his melody notes and moving the time “window” across his recording, the attacks and decays of the notes are extremely clear. There is never any doubt about which pitch he sings either. He speeds up part of the melody in the second part of the verse lines and uses absolutely no vibrato on phrase endings. Some of the notes he sings extremely nasally, as if he is focusing his voice on certain notes, maybe words. He is the only singer here who uses really clear ornaments, regularly on the E in the third measure and sometimes on other notes. In addition to these his voice trembles very fast on some notes. This is hardly audible at normal speed. He also uses a lowered sixth, but not consistently.



Three examples of melodies, transposed to the key of G and with simplified rhythm: Aslak Brekke, Telemark and Dagmar Blix, Nordland, major, Hanna Skillestad, Gudbrandsdalen, minor.

Anne Østgården (b. 1892, rec. 1956), also from Telemark (Sauherad), sings quite differently – and to a minor melody. Her metre is straight ahead without much variation or pauses for breathing. Østgården uses vibrato and she seems to drag certain notes upwards or downwards, but not so much that it would be a clear glissando. She also uses some ornaments, but nowhere as clearly as Brekke does. In fact, they are hardly audible before one slows down the recording.

Aasulv Vraalstad (b. 1900, rec. 1966) from Drangedal in coastal Telemark sings more distinctly than many of the others, but not quite to the same degree as Brekke. His melody is the same as Østgården's. He glides from note to note only in certain places in the melody, but much more often he uses grace notes at the beginning of notes. Instead of vibrato he uses single grace notes at phrase endings. The rhythm is very steady, but the lengths of pauses vary.

Geographically closest to Telemark is Numedal, where Even Evensen (b. 1875, rec. 1959) comes from: He was 84 at the time of the recording, his voice does sound old and he only sings two verses. His melody is major. His consonants are soft and he glides into the notes, especially at the beginning of lines. He takes pauses for breathing and puts in an extra beat before some lines, maybe to recall the lyrics, maybe to help the story. His rhythm stabilizes quickly. He uses little vibrato on the end of phrases and hardly any ornaments – with the possible exception of one grace note after a melody note.

Kristine Holden Flaata and Gunvor Holden Svendsen, Uvdal (b. ? and 1934), were recorded 23 years later and begin to sing the song as a duet.

After eight verses one of them continues and sings eight more alone. One of the singers is not registered with a birth year, but the two voices in this version sound younger and maybe come the closest to the stereotype of a skillingswise. The rhythm is relentless and there is hardly any variation through the 16 verses. The melody is major, but does not follow the standard harmonic progression many of the other versions share. Instead it stays in the dominant for much longer, thus creating a certain tension. The singers glide from note to note unless there are hard consonants, but there is no doubt about the pitches. There are hints of vocalizing.

Hanna Skillestad (b. 1897, rec. 1957) from Heidal in Gudbrandsdalen sings in a fairly high range and with a steady rhythm. The result sounds similar to Flaata and Svendsen. At tempo the singing sounds plain, but slowing down the recording reveals vibrato, gliding from note to note – especially in the beginning – and more ornaments than expected. Skillestad uses well-placed grace notes in almost all of her lines.

Syver Sukke (b. 1895, rec. 1962) from Sør-Aurdal in Valdres sings yet another variation on the melody in a high range. The tonic is at F#. His rhythm is brisk and steady. Even if his voice sounds a little hoarse or pressed because of the high range, his attacks are clear. Again it is hard to decide if his treatment of the phrase endings is some kind of vibrato or rather an ornament – as the pitch goes up and down only once or twice.

Olaus Grøv (b. 1885, rec. 1962) was recorded the same day in the same place. He and Sukke share the bouncy rhythm, although Grøv takes more breaks. He seems to alternate between two ways of singing the lines. Sometimes he lets the words glide into each other (“Jeg avskjed tog med hjemmet”), but more often he sings each word distinctly and in some of the lines he really puts stresses and ornaments on every single word. His phrase endings all get a light vibrato, which cannot be perceived as an ornament.

Marit Aasen (birth year unknown, rec. 1957) from Tolga in northern Østerdal sings in a high range, her voice sounds old and has a slight quivering natural vibrato. Her rhythm is even and constant and she seems to attack the notes without any ornaments and does not glide into the notes either. But when one slows down the recording it becomes apparent that she indeed starts many notes with subtle, but distinct ornaments, almost like a vibrato at the start of a note before it stabilizes (e.g. “Himlens trøst”). But there are also some melody notes where she does the opposite and uses vibrato at the end.

Guttorm Flisen (b. 1908, rec. 1981) from Elverum sings very low (F minor with high leading tone) and in many passages very softly. The low notes lack energy and probably he has less control than higher up in the register. His tempo is slower than many others’, but his rhythm is clear with pauses at phrase ends. He uses vibrato in the phrase endings. As these are mostly low in pitch, the vibrato is somewhat shaky. His melody has a little tag at the end of the phrases and returns to the tonic in a short text repetition.

Olav O. Larsgard (b. 1899, rec. 1964) from Hol in Hallingdal uses a minor melody and only sings the first verse and repeats it. He starts the lines in a steady rhythm and then finishes them rubato. There is slight vibrato throughout which is especially audible in the drawn out notes, but also at the beginning of some of the lines. Gliding from note to note is present, but very subtle.

This leaves us with the three singers from Hordaland, all of whom lived on islands off the coast at Bergen, and the two from the north.

Johan Hufthammer (b. 1902, rec. 1958) uses yet another melody. His style sounds “old-fashioned” and again formed by the religious repertoire: he uses rubato and sounds declamatory. There is no stringent rhythm and his sound is nasal. His intonation is gliding, but more than the others from the area he uses ornaments, if not very clearly. He uses some vibrato already early in the notes as well as some vocalizing.

Ingvald Svellingen (b. 1892, rec. 1958) calls this “a sailor’s song”. His melody is similar to Hufthammer’s. His singing style is also similar, but not quite as declamatory and his rhythm is more stringent. He glides into notes, but also attacks some notes with more distinct ornaments. Sometimes he seems to glide within the notes and then into vibrato, which he uses quite a bit.

Karl Herdlevær (b. 1903, rec. 1958) is the youngest of the three, but his voice sounds the oldest, or most old-fashioned. It has a fluctuation like a tremolo, which is present throughout the song. His rhythm has a triplet feel and the notes flow into each other.

Dagmar Blix (b. 1900, rec. 1965) from Nordland sings in a very plain and very relaxed style in a low range. She seems to just tell the story. She also explains the story more for the collector in between verses. The rhythm is steady, also here with a triplet feel. Some notes glide a little bit, but most are very straightforward. She does not use any ornaments, but some vibrato on certain phrase endings.

Leonhard Bergvoll (b. 1894, rec. 1966) from Lyngen in Troms sings in a voice close to the singers from Hordaland. His rhythm is very solid – in a clear duple metre – and he tells the story almost in a declamatory way, solemn and portly. He uses vibrato, probably more than any of the other singers, and glides into notes. It is hard to hear any northern accent in his singing, while many of the other singers are easy to place geographically from their pronunciation.

What does this tell us about geographical or other styles? In order to confirm or falsify my first impressions one would have to compare much more material from the different areas, which is not possible here. What these singers have in common is the story, the text and the intention to tell it to their listeners. There are differences in how much musical expression they allow for this purpose. From Dagmar Blix who really sings the song as

plainly as possible – while using a perfectly pleasing melody – to Aslak Brekke at the other end of the spectrum, who ornaments the notes and varies the rhythm and to a certain degree creates effects which might help the story, but could also get in its way.

While most of the melodies must come from the same source – they mostly share the same text-based rhythm pattern, the amount of variation in outlining the melody is impressive. In the minor group the three singers from Hordaland and Larsgard from Hallingdal use a very similar melody, as do Østgården and Vraalstad from Telemark. In the major group only Grøv and Skillestad come close to using the same melody.

What at first glance looked like a clear tendency to a difference between the inland singers, the ones from the west coast and the singers from the north and east, produces a slightly more complicated picture. A few of the featured singers perform in a very plain style, but they are spread throughout the country. The gliding into notes is used all over, except where one would have expected it. The two singers from Østerdalen do not use it, while Dahlback found this technique present in this area with its mountain pasture farming – more than in other areas. Vibrato is used to varying degree, but all the singers except Brekke and Vraalstad use it. Clear ornaments are used by the singers from Telemark and Valdres, but also by some of the others. Vocalizing is actually quite rare in our sample. The traits that most performances share are the steady tempo (even if the range of tempos is large) and the use of vibrato.

Performance Styles Today

If this is some kind of a description of singing styles used for *skillingsviser* in the late 1950s and the first half of the 1960s (and two recordings from the early 1980s), what can we say about *skillingsviser* and how they are performed today?

The folk music movement stayed away from this repertoire and they never featured at contests. In the 1960s singers preferred the several hundred year old four-line *stev* and the much more recent *bygdeviser*. In the 1970s the medieval ballads experienced a revival and also became an important repertoire element. The extremely successful “Frem fra glemsele” recordings of the 1970s and 1980s made the *skillingsviser* very visible and presented them in a singing style totally different from what was cultivated at the folk music contests. It might very well be that the success of the LP series made it even more difficult to use this repertoire. The songs were just “too popular to be folk”, meaning belonging with the kind of music that the members of the folk music community celebrated among themselves, and that was largely unknown to the general public who deemed it difficult and esoteric. Maybe the songs were not local enough to be called folk music. That

they came from somewhere else did not stop the singers documented in our archive from singing them, and that they presented newly written texts to well-known older melodies, did not distinguish them from the *bygdeviser* which were created the same way. The only difference is that these were written in the countryside and that they were performed in a style adapted from older types of songs.

Velle Espeland compares what he calls this *kvedarstil* with modern professional *visesong* as it was developed after World War II. He sees two camps with different objectives. While the *kvedare* emphasize the technical details of melody and ornaments and take pride in mastering an old style, the *visesangere* put all the emphasis on the text and transmitting the text. They shun ornaments and keep the melody simple. While the *kvedare* mistrust written notation that simplifies and therefore have hesitated long before singing anything that was not orally transmitted or recorded in sound, the *visesangere* have been the disseminators of older folk songs written down by Lindeman and Olea Crøger in the mid 1800s. An example is Alf Prøysen, who sang both old ballads and new *skillingsviser* in a plain style which he learned in the early twentieth century – in the valleys of eastern Norway where he grew up, of the inner mountains that the national romanticists idealized and that still seems to satisfy audiences' longing for the old and different. Espeland finds that Alf Prøysen would have fit into the Anglo-American definition of folk music much better than into the Norwegian one. The Anglo-American he interprets as putting much more weight on folk music being “the people’s music” while the Norwegian folk music is much more national romanticist, putting the emphasis on the exotic and musically unique and even challenging (Espeland 2002:8ff).

It took until around the year 2000 before singers from the folk music community became interested in *skillingsviser*. In her study of sentimental songs Helga Gunnes writes that “when the *skillingsviser* have conquered a larger space in the folk music discourse in the last ten years, they have a *social climb* behind them. They have changed status from low “popular music” to more elevated “folk music”, and from lower folk music to higher folk music. This process has had its price. The songs have been filtered through an evaluation process in which style, form quality and motifs distinguish between good and bad music more than before” (Gunnes 2008:14).

Now folk music performers are “taking back” a repertoire they did not have any need for earlier. Their sources had probably sung plenty of these songs, but these were not something that would have “worked” at a contest.

In our archive we have some recent recordings from folk music contests where *skillingsviser* were featured. Today’s contest performers will be very conscious about how they perform a song and make a number of choices. The recordings I have listened to are from the last five years. Two young performers state they have learned the songs from the singer Camilla Gran-

lien (b. 1974), who has been central in reintroducing *skillingsviser* in a folk music context. In addition to singing them at contests and concerts she also recorded a CD with the singer Tone Juve and fiddle player Åse Teigland. The title was “Skrekk” (Terror or Scare) and it contained *skillingsviser* as well as older repertoire with scary and tragic stories arranged in a number of ways.⁷

Granlien’s students sing solo and use a style that is quite different from our source recordings. They sing these songs as if they were much older and use the intervals between major and minor that have been discussed so much that every folk singer seems to have to be able to use them in a convincing way. Herdis Lien states that “to be unable to achieve this because one’s tonal habits are different or because one has not worked enough with this, is seen by some as a defeat” (Lien 2002:25).

That way the singers pull these songs towards the *kvedar* style of singers like Aslak Brekke. Naturally, this changes the songs’ functions.

The ethnomusicologist Anne Murstad has also observed a change from the functional towards the musical in modern Norwegian folk singing styles: “For example, I think that there is a tendency toward women singing with the tone-near voice, even if their sources sang with a speech-near voice. A result is that the voice takes on a lighter, softer sound” (Murstad 2003:72).

And finally Gunnes has interviewed several modern performers of *skillingsviser* about which ones they take into their repertoire. While the pop singer Veslemøy Solberg (b.1964) looks for the melodious and familiar, Camilla Granlien looks for the surprising and unfamiliar, using the term ancient-sounding (85f). Gunnes also finds that the folk music performers stress that they find *skillingsviser* in their own local tradition in order to present them in believable fashion (86). In her interviews she finds that the singers in the folk music community learn these songs the same way as they learn other repertoire. They emphasize that these songs have entered the oral tradition and sing them with the same stylistic means as other repertoire (Gunnnes 2008:112).

This parallels an important moment in Norwegian folk song research. At a folk music research seminar in Gol in 1999, the topic was “The music of the Norwegian travelling people”. There were speakers from the folk music community and from the travelling people. The talks were interesting, but it was the social gathering at the hotel at night which really produced an understanding of the relationship between the travellers’ and the settled farmers’ music. Folk music experts sang songs from their home community – in *kvedar* style – which everybody thought of as very tightly knit to a local tradition. But after every single song one of the travellers jumped in right after the singer had finished, saying “I know that one, too!” and then singing a much plainer version to three chords on the guitar.

Any prognosis about where any development may lead is of course built on little evidence. In the folk music community skillingsviser seem to become more attractive for a number of reasons. Firstly they will expand the repertoire of what can be performed and thus make it more varied and interesting. So far it seems as if the singers are very much aware of the contest format and chose a performing style close to what we have seen in Aslak Brekke's recording rather than the plainer styles on most of the other recordings we have looked at. But this may change, as the growing number of professional folk singers will have to appeal to other audiences than the insiders and musical specialists at the contests. For these audiences other elements may be as important as an intricate singing style. There may also be a new turn towards the local, and it is interesting to note that Granlien and a few of her colleagues who have rediscovered this repertoire come from areas where the songs were sung a lot. Maybe the style might become closer to the style used there, too.

It is even more difficult to say anything about the future for the other performance style Espeland describes. Will the text-focused singing of the *vise-sangere* keep its appeal when the stories these songs tell are mostly sentimental and far removed from today's reality and people's lives? They were an early type of mass media, but will they still be of interest in the middle of all the mass media available today? In the 1970s the answer was a deafening "Yes", but today that is not as obvious. It may very well happen that these songs have more of a future in the repertoire of folk singers.

Hans-Hinrich Thedens, Dr. Philos.
Research librarian
National Library of Norway, Music Section
Pb 2674 Solli
0203 Oslo
Norway
Hans-Hinrich.Thedens@nb.no

References

- Åkesson, I. 1999: *Individuellt, lokalt eller allmänt folkmusikaliskt? Institutionen för musikvetenskap*. Uppsala: Uppsala universitet.
- Arnesen, Lise 1994: *Stemmekvaliteter & stilstudier. En studie i akustiske, fysiologiske og stilmessige aspekter ved forskjellige sang-genre*. Hovedoppgave. Universitetet i Oslo: Institutt for musikk og teater.
- Dahlback, Karl 1958: *New Methods in Folk Music Research*. Oslo, Oslo University Press.
- Espeland, Velle 2002: Folkeviser frå scenen. *Norsk folkemusikklags skrifter* 16:1–10.
- Gunnes, H. 2008: *I tonene er tårer, i ordene er sukk*. Institutt f. musikkvitenskap. Oslo, Universitetet i Oslo.

- Gurvin, O. 1951: Photography as an Aid in Folk-Music Research. *Norveg* 3.
- Haug, B. 2006: Tanken om det lokale som rettesnor i folkemusikkforskning. *Norsk Folkemusikklags skrifter* 19:34–50.
- Ledang, O. K. 1967: *Song, Syngemåte, Stemmekarakter*. Oslo.
- Lien, H. 2002: Folkesongen frå generasjon til generasjon. *Norsk Folkemusikklags skrifter* 15:18–27.
- Murstad, A. 2003: *Sireners sang eller himmelske samtaler?* Hovedoppgave. Grieg-akademiet – institutt for musikk. Bergen: Universitetet i Bergen.
- Omholt, P. Å. 2015: Mælefjølvisa. *Musikk og tradisjon* 29:29–57.
- Prøysen, E. 1973: *Folkelige Viser*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
- Skjærstad, P. J. 2000: *Frem fra glemsele*. Ramnes: Stokke.
- Skjelfoss, I. 2006: *Eldre folkelig sangstil i Østfold*. Institutt for folkekultur. Rauland, Høgskolen i Telemark.
- Thedens, H.-H. 2007: Intonation Studies in Norwegian Folk Music Research. *European Meetings in Ethnomusicology* 12:49–66.

¹ Even though the archive's purpose has changed through the years, the music is still the main object of study and my own training is as an ethnomusicologist. Norwegian folk music has in general been studied as an art form and by musicologists rather than by folklorists.

² *Magasinet for alle* (Magazine for everybody) was published from 1927 to 1970 and started out as a workers' magazine. Alf Prøysen had this column starting in 1953 (Prøysen 1973).

³ Nyhus (b. 1932) replaced the acoustician Ola Kai Ledang (b. 1940).

⁴ Through the years almost 2,000,000 copies.

⁵ Ingunn Skjelfoss (2006) uses as many as 47 different traits in her classification sheets for singing styles.

⁶ Transcribe! From Seventh String software.

⁷ Heilo HCD 7193, Grappa musikkforlag 2004.

With a Rough Piece of Twine

Skilling Ballads on Malefactors: The Case of Brita Christina Wanselius 1827

Karin Strand

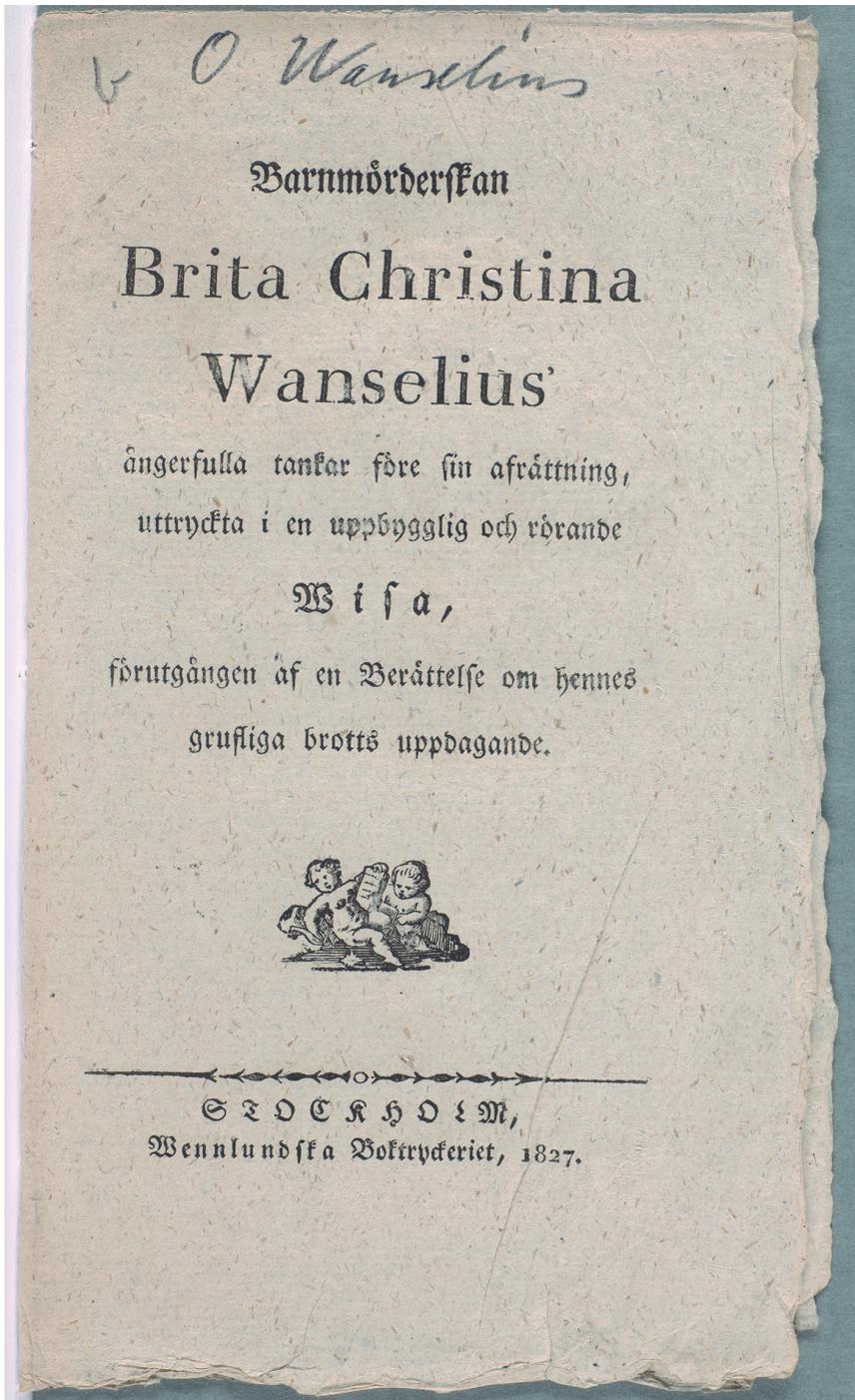
Abstract

This article concerns a certain category among the heterogeneous repertoire of cheap song prints (*skillingtryck*) in Sweden: songs on crimes and malefactors. Focusing particularly on the representation of female delinquents and their crimes, the discussion is exemplified by a case study of an infanticide in Stockholm in 1826. Searching for the story behind the printed words, the study sheds light on the relation between the actual events and their representation. The comparison illustrates the selective narration and moral tendency of the song prints as well as their intertextual relationships. We also learn about the real circumstances of the murderess herself, the protagonist who lacks a voice of her own in the media of her time.

Keywords: broadside ballads, street literature, folk songs, female criminals, infanticide, executions

In the summer of 1827, the interested public in Stockholm could see the extended legal process of child murderess Brita Christina Wanselius finally come to an end. Accused of having murdered a little boy that she had been entrusted, she was imprisoned and interrogated during October 1826. The court soon proved her guilty and she was sentenced to death: to be beheaded and burned at the stake. From the prison of Smedjegården in Stockholm, Wanselius sent several petitions for pardon to the King in Council, but in vain.¹ The execution was eventually set to the 28th of July 1827.

While the case had been covered from the outset by the newspaper *Stockholms Dagblad*, it was the event of the execution that urged the producers of topical song prints, “skilling prints” (*skillingtryck*) to join in on the matter.² In a merging of factual report, sensational news and solemn morality, at least four different prints were published on Wanselius’ crime and penalty. One claims to express her “regretful thoughts” before the execution,³ another is presented as a “death hymn” at her execution.⁴ Both prints combine a song with a prose text – discourses that represent the delinquent and the event in different moods and from different perspectives. Where the song



The print *The regretful thoughts of child murderess Brita Christina Wanselius before her execution, expressed in an edifying and touching ballad, preceded by a story about the discovery of her dreadful deed*, published in Stockholm 1827. O Wanselius b, National Library.

stages a lyrical subject, the prose narration presents a “factual” report, summarizing previous writings in the newspapers and the course of events of the trial. Such “combination prints” (*kombinationstryck*) were among the most common forms for reporting on malefactors and their executions in Sweden during the nineteenth century.

The two other prints, written mainly in prose, depict different aspects of the execution, supposedly mediated by someone who witnessed the event. *Old Stina’s trustworthy and horrific story about the child murderess Brita Christina Wanselii last moments and execution* takes the reader from the crowd’s procession to the place of execution via incidents along the way – including Wanselius’ attempts to escape – to the sound of the broad-axe hitting the neck and the commonplace small-talk while walking home afterwards.⁵ The print entitled *Words of warning to the people at the place of execution* contains a fragment of a speech held by the priest at the block, “approximately apprehended by a present auditor.”⁶

A Case Study

In my current research project, I study skilling prints on female criminals.⁷ In the material, there is one crime that stands out in the number of prints as well as in its moral complexity: various kinds of child murder. In this article, I will use the prints on the child murderess Wanselius for a case study of topical song prints in general and the representation of female malefactors in particular. How do the ballads and prose reports depict the crime, the execution itself and the protagonist? To what extent do they use and relate to other sources; what can be said about their “truthfulness” and tendency – and what is their moral?

To answer these questions, we need to go beyond the words of the skilling prints and contextualize the matter with the help of other source materials. The aim of the study is to shed light on what role the ballads could play in the contemporary social dialogue. I also hope to show some of the potentials of the ephemeral song prints as a source material; serving as keyholes to their time, mediating between current affairs, entertainment, power relations and personal fates.⁸

One reason why I have singled out Wanselius from the approximately 40 named female infanticides in the collection of skilling prints on malefactors at the National Library of Sweden, is that the case is unusually well documented. Wanselius happens to be one of the last child murderesses that was sentenced to death in Sweden; the last decapitation of an infanticide was performed in the 1830s.⁹ By that time, print culture was flourishing with the gradual establishment of printing services and a growing reading public. In Stockholm, several newspapers were established; papers that presumably were read in wider circles than is usually supposed.¹⁰ The market for street

ballads experienced its heyday offering a wide variety of topical issues, several of them picked up from the newspapers. The two media – newspapers and song prints – spoke from different positions and in different voices, but not necessarily to different audiences. They had, as Isabel Corfe argues, quite different functions.¹¹

Before entering the world of Wanselius, we need to position the songs and stories about her in their wider generic context of skilling prints on crimes and malefactors. An inventory of such prints in the largest collection in Sweden will indicate the gender balance within this thematic group and specify which crimes are associated with female delinquents.

Songs on Malefactors

Skilling prints on true crime and malefactors have a history almost as old as the print form itself. The earliest (yet known) song print on a presumably actual crime in Sweden was published in 1647, depicting a daughter and a son, “impious and poorly disciplined”, that had killed their parents.¹² The most recent seems to have been printed in 1936, reporting on “Salaligan”, at the time a notorious gang of robbers.¹³

Songs and prints on criminals and crimes, then, constitute a thematic continuity throughout the centuries. As far as form and content are concerned, they have, obviously, undergone crucial transformations, above all regarding the perspective of the narrator and the degree of spiritual conception. Crime songs from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are usually narrated from a first-person point of view, told from the (simulated) perspective of the regretful convict her- or himself. The religious moral is underlined by the tune directions, which are almost exclusively hymns.¹⁴

In the early nineteenth century, there is a gradual shift towards third person narration. In song prints from the former half of the century, the shift is often bridged by the dual perspective of the combination print mentioned above: the reporting of an anonymous narrator and the confession of an expressive subject. In the course of the latter part of the nineteenth century, the third person narration comes to dominate in both prose and lyrics. The moral – the condemnation of the sinful and the legitimation of the penalty – remains, but the perspective marks a distance to the delinquent.

The sinner as a speaking subject, directly addressing the audience is a narrative trait with obvious edifying points, inviting the reader or listener to identify with and take warning from the sinful. By contrast, the impersonal report of an external narrator positions the protagonist as a villain without a voice; the *Other*.¹⁵ In combination prints narrated from this perspective, songs and prose texts supplement each other by discourse rather than by point of view: moralistic-poetic elaboration versus factual résumés.

A related diachronic tendency is the gradual secularization of morals. Whereas the concerns in skilling prints from seventeenth and eighteenth centuries primarily were the soul of the sinner, the songs and stories from the nineteenth century increasingly apply to the victim and the society.¹⁶ The secularization is mirrored in the melody repertoire, which in the course of the century loses its connection to the hymnal.

The largest collection of skilling ballads in Sweden is at the National Library (*Kungliga biblioteket*) in Stockholm which holds about 15 000 prints.¹⁷ The major part is arranged according to a classification system of letters, a system partly based on content, partly based on formal issues such as the number of songs per print or whether the print contains the year of printing.¹⁸

Songs on the theme criminals and crimes can be part of prints with miscellaneous content. The material of interest here, though, is the prints and songs dedicated to certain delinquents and executions which are collected under location mark O, “Songs on malefactors” (*Visor om missdådare*). These thematically coherent articles consist of about 460 different prints, many of them in several editions and reprints.¹⁹ The location mark is divided into three sub-sections: O, Oa and Ob. The main category O holds about 350 different prints on “known”, i.e. named, malefactors.²⁰ The prints are arranged in alphabetical order according to the surname of the protagonist, which in most cases is the criminal, occasionally the victim.

Oa and Ob, on the other hand, hold texts about “romanticized and unknown” malefactors, which refers to fictive, fictionalized, anonymous or unidentified protagonists. Oa contains 37 different prints, principally in prose, while Ob consists of 71 song prints.²¹ There are several overlaps, though; prints in prose often comprise a song or verse on the matter just as the song prints may include brief reports in prose. The primary source of my study of songs on female delinquents are the prints in the category of named malefactors (O), but the prints on unknown and anonymous protagonists will also be taken into account.

Not surprisingly, skilling prints on actual crimes almost exclusively deal with serious crimes, above all murder. Apart from the sensational aspect of the crime itself, the prints are often motivated by – and were marketed in conjunction with – the punishment: death by execution. Prints of this kind obviously had, at least until the middle of the nineteenth century, the dual function of announcing/reporting the very event to the public – the front page declares not only the delinquent’s full name but also the time and place of the event – and offer a thrilling insight into what is presented as the convict’s mind and conscience.²² Later prints on malefactors are of a more secular kind, a development that obviously relates to the abolition of public executions in 1877.

In conjunction with criminal history, the ballads and reports on crime in skilling prints show a clear overrepresentation of male agents. There are 236 named protagonists in section O; 195 are men and 41 are women.²³ The actual number of criminals (female and male) is somewhat greater than the names catalogued, though. In some ballads accomplices are mentioned,²⁴ and there are prints that apart from their topical issue contain songs on similar cases.²⁵ Within the group of unknown, anonymous or fictive criminals (Oa and Ob), there are at least 17 female subjects in the 108 prints that resemble (what seem to be) real persons that committed crimes.

Songs on Female Infanticide

Murder is the most common crime thematized in skilling prints on female delinquency. Thirty-four of the 41 women in the group of named malefactors which constitutes the main corpus of my examination have committed murder. Half of the murderesses (18 persons) have been convicted of child murder: 13 of their own infant,²⁶ five of somebody else's child.²⁷ Additionally, there is one case of combined suicide and murder that involves the killing of the child.²⁸ Among the reference material of fictionalized and unknown malefactors (Oa, Ob and one print from before 1700²⁹) there are 12 discernible cases of infanticide (13 female agents) represented, all but one committed on a woman's own infant.³⁰

The second largest group of homicide among the O-prints constitutes the killing of (or seriously injuring) a husband or lover (eight cases).³¹ There are four murders of persons outside the family,³² and three cases of murder of female family members (a mother, an aunt, a daughter-in-law).³³ There are also three cases of incest with a female party,³⁴ two thefts,³⁵ one more combined suicide and murder,³⁶ and a fraud.³⁷

Infanticide is the only serious crime that has been predominated by female malefactors.³⁸ As we can see from the inventory above, this fact is thematically reflected in the skilling prints: about 50% of the female malefactors have committed child murder of some kind.³⁹ Ranging from the killing of an illegitimate child to suicidal murder and more or less systematic baby-farming (*änglamakeri*), the crime, as reported on in the songs, contains a variety of crimes. The most common, however, is the parental infanticide of an illegitimate newborn by its mother: one third of all prints on female criminals report on a woman's murder of her own child.

Infanticide is a crime that has vexed the judicial authorities, the church and the state at least since the early seventeenth century.⁴⁰ By its association with immoral behaviour (that is: extramarital intercourse), child murder of this kind implies a double offence. The official strategies to control and come to terms with the crime have varied over the centuries, but the image of the typical malefactor has remained: an unmarried woman of the

lower classes.⁴¹ The part played by the man involved has rarely been an issue.⁴²

The murder of a small child is, to most people, an inapprehensible action. The crime must, however, be historicized in the light of the socio-economic and moral regulations of women. Similarly, the cultural response to infanticide should be seen in relation to prevailing ideas about women as being inherently motherly and caring. In addition to being a real social tragedy, infanticide is a “horror crime” which possesses emblematic qualities, as is expressed in art, literature, folk tales and ballads throughout times.

After this inventory of crimes committed by women represented in skill-ing prints, let us now turn to Stockholm 1826 and the case of Brita Christina Wanselius. Consulting criminal records and newspaper reports, we enter the story just before a horrible detection is to be made.

The Discovery

A Saturday morning, the 2nd of September 1826, a fishmonger’s hand called Johan Fredrik Berg was fishing from a rowboat close to Skeppsholmsbron, a bridge that connects the northern centre of Stockholm with the islet of Skeppsholmen.⁴³ He then saw a dog jump from the bridge, obviously wanting to fetch something that it had spotted in the water. At first Berg thought that it must be some waste from the slaughterhouse nearby that the dog was after, but judging by its loud barking and febrile yet unsuccessful attempts to catch the object, Berg realized that it must be something else. He rowed towards the bridge and once there he was confronted with a macabre finding: just under the water’s edge there was a dead baby. The head was turned down with the weight of a stone attached to the neck and the body was already in decay.

Berg immediately reported his discovery to the police warden Nils Berglund, who made arrangements to move the corpse from the water to the morgue under the City Hall and requested the city surgeon Nils Wilhelm af Grubbens to perform an autopsy.⁴⁴ Two days later, on Monday the 4th, Berglund reported the case to the Governor of Stockholm. A short notice was published the same day in *Stockholms Dagblad* under the headline “Domestic news”, reporting that an infant, a baby boy of a couple of months, had been found dead in the water by Skeppsholmsbron.⁴⁵

To be able to investigate the matter, the Governor needed the help of the public for information; first and foremost, to identify the murdered baby. Tuesday the 5th of September, a formal proclamation was published in the same paper. The proclamation included a detailed description of the baby’s clothes, of every garment and fabric type, requesting those who knew anything about the child or the incident to contact the authorities.⁴⁶ Among the readers was a maid called Lovisa Catharina Wennström. She immediately

recognized the boy, “by age as well as by clothing”; not only had she made the clothes herself, she was also the mother of the child.⁴⁷

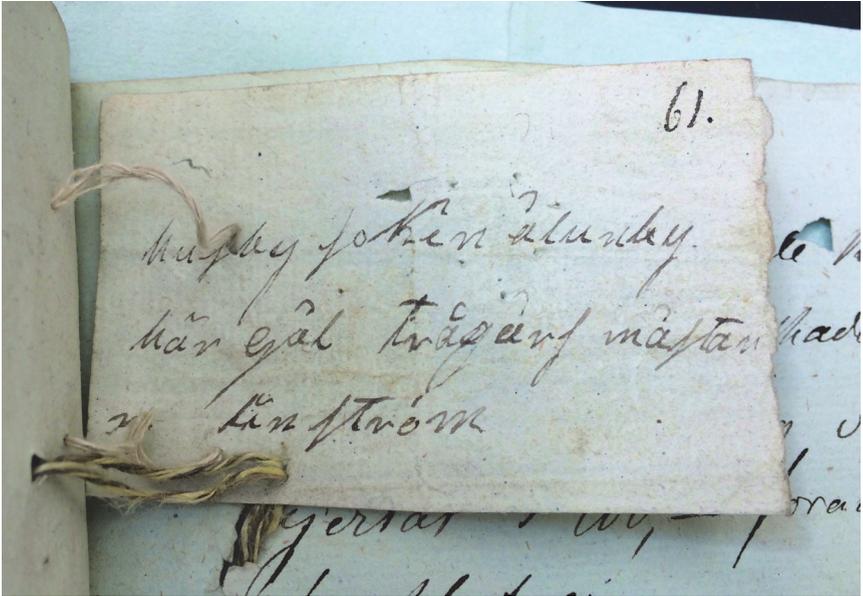
Wennström had become pregnant with the journeyman Johan Abraham Röding in 1825, and on the 13th of April 1826 she gave birth to a boy who was christened Johan August.⁴⁸ Shortly after, Wennström got service as a wet-nurse, so she made the arrangements to leave the baby in the care of Mrs Kron, a wife of a seaman, who would foster and care for it for 2 RD Rks per week.⁴⁹ At the time, Wennström was in service at the house of a captain of a merchantman, Mathias Löfgren. She visited her child a couple of times a week, but the arrangement was expensive for her and Röding, who shared the cost of their illegitimate child.

Röding eventually suggested they get help from a woman he had just got to know, Mrs Wanselius, a widowed mother of three. After having heard about the current arrangement, she had offered Röding to try to get the child a place at the Public Foundling Hospital (*Allmänna barnhuset*), which she asserted to have managed to arrange for another child. If this was not possible, she declared herself willing to take care of the boy herself at a lower cost than Mrs Kron.⁵⁰

Wanselius was 32 years old at this time and had been settled in Stockholm for a couple of years.⁵¹ As is stated in the brief biography given in court, she was born in Ärila parish in Sörmland, and at the age of 20 she married the carpenter Erik Wallin. They moved to Åkers Styckebruk and had three children, only two of them still alive.⁵² As Wanselius’ husband died in 1821, she had to provide for the family by herself. In April 1824, she got service in Stockholm but since she was pregnant with an illegitimate child (its father was a befeater who was out of the picture from the beginning), she had to leave almost immediately. She went to stay with relatives outside town and in September the same year she gave birth to a boy who was christened Anders Wilhelm. She moved back to Stockholm with her children, making a living from wet-nursing, laundry work and sewing. At the time when our story starts, she was staying at the house of police warden Anders Råstedt at Ladugårdslandet, just outside the centre of town, working for accommodation.⁵³

Wennström agreed to engage Wanselius, and it was decided that she would collect the child from Mrs Kron on the evening of the 26th of August.⁵⁴ Wanselius got money in advance from Röding to cover the expenses for application and registration.

As the days passed, Wennström and Röding expected a confirmation that the child was accepted at the foundling hospital but received no intelligence.⁵⁵ A suspicion that something was wrong began to rise, and when Wennström saw the proclamation in the paper she knew for sure. On the 8th of September she confronted Wanselius who ensured her that the boy was well and alive at the foundling hospital, and that she would prove it.⁵⁶ The day after, she turned up at Wennström’s house with the good news that the



The note that Wanselius claimed to prove that the baby had been adopted by a gardener's family in the countryside. In: Nedre Justitierevisionen arkiv, Utslag i besvärsmål, akt 41, 1827, Swedish National Archives.

child had been adopted by a gardener's family in the countryside, a couple who had just lost their own child. As evidence, Wanselius showed a handwritten note which she claimed was an attachment to the adaptation documents, stating the name and address of the gardeners. This proof, however, did not convince Wennström.

The day after, on Sunday the 10th, Wennström and Röding went to the foundling hospital to find out for themselves about the boy, but there was no information to be had.⁵⁷ Wennström told her master about her worries, whereupon he, together with Röding, reported Wanselius to the police wardens Flodberg and Grönroth. The policemen went straight to Wanselius' house to interrogate her. She admitted having picked up the boy at Mrs Kron's but claimed that instead of bringing him to the foundling hospital she had given away the baby to an unknown woman that she incidentally met on the way.⁵⁸ Flodberg and Grönroth did not find the story trustworthy so they brought Wanselius to jail.

Sentenced to Death

The trial against Wanselius started on 5th and ended on 30th of October, with altogether seven interrogation sessions.⁵⁹ The case was quite clear; already in jail Wanselius withdrew her first story about the unknown woman

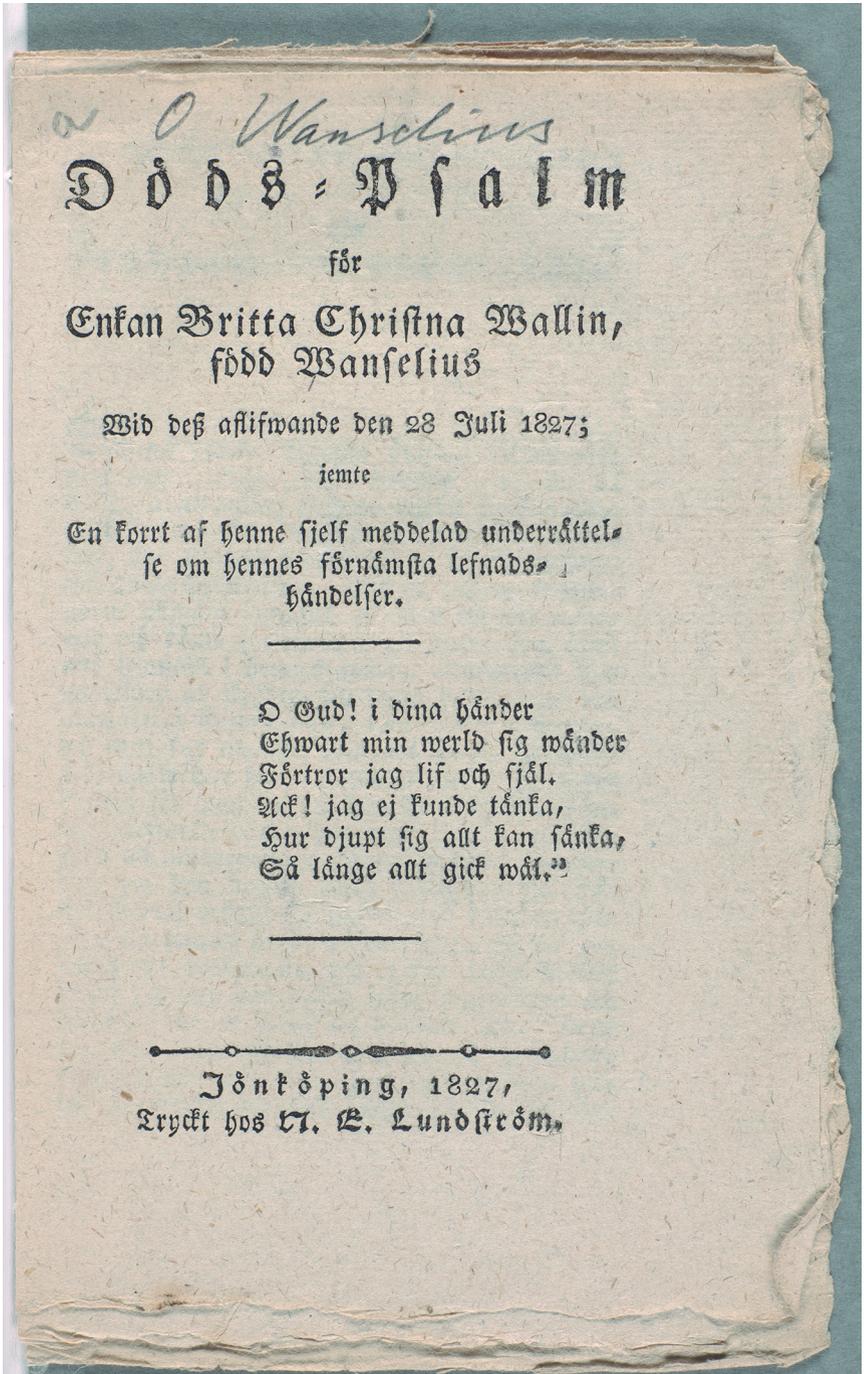
and she confessed to being guilty of intentionally having killed the child.⁶⁰ According to her, it was an impulse that she got after having picked up the baby.⁶¹ Instead of walking to the foundling hospital she went down to Skeppsbron. With a piece of twine that she used as a garter, she tied a stone to the baby's neck and threw it into the water. According to the autopsy, the baby died from choking rather than drowning.⁶²

The investigation, then, was not so much about proving Wanselius' guilt but rather to make clear the order of events, preclude possible accomplices and clarify the interpersonal agreements. What the court did not receive, though, was a satisfyingly distinct explanation, a motive, for the murder. Wanselius repeatedly claimed that the murder was not planned, and that she did not know why she committed it. As the interrogation process proceeded, however, Wanselius admitted that the killing was motivated by economic despair. She accused Rödning of, albeit unintentionally, giving her the incentive by promising that she would be amply rewarded if she got rid of the baby, supposedly "in any way that she wished".⁶³ Considering her poverty and great needs, the prospect of getting money was too tempting for a widow with three children to provide for.

The verdict was given on the 31st of October: the court sentenced Brita Christina Wanselius to death by decapitation, and to be burned at the stake.⁶⁴ As always in matters of death penalty, the verdict of the local court was submitted for consideration by the lower court of appeal and the King in Council. In the meantime, Wanselius was put in the prison of Smedjegården. Whilst in prison, she wrote her first petition for pardon to the King in Council, dated the 20th of November.⁶⁵ In the letter she regrets and admits her great sin, but she begs for mercy considering her three defenceless children.

Ironically, the judgement was confirmed by the lower court of appeal the very same day as Wanselius wrote her first petition for pardon.⁶⁶ On the 7th of January she sent another, more extensive and expressive account of her wretchedness and her crime – "a sin too heavy to be forgiven".⁶⁷ She laments her children, begging the King in Council for a milder punishment in the hope of being reconciled with God. The petitions had no effect, however. As declared on the 23rd of January 1827, the King in Council did not see any reason to make the punishment less severe.⁶⁸ On the 19th of February the verdict was officially proclaimed and Wanselius was moved to the preparatory room at Smedjegården to be prepared to die as a Christian.

During the spring, the chaplain of Smedjegården, Lars Tunelius, was troubled about the delinquent. In a letter to the Governor of Stockholm on the 7th of May, Tunelius reports that the preparation of Wanselius was difficult since she constantly insisted that she was innocent.⁶⁹ His conscience urged him to inform the authorities "in case her continual claim could have any ground".



The print *Death hymn for the widow Britta Christina Wallin, born Wanselius, at her execution on the 28th of July 1827* includes a prose report “based on her own information about her main life history”. It was first printed in Stockholm in 1827, but, as this example shows, also it was published in Jönköping the same year. O Wanselius a, National Library.

We don't know what made Wanselius change her story after the rejection of pardon, or what she might have told the priests. Tunelius' doubts, however, did not give rise to any further considerations. Quite the opposite, the King in Council was discontented by the fact that the execution was delayed. The death sentence was finally stated by a resolution on the 14th of June 1827, and the day of execution was set to the 29th of July.⁷⁰

With a little more than a month left to live, Wanselius was finally facing her end and, with priestly guidance, requested to embrace God's love and mercy to save her soul. What did she experience these last weeks? According to one of the skilling prints, she was "prepared to die as a Christian" at her execution day.⁷¹ As is cited in another print, however, "the bitterness of death was doubled by the fact that she had to leave her children in an age when they needed her the most".⁷²

The Voice of a Penitent Sinner

The prints about Wanselius were all produced and marketed in close conjunction with the day of her execution. Two of them combine songs/verses staging the convict herself confessing her sins with résumés of the crime and trial as reported in the *Stockholms Dagblad* the previous year. As is usual with skilling ballads in general, no author is mentioned. Formulated from the perspective of the delinquent, we know, however, that it isn't Wanselius herself who has composed them.⁷³

Death hymn for the widow Britta Christina Wallin, born Wanselius opens with the phrase: "My last moment draws to an end" (*Hon nalkas nu min sista stund*) and continues by expressing deep guilt for the crime and fear of the imminent punishment.⁷⁴ The song contains an interesting passage where the protagonist rhetorically addresses the murdered baby, and also imagines the child talking back to her:⁷⁵

3. You little child that on my arm
were resting so innocently
as the motherly feeling
hastily left my bosom
Why shouldn't I take care of you
just as if you were my own
And keep you safe from violence?

4. Your spirit wings around my mind
and seems to ask:
"How could you lose yourself
for the lousy lure of gold?
I was torn from the happiness of life
almost before I had experienced its first day
How could a mother act in such a way?"

5. I still can see how sweetly you smiled
and defencelessly reached your hands to me

But the lust of sin betrayed me
and stretched the sense of virtue
I walked the path of precipice
that brought me to destruction
and now to the place of execution.

Regretful, but with acceptance for her punishment, the lyrical protagonist continues by turning to God and Jesus, asking for forgiveness. She then addresses her own children in a repentant farewell, requesting them to trust in God and to see her as a warning example:

10. Farewell now, my poor children
I will abandon you
May God be your defence
against the snare of Satan
Trust in his hand of goodness
and you will not build your house of joy on sand.

11. You can see in your poor mother
a significant example
that God has not his temple
in a heart where depravity lives
That God, who has the power over everything
let sentence follow in the footsteps of crime,
though it seemed to delay.

The song of the other combination print lets Wanselius speak in a similar mood but has a somewhat different structure, depicting the moral process of rising insight and acceptance of the death penalty. *The regretful thoughts of child murderess Brita Christirna Wanselius before her execution* begins with the exclamation: “O, good Lord, forgive the crime to which I was led by Satan!” (*O, milde Gud, det brott förlåt, hwartill mig Satan ledde!*). Reflecting chronologically on the crime, the arrest and the efforts to be spared the punishment, the protagonist eventually faces her sin:⁷⁶

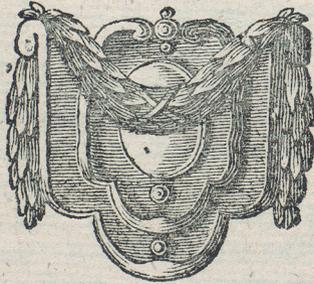
4. [...]
But when I got the rejection the last time
and realized that the verdict was given
Then my regrets woke up.

The malefactor fully admits the seriousness of her crime, now convinced that the execution is not only a just punishment, but also a prerequisite for saving her soul:

6. My crime is serious, my crime is enormous,
it cannot be reconciled here
And it is just that I don't get spared
for the abomination I have committed
O Lord, may the punishment here
Free me from the judgement there
on the other side of the grave!

O Wanselius

Gamla Stinas
Trowärdiga och Rysliga
Berättelse
om
Barnamörderkan
Brita Christina Wanselii
Sista stunder och afrättning.



SEDESHOEN,
tryckt i Marquardska Boktryckeriet, 1827.

The story *Old Stina's trustworthy and horrific story about the child murderess Brita Christina Wanselii last moments and execution* is told by one of the spectators at the event. O Wanselius c, National Library.

The tendency of these versified texts is an ethical-emotional legitimization of the death penalty, expressed by the delinquent herself. This simulated subject acknowledges the heavenly and rightful justice operated by the church and the state, and is simultaneously positioned as a cautionary case, personifying a warning not to trespass. The moral expressed in this popular poetics is in tune with the message of the authorities, albeit on sensational-commercial rather than ideological grounds. To what extent and in which way the songs might have influenced the minds of their audience is, however, less given.

Popular and Priestly Points of View

Among the prints reporting on Wanselius, there are two that depict the event of execution from other perspectives than that of the (simulated) malefactor herself.

Old Stina's trustworthy and horrific story about the child murderer Brita Christina Wanselii last moments and execution contains a story in prose and ends with a poem in two stanzas.⁷⁷ The story is something as rare as an eyewitness report from the day of the execution. The narrator called "Old Stina" could of course be anyone, but it is obviously someone that was actually there, and presumably someone who knew Wanselius personally. "Old Stina" speaks in a personal tone, describing the course of events and her thoughts about them, starting early in the day:⁷⁸

Last Saturday, the 28th of July, I went off early to Smedjegården, to find out if it was true what had been commonly talked of the day before; that Wanselius was to meet her death. In case it was true, I had arranged my pursuits so that I could have a couple of hours off to see the execution; not least since I have known Wanselius from her younger days, and always thought and even told her that her impenitent way of life never would have a happy end. Now I got to hear that, alas! my prediction was true, because I was told that she was totally unprepared to suffer death, and that she had the godless belief that it was no sin to get rid of illegitimate children.

Compared to the Wanselius we meet in the skilling prints, the delinquent described above does not seem to agree on the seriousness of her crime or the rightfulness of the punishment. Quite the opposite: in the narrator's view, she did not accept the inexorable fact even on her last day, still looking for ways out:

Wanselius had refused to go [by carriage] to the place of execution, probably for the opportunity to escape during the walk, which she immediately seemed to have in mind as soon as she came out through the front door of Smedjegården. She was led by two priests, to which she did not seem to pay attention at all.

The narrator states that she was so affected by witnessing Wanselius' "misery of sin" that she lost herself in thoughts while walking, but eventually she caught up with the procession outside the tavern Hamburg where

delinquents used to be offered a last drink on their way to execution. Wanselius refused to accept the glass of wine that she was given. She is described as both stubborn and hysteric; suddenly stopping, throwing herself on the ground and even trying to escape:

At Skanstull she claimed that she had needed to relieve herself, and so she was permitted to visit an outhouse on a yard. As it took a long time, they went to look for her and discovered that she had managed to make a way out through the poorly nailed sidewall and thus escaped. She was soon caught, however, but remained obstinate all the way to the scaffold.

As she mounted the scaffold she was admonished by the priests to take refuge with God's mercy and compassion, but she didn't seem to listen. She asked to tie the blindfold on her eyes herself.

After having said her last prayer, her hour had come for the execution. The priests led her to the stock:

Almost reluctantly, she put her head down and the executioner immediately detached it from the body. The distinct sound of the broad-axe cutting the stock shook everybody's senses. Afterwards, a couple of loose boards were removed, and the executed woman fell down at the stake which was immediately fired.

The story ends with Old Stina walking home, in company with an old lady who had some gossip to tell about the executioner's maid. The small talk distracted "Old Stina's" thoughts from the horrifying event for a while, but when arriving home, she sought solitude to write down her reflections. These are presented after the story in a verse about the importance of leading a virtuous life before it is too late.

Another testimony of the execution, albeit more indirect, is expressed in a skilling print entitled *Words of warning to the people at the place of execution, spoken by one of the three priest men that accompanied the widow Wanselius to death*.⁷⁹ The words referred to are a fragment, presumably the end, of a priest's speech at the block, "approximately apprehended by a present auditor and submitted to the press".⁸⁰ Such speeches, priestly "words of warnings", were common at executions in Sweden until they were prohibited in 1830.⁸¹ Held immediately after the decapitation, the priest turned to the audience, explicating the moral and divine meaning of the act. Apart from their direct, performative use, the speeches were also sometimes printed a posteriori, above all those concerning (in)famous delinquents.⁸² The speech fragment in the Wanselius print consists of only a couple of sentences, ending with "Amen". The assembled crowd is urged always to keep God in their mind and their heart and never defy his commandments.

These texts depict different aspects of the event, as well as representing two separate narrative genres: the informal talk and the sermon. "Old Stina's" story is decidedly *realistic* in its detailed depiction of the event and the persons involved, as in the use of everyday speech. In addition to the outer description, there is also an inner realism, expressed by the narrator's

d. O Wanselius

W a r n i n g s - O r d

af Menigheten på Akråttplatsen, uttalade af en

bland de trenne Prestmän, som den 28 fistlidne

Juli ledsagade Enkan

W A N S E L I U S

till döden.

Af en närvarande åhörare ungefärligen uppfattade
och till trycket befordrade.



G E D E K H O L M,
Wenlundskä Boktryckeriet, 1827.

Words of warning to the people at the place of execution, spoken by one of the three priest men that accompanied the widow Wanselius to death contains a fragment of a priest's speech at the block, "approximately apprehended by a present auditor". O Wanselius d, National Library.

thoughts and memories. The claim that “Old Stina” knew Wanselius personally adds a further dimension to the idea of trustworthiness: a real connection between the (decent) narrator and the (deviant) narrated. In the popular print, “Old Stina” mediates between the scandalous and the ordinary, positioning herself as an authentic witness on the good side.

In all their brevity, the priest’s “words of warning” represent the wider context of the fateful warning at the block, a discourse well known to the contemporary audience. What unites these separate texts is the Christian ethos that pervades them; a conviction that good and evil are discernible, absolute opposites and that their effects are revealed and performed in the actions of the individual. Wanselius’ fate is not only a horrific story in its own right but serves as a cautionary case, emphasizing the importance of leading a virtuous life.

The Skilling Prints versus the Newspaper

As mentioned above, the prose reports in the skilling prints about Wanselius refer, like a lot of other nineteenth-century prints, to newspaper articles. The prose texts rely on the “objective facts” presented within journalistic discourse in depicting backgrounds to the moralistic, subjective and poetic elaborations in the songs. There are in fact skilling prints that consist of nothing but a reprinted newspaper article.⁸³ Evidently, then, the skilling authors often fed on newspapers as sources for topical issues. Another, more hidden, aspect of this relation is that several of the anonymous authors in fact have been proven to be professional publicists and authors.⁸⁴ But was there a reciprocal intertextual relationship between the media? Did journalists even acknowledge their vernacular, contemporary sibling?

A basic level of mutual dependence is that skilling prints on sensational matters could be advertised in the newspapers, especially in the first half of the nineteenth century. This was also the case for the prints about Wanselius which all were advertised close to the execution: three of them within a week, one about two weeks after the event.⁸⁵ The prints could of course have been published and sold on the streets or elsewhere several days before; one of them was demonstrably sold already on the execution day. Nevertheless, the adverts are interesting points of reference to track the wider spreading of the word.

There is also evidence that journalists could comment on the skilling prints’ inferior handling of urgent matters and refer to them only to express different standpoints in matters like criminal justice. The print *Death hymn for the widow Wanselius at her execution* was, according to an upset writer in *Stockholms Dagblad*, published and sold on the very day of execution, which he finds quite offensive.⁸⁶ Ironically as it may seem, the print was advertised in the very same paper only four days later.

The article was published on the 30th of July, commenting on the execution that had taken place two days earlier. The writer, who obviously witnessed it personally, reports that an uncountable throng gathered to get a sight of Wanselius as she was brought out of Smedjegården; a sheer spectacle. The writer is disturbed by the lack of seriousness that was to be observed among the crowd; “only a few seemed to be in the grave mood of worthy contemplation that such a mournful event ought to give rise to.”⁸⁷ During the walk to the place of execution, Wanselius occasionally was even met with cheers, a frivolousness that makes the writer doubt any enlightenment and virtue among the public. Morally, then, the execution did not seem to have any effect. But, as the writer sarcastically notes, it obviously opened other possibilities:

[The execution] made way, however, for what one could almost not imagine; for the industry to make economic improvement. The very same day, printed at Elméns & Granbergs printing office in this town, a leaflet was published, entitled *Death hymn for the widow Wallin, born Wanselius, at her execution on the 28th of July; with a short report based on her own information about her main life history.*

The critical edge here, thus, concerns the commercial logic as opposed to a moral consciousness. The skilling print (or *broschyr*, “leaflet” as it is called in the article) is seen as a cynical item, produced to make money from a profoundly serious event.

This critique could be seen in the light of the wider debate on the death penalty that was vigorously conducted during the nineteenth century. Many newspapers were mouthpieces for a liberal discourse, criticizing the public executions as being arenas for vulgarity and superstition.⁸⁸ Criminal historian Hans Andersson notes that the skilling prints generally took another posture than the papers in this matter; whereas the newspapers express a critical distance to the official spectacle, the song prints report in an upset and moralizing mode (focusing on the delinquent).⁸⁹

In this particular article, there is yet another edge. Apart from criticizing the commercial aspect of the pamphlet, the writer also attacks the author of it, who is assumed to be the same person as the one writing Wanselius’ petitions for pardon. The connection is not only obvious from the similarity in tone, but, above all, for the suggestion that she is not proved to be guilty. This is nonsense, states the writer, citing all the instances where she has been judged and the fact that she has confessed her crime in court. Even worse, argues the writer, is that the author of the pamphlet names an innocent man, insinuating that he played a crucial part in the matter.⁹⁰ The article ends by requesting the author to seriously contemplate what *new* harm he might have caused by these fallacious implications.

As the example hints, the newspaper and the skilling print were media with different pretensions, agendas and (ideological) standpoints. Simultaneously, there are many links between them. Associated with different

strata or taste communities, they had in practice a lot of readers in common, and, as touched upon, several writers served both media. Obviously, at least in the period studied here, there seems to have been a mutual dependence between them, albeit on different grounds. The skilling prints fed on the news reports on exciting matters; the newspapers for their part needed the income from advertisements, including skilling prints. Moreover, as in the example we have just seen, the newspaper publicists could occasionally criticize the skilling prints in public, to all appearances to defend their own position against the less scrupulous media. There is also evidence that papers could refer to the report in a skilling print when there were no other sources available.⁹¹

After this brief look at the relationship between skilling prints and papers, it is now time to sum up the case study on this particular matter.

Keyholes and Interfaces

In the truly heterogeneous repertoire of songs and text genres in Swedish skilling prints, there are several kinds that speak of their time in a very direct sense; songs that report and comment on current social events, persons and issues. To this group we can count the prints on malefactors and crimes that have been the focus of this article.

Skilling prints on contemporary urgent matters, such as the ones about Wanselius, are a suggestive merging of disparate discourses: social and aesthetical, moral and sensational, spiritual and popular, factual and fictional. The aesthetics must be understood in accordance with their immediate aim: to sell and make a profit. To do so, however, they had to be perceived as interesting and relevant to their potential buyers. This public appeal must be taken into account when considering the prints' and songs' status as source material, not least if we are interested in historical facts. As the literary researcher M. A. Shaaber put it back in 1929, commenting on the news ballad:

Unlike a true report of news, it is derived not from the circumstances of outward occurrences, but from the impression they make on the popular mind. As contemporary historical documents these ballads are highly unsatisfactory, but as revelations of the majority opinion on passing events they are perfect.⁹²

Seen from a different angle, then, it is precisely the populism that makes the skilling prints rewarding as sources, potentially for a wide range of disciplines. They may not be "factful" in a literal sense, rather, they are suggestive in their representation of the matter, expressing and negotiating moral and "common sense" about topical issues. Contextualized, the prints may serve as keyholes to the social dialogues, ideological tensions and standpoints recurring at the time.

On a micro-historical level, the song prints can also serve as entries to in-

dividual fates. The cover page usually states brief but hard facts about the condemned person, such as name, crime and date and place of execution. Such leads make it (at least theoretically) possible to find the person and the case in criminal records and other archival resources. As such, skilling prints on malefactors can be starting points for getting sight of the real person behind the crime and the sensational texts; the protagonist who lacks a voice of her own in the ballads and reports about her. An incidental finding of the case study of the prints on Wanselius is awareness of the real circumstances for this particular woman and the baby that happened to be her victim, a modest contribution to the history of the less privileged.

The skilling prints about the child murderess Brita Christina Wanselius depict her, as we now have seen, as quite different characters, but all according to dominant ideas of morality and justice. The first-person narration of the songs performs a stereotype of the penitent sinner, prepared to be sentenced to death, whereas the prose print, presumably told by someone from her own social sphere, presents her as tragically obdurate. None of these images can be said to be “true”. Putting them in their historical context, however, as voices among other voices, they are significant parts in a polyphonic story; a gendered history of power, sexual morality and economic despair.

A more timeless feature of the market for crime songs is the lucrative dismay and the fascination with deviance, still vividly present in the popular culture of our time.⁹³ The female criminal, the monstrous mother, is still a worrying enigma.

Karin Strand, PhD
Research archivist
Centre for Swedish Folk Music and Jazz Research
Swedish Performing Arts Agency
Box 16326
103 26 Stockholm
Sweden
karin.strand@musikverket.se

References

- Andersson, Hans 2006: *Aldrig kommer duvungar blå utav korpäggen vita. Skillingtryck om brott och straff 1708–1937*. Uppsala: Kungl. Gustav Adolfs Akademien för svensk folkkultur. (Svenska visor 2.)
- Andersson, Hans 2009: *Från dygdiga Dorotea till bildsköne Bengtsson. Berättelser om brott i Sverige under 400 år*. Stockholm: Vulkan.
- Bergman, Martin 1996: *Dödsstraffet, kyrka och staten i Sverige från 1700-tal till 1900-tal*. Diss. Stockholm: Institutet för rättshistorisk forskning. (Skrifter utgivna av Institutet för rättshistorisk forskning, serien 1, Rättshistoriskt biblioteket 53.)

- Bergman, Martin n.d.: *Vägen till himlen går över schavotten. En folklig föreställning och dess vedersakare*. Teologiska institutionen, Lunds universitet (article published on Lund University's website).
- Corfe, Isabel 2016: Sensation and Song. Street Ballad Consumption in Nineteenth-Century England. In Rooney, Paul Raphael & Anna Gasperini (eds.), *Media and Print Culture Consumption in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, pp. 131–145. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK. (New Directions in Book History.)
- Cossins, Annie 2015: *Female Criminality. Infanticide, Moral Panics and the Female Body*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Edvinsson, Rodney & Johan Söderberg 2011: *A Consumer Price Index for Sweden 1290–2008, Review of Income and Wealth*, vol. 57 (2) (web edition: <http://historicalstatistics.org/Jamforelsepris.htm>).
- Jersild, Margareta 1975: *Skillingtryck. Studier i svensk folklig vissång före 1800*. Diss. Stockholm: Svenskt visarkiv. (Svenskt visarkivs handlingar 2.)
- Jonsson, Bengt R. 1958: *Äldre svensk visdiktning och vistradition*. Stockholm. (Licentiate dissertation, manuscript in Svenskt visarkiv.)
- Kordon, Suzanne & Anna Wetterqvist 2006: *Gärningsmannen är en kvinna: en bok om kvinnlig brottslighet*. Stockholm: Bokförlaget DN.
- Lövkrona, Inger 1999: *Annika Larsdotter barnamörderska. Kön, makt och sexualitet i 1700-talets Sverige*. Lund: Historiska Media.
- Lundberg, Dan, Krister Malm & Owe Ronström 2000: *Musik, medier, mångkultur. Förändringar i svenska musiklandskap*. Hedemora: Gidlunds. (Kungl. Musikaliska akademins skriftserie 93.)
- Strand, Karin 2015: Tidsspegling, tendens och tradering. Introduktion till skillingtryck som källmaterial. Märta Ramsten, Karin Strand & Gunnar Ternhag (eds.), *Tryckta visor. Perspektiv på skillingtryck som källmaterial*. pp. 9–17. Uppsala: Kungl. Gustav Adolfs Akademien för svensk folkkultur. (Acta academiae regiae Gustavi Adolphi CXXXIV, Skrifter utgivna av Svenskt visarkiv 39.)
- Strand, Karin 2016: *Brott, tiggeri och brännvinets fördärv. Studier i socialt orienterade visor i skillingtryck*. Möklinta: Gidlunds. (Skrifter utgivna av Svenskt visarkiv 41.)

Skilling prints

- Kungliga bibliotket (*National Library*)
 Skillingtryckssamlingen, tryck på signum O.
 Svensk vitterhet före 1700: Visor, andliga.

Newspapers

- Bihang till Stockholms Dagligt allehanda* 4 August 1827.
Stockholms Dagblad 4 September 1826; 5 September 1826; 23 February 1827; 1 August 1827; 2 August 1827; 30 July 1827; 14 August 1827.
Stockholms-Posten 21 September 1829.

Archival resources

- Stockholms stadsarkiv
 Stockholms kämnärsrätter, Norra förstadens östra kämnärsrätt, A 2 A: 103, Protokoll i brottmål 1826.
- Riksarkivet (*Swedish National Archives*)
 Nedre justitierevisionens arkiv
 Registratur för år 1827, januari–juni.
 Diarium över besvärsmål 1827.
 Besvärs- och ansökningsmål 1827, akt 41.

¹ First rejection of pardon declared by Royal Court 23 January 1827 (Kongl. Justitierevisionens registratur för år 1827, januari–juni. Riksarkivet). See also comment in *Stockholms Dagblad* 1827 February 23.

² In the article, I use the term *skilling print/skilling ballads* for the Scandinavian song prints and their songs which (except for their format) have a close kinship to the anglophone concept of *broadside ballads*. The skilling print was typically a sheet folded twice, making an 8-page booklet (in *octavo*). The print could contain one or several songs, and from the early nineteenth century also prose texts. Cf. Strand 2014, pp. 11f; Brandtzæg in this volume.

³ *Barnamörderskan Brita Christina Wanselius ångerfulla tankar före sin afrättning, uttryckta i en uppbygglig och rörande wisa, förutgången af en berättelse om hennes grufliga brotts uppdragande*. O Wanselius b (Stockholm, 1827).

⁴ *Döds-psalm för enkan Brita Christina Wallin, född Wanselius wid dess aflifwande den 28 juli 1827; jemte en korrt af henne sjelf meddelad underrättelse om hennes förnämsta lefnads-omständigheter*. O Wanselius a (Jönköping, 1827). The print was also printed in Stockholm 1827, cf. A 1702 in Svenskt visarkiv.

⁵ *Gamla Stinas trowärdiga och rysluga berättelse om barnamörderskan Brita Christina Wanselii sista stunder och afrättning*. O Wanselius c (Stockholm, 1827).

⁶ *Warnings-ord till meningheten på afrittsplatsen, uttalade af en bland de trenne prestmän, som den 28 sistlidne Juli ledsagade enkan Wanselius till döden. Af en närwarande ähörare ungefärligen uppfattade och till trycket befordrade*. O Wanselius d (Stockholm, 1827).

⁷ The project is mainly funded by Stiftelsen Olle Engkvist Byggmästare.

⁸ The keyhole concept was developed in Lundberg *et al.* 2000.

⁹ Lövkrona 1999, p. 179.

¹⁰ On British ground, Isabel Corfe (2016) refers to an article in the *Westminster Review* from 1829, where the writer calculates that on average, “every copy of a newspaper in Great Britain [...] was read by perhaps twenty-five persons on average”, with the average in the London area being as high as around 30 people. Corfe, p. 139.

¹¹ Corfe, p. 141.

¹² National Library (Vitt. sv. f. 1700. Visor, andl.). According to the survey of skilling prints printed before 1700 listed by Jonsson (1958), the print has the number Sa 23 (“Sa” signifying spiritual as opposed to worldly, “Sv”) Cf. Jersild p. 45.

¹³ O Thurneman, S. a and b.

¹⁴ Cf. Jersild 1975, pp. 216f.

¹⁵ Cf. Andersson 2006, p. 8 and Strand 2016, p. 127.

¹⁶ Cf. Andersson 2006, p. 8.

¹⁷ Strand 2016, p. 21.

¹⁸ For an exposition of the collection of skilling prints at the National Library, the catalogue system and its history, see Olrog 2011, pp. 51–58.

¹⁹ All editions included, the total number of prints in this section is 744.

²⁰ All editions included, the total number of prints in this section is 568.

²¹ All editions included, the total number of prints in this section is 176.

²² The announcement seems to have its historical background in the judicial rearrangement made in 1614 in Sweden. From this point, death penalties judged at the local courts had to be submitted to the Supreme Court before execution. This meant a longer duration between verdict and sentence, which was to the benefit of both the church (for preparation of the convict) and the state authorities (for time to promulgate the event to ensure many spectators). (Bergman n.d., p. 3). The song prints for sale obviously played a part in the popular spreading of the word.

²³ To the corpus of named female criminals on “O” I have added one print outside the National Library’s collection as it fills all obvious criteria. It was printed in 1699 and has, according to the survey of skilling prints printed before 1700 listed by Jonsson (1958), number Sa 62. Ac-

ording to Jonsson, the print is part of S. Lindved's collection, deposited in Lund University Library.

²⁴ O Lindgren.

²⁵ O Falk, O Larsdotter and O Olsdotter.

²⁶ O Andersdotter, O Carlsdotter, O Johansdotter, O Jöransdotter, O Larsdotter A (the b-print contains a song about another child murderess who was executed a couple of months before, called "a similar sinner"), O Lindbom, O Löfling, O Olsdotter (the b-print contains a song about another child murderess who was beheaded for her crime), O Runbom, O Siggesdotter, O Sundman, O Wiberg, O Östervik.

²⁷ O Apelqvist, O Falk (this print also includes a song about another child murderess who was executed the same day, called Christina Sophia), O Löf, O Löfvenmark, O Wanselius.

²⁸ O Nilsson.

²⁹ Sa 23:2. Cf. note 12 above.

³⁰ Ob 1, Ob 2, Ob 5, Ob 1734 a, Ob 1734 b, Ob 1801 a, Ob 1801 b, Ob 1801 c, Ob 1836 a, Ob 1836 b, Ob 1838 a, Ob 1838 a and Ob 1904 a.

³¹ O Adelin, O Eckart, O Eklund, O Hedin, O Lindgren (the print also declares the name of the accessory, Lovisa Bergros), O Norman, O Zierau.

³² O Bengtsdotter, O Larsson-Friberg, O Real, O Romenoff.

³³ O Boman, O Larsdotter M, O Månsdotter.

³⁴ O Gabriëlsson, O Persdotter I, O Persdotter S. C. Incest was also part of the murder case reported on in O Månsdotter.

³⁵ O Meyer, O Starck.

³⁶ O Madigan.

³⁷ Sa 62. Cf. note 23 above.

³⁸ The term infanticide usually presupposes a parental perpetrator. In her study of (the representation of) female infanticide in Britain, Ann Cossins (2015) distinguishes between "neonaticide" (the homicide of an infant within the first 24 hours after birth), "infanticide" (the homicide of a child under the age of 12 months), and "filicide" (homicide of a child of any age by its parents). Cossins, p. 5.

³⁹ Counting all female delinquents of these skilling prints together (named, anonymous and as subsidiary characters), 31 out of 61 persons have committed child murder.

⁴⁰ Lövkrona 1999, pp. 13–18.

⁴¹ Cf. Cossins, p. 8; 74f.

⁴² For a discussion on the gendered history of infanticide, see Lövkrona 1999 pp. 18–22.

⁴³ Criminal record; Stockholms kämnärsrätter, Norra förstadens östra kämnärsrätt, A 2 A: 103, Protokoll i brottmål 1826, 5 October 1826, interrogation of Berg. Henceforth I refer to this protocol as CR and date.

⁴⁴ CR 5 October 1826, interrogation of Berglund.

⁴⁵ *Stockholms Dagblad* 4 September 1826.

⁴⁶ *Stockholms Dagblad* 5 September 1826.

⁴⁷ CR 5 October 1826, interrogation of Wennström.

⁴⁸ CR 5 October 1826, interrogation of Wennström.

⁴⁹ RD Rks = riksdaler riksgälds was a Swedish currency 1789–1872. In 2018 value, 2 RD Rks in 1826 corresponds to a purchasing power of 158.50 SEK (about 15 euros), and in terms of cost for worked hours (calculated on a male worker's salary) 5989 SEK (about 560 euros). Edvinsson & Söderberg, pp. 270–293.

⁵⁰ CR 5 October 1826, interrogation of Wennström; interrogation of Röding.

⁵¹ CR 5 October 1826, interrogation of Wanselius.

⁵² The third child, a girl, died a couple of days after its birth (CR 5 October 1826, interrogation of Wanselius).

⁵³ CR 5 October 1826, interrogation of Råstedt.

- ⁵⁴ CR 5 October 1826, interrogation of Råstedt; interrogation of Wennström; interrogation of Wanselius.
- ⁵⁵ CR 5 October 1826, interrogation of Råstedt; interrogation of Wennström.
- ⁵⁶ CR 5 October 1826, interrogation of Wennström.
- ⁵⁷ CR 5 October 1826, interrogation of Råstedt; interrogation of Wennström.
- ⁵⁸ CR 5 October 1826, interrogation of Flodberg and Grönroth.
- ⁵⁹ The sessions were held on the 5th, 12th, 17th, 19th, 24th, 26th and 31st of October.
- ⁶⁰ CR 5 October 1826, background.
- ⁶¹ CR 5 October 1826, 12 October 1826, interrogation of Wanselius.
- ⁶² CR 26 October 1826, report by af Grubbens.
- ⁶³ CR 24 October 1826, interrogation of Wanselius.
- ⁶⁴ CR 31 October 1826, verdict.
- ⁶⁵ Nedre justitierevisionens arkiv, Besvärs- och ansökningsmål 1827, akt 41. Letter arrived 20 November 1826.
- ⁶⁶ Nedre justitierevisionens arkiv, Besvärs- och ansökningsmål 1827, akt 41. Transcription of verdict by Svea hovrätt; *Stockholms Dagblad* 23 February 1827.
- ⁶⁷ Nedre justitierevisionens arkiv, Besvärs- och ansökningsmål 1827, akt 41. Letter arrived 8 January 1827.
- ⁶⁸ Justitierevisionens registratur för år 1827, januari–juni.
- ⁶⁹ Nedre justitierevisionens arkiv, Besvärs- och ansökningsmål 1827, akt 41. Letter arrived 7 May 1827.
- ⁷⁰ As cited in O Wanselius b, p. 3.
- ⁷¹ O Wanselius b.
- ⁷² O Wanselius a.
- ⁷³ Cf. Strand 2016, pp. 124–128.
- ⁷⁴ O Wanselius a.
- ⁷⁵ My word-for-word translation.
- ⁷⁶ My word-for-word translation.
- ⁷⁷ O Wanselius c.
- ⁷⁸ My translation.
- ⁷⁹ O Wanselius d.
- ⁸⁰ There are different statements regarding the number of the priests following Wanselius to death; in “Old Stina’s” story above they are said to be two; according to this print they were three.
- ⁸¹ Bergman 1996, p. 123.
- ⁸² Cf. The collection of “Dödsfångetryck” (Teol. Pred. Dödsf. (Br.) 1700–1829) in National Library.
- ⁸³ Cf. Ob 1800 a, citing an article in *Dagligt Allehanda* at length. Cf. Strand 2016, pp. 144–148.
- ⁸⁴ Cf. handwritten attributions on several prints on section O, for example C. J. L. Almqvist (O Lindström); Anders Sundler (O Antonellos).
- ⁸⁵ O Wanselius a: *Stockholms Dagblad* 1 August 1827; O Wanselius d: *Stockholms Dagblad* 2 August 1827; O Wanselius b: *Bihang till Stockholms Dagligt allehanda* 4 August 1827; O Wanselius c: *Stockholms Dagblad* 14 August 1827.
- ⁸⁶ *Stockholms Dagblad* 30 July 1827.
- ⁸⁷ *Stockholms Dagblad* 30 July 1827.
- ⁸⁸ Andersson 2009, p. 109.
- ⁸⁹ Andersson 2009, p. 116.
- ⁹⁰ The man referred to is Anders Råstedt, the police warden with whom Wanselius was staying at the time.
- ⁹¹ Cf. *Stockholms-Posten* 1829 September 21 and O Löf (Stockholm, 1829).
- ⁹² Cited in Clark, pp. 75f.
- ⁹³ For discussions on current representations of female criminals, see Kordon & Wetterqvist 2006.

Life Prisoner and Master Thief

Constructions of a National Hero

Knut Aukrust

Abstract

The article is about the famous and troubled Norwegian gangster Ole Høiland (1797–1845), son of a small farmer in the south of Norway. He is at once a hero and a villain, a duality that has fascinated and provoked many people. What narratives are at play in broadside ballads, newspapers, books, and references to him which can shed light on this problem? The starting point is a broadside ballad ascribed to Ole Høiland himself. The theoretical foundation is inspired by Mikhail Bakhtin's theories of polyphony, combined with narratological perspectives in the field of African American studies. Høiland's own text is both a recapitulation of his own life and a construction of his life.

Høiland can be seen as a trickster figure, his laughter and his verbal ability to manipulate his way out of tricky situations occurs as a cultural script in several variants.

Keywords: hero, gangster, Bakhtin, trickery, African American studies

In 1843 the bookbinder Thøger Petersen in Hjørring, North Jutland, printed a broadside ballad with seven verses about the Norwegian Ole Høiland. The first verse goes:

O, haarde Skjæbne! Du saa mange faarer,
Og leder paa den mørke Verdens Sti!
Selv til Offer Høiland du udkaarer
Med andre fleer, som er ei heller fri.

O cruel fate! You lead astray so many,
And guide them on the dark path of the world!
And you chose Ole Høiland as your victim
And many other men who are not free.

Before the ballad itself there is a short presentation of the main character, Ole Pedersen Høiland (1797–1848), a famous man “whose name is sacred in the mouth of the poor Norwegian”. He is described as an unusually handsome, agile, lithe person with open, noble features. He particularly attracted “the attention of the beautiful”. Already at a young age he had taken the first steps on “the path of vice, to which he devoted his life from that day”. His

ambitious plan was to found a band of courageous young men with the aim of “stealing and robbing from the rich to distribute among the poor and unfortunate”. His life was accompanied by stories of exploits “many of which seem incredible”. After a series of spectacular escapes he is now a prisoner in “The Castle of Aagershus in Norway [...] is now 46 years old” (Petersen 1843; Clausen 1985:36–38).

Printed sheets of this type have been called *kisteblad*, *kistebrev*, or *kistebilde*, and the Swedish cultural historian Hanna Enefalk has designated

Ole Høiland.

Denne berøgtede Mand er født i Høilands Prestegjæld i Vifter og Mandal Amt i Norge, hvor hans Fader var Skovhugger. — Halvmodelig smukt rødt og rødt, med aabne og adle Træk, tiltraf han sig alles Herde og Sjæles Samværfremde. Af denne Grund tog ogsaa en rig Herredens Kone i Christiansburg den selvsaaige Gut i sin Tjeneste, og behandlede ham med største Forførmelighed. — Der luffte sig naar talte han her, før hans uslydige Sind forleste ham til at tage en anden Tjeneste som Gæstgæst, hvilket Kald han regtede med største Megetagthed. — Men fra Dandemmens første Dage havde argerrige Manner største gjennemtrøst hans Hoved; han besluttede at danne en Vandt modige Mand, hvis Hensigt stulde være at stjele og røve fra de Rige til Høilung blandt de fattige og Høilfælige. — Han udførte sit Forløst, løb fra sin Herde med endel Penges; — det første Skridt paa loftenes Vane, som han fra den Tid begyndte at gøre. — Dandslydige ere de Træk der fortæller om ham, hvilke mange fattige tonede utrolige. — Høilands fri Dand afbrødte med at stjele og røve; men tilfødt blev han forrøbet af en Skar af hans Vandt, og med flere af sine Kammerater efter forsvovlet Kamp fanget af Soldaterne. — Sine Høilfælige udbrøde han af Hængsel; selv forblev han som Fange paa sit Høilørd paa Aagershus Slot i Norge, hvor han endnu var 1836. — Denne Mand hvis Navn er helligt i de fattige Nordmands Munde, er nu 46 Aar gammel.

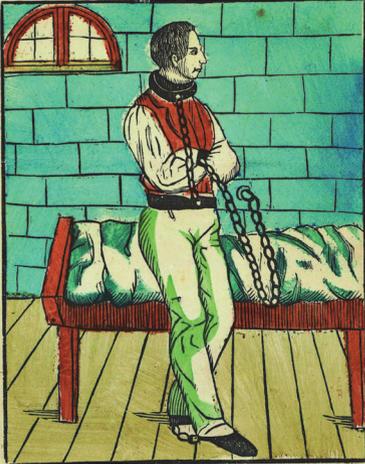
Mel: Dig elskte Frankrig mit Høilørd jeg lude.

D hørde Høilørd! Du saa mange saarer,
Dy lede paa den meste Herrens Stal!
Søt til Høilørd du udførte
Med andre flere, som er et heller stiel.
I atten Aar dig lode som tilfældig,
Saa rigt begavet af Naturen Høilørd!
Da Høilørd, da du moone fremad lie
Med modigt Haad den valgte Stiel til den.

Han vilde jenne alle Høilørd Gøder,
Som troede her sig alle Gøder var,
Dy som en Riddet efter Høilørd
Han vandre sig, og Høilørd modigt bar,
Høilørd Høilørd han Penges fra sin egen Herde
Med vilde gøder løb til deres Høilørd;
Men der et lange Høilørd fande vore
Han Høilørd ud, og kemtil Høilørd frem.

Høilørd blev han groven, kemtil Høilørd og Høilørd,
Men her med Høilørd Høilørd og Høilørd,
Dy agte et den saa begyndte Høilørd,
Men Høilørd Høilørd, Høilørd Høilørd.
Høilørd vilde ud med Penges ubi Høilørd
Den ramte Høilørd, og hans modigt Høilørd,
Dy Høilørd metog af Høilørd Gøde
Saa ofte Høilørd fra en Høilørd Høilørd.

Saa gram i Høilørd med Høilørd Høilørd Lørd
Paa den som vørdte som den første Lørd,
Han Høilørd paa og Høilørd ommandt
Med modigt Høilørd fra en Høilørd Høilørd.
Den Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd
Høilørd i Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd
Høilørd Høilørd, og Høilørd Høilørd,
Men Høilørd tog Alt — og Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd.



Si Høilørd lysten fremet var udføret;
Han vilde se sin Herre Høilørd og Høilørd!
Med Høilørd Høilørd af Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd
Paa Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd
Han Høilørd, Høilørd af Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd,
Dy Høilørd med Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd,
Der Høilørd Høilørd, han med ad Høilørd Høilørd
og Høilørd sig i Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd.

Men Høilørdens Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd i det Høilørd;
Høilørd af sine Høilørd den Høilørd Høilørd!
I Høilørd Høilørd han Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd —
Den Høilørd i Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd.
Et Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd
for Høilørd Høilørd, — og hans Høilørd Høilørd;
Som Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd
Med Høilørd og Høilørd — Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd.

Men Høilørd ei dem det vilde Høilørd;
Som Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd,
Dy Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd,
End Høilørd Høilørd fra det vilde Høilørd,
End Høilørd Høilørd at Høilørd Høilørd —
Der Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd at Høilørd
Al Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd,
Dy Høilørd sig Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd
Med Høilørd Høilørd den Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd.

Paa Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd,
Dy Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd,
Høilørd, Høilørd, Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd,
Som Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd.
Med Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd,
Dy Høilørd Høilørd af den Høilørd Høilørd!
Da han et Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd;
Men Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd Høilørd!



Trykt og saad hos J. Petersen i Hjørring.

Nr. 43.

1. Broadside: Oh Cruel Destiny, Ole Høiland, Thøger Petersen, Hjørring. Source: Det kongelige Biblioteks billedsamling, Copenhagen <http://www.kb.dk/images/billed/2010/okt/billeder/object143/da/>.

them as a “sister medium” of the *skillingstrykk* or broadside (Enefalk 2013: 15). They were fairly large plates that could be pasted inside the lid of a chest (hence the names beginning with *kist-*) or hung on a wall. The sheets tended to be illustrated with one or more colourful woodcuts in the middle, surrounded by an introductory presentation, such as the text quoted above, in addition to the ballad itself. Thøger Petersen’s sheet is dominated by a portrayal of Ole Høiland in his prison cell. His gaze is calm and introverted as he stands in front of the bunk bed with irons around his foot, neck, and waist, attached by chains to a solid stone wall. Ole is moreover wearing a straitjacket so that he cannot use his arms. At head height the cell has a little arched window. The interior and the atmosphere conjure up Ole’s cell at Akershus, the fortress where he was imprisoned for many years. This is how a national hero from Norway was presented, thirty years after the country had ceased to be a part of the Danish king’s domains.

Ole Høiland was both a master thief and an escape artist. The main theme of this article is how his name could attain the status of “sacred in the mouth of the poor Norwegian” while he was still alive. What narratives are at play in broadside ballads, newspapers, books, and references to him which can shed light on this problem? The starting point is a broadside ballad ascribed to Ole Høiland himself, composed during his imprisonment at Akershus, presumably around 1836. Additional source material consists of other broadside ballads and other Norwegian and foreign literature on the theme of Ole Høiland up to the middle of the 1850s. Thøger Petersen’s print is an expression of the interest that existed outside Norway as well. In addition I consider Swedish, Scottish, and French material. A special feature of the foreign material is the attempts to explain the connections between the role of hero and the distinctiveness of Norwegian culture. The theoretical foundation is inspired by Mikhail Bakhtin’s theories of polyphony, combined with narratological perspectives in the field of African American studies (Bakhtin 1986; Volosinov 1986; Møller Andresen 2010; Abrahams 1970; Gates 1988).

Villain and Hero / Perspectives and Theory

Transformations from villain to hero are not a new phenomenon, nor the fact that they can be a part of nation-building projects. The tradition of singable ballads about heroes balancing on the edge of established moral and religious paradigms is a long one. The American folklore scholar Francis James Child developed a classification system as part of his ambitious book project *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, published in the period 1882–98. Volume V deals with ballads about Robin Hood and his merry men, while volume VI has ballads about other outlaws. Scholars in England have been working for many years with *The Robin Hood Project*. One of their aims has been to study how the robber Robin Hood was transformed into a folk and

national hero in legends, ballads, and broadsides up to our own time. But the patterns go back even further, to the tragic heroes of antiquity and to the Christian tradition deriving from Luke the evangelist. Chapter 23 tells of how the master from Nazareth was nailed to a cross between two malefactors, one of whom repented and was rewarded with a promise to accompany Jesus to Paradise.

Verbal statements acquire meaning through the place and the significance they have within a culture's practices and lifeways. The American sociolinguist and folklorist Dell Hymes has developed this perspective with a view to revealing inter-subject relations in language (Hymes 1996). Mikhail Bakhtin, with his theories of polyphony and speech genres, emphasizes the links between linguistic meaning, contextual foundation, and power (Bakhtin 1986). Language becomes a stage for confrontations between different social dialects and accents. Whereas the ruling class gives the impression that language is neutral and uniform, repressed classes and groups struggle to use language as a tool for their own liberation. Words, expressions, and signs may appear identical when used by different actors, but they carry different meanings. One of the scholars in Bakhtin's circle has highlighted this ambiguity with reference to the Roman god Janus, with his two faces looking in different directions: "In actual fact, each living ideological sign has two faces, like Janus. Any current curse word can become a word of praise, any current truth must inevitably sound to many other people as the greatest lie." According to Bakhtin and his school, this internal dialectal quality stands out with particular clarity "in times of social crises or revolutionary changes" (Volosinov 1986:23).

Ole Høiland lived in a period of turbulence, social destitution, crises, and revolutions in Europe and the Scandinavian countries. The Napoleonic Wars had far-reaching consequences for Norway owing to blockades, famine, and states of war. The union with Denmark that had existed since the Middle Ages came to an abrupt end as a result of the progress of the war and the Treaty of Kiel in January 1814. Europe's great powers decided that Norway, instead of being a client of kingdom of Denmark, should be forced into a union with Sweden. The Norwegians rejected this solution and took the opportunity to adopt a constitution that was democratic by the standards of the time; this happened at Eidsvoll on 17 May. At the same time, Norway proclaimed itself an independent nation, a status that lasted just six months. In November the king of Sweden took full control over Norway, in keeping with the Treaty of Kiel. The national project throughout the nineteenth century was to revive Norwegian language and culture after the long Danish hegemony, a period which the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen described as a "four-hundred-year night brooded over the monkey" (Ibsen 1867:177). At the same time, it was important to oppose Sweden's political and economic dominance and defend the national rights in the constitution.

The year of Ole Høiland's death, 1848, was also the great revolutionary year in Europe. Who was a hero and who was a villain?

The Life of a Small Farmer's Son

Ole Pedersen Høiland was born on the farm of Høiland in southern Norway, about 60 kilometres north of Mandal, and was christened in Grindheim church on 24 February 1797. His parents were the farmers Peder Olsen and Gjertrud Gullovsdatter. The 1801 census shows that, besides Ole, his parents, and two younger sisters, there were 23 people living at Høiland, on five small farms. Peder Olsen took over the farm in 1768 with no start-up capital. Large loans were needed, and in 1802 the parents were obliged to sell the farm. The family then moved to Kristiansand. A local history of Grindheim mentions that on 16 May 1811 Peder bought the farm back for 2,500 *riksdaler*, as "freehold for his son Ole". On the same day it was sold on to Jon Aanenson for 5,300 *riksdaler*. The background to these economic transactions is unclear, and five years later Ole's family were living on poor relief from the town of Kristiansand (Breilid 1966:18–19).

In his early youth Ole worked as a servant boy and herder on several of the farms in his home district of Grindheim. For three years he lodged at the rectory in Tveit, ten kilometres or so east of Kristiansand, where the parson Jens Nielsen Lassen and his family looked after him. After confirmation in 1815 he went to live with his parents, but the lack of jobs prompted him to embark on a criminal career. It began with petty theft and quickly escalated to his arrest and a sentence of two years' imprisonment in November 1816. A month later he escaped, ready to commit more crimes.

The combination of crimes, severe sentences, and spectacular escapes persisted for the rest of his life, in other words, 32 years of heavy punishments, whipping and isolation, inhuman conditions – and long periods on the run. From 1824 until his death 24 years later he was in the "Slavery" at Akershus fortress, serving a life sentence in penal labour, interrupted by four spectacular escapes. In this period he was at large for a total of four years and three months, and several of his major exploits took place during these "abscondments" (*Undvigelser*), as the term of the time called it. The robbery of the Christiania branch of the Bank of Norway in the early hours of 1 January 1835 gave him star status. There he made off with a sum of over 60,000 *speciedaler*, corresponding to 20 million kroner (about 2 million euros) in today's currency. For the final six years he was in isolation, a broken man, and at the third attempt he succeeded in taking his own life (Meltzer 1849).

Ole Høiland never used violence or weapons, and this made him popular and legendary both inside and outside Norway. There are many stories about him in prose and verse alike. Contemporary broadside ballads about him, in the typical manner of the genre, are called the "new", the "newest",

“the very latest news” of his dramatic life, or describe specific episodes, thefts, escapes, and arrests. Rumours flourished about his way with the women, and in various parts of Norway there are still today many local legends about houses, caves, and hiding places where Ole is said to have concealed himself or his stolen goods (Bull-Gundersen 2009). Two characteristic features of Ole’s activities are particularly expressed in the broadside ballads and other traditions about him. First of all, they illustrate his ability to outwit the people he stole from and the authorities who tried to keep him under arrest. He is thus presented as a Norwegian trickster, a dubious figure who alternates between being inside and outside the norms of society. Secondly, there is the egalitarian theme, in that a way of reading his thefts soon arose, as he was said to steal from the rich to give to the poor. As a popular figure he has many features shared with characters in fairy tales and legends, Loki in Norse mythology, the master thief, and Robin Hood. He transgresses physical, social, and moral barriers through his actions, where he ridicules, exposes, and tricks people in power. Occasionally it is difficult to distinguish whether what comes first is the folk understanding that places Høiland in a position like this, or if it is a construction with Ole himself as the director.

In This Dark Prison Cell I Now Have Been Confined

Among the many broadside ballads *about* Ole Høiland’s life of crime there is also a sheet *by* Ole Høiland. It is entitled “Ole Høiland’s Life. Written by Himself in Prison”, and it is easy to sing for anyone who knows the tune of “Nu vil jeg fortælle min Skjæbne saa tung”. The ballad can be found in many editions and printings, and it derives its strength from being the only one ascribed to Ole Høiland himself, combined with the fact that it was written in prison (*Levnetsløb*). We take no stance as to whether it is actually true, and we adhere to a unanimous tradition about the origin. The content and form are low-key and sober, assuming that the listener, the addressee, is familiar with the events of Ole’s life. Through the ballad the first-person narrator takes an active grasp of the presentation of his own life, and thus also controls how he wants it to be understood. The ballad is not clearly dated, but there is a great deal to suggest that it was written in the period 1836–1839, after Ole had broken into the Bank of Norway and had been arrested in January 1835, but before his last escape in September 1839. More about this later.

The *Levnetsløb* is a condensed life story in 29 verses, each with four lines. The American psychologist Jerome Bruner has pointed out how a life story, like any narrative, has an implicit evaluation of the events described, and of which events should be omitted. The life story is constructed after the event by creating what Bruner calls “an identity-conserving Self” (Bruner 1986). Every person has a great talent for telling stories in instalments, where the

Ole Høilands Levnetsløb

Skrevet af ham selv i Fængslet.

Mel: Nu vil jeg fortælle min Skjæbne saa tung.

1. I Fængslets mørke Gjemme har man mig nu indsat,
Og jeg vil nu istemme en Sang i tause Nat; Den Tidss-
fordriv kan være for mig i Ensomhed, Og andre kan den lære,
Hvad mig er hændet ved.

2. Min første Ungdoms Dage hengled i Lyst og Fred,
Men alt de spandt saa fage, Jeg glemte Gud og Dyb.
Alt tidligen jeg ikke Paa Laskens Bane ud, Vetsindig jeg
kun smilte Til Dyden og dens Bud.

3. Jeg femten Aar var bleven, Saa jeg min Tjenest
tog, Men et det saa var skrevet I Skjæbnens store Bog,
Alt jeg mig ærlig skulde Erhverve mig mit Brød; Da tre
Aar vare fulde, Min Tjenest jeg forstjød.

4. Hos min' Forældre gamle Jeg var et Aars Tid
vel; Istedesfor at samle til dem al Fryd og Held, Saa
tænkte jeg alene paa Rov og Tyveri, Og søgte at forlene
Mig Øvelse dert.

5. I Kristianssand jeg lærte, Hvad Vaand og Fængsel
bar; Jeg første Gang proberte, Hvad Tvang at sige har.
I Lugthus man mig satte, Mig tvang til Arbejd' der; Nu
kunde jeg først fatte, hvad Friheden dog er.

6. Jeg derfor ogsaa snarlig en Vællighed udfandt, Hvor-
ved jeg nok saa varlig Af Fængselet forsvandt. Nu var
jeg fri da bleven, Hvor skulde jeg nu hen? Af Mennesker
fordreven, Jeg Thy maatt' bli igjen.

2. Ole Høiland's life story. Written by himself in jail. Ole Høilands Levnetsløb. Skrevet af ham selv i Fængslet. Source: NFS Skillingstrykk: Prøysensamlingen.

narrator forces and organizes past events and emotions to suit the time, place, and intention of the narrative. How does Ole Høiland wish to appear, to the present and the future? The first verse goes:

I Fængslets mørke Gjemme Har man mig nu indsat,
 Og jeg vil nu istemme en Sang i tause Nat;
 Den tidsfordriv kan være for mig i Ensomhed,
 Og andre kan den lære, hvad mig er hændet ved.

In this dark prison cell I now have been confined,
 And now I want to sing a song this silent night;
 To pass away the time here in my solitude,
 That others thus may learn what has befallen me.

The setting is clear. Since he was 27 years old, Ole has been kept away from public life, as a life slave in Akershus fortress. Thanks to his skill as an escape artist, however, the years within the prison walls were interrupted by four escapes which gave him freedom for a total of four years and three months. Captivity and freedom are key words in the ballad, which he sings himself in order to break the silence. The broadside ballad is an active instrument to construct his own version of how he wants to appear to his contemporaries and posterity. Within the prison walls, solitude prevails. The situation is not without irony, in that the only kind of pastime he has is to reflect on his own life (Olaussen 2013). The narrative is not a vain shot in the dark on the part of the prisoner. Those who hear and understand its language and message can learn from his experiences, filtered through his desire to appear like a real hero. The broadside ballad is a medium that bursts the walls between life inside the prison and the world outside. The author is “himself in prison”, and the addressees are the absent listeners outside the prison cell, in time and space. Høiland’s structuring of the text is both a recapitulation of his own life and a construction of his life. The text is aimed at a presumed addressee outside the walls, in keeping with Bakhtin’s concept of “superaddressee”, based on the idea of being heard by someone, a chance listener or a future “judge” (Møller Andersen 2010:19).

Vice and Virtue, Freedom or Captivity

The life story does not dwell long on Ole’s childhood on the farm of Høiland in Bjelland parish and the years of early youth. They “slipped by in pleasure and in peace” (verse 2). But “in early years I hastened upon the path of vice, [...] forgetting God and virtue”. This is how he formulates the contrast between virtue and vice, a choice of path that is familiar from biblical texts and classical myths about gods and heroes in the Greco-Roman pantheon. When Ole entered into service at Tveit rectory he was just fifteen years old, “but it was not inscribed in the great book of fate” that he would earn his livelihood by honest means (verse 3). He does not mention the place or the name of the priest in the text, but the pastor Jens Nielsen Lassen had known the Høiland family since Ole was a child. Harald Meltzer, however, has emphasized Lassen’s importance and has shown that in later years Ole looked back to his time in service with the pastor as “the highlight of his life”. Although he was

by then a hardened criminal, he could tell the prison warders “with profound wistfulness and a curious childlikeness” about growing up at Tveit, tobogganing in the moonlight with the other children at the rectory. “Such strong contrasts exist in the human heart,” Meltzer writes. He also notes that Ole’s mother had a reputation for not caring about “the difference between what’s mine and what’s yours”. The start of a criminal career was dangerously close for a young lad “without a strict conception of morality,” he concludes. Ole, who moved from the rectory to his parents in Kristiansand, writes himself: “Instead of bringing them [the parents] good fortune and delight, / The one thing on my mind was robbery and theft” (verse 4). And so he let his parents down, while simultaneously assuming responsibility for his future career in crime.

The difference between freedom and captivity is a major motif in Ole Høiland’s narrative of his life. It was in Kristiansand he experienced “what bonds and prison were” (verse 5). When he was arrested in autumn 1816 and charged with thirteen counts of petty theft, he was sentenced to two years’ penal labour in prison. “And only now I understood what freedom is.” His conditions in prison were an important motivation for escaping, and with a relatively relaxed prison regime it was evidently not very difficult. Achieving this freedom through “abscondment” simultaneously created a completely new situation. What was he to do with himself, banished by everyone? “I had to steal again” (verse 6). From 1816 onwards his life consisted of a continuous series of alternating escapes, thefts, arrests, and long prison sentences. The intervals of freedom varied in duration from a few weeks to several months. The longest period was from 17 September 1839 to 31 August 1842, almost three years. Harald Meltzer has given an apt description of the state in which he found himself, always on the run like “an outlaw who everywhere, no matter where he travels, is in constant anxiety about being recognized and who, where he is recognized, is chased and persecuted like a wild animal” (Meltzer 1849:13).

In verses 7 to 16 Ole Høiland describes and ponders on his experiences in the borderland between prison and freedom, and the verses are simultaneously a catalogue of some of his chief exploits in town and country, both out among people and on his own. Here he is thinking of the simple, contented life in nature, in contrast to the money and valuables he stole. Verse 7 is a description in four lines of life on the run, in good times.

Saaledes jeg omvanket fra By til anden om,
Og overalt jeg sanket Mig Penge, hvor jeg kom;
Men husligt Ly jeg mangled Hvorsomhelst jeg drog frem;
Til Leie Mos jeg samled, Og Skoven var mit Hjem

And so I wandered all around from town to town,
And I collected money no matter where I went;
But everywhere I rambled, no houseroom could I find;
My bed was made of moss, the forest was my home.

The lack of a roof was amply compensated by the freedom of life in the forests. Yet despite his craftiness, skill, and lack of fear of being captured, his days of freedom came to an end. He was caught and imprisoned, but he broke out – time and again. It was not hard for him to escape: “I hastened to the woods, where I was wont to live./ And smiling at the guards, For I was safe and sound” (verse 9). The regularly repeated sequence of abscondment and robbery acquired its own agenda: to make a mockery of the judicial system and its guardians. One robbery followed another, in Arendal, Egersund, Kristiansand, Mandal, Stavanger, and many other towns and places along the coast in southern Norway.

In district after district the authorities mobilized, but Ole got away, even when he was arrested and given heavy sentences. “Arrested on the road, condemned to slavery./ But I caused that to change, So I was free again” (verse 10). Similar key sentences are found in several variants. After the escape from Arendal in summer 1823 he had a breathing space of almost a year in freedom. He “stole things in the night, in broad daylight as well”, and he became increasingly bold. His time as a vagabond, with hiding places provided by nature, was an easy-going existence, “I even left the forest and safely used the road” (verse 11).

Ole Høiland’s résumé for the years from 1816 to 1824 was long and eventful. It was almost impossible for him to mention everything. “So I will only tell the most remarkable” (verse 13). The robbery of the deanery in Helleland was decidedly “remarkable”, described in verses 14 and 15. Helleland rectory, near the town of Egersund, about 70 kilometres south of Stavanger, was known for its rich, authoritarian dean, Gerhard Reiner. He was a bachelor and bon viveur with a paternalistic solicitude for the poor in his parish (Hetland 2016). It was rumoured that Ole Høiland was in the locality, and the sheriff warned the dean of what was afoot. Reiner posted four watchmen to guard the rectory, but the jovial dean appeared to be more concerned with giving the watchmen (and himself) plenty of food and drink than with keeping watch. Ole broke into the upper floor of the building, smeared the window panes with tar before breaking them, without making a sound: “I could ignore the guards, who were enjoying food and drink”. Then he sneaked into the dean’s study, “Where I could help myself to large amounts of cash”. The takings were plentiful: a cabinet clock, a gold chain, several gold coins, and silver coins to a total value of 230 *speciedaler*, besides several securities and promissory notes. Meltzer writes in several places that Ole had a singular ability to ingratiate himself with women, and he himself said later that “he was acquainted with a woman at Helleland who assisted him on this occasion. If this account is true, then, this was yet another woman that Ole had been able to lead astray” (Meltzer 1849:32).

Many of the burglaries and thefts were similar in character, audacious and provocative. Rich men were robbed by the bold Ole Høiland, despite warn-

ings and specially hired guards. He thus stands out as a trickster who knew the best dodges. Without using weapons or violence he caught the authorities unawares, with the help of his intelligence and experience, and using his female contacts, although the latter are never a theme in Ole's own life story. The state's control apparatus was unable to capture a poor farmer's son from Høiland. This brought ridicule on clergymen, officials, police officers, merchants, and estate owners.

Life Prisoner

Being at large and able to spend his money did not last long, however, and the turn of the year 1823–24 marked a change of direction in Ole Høiland's career. He was arrested again and brought to Kristiansand where he was given a life sentence as a slave and was *kagstrøket*, a public corporal punishment involving 24 lashes of a whip to his upper body as he was tied to a post. Then he was transferred to the capital, Christiania, and the fortress of Akershus on 31 March 1824. Ole was then 27 years old: "Compelled to slavery, and there they made me lodge" (verse 16). This entailed a significant change in both the place and the form of imprisonment. Here it was shackles and bolts, a rigid regime with iron rings around his neck, waist, and feet.

The Slavery made a distinction between honest and dishonest slaves, those who behaved themselves, displaying contrition and repentance, and those who did not show the right attitude. The master thief appears to have contemplated changing course. He wanted to do penance and become a better person.

Det synes vel utroligt, Men dog det Sandhed er,
 At jeg forblev hel roligt I hened ni Aar der.
 Jeg var paa Vei at blive et andet Menneske,
 Idet jeg vilde give Slip paa al Fristelse.

Now you may not believe, but this is all the truth,
 I lived a quiet life for upwards of nine years.
 And I tried to become a different person there,
 Intending to avoid temptations of all kinds (verse 17).

The master thief altered his style and strategy, and Meltzer writes that he received the best testimonials in the annual "Conduct Lists". Good behaviour, diligence, and order rendered him gradual relief in the terms of his sentence. Most of the irons were removed, apart from the fetter around one leg. The slaves had to be put to work, both on the fortress and outside, and Ole quickly became one of "the most competent turners and stone-cutters in the fortress". He was cheerful and jolly and, not least of all, helpful towards his comrades. He built up a good reputation for generous and loyal behaviour. He would never inform on anyone; instead he covered for others who performed illegal acts. That earned him respect. The other slaves admired him

for his reputation, “because among criminals the most hardened and crafty are held in the highest regard” (Meltzer 1849:34).

This strong position was also linked to his economic status. Throughout his career, Ole took care to bury some of his booty, scattered over a large area. Thanks to loyal friends he had a constant top-up of cash, in return for generous compensation. This enabled him to bribe the guards, who were very badly paid. They helped him by smuggling in food, alcohol, tools such as files, picklocks, and saws, and assisting in his escape plans. He also paid several of the slaves in the fortress to work in his place during this period. In addition, he had a “rather profitable discount business” making advances on the slaves’ wages at high interest. At times up to thirty slaves received money weekly from Ole. In this way he systematically built up his position among the slaves and supervisors, and he “was feared by the other prisoners” (Meltzer 1849:49).

One of the inmates was the big thief Gjest Baardsen, who was the same age as Ole and a rival. He too had a life sentence and had been transferred from Bergen to Akershus in 1828. His territory had been on the west coast, and in the prison there he had been the undisputed leader among the inmates. At Akershus he never acquired that position because everything here was under Ole Høiland’s regime. In this situation Gjest had to choose between isolation and cooperation with the authorities. The latter was the obvious choice, which could most easily bring reward in the form of pardon, according to the historian Yngve Nedrebø (1998:41). By solemnly promising the deputy commander not to escape, he was subsequently granted a series of privileges in the form of a private cell where he could write his autobiography in peace. He could thereby appear in a good light to the authorities, penitent and cooperative. A Christian way of life was a precondition for a pardon.

Ole’s first escape from the fortress took place on 26 June 1831, after seven years in the Slavery. That was as long as he could resist “that wicked old temptation”. “I heard its oily voice”, and together with “a pair of seasoned rogues” (*to andre udlærte Spidsbuber*) he determined to walk out into “the freedom I hold dear” (verse 18). In the next verse he gives the impression that “A chance appeared for us to give the guards the slip”, whereas Meltzer describes how it came about, not by chance, but through detailed preparations and bribes, which included getting helpers to place a boat at Vippetangen, a narrow beach just outside Akershus fortress. His fellow conspirators were soon caught by the police, but Ole managed to stay at large longer: “And freely I could stroll in country and in town” (verse 21). In connection with the escape in 1831, Gjest Baardsen writes in his memoirs that he had also been offered a chance to participate. He was sorely tempted to accept, “because I was still far from the sincere acknowledgement of sin and repentance for my former conduct, with which I was later imbued by the

Grace of God.” He nevertheless resisted on account of his word of honour to the deputy commander, because “it has [...] at all times been a part of my character not to break a promise once given” (Baardsen 1876:168).

The first escape from the fortress lasted five months, and when he was captured and brought back, he was sentenced once again to a public whipping, and his life sentence was renewed under strict supervision. The sentence was confirmed by the Supreme Court on 6 October 1832, but by then Ole had already been on the run for two months. This time he had got collaborators to place a rope on the outside of the fortress so that he could escape. Once again he had made a mockery of the authorities and the major who was the deputy commander of the fortress. He used his freedom to carry off several profitable robberies. The victim of the biggest of these was the former government minister Diderich Hegermann. His political and military career was impressive. Already in the early nineteenth century he had built up the military academy in Christiania, later he played an important part in the negotiation of the constitution at Eidsvoll in 1814, and he was subsequently minister of both the army and the navy. As one of Norway’s most decorated men, he retired to Kristiansand, where he was a landowner and one of the town’s richest businessmen. Ole Høiland’s robbery was unusually daring, rendering Høiland and his fellow conspirators about 2,280 *spesiedaler* in notes and many bags of gold and silver coins. Because of the size of the haul and Hegermann’s position as a minister, the robbery led to a huge police operation which ended with another arrest. Ole does not mention Hegermann in his ballad, contenting himself with the conclusion:

Nu jeg til min Ulykke Ei valgte rigtig Kurs,
Thi da jeg kom et stykke, Saa greb man mig bardus
Og slæbede nu atter Mig ind i Slaveri,
Hvis tvang man da først fatter, Naar man har været fri.

Too bad for me, I chose a course that was not right,
For I had not got far, they nabbed me just like that
And dragged me back again, once more to slavery,
A fate you feel the more when you have once been free. (verse 22)

On 8 February 1833 he was captured again and brought back to the Slavery. Corporal punishment in the form of whipping was a heavy strain that encouraged him to plan new escapes, which led to new arrests. This recurrent theme of his struggle for liberty and his longing to be free of shackles resulted in the most spectacular of all his plans: robbing the Bank of Norway in Christiania in the early hours of New Year’s Day 1835. He declares with pride and self-assurance in verse 24: “And now I played a prank that outdid all the rest, For which I am renowned, remarkable it was.”

This huge raid on the Bank of Norway in Christiania, “where loot was to be had”, was the ultimate solution to the master thief’s quest for money and freedom. To accomplish this job he required assistance from comrades, fel-

low inmates, former prisoners, and guards, and all were generously rewarded from the booty of 62,000 *speciedaler*, 20 million of today's Norwegian kroner, or two million euros. He had helpers both inside and outside the police. The triumph was quickly followed by a setback. Ole Høiland was on the run but was brutally arrested and manhandled on 21 January 1835. "But fortune is inconstant" is his comment on the event. He was discovered because he was the only person capable of such a robbery. "And that's why I can now expect harsh punishment."

This was not a death sentence, but he was given the severest possible conditions in prison. He was placed in what was called "The Crown Prince's Gunpowder Tower", a small isolated building in the inner part of the fortress. The tower had massive granite walls and just one room. A large cage was constructed inside it, made of thick wooden posts placed close together. The posts were attached to a spring device and a bell that rang if anyone touched them. Ole sat in this cage, heavily laden with irons. An armed guard outside the tower kept watch on him, but people outside could see and talk to him. In his text Ole Høiland mentions this display case where he was like a captured animal (verse 26). His assessment is sober and lucid:

Jeg blev udstilt til Skue, Ret som et fanget Dyr;
 Ja man mig nu og trued At holde mig istyr.
 At man et Bur vil gjøre for mig i Fængslet,
 For at jeg ei skal smøre Min Fod og rømme det.

They put me here on show, just like a captive beast;
 And they have threatened me, to keep me in their sway.
 They want to make a cage in prison just for me,
 Lest I should grease my foot and make a bold escape.

People flocked to the place, eager to see, and Harald Meltzer writes: "Many of the visitors, including distinguished people, expressed their sympathy for him and made comments about how sad it was that a person should be made to suffer as much evil as he was forced to endure." Ole sat like this for a very long time. He himself interpreted the great attention as an expression of sympathy and admiration for his exploits; he regarded himself "almost as a martyr", Meltzer remarks ironically (p. 62). It is not difficult to imagine that this dehumanizing treatment helped to change public opinion about Ole Høiland. The way from martyr to hero is not very long.

This ends Ole's ballad about his eventful life alternating between punishment and freedom, between prison and nature, between heroism and martyrdom, and between robber and trickster. While we might have expected a lot of "taking from the rich to give to the poor", there is a striking absence of this. At the same time, it is not entirely correct to say that Ole's broadside ballad is all over, because although he does not mention any more events, there are still two more verses. Verse 28 is a prayer to those who hear the ballad: "Please do not pray for evil on my wretched soul." In his defence he

emphasizes that he has not committed any murder or used violence, but because he has stolen “I’ll suffer punishment” (Jeg Straf *vel* lide maa). Is this a penitent confession, does it stand up as an expression of regret and contrition? Is he prepared to accept his punishment? The filler “*vel*”, meaning something like “probably” or “I suppose”, may well have been inserted for the sake of the rhythm, but it could just as well be an expression of hesitation and doubt: “I guess I’ll pay the price.” Perhaps he was still far from “the sincere acknowledgement of sin and repentance” for his past conduct, as Gjest Baardsen described his spiritual state in 1831. Ole’s career did not end in the cage, as further spectacular events would come. And we shall return to the last verse in the ballad at the end of the article. Now we shall look abroad, where the Norwegian master thief was rapidly becoming a sensation.

Norwegian Customs

In August 1839 the French painter François-Auguste Biard and his fiancée, Léonie Thévenot d’Aunet, were visiting Christiania. They were to take part in a French scientific expedition, “La Recherche”, the aim of which was to explore Spitsbergen. Several artists had been commissioned by King Louis-Philippe I to document nature and people in northern regions. Biard and his fiancée travelled on their own to Hammerfest, where they joined the other members of the expedition. Some ten years later Léonie d’Aunet wrote the book *Voyage d’une femme au Spitzberg*, where she also mentions the stay in Christiania. Already in 1840 their visit was reported in the magazine *Musée des familles: Lectures des familles*, an illustrated literary magazine founded in 1833 and with some of the leading French authors as contributors (d’Aunet 1851; *La Recherche* 2005; Berthoud 1840). The first article in the April issue had the headline “Moeurs norwégiennes” (Norwegian customs), and the illustration on the front cover showed a prison cell with a man’s face behind bars. To the left in the drawing there is a distinguished young lady, to the right a man with a sketchpad, and in the foreground some iron shackles. The man behind the bars is Ole Høiland, or Oulie Hiélan in French.

During their short stay in Christiania, Biard and his fiancée had been shown round the town and the surroundings. They had visited the big estates of Bogstad, Frogner, and Ullevold, and at the end the guide asked: “Vous n’avez pas vu Oulie Hiélan?” (Have you not seen Ole Høiland?) No, but they would be glad to see it, Biard replied, thinking that it was a building in the capital. They were driven to the “château d’Aggerhuys” – Akershus fortress – and led into the prison tower with the cage described above. Inside the cage was a man busy at some kind of woodwork. Surprised at being shown a man and not a building, Biard wondered who Oulie Hiélan was. “C’est un fameux brigand” was the answer, and the guide told them about the crimi-

MOEURS NORWEGIENNES.

3. Norwegian customs: On the way to Spitzbergen. Oulie Hiélan in his cell at Akershus fortress. Front cover of *Musée des familles*, 1840, no. 25, p. 193.

nal's remarkable life. He was the hero of the day, the talk of the country on account of his many arrests and escapes. Strict security measures were necessary, and he would remain in the cage in the tower the rest of his life. The folk hero himself was taciturn, but highly inventive, and his heart was legendary, according to the guide. He performed the most daredevil acts, feared neither God nor Satan nor the police, and stole from the rich to give to the poor. He was loyal to his friends but merciless towards his enemies in the crusade against every injustice in society. In this struggle he displayed more energy and bravery than ten generals or ten heroes of serialized novels.

In her account of her journey in 1854, Léonie d'Aunet described the famous man as one of those who became a robber because they had no opportunity to become war heroes. His actions would have become heroic deeds in the theatre, in her opinion. In the magazine article from 1840, signed by the editor Samuel-Henri Berthoud, Oulie Hiélan is described as the Nor-

wegian Robin Hood. He was a true hero who fought all forms of injustice and he sided with the poor against those in power. On all his raids, when attacking and robbing carriages, he was always chivalrous towards the ladies and entertained them courteously while the gang members collected all the valuables. A distinctive feature of “our hero’s character” was his vengeful attitude to those who reported him to the police. When he was brought into the city after being arrested, he was hailed like a triumphant conqueror. The article in *Musée des familles* did not spare the details of his exploits. Prison did not scare him because he knew how easy it was to escape. The very thought of being humiliated through blows, whipping, and confinement made him desperate. His plan was something quite different: he wanted to be a model for Norwegian youth and become the subject of hundreds of legends, which could then be told in front of the fire on cold winter evenings.

After the visit to Svalbard and Finnmark, where Biard did several sketches, they travelled via Sweden home to France. At one of the coach stations in North Norway they saw an interesting poster, and one of the interpreters explained what it showed. It was a notice that Ole Høiland had recently escaped from Akershus fortress, and a large reward was offered for his recapture, dead or alive. Monsieur Biard exclaimed in astonishment: “Oulie Hiélan était redevenu libre!” (Berhoud 1840:198). Ole Høiland was free again!

In the French texts we recognize several of the elements from the introduction to the Danish broadside ballad. Ole Høiland was a sensational figure, with an adventurous career. He was handsome and strong, generous, vindictive, and a ladykiller with a political agenda: to take from the rich and give to the poor. Virtually all these ingredients are absent from Ole Høiland’s own ballad. In the construction of his life, he chose a far more sober strategy, a more realistic description despite all the idealization that also existed about him.

Children of Freedom and Superstitious Beliefs

The reportage in the French family magazine was not the only account of Ole Høiland outside Norway. Two other foreign sources will be cited here, one in English, published in 1833, and a Swedish account printed in 1853. It is interesting that the foreign reports appeared quite early, and they are very similar, at times almost identical. Also, they both show how Norway’s unusual history, culture, religion, and natural geography are closely connected to an understanding of Ole Høiland and his role as both villain and hero, in a country on the margins of civilized Europe.

The oldest of these references is from *Chambers’s Edinburgh Journal*, a weekly magazine, started in 1832 by the Scottish publisher and politician William Chambers. In the course of a few years the magazine had a circula-

tion of some 80,000, and it covered topics such as language, science, religion, and history. Just the year after the start, the magazine had a three-page article entitled “Oulie Hielan” (*Chambers’s* 1833, 23.2. pp. 27–29). At this point of time Ole Høiland had been recaptured after his second escape from Akershus fortress. The content of the article “has been procured from an individual who lately spent a considerable time in Norway, and oftener than once saw Oulie Hielan”. Many of the ingredients and elements in the text, both details and perspectives, were then recirculated and appeared, for instance, in the French literary works, not least the spelling of the leading character’s name.

The English variant is extensive, with a number of details that are interesting and sensational from the perspective of European cultural history. This applies to Hielan’s background, childhood, and career as a master thief, and not least the assessments of Norwegian culture. This theme is introduced explicitly: “There is at all times something fascinating in the contemplation of a character marked by uncommon features”, and if the person additionally displays an intrepid spirit, he becomes even more interesting. At the same time, a character like this represented a threat to society when it turns out that “he who thus takes possession of the imagination is the hero of a tale of violence”. The hero becomes a danger “for our moral and religious principles”. And in Norway there is one such person, the robber chieftain Oulie Hielan, “who is still alive”.

The explanation for his heroic status is found by the author in the distinctive conditions in Norway. The religious situation appears very mixed, “partaking in nearly equal parts of the superstitions of the ancient Scandinavian mythology, the forms of the succeeding Catholicism, and the doctrines of Luther”. Although Lutheranism was the official religion in Norway, there were several features that made the country different from “more civilized countries”. The Norwegians’ strong belief in supernatural beings must be seen in connection with the country’s distinctive nature, “the misty mountains, the dark forests, and the solitary lakes”. The landscape distinguished them from other nations, and this was also true of their character. “They are the children of freedom”, simple and naive, but also equipped with a distinctive spirituality. “Amidst such a race, there must at times burst forth from the common mass some singular emanation of the spirit of the country”. Oulie Hielan was one such singular character.

His abilities were remarkable right from his childhood: he was better-looking than others, and he mastered all the skills that his countrymen prized: strength, swimming, diving, shooting, running, and skiing, “surpassing even the reindeer in swiftness”. Even more important was Oulie’s knowledge of Norway’s legends and history, including the belief in supernatural creatures associated with the forest, water, the earth, and the mountains. All this meant that Oulie, early in life, had a dream of attaining a place

in history through his actions. The plan was to form a robber band that “should couple his name in future ages with those of the genii of his country”. Oulie was not seeking wealth for himself; he wanted to “wrest from the rich what he intended to bestow on the poor”, as a way to combat injustice in society. His profound knowledge of nature and the mountains with their crevices and caves enabled him to find hiding places both for the money he stole and for himself and his band members. From these concealed places he fetched money for the countless poor people in need. When Norwegian mountain farmers then found these anonymous gifts, they would say that they came from the benevolent forest beings, the kindly *nisse* – or from Oulie Hielan.

The article in the *Edinburgh Journal* was clearly the basis for the Swedish narrative about *Ole Heilan, En Norsk Stråtröfware* (“a Norwegian highwayman”). It was probably written around 1836, but the only available printed edition appeared in 1854 (*Ole Heilan* 1854). It contained many of the same ingredients as the Scottish article. Ole was convinced from childhood that he could not submit to a monotonous and regular life, and wanted to achieve a better future than his poor parents. Combined with a powerful longing for freedom, he was obsessed with the thought of making a name for himself through spectacular actions, not just in his own lifetime but for all eternity, “as a hero” (p. 6). The role model was the medieval knight, and thanks to his own physical strength and intelligence, he felt selected to tear down all barriers between poor and rich, upper class and lower class.

To realize his ambitious plan he needed start-up capital, and for this he had singled out a rich merchant in Kristiansand as his victim. Inexperienced and young as he was, he was discovered and arrested. Being captured was no problem because it was easy to escape, but the threat of public whipping was something completely different. Being subjected to this humiliation was unthinkable for a man who was resolved “to serve as a model for Norwegian youth and to give subjects for a hundred tales of adventure, which will be repeated from generation to generation to the end of time”.

Having mobilized his whole “Herculean strength”, he broke out of prison, he took his money and ran away to the Norwegian Alps, to “Hurrungerna”, where the highest peaks would serve as his headquarters. The raids by Ole and his band had the character of “taxation”, redistributing the major part of the booty to the poor of the country. His fantastic strength, his indefatigable enterprise, and his serious, decisive, gentle character, made him “feared and loved” at the same time. He was admired by everyone for his noble stance and obliging nature, and this gained him the benevolence of women. He continued his activities incessantly, severe towards the rich and comforting and helpful to the poor. In Norway he was renowned for his deeds, and he became a model for his country’s fortune hunters and defenceless adventurers.

Ole Høiland is thus deliberately inscribed in the list of roles passed on from former times. At bottom the narratives also show a clear understanding that Ole himself was driven by an unstoppable urge to become a hero. The foreign narratives are mainly built up around clichés, migratory legends, and features from similar figures elsewhere. Unlike the Norwegian broadside ballads about the life of Ole Høiland, which are based on concrete events, the foreign stories are more concerned with imaginary and fantastic events. Two episodes in particular stand out here. One is about the alleged revenge on the merchant who reported him to the police, which led to his first arrest and punishment, and the other relates to his transfer from the prison in Kristiansand to Akershus fortress. The latter is based on an actual event in the spring of 1824, while the former has no such basis.

Ole's bitterness towards the merchant who reported his first theft found its resolution after a year or so. Thanks to his shrewdness and his skill at deception, the master thief got revenge by robbing the rich man's country house by the fjord outside Kristiansand. Høiland and his band had taken the booty over to the other side of the fjord where Ole had positioned himself on the top of a rock, safely out of reach of the merchant, the police, and the soldiers who were soon ordered to the scene. In the sight of a large group of spectators, Ole defied the authorities with provocative and comical gestures, insults, bawdy songs, and toasts. With great relish he drank up the finest champagne from a precious silver goblet, all stolen from the merchant's house. While the merchant and the soldiers stood in a rage on the shore, the robber sat on the top of the rock loudly singing "the beloved folk song 'Old Norway', which no Norwegian can hear without gladly joining in". The atmosphere was uplifted, and finally everyone joined in the singing, accompanied by triumph and peals of laughter, with the exception of some police officers "who, in keeping with their oath and their duty, did not dare to forget the gravity of their obligations".

Bakhtin describes actions of this kind as an expression of carnivalesque culture challenging established social values. The laughter and the burlesque incantations were a part of the folk culture that mobilizes and symbolizes resistance. The French and the English accounts of the raid on the merchant's house likewise mention the song both in Norwegian (*Gamle Norge*) and translated as *La vieille Norwège* and *Old Norway*, a clear indication of the common origin of the texts. We can speculate about which song is intended; most likely it is the drinking song "For Norge, Kiempers Fødeland" (For Norway, Native Land of Champions), written in Copenhagen in 1771 by the Norwegian student of theology Johan Nordahl Brun, later bishop of Bergen. The song oozes national smugness, and for a long time it was Norway's unofficial national anthem, after first having been banned by the censor. It is a tribute to freedom, to the people, to Norwegian women and

Norwegian nature, expressing a strong desire for an awakening “to burst shackles, bonds, and captivity” (Brun 1818:237).

The other fantastic episode, based on a real event, comes in the foreign narratives a couple of years after the triumph at the rich man’s country house. Betrayed by one of his own gang members, the famous Norwegian is arrested and brought in chains from Kristiansand to Christiania. The destination is the secure prison cell at Akershus fortress. What could have been a final journey for a morally and humanly defeated man became instead a combination of a funeral procession and a victory procession. As Ole Høiland approached the capital, a large crowd assembled. All the Norwegians were in despair and grief. Women in the city stood on balconies waving their handkerchiefs, so that a chance observer “might have supposed, [they] were celebrating the entrance of a triumphant conqueror, instead of that of a band of manacled robbers” (*Chambers’s* 1833:28).

A group of women in Christiania had sent a delegation to the Swedish governor in Norway asking for a pardon and offering a sum of a thousand *daler* as a ransom in return for a solemn pledge by Ole “to forsake his former mode of life, and become a peaceable citizen”. When Ole heard about this offer his response, according to the Swedish version, was: “Tell the women of the city that I am prouder of the sympathy they have shown me today than if I were offered the double crown of Sweden and Norway.” Thus speaks a national hero. The Swedish variant goes on to describe the situation like this: The commander gave him the offer of promising not to escape and thereby obtain better prison conditions and later a chance of amnesty. Otherwise the prison sentence would be long and painful. It was impossible for the prisoner to live in any other way than he had done for most of his life: “In which I felt so happy” (*Ole Heilan* 1854:24). Ole Høiland thus stands forth as a man of honour. He refuses to make a promise that he is unable and unwilling to keep.

Norwegians and Swedes

Broadside ballads are not just anonymous folk songs. They could also be composed by well-known poets, and Henrik Wergeland wrote several broadside ballads with Ole Høiland as the central figure. For the great Norwegian poet Henrik Wergeland – historian and popular educator, agitator and rebel – the struggle for an independent Norway was a priority issue (Storsveen 2008). Liberation from Danish cultural dominance and Swedish political, economic, and national repression was a crucial cause in Wergeland’s writings and activities. After Ole Høiland’s spectacular bank robbery on 1 January 1835 and the hullabaloo that ensued, Wergeland wrote under the pseudonym Ola Graagut “En nye vise om Ola Høiland med mere” (A new ballad about Ola Høiland). The song ap-

peared in several editions and media. Already on 19 February 1835 H. C. Hansen's printing house in Larvik advertised Graagut's broadside "En ganske ny Vise om Ole Pedersen Høiland's Bedrivter" (A completely new ballad about Ola Høiland's exploits) (Wergeland 1835). The first verse goes:

Det var han Ola Høiland han var en slem Krabat
 Men Norge er nu vant til at blie ved Næsant ta't
 Ak, gamle Kongedom
 Naar selv vi vilde stelle, bestandigt Andre kom.

And this was Ola Høiland, he was a wicked rogue,
 But Norway has got used to being tricked and lured.
 Alas, thou ancient Realm,
 Wishing to rule ourselves, but others always came.

Wergeland interprets Ole Høiland's bank robbery as an event in a long series of frauds and attacks to which Norway, "Alas, thou ancient Realm", had been exposed since its time subject to Denmark. History had shown that when Norway wanted self-determination, it was always others who took over. When Wergeland calls Ola Høiland "a wicked fellow", there is an implicit subversive understanding of the adjective *slem*, because it is the Swede who is actually an even "wickedder" fellow. Høiland's thefts may have made Norway poorer "but not less free" (verse 6). Wergeland does not sympathize with Høiland's robbery, but he puts it in a broader political and cultural context. There were many greater crimes against Norway than a bank robbery. Here is how Wergeland interprets the judgement of the people:

Saa lad han Ola leve; men de, som værre er,
 Bør i et Fængsel sættes, hvor Væggen er af Leer.

He thus let Ola live; but those who are much worse,
 They should be put in prison, where walls are made of clay (verse 7).

In September 1836 Wergeland's ballad appeared in a slightly revised form, in connection with an article he wrote in the Christiania newspaper *Stadsborgeren*, where he was co-editor at the time. The headline of the article ran: "A Swedish *Specie* with the Norwegian national lion on it (For those who have not seen or would not believe it)", accompanied by a picture of a new Swedish *daler*. On this coin the lion of Norway was juxtaposed with the arms of the old Swedish province of Götariket, which had long since lost its rights. In former times it had been an earldom, with "a meagre and obscure history until it was finally subjected long ago to the dominance of Sveariket", Wergeland writes with indignation. Was this how the Swedes envisaged the fate of Norway too? Right under the picture of the coin was a rewritten verse from the broadside ballad:

Gid Svenskens Specier havde i Bankens Kjælder lagt,
Da Ola Høiland var der paa Nummer Attens Vagt!
Han skulde dem beholdt,
Saafremt ei til at ta'e dem den Gavtjuv var for stolt.

I wish the Swedish coins had been in that bank vault,
When Høiland he was there on number eighteen watch!
He would have kept them all,
Unless the master thief was to proud to take such loot.

Here Wergeland links the Norwegian bank robbery to the launch of new coins by the Bank of Sweden with their provocative use of the Norwegian lion. Ole Høiland's burglary of the bank seems like a trifle compared to the actions of the Swedish government and King Karl Johan. They were robbing Norway of its democratic rights and its independence. The criticism of Sweden was further underlined by the comparison with Ole Høiland's "she-nanigans". Sweden was criticized even more explicitly in Wergeland's comedy *Stockholmsfareren* the following year, 1837. He called it an "Opera in three acts" written under the pseudonym "Siful Sifadda" (Wergeland 1960:215). Here it is sung loud and clear:

Det var han *Ola Høiland* tog Natten til sin Ven,
Erklærte Norge Krigen, og Norge ham igjen.
Det var en Krig forvist
imellem Ræv og Bonde, imellem Magt og List.

And it was *Ola Høiland* who made the night his friend,
Declaring war on Norway, as Norway did on him.
It was indeed a war,
the fox against the farmer, and cunning versus power.

The next move by Wergeland came in the autumn of 1839, and it was directly linked to Ole Høiland's escape from his cage in the fortress (Wergeland 1839). He continued to use the pen name Ola Graagut, and a title of the kind required by the genre, meaning: "New ballad about Ole Pedersen Høiland's latest remarkable abscondment from Agershus Fortress in the early hours of 17 September 1839. (Major Glad must now be grieving)". Now it was not just a matter of the conflict with Sweden, because two additional factors had arisen. Wergeland attacked the way the authorities had treated Ole Høiland in prison, in breach of fundamental rights. The critique in the ballad is particularly aimed at the man responsible for Akershus fortress and the slavery system there, Major Christian Glad (Bordahl 2001:9). Verse 1 sets the tone and the rhythm:

Major *Glad* maa nu sig græmme:
– Melotamp-tamp-tamp-Melopine –
Ola Høiland er ei hjemme.
Han er gaaet i grønne Skov.
Han er gaaet foruden Lov.
Major *Glad* maa nu sig græmme:
Ola Høiland er paa Rov.

Major *Glad* must now be grieving:
 – Melotamp-tamp-tamp-Melopine –
Ola Høiland's not at home.
 He is to the greenwood gone.
 He has gone with no man's leave.
 Major *Glad* must now be grieving:
Ola Høiland is on the prowl.

The second line is inserted in all fourteen verses, mocking the tramp of the soldiers in their vain search for Høiland, under the leadership of the ridiculous Major Glad. The ballad is a compilation of invectives and an impressive combination of insults and gloating aimed at Major Glad and the regime he represents. The ballad simultaneously follows all the elements of the escape, verse after verse. With his thirst for freedom, Høiland had outwitted the powers that be, and for this he was applauded by Wergeland. Behind the irony there is always a serious tone, as Wergeland emphasizes the opposites captivity and freedom, nature and prison: "From its cage the bird has flown / Into God's own Nature gone" (verse 3). No instrument of power was capable of crushing "Freedom's sweet desire. / For it dwells in the slave's breast" (verse 5), despite the weight of all the shackles in the world. The theme of the ballad is the struggle to be free. Here Wergeland sides unreservedly with Høiland, and the story of his escape is at once a political and a symbolic expression of the right of the repressed life slave to respect. The ballad contains codes for those who are able to understand what it actually says. When Wergeland writes in the first verse that Høiland is "paa Rov" (on the prowl), it does not mean new raids. It is freedom he is in search of, having escaped "foruden Lov" (without leave). He thus becomes a spokesman for the Norwegian aspiration to independence from Swedish domination. The abscondment from the escape-proof prison cage made Ole Høiland into an even more radiant hero by mocking the apparatus of military force in general, and Major Glad in particular. The struggle against Swedish repression and the defence of human rights are thus seen as two sides of the same coin, and they are combined in the figure of Ole Høiland on the run, and the struggle takes patience: "For patience always tends to / Triumph over everything" (verse 9).

A private motive on Wergeland's part was also involved here. Major Glad was not a fictitious figure with an ironic name but a high-ranking military man, Christian Glad. In the early 1830s Wergeland had been in conflict with Christian Glad, who was then a major at Gardermoen military garrison. In the winter of 1839 the two men ran into each other the royal mansion in Bjørvika, for many years the king's residence during his visits to the new capital of Norway after 1814. Wergeland was inside the mansion with some friends at the start of March, and the mood was jovial. The men were drinking punch, singing, playing guitar, and causing unrest. The major on duty, Christian Glad, reported disorderly behaviour to his superior, General

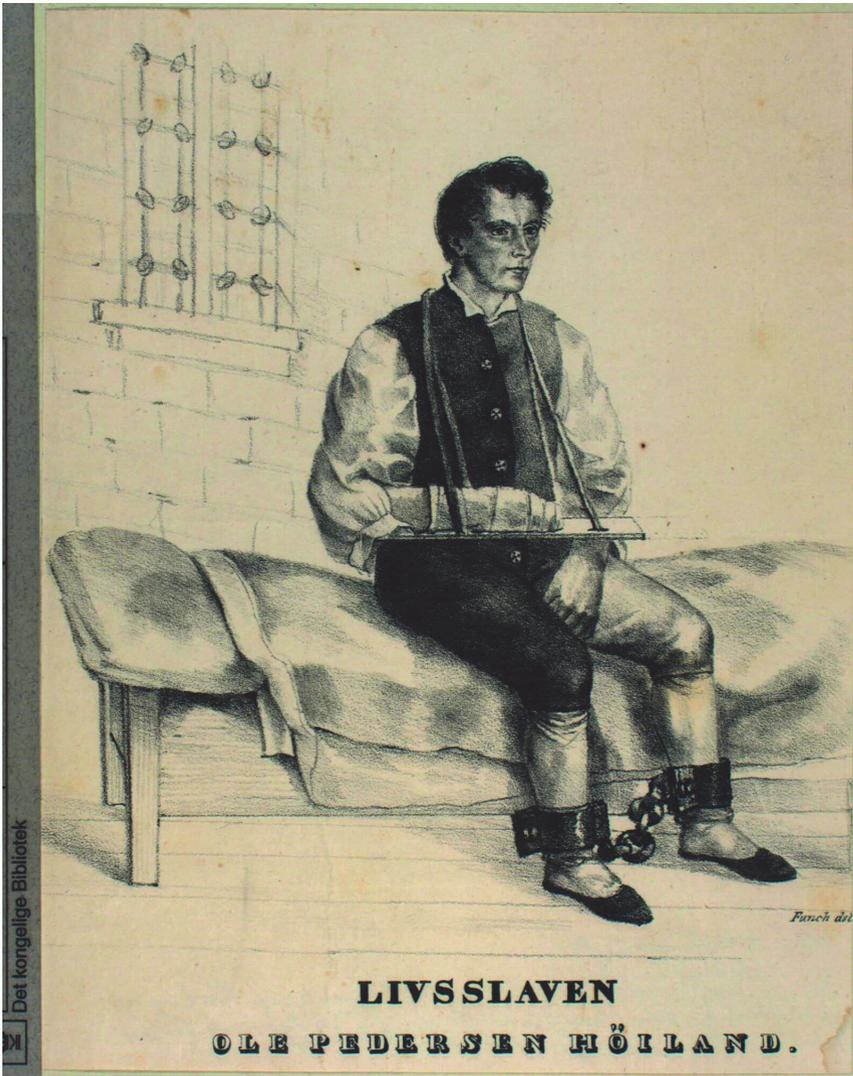
Wedel Jarlsberg, who straightaway reported the occurrence “that same evening to His Majesty” (Laache 1930:60). At this time Wergeland was waiting to be appointed chaplain of Nannestad, but that position disappeared as a result of King Karl Johan’s indignation at what Glad reported. The affair of the “guardroom party” took place on 12 March. Half a year later Høiland escaped from prison, and Wergeland wrote his last ballad about Ole Høiland soon after. It was not just an act of personal revenge and *Schadenfreude* against Glad; there is also a serious accusation behind it. Sarcasm about the major’s failure to maintain security was one thing, but far more serious for Wergeland was the criticism of Glad’s inhuman treatment of the prisoners in penal slavery at the fortress.

After his escape from Akershus, Ole Høiland was at large for almost three years, until 1 September 1842. When he was arrested it was brutal, and it was rumoured that he had been “sold” to the police in the nearby town of Drammen, west of Christiania, by one of his own men. The event was covered in an anonymous broadside, “Master Thief Ole Høiland’s Capture in Skouger Parish and Return to Akershus on 1 September 1842”. There would be no more attempted escapes. Neither the authorities nor Glad would run the risk of more abscondments, and the penal regime was merciless. Ole Høiland’s chances of contact with the outside world were reduced to a minimum, and he was isolated and deeply depressed.

Ole Høiland’s Cell

On 5 October 1848 the newspaper *Morgenbladet* had an article with the heading “Ole Høiland’s Cell”, written by three theologians who served as chaplains in the Slavery at Akershus (Fangen *et al.* 1848). They had a thorough knowledge of the conditions and had long been worried about Ole Høiland’s situation. He “is said to have attempted to take his own life a few weeks ago, stating as a reason the treatment to which he is subjected in the penitentiary, as he sits in a cell with no hope of any change in his conditions.” The theologians’ article was not written to defend a criminal serving a well-deserved punishment, but a sentence like this could not mean that he was forced to live “cut off from human society for the rest of his life”. His sole contact was reduced to the guards and the major. The treatment “verges on the barbaric”, and it does “no credit at all to the surveillance concerned” that they use all manner of devices and expenses to keep a specific prisoner in total isolation.

The most sensational feature of the article was the criticism of the man in charge: “Lieutenant Colonel Glad, who is especially blamed for the arrangements devised against Ole Høiland”. The minister of justice had recently visited the Slavery, and Høiland had taken the opportunity to bring up the matter of the inhuman conditions. “Lieutenant Colonel Glad scarcely gave



4. The life slave Ole Pedersen Høiland in his cell. Source: Det kgl. Biblioteks billedsamling, Copenhagen. <http://www.kb.dk/images/billed/2010/okt/billeder/object460438/da/>.

him time to finish speaking before he denied all of Ole Høiland's accusations." Such treatment was not compatible with a Christian and humane disposition, they argued. Ole Høiland did not cease to be a human being because he was a dangerous criminal. As it was now, it appeared as if he could only "look forward to the same solitary dark future until he is granted a grave in the earth instead of the one to which he is condemned in this life".

No changes occurred, and shortly before Christmas the same year the newspapers reported that "the life slave, the famous Ole Høiland, has

hanged himself. The event took place today (20 December) between 6 and 9.30 a.m., and the unfortunate man used the cord of his lathe, which he had attached to a hook in the roof of the cell, which was intended for hanging the prisoner's bed."

Gangster or Hero?

Ole Høiland is portrayed as a master thief in both the Norwegian and the foreign texts. He is at once a hero and a villain, a duality that has fascinated and provoked many people. In 1850 the public educator Ole Vig, who was born in the year that Ole Høiland was brought to Akershus fortress, published a book entitled "The Norwegian Big Thief Ole Pedersen Høiland's Complete Life", under the pseudonym Rasmus Berg. The presentation contains the same contradictions as many of the other accounts of his life. Ole Vig's narrative has an obviously educational goal, intended to teach and warn young readers about Høiland's lawless and self-destructive life. The description is nevertheless so engaging and enthusiastic that there is an unexpected identification between the reader and Ole Høiland. It is as if "the soul who deviates from the path of God fascinates" to such an extent that the 26-year-old Ole Vig somewhat reluctantly turned the villain into a hero (Vig 1850; Bye 2014:109).

Ole Høiland's life has given rise to several narratives, newspaper reports, books, and broadside ballads. Our sources display a wide range of perspectives and voices. The texts are polyphonic, not necessarily contradictory, but they depend on who is speaking (the author) and who is listening (the addressee). Based on the historical data about Ole Høiland, there is no doubt that he was a rogue with a long career of serious crimes against Norwegian penal law, including all his escapes. Yet he was a hero for many of his contemporaries, and we have pointed out several factors that may have influenced this. In the foreign material the explanation above all is the idea that he was like Robin Hood, stealing from the rich to give to the poor, and something of the same perception no doubt occurred in Norway too.

The broadside ballad attributed to Ole Høiland himself, however, has no hints in that direction, and if anything it is in keeping with Harald Meltzer's conclusion: Ole died "as he had lived, in crime and disgrace". The thief's notions of right and wrong, good and evil, had corrupted his soul to such an extent "that he was proud of his disgrace and praised himself for his crimes". The statements "about Ole Høiland, that he was charitable towards the poor, especially in his younger days", were viewed by Meltzer with great scepticism; "it has not been possible for the present writer to trace a single reliable fact about this" (Meltzer 1849:98). Wergeland likewise had no sympathy for the master thief's crimes, but interpreted the actions in a different perspective. They were expressions of the dichotomy between captivity and free-

dom, with a parallel to Norway's oppressive bonds to Denmark in the past, and the conflicts with Sweden and its present domination. Ole did not steal from the rich to give to the poor, but by virtue of his background as a poor farmer's son he opposed the rich, with robbery, trickery, and mockery. He thus appeared as a representative of the common man and of people with small means in their struggle against those in power.

One of the devices in the accounts of Ole Høiland is laughter. We laugh *with* our own people, and we laugh *at* others. In his famous study of carnival and laughter in the Middle Ages, Bakhtin has discussed this theme in detail. "The principle of laughter and the carnival spirit on which the grotesque is based destroys this limited seriousness and all the pretense of an extra-temporal meaning and unconditional value of necessity. It frees human consciousness, thought, and imagination for new potentialities" (Bakhtin 1984: 49). Laughter and the carnivalesque expose power, and this is a weapon available to folk culture and actively used in it.

The trickster phenomenon has been given a special place in recent African American studies. The term *signifying* refers there to properties associated with the trickster's ability to talk "with great innuendo, to carp, cajole, needle, and lie". The folklorist Roger Abrahams, in the dissertation *Deep Down in the Jungle*, has also emphasized other special features and qualities, the use of provocative body language, "the propensity to talk around a subject, never quite coming to the point [...] and in this respect encompasses a whole complex of expressions and gestures". Signifying is a "technique of indirect argument or persuasion", "a language of implication" (Abrahams 1970:51–52). "Signifying is the language of trickery", according to the leader for many years of the Department of African and African American Studies at Harvard University, Henry Louis Gates Jr., with reference to Roger Abrahams (Gates 1988:54). In his notes Harald Meltzer mentions observations of Ole's behaviour during questioning. For the most part he replied politely to all the questions put to him. "He could lie with a proficiency and impudence that was astonishing, and with the most plausible mien in the world" (Meltzer 1849:99). It was therefore difficult to catch him contradicting himself, but if he was confronted with obvious lies, he could lose his composure for a brief moment. But it did not take long before he regained possession of himself "and then was usually able to twist the matter so that it gained a semblance of truth". Ole Høiland had this command of the language of trickery, and he exploited this linguistic skill as a survival strategy.

Ole Høiland has been described by many as a master thief, which in the Arne-Thompson classification system for folktales is given the number AT 1525. The master thief in Norwegian folktales acts like a trickster, deceiving everyone with his skills and lies. This figure was thus a challenge to Christian life and morality. Is it then a threat to society that these folktales ignore "all ethical considerations [...] and take pleasure solely in the cunning and

dexterity with which the master thief performs his tricks”? The question comes from the theologian and folklorist Jørgen Moe in the introduction to Asbjørnsen and Moe’s collection of Norwegian folktales in 1852. “This is not the case,” he replies in the next sentence. For the master thief performs his tricks “on persons who deserve to be hoodwinked”. All those who fall victim to the master thief because of their social position and lack of sagacity and intelligence: “The county prefect is moreover, in his capacity of ‘high authority’, smug and conceited as well as cowardly and evil; the priest is avaricious, hypocritical, and superstitious” (Moe 1871:69).

Høiland the trickster figure, his laughter and his verbal ability to manipulate his way out of tricky situations, occurs as a cultural script in several variants, like Volosinov’s description of the Janus face. As public, concealed, and alternative scripts, in what we could compare to Bakhtin’s speech genres, they are flexible templates for both storytellers and listeners. They are found in different national forms, and listeners and spectators are inclined to interpret them as being part of a familiar repertoire. For the foreign writers it appears relatively unproblematic to rank Ole Høiland as one in the series of Robin Hood figures. They believed that the wild and inaccessible Norwegian nature was the reason why the Norwegians were primitive, superstitious, naive, and imbued with a kind of innocence that made them children of freedom, implicitly meaning that they did not follow ordinary norms and rules in agreement with Christian religion.

This interpretation of Norwegian culture, in contrast to the benefits and virtues of continental civilization, paradoxically coincides with Norwegian national self-understanding at the time, at least for some people. Being content with one’s lot was not just a virtue, but a mark of honour among the elite, according to the ethnologist Arne Lie Christensen, who has aptly designated it as a “culture of frugality or plainness” (*tarvelighetskultur*) (Christensen 2015). The folk high school teacher Christopher Bruun warned several times against “European over-civilization”, which led to “a stunting of human nature” (Bruun 1878:107). A central factor in Bruun’s argumentation was Norway’s geographical and historical location in relation to the rest of Europe. By being a backwater on the distant margins, the land and people were little affected by the general social circumstances on the continent. To the extent that people had their ears and eyes open to development, for instance the urban bourgeoisie and the intellectual elite, it led to decadence, materialism, and self-indulgence.

The broadside ballads functioned as coded messages and could be understood and interpreted in different ways, either literal or figurative and symbolic. Ole Høiland’s account of his life seems very sober in form and content, with few details. Those who knew of his life and deeds nevertheless understood the significance of the individual parts. There is a great deal to suggest that the ballad was written a couple of years before the escape from the

“cage” in autumn 1839, as previously mentioned, and the last two verses contain a clear presentiment. Ole Høiland understands, somewhat reluctantly, that he will be punished, but despite this he cannot give up his hope of freedom. It was unrealistic to think that he would regain his freedom, but entertaining a hope is something quite different.

The American literary scholar Kenneth Burke has pointed out that narratives are built up around five elements: Act, Scene, Agent, Agency, Purpose, and what he calls “noise” (Burke 1969). In the stories of Ole Høiland it is the master thief himself who is the noise. In the broadside ballads written by the poet Wergeland, it was the Swedes’ repression of Norway that represented the noise, but in Ole’s own narrative it is the arrests, imprisonments, and fear of corporal punishment and humiliations that are the threat. The prison cell heightened the longing to be free. The authorities wanted to break Ole when he refused to act as a repentant Christian. Unlike Gjest Baardsen, who collaborated closely with Major Glad and was released from the fortress in 1847, Ole is not a penitent sinner with a promise of a place in Paradise (cf. Luke 23:43). He is completely alone in the cell, longing for freedom, but in December 1848 his hope came to an end. We are ready for the last verse:

Farvel jeg eder byder, I Alle og Enhver!
Om Efterretning lyder Engang jeg flyttet er,
Da undres ei derover, Se intet Ondt deri,
Den Lyst jo aldrig sover, Den Lyst at være fri.

And now I bid farewell to everyone of you.
If you hear news of me when I have run away
You need to be surprised, and don’t think bad of it:
That longing never sleeps, the longing to be free.

Dr. philos. Knut Aukrust.
Professor of Culture History
Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages
University of Oslo
Pb.1010 Blindern
N-0315 Oslo, Norway
k.h.aukrust@ikos.uio.no

References

Broadside Ballads

- Levnetsløb* (Høiland, Ole): *Ole Højlands Levnetsløb. Skrevet af ham selv i Fængsel.* Helge Schultz Trykkeri (NFS).
Mestertyven Ole Høilands Tilfangetagelse i Skouger Sogn og Tilbagekomst til Akershus den 1. Septbr. 1842 (Der kommer Rygter fra Drammens By).

- (Wergeland, Henrik) 1835: *En ganske ny Vise om Ole Pedersen Høilands Bedrivter*. H.C. Hansens trykkeri, Larvik.
- (Wergeland, Henrik) 1835: *Ola Graaguts nye Vise om Ola Høiland med mere*.
- (Wergeland, Henrik) 1836: Af Ola Graaguts nye vise om Ola Høiland med mere. *Statsborgeren XX*, 8 September.
- (Wergeland, Henrik) 1839: *Ny Vise om Ole Pedersen Høilands sidste mærkelige Undvigelse fra Agershus Fæstning Natten til den 17de September 1839*. (Major Glad maa nu sig græmme). Chra: Frederik T. Steen.
- Petersen, Thøger 1843: *Ole Høiland Kistebillede*, Hjørring, Neg. 149600, Det kongelige Biblioteks billedsamling.
<http://www.kb.dk/images/billed/2010/okt/billeder/object143/da/>.

Contemporary Sources

- d'Aunet, Léonie 1851: *Voyage d'une femme au Spitzberg* (1875, 5th ed.). Norwegian edition: *En pariserinnes reise gjennom Norge til Spitsbergen anno 1838*. Translated by Geneviève Jul-Larsen. Oslo 1968, Aschehoug.
- Baardsen, Gjest 1876: *Levnetløb forfattet af ham selv*. Anden Del, Christiania: Damms Forlag.
- Berthoud, Samuel-Henri 1840: Moeurs norwégiennes. *Musée des familles. Lectures de soirs* 1839–40, April, no. 25, pp. 193–198 <http://iris.univ-lille1.fr/handle/1908/2567>.
- Fangen, Anton Wilhelm, Niels Christian Hald & Hans Steensrud 1848: Ole Høilands Celle. *Morgenbladet* 279, 5 October.
- Folketellingen 1801: Ole Pedersen <https://www.digitalarkivet.no/census/person/pf01058339002730>.
- Meltzer, Harald 1849: Ole Høilands Liv og Levnet. *Christiania-Posten* no. 486, 489, 491–492, 494–495, 497, 500. <http://www.dokpro.uio.no/litteratur/meltzer/>.
- Ole Heilan, En Norsk Stråtröfware*. Stockholm, 1854.
- Oulie Hielan. *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal* 1833, no. 56, 23.2, pp. 27–29.
- Vig, Ole 1850: *Den norske Stortyv Ole Pedersen Høilands fuldstændige Liv og Levnet*, beskrevet af Rasmus Berg. Christiansund.

Other Literature

- Abrahams, Roger D. 1970: *Deep Down in the Jungle. Negro Narrative Folklore from the Streets of Philadelphia*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail 1986: *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Translated by Vern W. McGee, edited by Caryl Emerson & Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Breilid, Magnus 1966: *Grindheim*, band 1. *Gards- og tættesoge*. Utgjeve av bygde-sogenemnda, Mandal.
- Brodahl, Jan Petter 2001: *Kronprinsens kruttårn*. Oslo: Krus.
- Brun, Johan Nordahl 1818: *Mindre digte*. Udgivne af hans Søn C. Brun. Christiania.
- Bruner, Jerome 1962: *On Knowing. Essays for the Left Hand*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- Bruner, Jerome 1986: *Actual Minds, Possible Words*. Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press.
- Bruun, Christopher 1878: *Folkelige Grundtanker*. Hamar: O. Arvensens Bogtrykkeri.
- Bull-Gundersen, Anne B. 2009: *Ole Høiland. Mestertyv og utbryterkonge*. Oslo: Omnipax.

- Burke, Kenneth 1969: *A Grammar of Motives*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Bye, Arild 2013: *Folkevennen Ole Vig*. Oslo: Aschehoug.
- Clausen, V. E. 1985: *Det folkelige danske træsnit i etbladstryk 1565–1884*. Utgitt av Foreningen Danmarks Folkeminder, København.
- Enefalk, Hanna 2013: *Skillingstryck! Historien om 1800-talets försvunna mass-medium*. Uppsala. (Opuscula Historica Upsaliensia 51.)
- Gates, Henry Louis Jr. 1988: *The Signifying Monkey. A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hetland, Rolf 2016: *Prost Gerhard Henrik Reiner på Helleland fra 1790 til 1823*. Gjesdal historie- og ættesogelag.
- Hymes, Dell 1996: *Ethnography, Linguistics, Narrative Inequality. Toward an Understanding of Voice*. London: Taylor & Francis.
- Ibsen, Henrik 1867: *Peer Gynt. Et dramatisk Digt*. Henrik Ibsens Skrifter. http://ibsen.uio.no/DRVIT_PG%7CPGht.xhtml.
- La Recherche*. Bilder fra en fransk ekspedisjon til Nord-Norge 1838–1839. Lærerveiledning 2005. Nordnorsk Kunstmuseum, Tromsø, https://www.nnkm.no/sites/nnkm.no/files/koffert-downloads/16_nnkm_recherche.pdf.
- Laache, Rolv 1930: *Henrik Wergeland og hans strid med prokurator Praëm aktmessige fremstillet, for det meste efter utrykte dokumenter*. Tredje Bind 1837–1845. Oslo: Jacob Dybwad.
- Moe, Jørgen 1871: Innledning til folkeeventyrene. *Samlede Skrifter Andet Bind*, pp. 16–83. Kristiania: Alf. Cammermeyer.
- Molde, Hanna-Sofie 1951: *Skillingviser 1558–1951 i Det kgl. Norske videnskabers selskabs bibliotek*. Trondheim. (Spesialsamlingen Katalog 6.)
- Møller Andresen, Nina 2010: Talesprog og sproglig polyfoni. Bachtins sproglige begrepsapparat i anvendelse. *Tijdschrift voor Skandinavistiek* 31:2, pp. 3–23.
- Nedrebø, Yngve 1998: Gjest Bårdsen – mestertyv, gentleman eller kleptomant? *Bergensposten* no. 1. 37–44.
- Olaussen, Kim-Are 2013: *Mellan tjuveri och heroism. En kulturhistorisk studie av en kriminell hjälteskepnad*. Oslo: Masteroppgave i kulturhistorie ved IKOS.
- Storsveen, Odd Arvid 2008: *Mig Selv. En biografi om Henrik Wergeland*. Oslo: Cappelen Damm.
- Volosinov, V. N. 1986: *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, translated by Ladislav Matejka & I. R. Titunik. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Wergeland, Henrik 1960: *Henrik Wergelands Skrifter, Folkeutgaven* bind 3. Oslo: J.W. Cappelens forlag.

Book Reviews

A Biographical Portrait of Otto Andersson

Matts Andersson: Farbror Otto. Över bygden skiner sol. Arap Group, Helsingfors 2018. 254 pp. Ill.

The book begins delightfully: a thick description of the parish of Vårdö in eastern Åland, of all its islands, a slow tracking shot through geography and time, conveying visual and auditory impressions to the reader, who takes in the scene with pleasure. The camera stops after a while at Lövö and the farm of Jakos, where the beginning of the story is set.

The island and the farm is the place where Otto Andersson (1879–1969) originally came from. I understand why the author has avoided the tired epithet “legendary”, but that adjective would in fact be highly appropriate for this Finland-Swedish musical and cultural personality with his roots in the Åland Islands. He was a “researcher, lecturer, popular educator, debater, conductor, composer, administrator, association founder, museum man, and writer” (p. 159). His profile, with a broad-brimmed hat and bushy moustache, pops up frequently in twentieth-century research on music and folklore, in the building of Finland-Swedish organizations, and in the annals of language policy – to name just a few of the domains where Otto Andersson’s massive contributions are still important.

That this man would be the subject of a biography was inevitable. Niklas Nyqvist’s dissertation *Från bondson till folkmusikikon* (2007) was praiseworthy

but it only covered one segment of the totality. Matts Andersson takes a broad grip in a chronologically arranged account, although he makes a number of well-justified stops in the flow of time. Matts Andersson is related to the subject of the biography, and has inherited Otto Andersson’s summer paradise on Hemskär. The author declares in the preface that he is unaccustomed to archival studies. Yet nothing of that defect is visible in the text, which is grounded on his careful reading of archival material and contemporary printed evidence. He has wisely refrained from basing his work on interviews. There ought to have been more source references, however, just as the author should have stated page numbers for printed sources. Some spot checks show that his text is close to what others have written about “Uncle Otto”.

The result of all this is a very interesting text, rich in details and illustrative images, with acute appraisals where justified, and formulated in appealing language that uses the full palette of nuances, but which also, in places, allows the literary Pegasus to soar high above the flat terrain of scholarship.

Otto Andersson left the island where he grew up, to study as a church organist in Åbo. His education continued in Helsinki, where he studied at the institute of music under the great Martin Wegelius. In 1902, at the age of just 23, he began to collect folk music for the Society of Swedish Literature in Finland, first in Österbotten, later in the whole of Swedish-speaking Finland and among Swedish speakers in Estonia. The combination of an interest in folk music and a

musical schooling led to his involvement in the important Finland-Swedish festivals of song and music and to the foundation of the Brage association. Through contacts with the research brothers Kaarle and Ilmari Krohn, Otto Andersson was diverted to an academic career. After receiving a dispensation for not having graduated from high school and after undergraduate studies at university he was able to take his doctorate at the University of Helsinki in 1923, with a dissertation about the *stråkkharpa* (bowed harp), written and published in Swedish and issued in 1930 in English, which was an unusual scholarly language at the time.

He was appointed professor of musicology and folklore studies in 1926 at the newly founded Åbo Akademi, where he was vice-chancellor 1929–1936. Alongside his official duties, which were burdensome enough, Otto Andersson constantly wrote articles and books, delivered well-crafted speeches, ran a publishing company, attended overseas conferences, participated in Finland-Swedish cultural events, and much besides. The pace did not slacken during his emeritus years.

Otto Andersson was destined to be dragged into political turbulence. The Åland Question in 1917–1921 naturally had a profound effect on him. But he adopted an attitude that differed from the predominant opinion in the islands, which wanted Åland to belong to Sweden. Otto Andersson had lived in both Åbo and Helsinki, and he saw a crucial value in keeping the Swedish speakers in Finland together. For this divergent opinion he was shunned for many years from official life in Åland. In the language conflicts, of course, he sided with Swedish and the people who spoke it, but his stance was not separatist. He argued instead that the two language groups and the interchange between them was a vital asset for Finland. And when the Second World War came, with two wars that were devastating for Fin-

land, his fear of Russian hegemony led him for a period to appreciate the Third Reich as a counter to the Soviet threat.

Matts Andersson gives a meticulous account of Otto Andersson as a political person and does not try to avoid mentioning stances that we today view as mistaken. In fact, the topic of Otto Andersson and politics is highly readable, adding many nuances to the picture of Otto Andersson, who has mainly been treated in previous works as a scholar and an organization man.

For a reader in today's Sweden there are at least two sections that provide new knowledge. Matts Andersson has a detailed account of Otto Andersson's contacts with Carl-Allan Moberg, who would be Sweden's first professor of musicology, installed in 1947 at Uppsala University. The author's analysis of the correspondence between these two men shows that this formalization of the position of musicological research, which came late in Sweden by comparison with Finland, was not only actively supported by Moberg's Finland-Swedish colleague but also that Otto Andersson's authoritative contribution was crucial. Moberg is glimpsed as a fraught and fragile person; to my knowledge he is not described like this anywhere else.

The author also tells of Otto Andersson's equally crucial participation in the creation of Svenskt Visarkiv, now known in English as the Centre for Swedish Folk Music and Jazz Research. With his experience of establishing Brage and its archive, with his background in collecting for the Society of Swedish Literature in Finland, and having created the Sibelius Museum in Turku, and other similar achievements, he understood what an archive for traditional music and song in Sweden could accomplish. He became a close friend of the young archive, participated enthusiastically in the work of its board of governors, and let the archive publish several works by him.

Matts Andersson has painted a full-

length picture in words of his relative Otto Andersson. My short review does not do justice to the book or its subject. But I hope it will be obvious that Matts Andersson has given us a text that is readable for many reasons, and for a long time to come it will be the standard work on Otto Andersson and his place in his time.

Gunnar Ternhag
Falun, Sweden

Cruel Chuds and Clever Sámi

Hans-Hermann Bartens, *Tschuden und andere Feinde in der saamischen Erzähltradition. (Folklore Fellows' Communications 312.) Academia Scientiarum Fennica, Helsinki 2017. 181 pp.*

Sagen aus Lapland. Herausgegeben, übersetzt und kommentiert von Hans-Hermann Bartens. Frank & Timme, Berlin 2018. 463 pp.

Ever since the beginning of the twentieth century, type and motif indices are virtually part and parcel of classic folkloristics. When the distribution of motifs and their historical roots were of vital concern for researchers, this tool was really inevitable. Consequently, the famous international book series *Folklore Fellows' Communications* consists of type and motif indices from various countries. Using them it was possible for a scholar to compare types and motifs from specific geographical areas in order to document the history of a *märchen* or a legend type or motif. Along the changes that happened within the discipline these indices have become more rare.

Dr. phil. Hans-Hermann Bartens is affiliated to the Georg-August-Universität in Göttingen, Germany, as a teacher of Finno-Ugric languages. His special fields of interest are Mordvinian, Votian and Mari language and grammar, Sámi languages and grammar and Sámi folklore. He collected and analysed several

legends and other narratives about external enemies to the Sámi people and put his findings together in a type and motif index called *Tschuden und andere Feinde in der saamischen Erzähltradition* (Chuds and other Enemies in the Narrative Tradition of the Sámi).

Dr Bartens has limited himself geographically to the Sámi tradition although legends of this kind are also known outside the northernmost parts of Europe. He has included legends about a Sámi person or group threatened by enemies, Chuds. Mostly the word Chud denotes Baltic-Finnic people living in the regions around the eastern parts of the Baltic Sea, but it also covers a more imprecise kind of foreigners who disturbed the Sámi. In Sámi tradition, consequently, the Chuds are regarded as baleful, unreliable enemies. The relationship between the Sámi people and the Chuds is the core of this index, which at the same time also functions as a good introduction to this category of narratives due to the comprehensive comments by Dr Bartens.

Being a good and thorough investigation the book contains all classical ingredients of a scholarly work, such as an analysis of central concepts. The reader learns what the enemies of the Sámi are called, who they are, what they do and when everything takes place. The material and the research history are described with a source-critical perspective. After the index follows a survey of other narratives containing motifs about Chuds. Finally the author takes his readers to the tradition in films, theatre and school-books of today. The sixth chapter, entitled *Schlussbemerkungen* (Closing Remarks) contains analyses of the legends. Here the author tries to confront problems concerning the functions of the tradition, the roles of the various characters mentioned in the narratives or their value as historical "documents". We see, in detail, that they are partly fantasies with supernatural traits. Partly they are also descriptions of everyday life as a Sámi for

they shape a background for the conflict between Sámi and Chuds.

The book ends with four appendices: place names, a diagram of the legends, a thesaurus of the type index and a map of the Sámi region. I guess that a summary in English would have increased the value of this very detailed and informative investigation of legends about the confrontations between the cruel Chuds and the clever Sámi.

Yet another book by Hans-Hermann Bartens is *Sagen aus Lappland* (Sámi Legends). This book is a collection from several archives and puts a selection of Sámi legends on display. Some of the texts have never been published before. They are translated into German and each text has information about where this kind of traditional narratives can be found, who told the story and to some extent the reader can learn something about what the legends are about. However, Dr Bartens refuses to give his readers an interpretation, which is certainly wise, for interpretations are a matter of individual understanding.

The collection of legends deals mainly with beliefs and is organized according to their motifs. Legends about water spirits, the devil, augury, death, and the end of the world are but examples of what can be found in the book.

In the beginning there is a short presentation of the Sámi region. At the end of the collection there is a description of the sources in which these texts were found. These documents are arranged according to the Nordic countries in which the texts were found and the ways of life in the different regions are also described. Another ordering principle is chronology.

This book is a good introduction to Sámi folklore for students and other people who are not acquainted with the northernmost European traditional narratives.

*Ulrika Wolf-Knuts
Åbo, Finland*

Soundscapes

Karin Eriksson-Aras: Ljudrum. En studie av ljud och lyssnande som kulturell praktik. Uppsala: Institutionen för kulturantropologi och etnologi, Uppsala universitet, 2017. Etnolore 37. 180 pp. Ill. English summary. Diss.

Karin Eriksson-Aras's doctoral dissertation is a monograph entitled "Sound Spaces: A Study of Sound and Listening as Cultural Practice", which examines sonic environments as meaning-bearing elements and how they create contexts and maintain human interaction. Through the dissertation Eriksson-Aras shows that sound plays an important part for ethnographic descriptions.

Eriksson-Aras's work falls well within the framework of "soundscape studies", a field that has been revived in recent scholarly dissertations. In the Swedish-speaking world I am thinking chiefly of the ethnologist Olle Stenbäck's study of shop music, *Den ofrivilliga lyssnaren: Möten med butiksmusik*, and the musicologist Kaj Ahlsved's work on music and sporting events, *Musik och sport: En analys av musikanvändning, ljudlandskap, identitet och dramaturgi i samband med sportevenemang*, both of which appeared in 2016.

Eriksson-Aras's dissertation seeks to investigate: (a) how sounds form distinct cognitive and spatial units, sound spaces; (b) how sound spaces constitute forms of human interaction. The author also aims (c) to conceptualize the study of sound spaces and contribute to a Swedish terminology for describing and analysing sounds and sound spaces.

The basis for the study is a number of urban sound environments in central Istanbul, but it also includes two comparative case studies: a dramatic bus trip along the Bosphorus and a visit to a place in rural north-east Turkey. The overall questions in the dissertation are closely linked to the aim of showing how sound spaces are created and maintained.

Eriksson-Aras proceeds from the physicist Pehr Sällström's ideas in *Sin-nena ljuger inte* (1999) about sound being motion – sounds can be understood both physically and socially. On this basis, sounds can be understood both communicatively, as an actual movement, and as energy. In her introduction the author considers the difference between hearing and listening: hearing is unprocessed perception whereas listening always involves an element of interpretation and selection. The selective character of listening recurs in different parts of the dissertation as an explanation for the actors' co-creation in the sound space.

The term “soundscape” was introduced by the Canadian composer and author Murray Schafer at the end of the 1960s and was discussed in *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World* (1977). Schafer defined soundscape as all the sound that surrounds people, the sonic landscape or the acoustic environment. But Schafer also sees a perceptual aspect in the term – “as it is perceived and understood by a listener”. Eriksson-Aras proceeds from Schafer's thoughts but adapts them to her own purpose: “Whereas the concept of soundscape is more about some kind of landscape, *sound space* suits my purposes better. [...] Istanbul's soundscape consists of many sound spaces: in the bazaar, outside the bazaar, the small back streets, in squares, tunnels and on the Galata Bridge across the Bosphorus. In my study I reserve the term soundscape for a larger context whereas sound spaces are units that can be demarcated empirically. A soundscape can contain many sound spaces” (p. 17).

For Eriksson-Aras, “sound spaces” are thus smaller distinguishable units. The sound space is characterized by certain recurrent sounds. The effect is that a present listener gradually establishes an expectation (recognition) of how the sound space will sound the next time too – a recognition that combines the audi-

tive and the physical space into a unit. Eriksson-Aras also discusses similar concepts used by other scholars, such as the sociologist Alfred Schütz's “life worlds” (1962) and the urban researcher Rowland Atkinson's “acoustic territories” from the article “Ecology of Sound: The Sonic Order of Urban Space” (2007). She also reasons with the support of Henri Bergson and Owe Ronström (1992) on the concepts of time and space. This discussion leads Eriksson-Aras to her own definition of sound spaces: “The dynamics and accessibility of sounds are affected both by the architectural structure by which the sound space is surrounded and formed, and by the sounds that move there. In a sound space people move communicatively and contemporaneously with each other” (p. 19).

I understand Eriksson-Aras's sound space as a demarcatable place where the sources of sound interact with the fixed “architecture” and are continuously reshaped through human interaction.

The dissertation has a phenomenological and hermeneutic basis, not least of all through the assumption that the establishment of sound spaces starts with perception. The method is fieldwork through a number of case studies – a selection of sonic environments in Istanbul make up the empirical basis for the study. The author approaches these places with as few preconceptions as possible and she works abductively, that is, alternating between an inductive and a deductive method. This alternation means that the researcher enters into the empirical material with no preconceived ideas and lets the impressions create the context. On this basis she analyses the observations, after which she goes back and tests hypotheses and conclusions in new empirical studies. Eriksson-Aras has been influenced here by the Norwegian cultural historian Anne Eriksen's *From Antiquities to Heritage: Transformation of Cultural Memory* (2014).

The author has also been inspired by the use of “more-than-representational theory”, which has exerted influence and undergone development here and there in ethnography in recent years. The basic idea for Eriksson-Aras is to develop the ethnographic description by adding elements, and in this study of course the additions are observations of sounds as an important part in understanding and describing places. The intellectual roots of more-than-representational theory lie in phenomenology, with leading names like the philosophers Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Martin Heidegger. According to these thinkers, concepts such as motion, interaction, and performance are necessary supplements in ethnography. The human geographer Hayden Lorimer coined the designation “more-than-representational” in *Cultural Geography: The Busyness of Being “More-than-Representational”* (2005). Lorimer’s fundamental idea is to expand the basis for ethnographic descriptions. In Eriksson-Aras’s case it is to add observations of acoustic phenomena to descriptions of social and cultural spaces.

Eriksson-Aras’s empirical foundation is the description and experience of six sound spaces in central Istanbul. In her abductive method the author begins by taking a “sound walk” and subsequently analyses and interprets her experiences. When presenting the method she discusses the difficulty of describing sound. Here she proceeds from what the Swedish ethnologists Barbro Klein and Sverker Hyltén-Cavallius say about problems of transcription in general (Klein 1990) and the difficulty of finding a useful language for analysing and describing music. Hyltén-Cavallius observes in his dissertation *Minnets spelrum* (2005) that there is a resistance to using musical terms in ethnology. Eriksson-Aras goes one step further and says that there is an even greater problem in discussing sound, since there is even less of an agreed terminology.

“Culture studies have a shortage of useful, established analogies and metaphors,” she writes (p. 31). Eriksson-Aras chooses here to establish a terminology taken from the fields of acoustics and music. She thinks that clearly justified and explained acoustic and musical designations facilitate an understanding of sonic descriptions and that this can also be useful in future studies in ethnology.

In chapter two the author presents the results of her sound walks. All the sound spaces in the dissertation are in central Istanbul, more precisely in the Eminönü district. This area is well known to all inhabitants of Istanbul, strategically located at the intersection of east and west at the western abutment of the Galata Bridge. The bridge over the Bosphorus links the two halves of the city. The area has historically been one of the most active places for trade in both the Byzantine and the Ottoman era. “The place has been a central trading and meeting place for people in Istanbul since the seventeenth century and is considered to give a typical atmosphere of the ‘old’ Istanbul” (p. 20). Eriksson-Aras has named her sound spaces after their typical activities or physical structures. We follow her sound walks in “The Tunnel in Karaköy”, “The Galata Bridge over the Bosphorus”, “The Toy Tunnel”, “The In-between Space”, “The Street Vendors’ Sound Spaces” and “The Spice Bazaar”.

Here is a long quotation from “The Street Vendors’ Sound Spaces”. This is a rich, close-up description with many details:

“The narrow alleys at the outdoor bazaar are densely packed with sounds and movements. All the voices together become a confused buzz. People squeeze their way between cheese counters and stalls selling olives, fish, and all kinds of sweets. The voices that stick out are those of the vendors. They seem to be competing with each other to catch customers. With melodious voices and harmonizing chants, the vendors emit their calls. The sound

space has a high volume and a relatively large range (*ambitus*), to which the vendors' voices contribute. With a strong chest register they call out their chants. The sound space is compact and the rhythm of steps becomes incoherent. The throng is at times so striking that I cannot distinguish the sound of my own or anyone else's footsteps, except on occasions when there is suddenly a lacuna in the throng.

"Suddenly a painfully *resounding* and *deafening* sound is heard. The electricity has gone and the generators start. People run from the source of the sound that becomes far too insistent, loud, and unpleasant. The interaction clearly follows the change in the sound. The sound space has changed to become that of the generators; the din of the machines has completely taken over the place. It has taken on a new key, a new volume and range. The range is now small since it is a single resounding, deafening sound that drowns everything else. The volume is much higher than before. The centre and peripheries of the sound space are also affected by the racket of the generator. The focus on the street vendors' voices disappears. The boundaries of this sudden new sound space run where the noise no longer hurts one's ears, beyond the boundaries of the in-between space, close to the toy tunnel. When the electricity comes back again, the sound space belongs once again to the street vendors. The return takes place gradually. It takes a while before the vendors are in full swing with the same energy as before" (pp. 71–72).

In this description of "The Street Vendors' Sound Spaces" we see the struggle to find a place and to occupy the sound space. At first the street vendors fight for mastery with their competing cries, but through an unexpected power cut the noise of the generators takes power over the sound space for a while. But this is only temporary – as soon as the power comes back on, everything goes back to normal. Eriksson-Aras uses

linguistic devices to bring the situation to life, her account being in the present throughout, increasing the sense of being there, and as readers we feel that we are participants rather than observers. The musical and acoustic terms used in the description are marked and explained in special fact boxes on the same page.

In chapter four the author discusses rhythm in relation to sound spaces. How different rhythmic patterns in the urban sounds appear to interact and create a polyrhythmic tapestry. Eriksson-Aras notes that all the sounds in her sound spaces are temporally structured. They have a timeline and a morphology. As examples she uses the sound of footsteps which create rhythmic orders. The chapter ends with a very interesting excursus; a bus journey along the shore of the Bosphorus. The journey illustrates changes in the sound space in interaction between people over time in different situations – how heat, stress, and external factors affect the interaction among the passengers and thereby the sound spaces of the bus.

The following chapter discusses people's capacity for selective listening. The example is the young handkerchief vendor Fatih who sells his wares beside the Galata Bridge, amidst constant noise. Fatih exemplifies the difference between focused and peripheral listening. The boy filters out unwanted sound, to concentrate on what he really wants to hear. Eriksson-Aras shows that it is not just listening that is done actively, but also the choice not to listen. Fatih does not register when cars toot their horns or when someone cries out. He continues his play with great concentration. Certain sounds that stick out, such as fireworks, can nevertheless penetrate.

In chapter six there is yet another excursus. On an outing to Erzurum in north-east Turkey the author discussed the significance of silence on the basis of the psychologist Håkan Svenbro's article "Meditation on Silence" (2008). In the mountains around Erzurum si-

lence has a natural place in the sound space. But the same is true in the vibrant and chaotic Eminönü district, according to the author. In the urban environment silence can arise, for example, when the human sounds are absorbed by the roar.

In the concluding chapter Eriksson-Aras returns to the questions posed at the beginning of the dissertation and reasons about how the knowledge that can be gained from empirical studies of demarcated sonic environments in Istanbul could also contribute to the creation of knowledge on a more general level.

The author believes that sound spaces can be viewed as distinct cognitive and spatial units. That they are *distinct*, that is to say, empirically separable, with discernable boundaries and passages: “Sound gives information about place, orientation, and communication, produces patterns of interaction, and affects people’s mood, listening, body language, navigation, forms of interplay, social patterns, physical movement, and perception of time and place. Sound spaces as *cognitive* units distinguish different mental processes, emotions, wills, thinking, and information in the sound spaces. Sounds have an effect and not just for the moment; they can also be engraved as memories that can be recalled by repeating the sound or thinking about it. Sound also contains silences” (p. 152).

Here the author also discusses how sound spaces constitute forms of human interaction and how they can be viewed as cultural – that is to say, humanly created within a social and cultural context.

To sum up, it is clear that Karin Eriksson-Aras’s dissertation in many ways breaks new ground in ethnographic research. Perhaps the most important insight conveyed by her work is that our perception of the surrounding world has more dimensions than just the visual one – we perceive with all our senses in interaction, and sounds probably are more significant for our understanding of socio-cultural phenomena than we normally realize.

I also like the open attitude in the study. Through the abductive method, her fundamental approach, the researcher clarifies her own interpretation, which is an appealing feature. It is an interesting way of describing how ethnological research in the field is actually done. The researcher takes in impressions, without having preconceived ideas about what might be observed or understood. When the material has been analysed and interpreted, the hypotheses are once again tested through observations in the field.

On the other hand, I question some other analytical tools. Why musical metaphors? It is not clear from the dissertation why these should give a better description of communicative processes in the sound spaces than other descriptive terms. Occasionally I also think that the explanations of the acoustic and musical terminology take too much focus away from the content. The terms she explains are also on very unequal levels – some seem completely self-evident. Do we need to have “mumble” defined as “talk that can hardly be heard” (p. 84)?

One can also ask why the study focuses so strongly on the auditive perspective. It seems reasonable to envisage that if one follows Hayden Lorimer’s ideas of “more-than-representational” ethnography, then all the senses ought to be taken into consideration. Human perception is surely based not just on sight and hearing but just as much on impressions of taste, smell, and touch.

Anyway, my general impression is that Karin Eriksson-Aras has written a dissertation that enriches modern ethnography with new angles when sounds are given a place in the descriptions. Let us hope that this study will inspire other researchers to develop ethnographic fieldwork.

*Dan Lundberg,
Stockholm, Sweden*

Proverbs

Liisa Granbom-Herranen: Proverbs in SMS Messages: Archaic and Modern Communication. Annales Universitatis Turkuensis, B 459. Turku 2018. 112 pp. plus six reprinted articles with their original page numbers, pp. 317–339, pp. 47–67, pp. 372–388, pp. 367–381, pp. 107–120, and pp. 503–518. Diss.

As a senior professor's career is approaching the unavoidable end, there is nothing more rewarding than to see how the newer generation of scholars is moving ahead in good stride with its research agenda. It is not only the joy of observing these scholarly advances but also the delight of still being of use in providing some guidance and support. This has been the case for me regarding Liisa Granbom-Herranen's truly remarkable work in the challenging field of paremiology during the past ten years. I have supported her applications for scholarships, and it was my honor of recommending her to be accepted into the Ph.D. program in the Department of Folklore at the University of Turku, where the internationally recognized Prof. Pekka Hakamies has been her advisor for the past three years. If I may, I would like to quote at least one short paragraph of my recommendation dated February 4, 2014, to set the stage for my review of her published dissertation:

“Liisa Granbom-Herranen represents an impressive reawakening of proverb studies (paremiology) in Finland. As is well known among paremiologists of the world, the deceased Prof. Matti Kuusi, my former dear friend, was one of the leading proverb scholars in the world. His numerous books on proverbs and his editorship of *Proverbium* (1965–1975) carried his name and his country of Finland to all people seriously interested in proverbs. His daughter Dr. Outi Lauhakangas and Prof. Pekka Hakamies have carried the proverbial torch onward, and they have now been joined by Liisa Gran-

bom-Herranen, whose book *Sananlaskut kasvatuspuheesa – perinnettä, kasvatusta, indokrinaatiota?* [Proverbs in Pedagogical Discourse – Tradition, Upbringing, Indoctrination? (2008) must be considered as a major contribution to modern proverb scholarship. There is no doubt that with the triad of Lauhakangas, Hakamies, and Granbom-Herranen the internationally recognized study of proverbs is once again solidly established in Finland”.

Let me also add that I have met Liisa Granbom-Herranen and her husband Erkki since 2007 on numerous occasions at the annual “Interdisciplinary Colloquium on Proverbs” at Tavira, Portugal. Her lively lectures have been most exciting and informative, and she has been an especially engaged discussant throughout the conferences. Her superb command of the English language has put her very quickly into the role of an informed interpreter of various discussion points, showing clearly that she has reached a magisterial level in her own proverb research. In addition to the six articles that comprise the second half of her dissertation, she has published numerous other articles in various European countries and the United States, and I am happy to report that every one of them is part of my International Proverb Archives at the University of Vermont in Burlington, Vermont (USA). Foreign guests, my students, and I myself have most certainly benefited from her excellent research on numerous occasions.

With this being said, I can turn to Liisa Granbom-Herranen's groundbreaking published dissertation that builds on her interest in how proverbs are used and interpreted in everyday Finnish communication today. She has also investigated how this use of proverbs might have changed and how old proverbs have taken on different shades of meaning as the society has changed. In particular she has investigated Finnish letters written to the editor of the

Salon Seudun Sanomat newspaper as SMS messages comprised of 160 characters each (sometimes two or three messages are connected), a truly novel corpus as far as proverb research is concerned. This textual base has provided her with proverbs in very natural linguistic discourse, and the wealth of materials that she has gathered has enabled her to draw significant conclusions about the modern communicative use and meaning of proverbs. This is indeed cutting-edge scholarship based on rich textual materials and a solid theoretical framework.

The main thrust of my review of her cumulative dissertation will be dedicated to the first part in which Liisa Granbom-Herranen presents and discusses her research into proverbial SMS messages. I shall also include comments on four of the six cohesively connected articles that appeared in internationally refereed publications between 2010 and 2016.

Already the title *Proverbs in SMS Messages – Archaic and Modern Communication* of this magisterial dissertation from the renowned University of Turku in Finland represents a revolution of sorts! It is without doubt a pioneering study in that it covers completely new ground in proverb scholarship by basing its corpus on SMS messages, that is electronic messages comprised of 160 characters that have been sent by the thousands to the regional Finnish newspaper *Salon Seudun Sanomat*. Since of about 70,000 messages approximately 7,000 contain proverbial language, this represents a rich repertoire on which the author could base her quantitative and qualitative analysis based on a serious theoretical framework. As she proceeds to look at how traditional proverbs appear in these short messages, how they are manipulated, and how new proverbs appear in them, it is her scholarly *leitmotif* that only the communicative context of the proverbial language gives

meaning to these folkloric elements.

The first chapter on “Proverbs in Contemporary Use” (pp. 15–29) serves as an introduction to the basic research agenda of this dissertation with comments on the six previous publications that make up its significant second part. Since everything has been written in a foreign language, I cannot stress enough that Liisa Granbom-Herranen has a superb mastery of the English language, making it a linguistic pleasure to read her exquisite scholarly English void of any intellectual jargon. The exciting part of her SMS messages is that they are unedited, thus showing a very natural employment of proverbs in short messages during 2006 and 2010, that is basically right now! Her research questions regarding “folkloristic paremiology” (p. 21) also address the changes in the concept of the proverb as a genre over time. Clearly proverbs are used differently today than during older agrarian times in Finland. Above all, proverb “meanings vary from one context to another” (p. 24) and, as she very lucidly explains, “the interpretation of a proverb is a matter of situational and individual experience” (p. 25). As far as Liisa Granbom-Herranen is concerned, proverbs without context are basically meaningless, and she is correct with this assertion, backing it up with the voice of Lauri Honko (p. 26), one of Finland’s greatest folklorists who unfortunately died at the very top of his distinguished career.

It is in the second chapter on “Concepts Related to Proverbs in this Dissertation” (pp. 30–60), where Liisa Granbom-Herranen shows her erudition and expertise regarding proverbs in general, their definition, meaning, use, function etc. She is, of course, not incorrect in stressing the “similarities between proverbs and metaphors” (p. 31), but it is worthwhile to point out that not all proverbs are metaphorical. This is especially true for many modern proverbs that often are indicative sentences without any

metaphor or particular structure whatsoever. As she deals with the vexing problem of defining a proverb, she shows that she is well-versed in theoretical paremiology and that she is aware of the scholarship of Archer Taylor, Matti Kuusi, Neal Norrick, Charles Briggs, Arvo Krikmann, and many others. But I wonder whether she might not be overstating matters when she writes “that at the beginning of the 21st century, proverbs in Finnish (as in many other languages) are not primarily transmitted either orally or from one generation to another, but rather in written form” (p. 34). Speaking for the German and American cultures to which I belong, I can certainly state that proverbs are very much alive in oral communication, be that normal conversations, speeches, dialogues in films, etc.

Her discussion of the multifaceted aspects of determining the meaning of proverbs is indeed excellent. She is right that the so-called standard meaning of any given proverb in collections or dictionaries is a construct, a ground meaning of sorts, but “the basic meaning of a proverb is always a culture-bound assumed standard proverbial interpretation” (p. 37). That is perfectly stated, since it is the appearance of a proverb in a particular context that gives away its meaning. Her discussion of so-called “markers” of proverbs, i.e., signaling that a proverb is about to follow by means of introductory formulas, is well taken, since they help with the identification of modern proverbs that have hitherto not been included in any printed proverb collection.

In fact, her discussion of modern proverbs is of special value. It makes a lot of sense that they can in fact be found in SMS messages as contemporary texts. The example of “Money doesn’t grow on trees” (p. 46) is indeed a modern proverb with its earliest reference thus far being from 1906 in the United States. It is not of Finnish origin but rather a loan translation into Finnish that now

has gained currency, as is the case with other modern American proverbs in various languages. And yes, “defining traditional proverbs and modern proverbs is a challenge” (p. 48), one that paremiologists everywhere need to tackle. For this see Charles Clay Doyle, Wolfgang Mieder, and Fred R. Shapiro, *The Dictionary of Modern Proverbs* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2012).

The rest of this enlightening chapter deals with the issue of contextuality, arguing convincingly that a proverb “will receive various interpretations depending on the space (the time and place inside some socio-cultural context)” (p. 52). Another aspect is the actual performance of the proverb, as Charles Briggs has argued so convincingly and as Liisa Granbom-Herranen explains as well. All these factors need to be considered and it is essential to realize that the “context provides a proverb with meaning” (p. 60).

The third chapter on “Mobile Phones as Part of the Shared Life Experience” (pp. 61–68) gives the cultural and socio-economic background of the relatively small town of Salo with its *Salon Seudun Sanomat* newspaper, explaining that Salo is the place where the Finnish mobile phone manufacturing had its start. It is this newspaper to which the thousands of SMS messages were sent electronically and anonymously. While the rich corpus of these short messages with their 160 characters is definitely impressive, one can well understand the author’s disappointment for having “no information on whether they [the senders] are male or female, young or old, not even what is their first language” (p. 68). It would indeed be of interest to know who really used the true modern proverbs? It would also be good to know if the picture would be different in such SMS messages from a large city like Helsinki? But never mind, one step at a time, and surely Liisa Granbom-Herranen’s research project can serve as a

model for other such investigations in Finland and beyond. What I find so utterly amazing – the author does not make a big fuss about it – is that these very short SMS messages include proverbial materials at all! After all, especially metaphorical proverbs will take up a fair percentage of those 160 characters. I suppose what helps is that sometimes a person strings 2 or 3 such messages together into a whole.

In the fourth chapter on “Research Process and Implementation of the Method” (pp. 69–89) Liisa Granbom-Herranen describes her innovative research process that is based on both the quantitative and qualitative analysis of a tremendously rich and unique textual data base. The proper identification of the proverbial language must have been an incredible labor-intensive process. After all, many of the proverbs appear in the SMS messages in a truncated or altered form. Clearly a proverb expert like Liisa Granbom-Herranen was needed for their proper identification which then could be assigned to the following convincing categories: (1) proverb, potential proverb, a Bible quotation; (2) phrase, phrase which might be or might become a proverb, expression which might become a phrase; (3) quotation, song, folklore product; (4) proverb marker (p. 77). In other words, the author over-collected, going beyond proverbs as such to make sure that no proverbial stone remained unturned.

But it is here where the problem with modern proverbs arises. How does even an informed scholar like Liisa Granbom-Herranen recognize the truly modern proverbs? After all, she cannot check them in those massive Finnish proverb archives or the printed collections! She gives a good answer to this problem: “Some modern proverbs were identified with the help of the Internet: if a complete expression or sentence had hundreds of occurrences, it was considered a modern proverb” (pp. 80–81). The

most surprising result of this impressive work is that “the largest category of the contemporary proverbial utterances, three of four, consists of modern proverbs or references to them” (p. 82). This is hard to believe, and the author herself admits proverbially that “If we look for something, we get it”. In other words, she might well have included too many “potential modern proverbs”, as she calls them. After all, we really don’t know exactly what the modern proverbs of Finnish or any other language are. There is plenty of informed guess-work in this, with currency and familiarity of modern proverbs not easy to establish: “The frequency of modern proverbs is the easiest to challenge because there are no sources [collections, records, etc.] focusing on Finnish material to invoke” (p. 83). Regarding the origin of modern proverbs, as well as their dissemination, their frequency of occurrence, and their familiarity, much more work needs to be done. This research is clearly most advanced at this moment for modern Anglo-American proverbs, and the following publications might have been useful from a theoretical and practical point of view: Charles Clay Doyle, “On ‘New’ Proverbs and the Conservativeness of Proverb Dictionaries,” *Proverbium*, 13 (1996), 69–84; also in *Cognition, Comprehension, and Communication: A Decade of North American Proverb Studies (1990–2000)*, ed. Wolfgang Mieder (Baltmannsweiler: Schneider Verlag Hohengehren), 2003, pp. 85–98; Richard P. Honeck and Jeffrey Welge, “Creation of Proverbial Wisdom in the Laboratory,” *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research*, 26 (1997), 605–629; also in *Cognition [...]*, pp. 205–230; W. Mieder, “‘Think Outside the Box’: Origin, Nature, and Meaning of Modern Anglo-American Proverbs,” *Proverbium*, 29 (2012), 137–196; W. Mieder, “Origin of Proverbs,” *Introduction to Paremiology. A Comprehensive Guide to Proverb Studies*, eds. Hrisztalina Hrisztova-Gotthardt and Melita Aleksa

Varga (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2014), pp. 28–48; and Stephen D. Winick, “Intertextuality and Innovation in a Definition of the Proverb Genre.” in *Cognition [...]*, pp. 571–601.

To be sure, Liisa Granbom-Herranen has now provided superb insights into modern Finnish proverbs and their use, function, and meaning in SMS messages. She deserves credit and praise for this aspect of her work! However, if I may raise one critical point it is the following: It sure would have been nice if she would have included a list of say fifty of the most well-known modern Finnish proverbs! I will make a scholarly educated guess here and claim that among them are bound to be some traditional and modern Anglo-American proverbs that have become current in the form of loan translations in modern Finnish culture. For the two proverbs “Money does not grow on trees” (traditional proverb) and “The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence” (modern proverb) this should be true, as Liisa Granbom-Herranen includes them in her dissertation. As I have argued on numerous occasions, we need annotated collections of modern proverbs, and Liisa Granbom-Herranen is best qualified to publish such a dictionary of modern proverbs for the Finnish language and culture. It is my hope that she will tackle this task in the near future.

The short fifth chapter on “The Articles: An Overview” (pp. 90–94) presents a convincing statement describing the cohesive continuum of her six articles from refereed publications during 2010 to 2016 that make up the second part of her cumulative dissertation. Let me just say here in recognition of her valuable earlier work that she had already pioneered the contextual analysis of Finnish proverbs in the mass media, namely in printed newspapers, to wit her significant studies “Proverbial Expressions in Newspapers. A Study in Estonia, Finland, and Slovenia,” *Tradi-*

tiones, 44 (2015), 5–32 (with Saša Babič from Slovenia and Piret Voolaid from Estonia); “‘Newspapers Are the Schoolmasters of the Common People’: Some Paremiological Notes of Proverbs in a Finnish Newspaper,” in *Proceedings of the Sixth Interdisciplinary Colloquium on Proverbs, 4th to 11th November 2012, at Tavira, Portugal*, eds. Rui J.B. Soares and Outi Lauhakangas (Tavira: Tipografia Tavirense, 2013), pp. 315–328; and “Some Paremiological Notes on Proverbs in Three Finnish Newspapers,” in *Proceedings of the Eighth Interdisciplinary Colloquium on Proverbs, 2nd to 9th November 2014, at Tavira, Portugal*, eds. Rui J.B. Soares and Outi Lauhakangas (Tavira: Tipografia Tavirense, 2015), pp. 405–414. This work was strengthened by other studies that are not included in the dissertation but that merit at least a mention here: “Proverb – a Literal Phrase and a Part of Everyday Speech,” in *Paremiología y herencia cultural*, eds. Antonio Pamies Bertrán, Juan de Dios Luque Durán, and Patricia Fernández Martín (Granada: Educatore, 2011), pp. 285–293; and “Proverbs and Meanings,” in *Proceedings of the Second Interdisciplinary Colloquium on Proverbs, 9th to 16th November 2008, at Tavira, Portugal*, eds. Rui J.B. Soares and Outi Lauhakangas (Tavira: Tipografia Tavirense, 2009), pp. 187–200. Those articles that she published in the proceedings of the international paremiological meetings at Tavira were, of course, delivered there as lectures, and I remember well Liisa Granbom-Herranen’s engaged and enthusiastic demeanor with the lively discussion after her deliveries. I cannot stress enough that her presence at these conferences helped to make these events so memorable!

What follows are a few comments regarding four of her six articles from refereed publications during 2010 to 2016 that were published in Estonia, Finland, Poland, and Slovenia. The first (also the most recent) article on “The Proverb

Genre. A Relic or Very Much Alive?" (2016) represents the impressive culmination of Liisa Granbom-Herranen's work as a paremiological scholar. It deals with the difficulty of defining a proverb and reviews the scholarly insights of such internationally recognized paremiologists as Archer, Taylor, Alan Dundes, Peter Grzybek, Arvo Krikmann, etc. As one would expect, the article includes a highly informative review and discussion of the accomplishments of Finnish paremiology with an emphasis on the significant work of Matti Kuusi, Pekka Hakamies, Martti Haavio, Outi Lauhakangas, Kari Laukkanen, and others. Realizing that most international scholars do not know Finnish, these enlightening comments are of great importance. Her discussion of modern proverbs is of special relevance for proverb studies. Way too long have proverb scholars looked backwards without paying proper attention to the new proverbs that most certainly continue to be created. Folklore studies in general and most definitely proverb studies cannot only deal with tradition but must also look at innovation, realizing that the modern age brings about new forms of expression. It is good that the author deals in considerable detail with the fact that new proverbs are formed on the basis of older proverbial structures. While some of them might have a short life-span as so-called anti-proverbs, some of them might over time become actual proverbs. Her theoretical discussion of the emic-etic distinction regarding proverbs is also most useful, showing that the folk understanding (emic) of proverbs is not necessarily identical with that of scholars (etic). She is right in stating that "Research ought to obtain both emic and etic knowledge, which in the proverb genre means both emic and etic concepts of the proverb" (p. 325). As expected, she then also deals with the fact that proverbs in collections are in fact "dead", with their meaning becoming clear only in actual

contextual use. Collections hardly ever include contexts, and what is needed is the interpretation of the function and meaning of proverbs in actual contexts. By way of numerous examples she then shows that "the [traditional] proverb genre is very much alive [...] and modern proverbs are part of living tradition [...] as long as they are used or referred to in everyday communication" (p. 334). This might well be thought of as obvious, but it is only the relatively recent paremiological scholarship that addresses the use and function of proverbs in the modern world. And it is here where Liisa Granbom-Herranen has done true pioneering work as her articles show in considerable detail.

In her article on "How Do Proverbs Get Their Meanings? The Model of Interpretation Based on a Metaphor Theory" (2011), she deals with the absolute necessity of going beyond the standard perceived meaning of proverbs in collections without context. Her maxim "Even if the proverbs are unchangeable, their meanings are not" (p. 47) is only too true, although the proverb texts themselves also can change in context because of syntactical matters or because of intentional changes and substitutions by the speaker or writer. Naturally she goes into theoretical considerations of the meaning of metaphors, stressing that the meaning of a metaphorical proverb in a particular context depends very much on the intent of its use and how it is received and interpreted. In fact, she speaks of "the possibility of various worlds" (p. 53) of use and interpretation of a proverb, and she shows this by a number of diagrams. As she speaks of various functions, meanings, and contexts, she might have employed the three terms "polyfunctionality, polysemanticity, and polysituativity" that have become standard in paremiological scholarship during the past two decades.

The article about "Some Theoretical Aspects of Processes Behind the Meanings of Proverbs and Phrases" (2013)

continues the theoretical considerations of how proverbs become meaningful communicative statements in contexts. Liisa Granbom-Herranen does well in stressing that “folkloric paremiology” in particular deals with this matter, but it deserves to be mentioned that literary scholars, cultural linguists, scholars of rhetoric, etc. also deal with the meaning of proverbs in actual use. Her statement that “although [the actual texts of] proverbs are relatively unchanging, their meanings do change in both everyday speech and colloquial written language” (p. 384) can once again be taken as somewhat of a maxim, but the addition in square brackets might make her point a bit clearer. But it is the concluding statement that overstates the point a bit: “Nowadays, proverbs are not primarily transmitted orally or from generation to another generation; rather, transmission occurs primarily in written form and quite often within a single generation only; those outside a generation are also outsiders to the utterances” (p. 386). At least for English as the *lingua franca* of the world, relatively new proverbs from the last two centuries have survived numerous generations, and modern proverbs of the 20th century have been handed on for up to four generations if one takes a generation to be about twenty-five years. Time only can tell what will happen let’s say with the proverbs that came into being during the past two decades, and they do exist! Finally, proverbs are also very much alive orally today, to wit conversations, television, films, songs, etc.

Finally, her article entitled “Beyond Understanding: How Proverbs Violate Grice’s Cooperative Principle” (2014) must have pleased our recently deceased Estonian colleague and friend Arvo Krikmann very much as Liisa Granbom-Herranen’s contribution to his richly deserved “Festschrift”. Here she deals in more detail with Paul Grice’s cooperative principle as a model to explain speech situations, as Krikmann had also

noticed. When she talks about the fact that “the conventional meaning of what is said consists of common knowledge as well as tacit knowledge in the context of the time and place” (p. 109) she might have brought the concept of “cultural literacy” into play. One of the reasons why proverbs at times fail as a communicative device is quite plain and simple that people don’t know them! “Creating a pause in the discourse” (p. 113) to signal that a preformulated proverb is coming, or to use a more direct introductory formula to introduce the proverb, will not help if the proverb and its basic meaning are not known. Indeed, the listener or reader of a proverbial message “has an active role in the situation” (p. 116). And Liisa Granbom-Herranen is correct when she concludes by stating that “Proverbs are combinations of socio-cultural context, people, emotions and information in different situations” (p. 118). Proverb scholars everywhere should always keep this in mind. They must also not forget that communication with proverbs can lead to miscommunication or misunderstanding if the proverb itself is not understood or not known at all.

Liisa Granbom-Herranen concludes the first part of her *magnum opus* with a few pages of “Reflections” (pp. 95–102) and a superb international bibliography (pp. 103–112). As she discusses one more time the difficulty in identifying truly modern (new) proverbs, the reader feels the wish that she might have presented a list of the most popular modern proverbs, as I mentioned above. When she states that “traditional proverbs are easily found since paremiologists know what they are looking for, especially when they are doing [dealing?] with their native language” (p. 96), she might be oversimplifying matters. Yes, for seasoned paremiologists and native speakers of Finnish this holds true for the most part, but for young Finns and certainly those who have learned Finnish as a foreign language, this is not so,

and they too read SMS messages. Also, by the time traditional proverbs are played with or merely alluded to, they are much more difficult to identify. Once identified, of course, one can check them in the excellent Finnish proverb collections and the vast archival materials that exist in Finland.

One more point, perhaps, as far as her concluding remarks are concerned. When she writes that “Modern proverbs are created by using traditional proverbs and the traditional ones are transformed” (p. 100), she might also have mentioned the phenomenon of “anti-proverbs”. As people play, transform, manipulate, parody older proverbs, some of these anti-proverbs might become new proverbs. It should also be kept in mind that while modern proverbs are often based on the fixed structures of traditional proverbs, they can also be created in straight-forward indicative sentences without an older proverb in the background. The study of modern proverbs is still very much at an early stage, with Liisa Granbom-Herranen’s published dissertation putting it on a more solid grounding. It is a unique, innovative, and future-oriented study both in the quantitative and qualitative aspects based on modern contextualized materials that have not been analyzed by paremiologists before. It is doubtlessly an impressive scholarly achievement that will be of considerable influence in the development of modern paremiology.

*Wolfgang Mieder
Burlington, Vermont, (USA)*

Reviewing a Research Career

Anders Gustavsson: Folkloristic Studies in Scandinavia. Personal Research Experiences and Reflections. Novus Press, Oslo 2017. 186 pp. Ill.

The grand old man of Swedish ethnology, Anders Gustavsson, has published

a book about folklore that he himself has used in his earlier studies. During a long career in which he has been mainly oriented to ethnology, he has nevertheless contributed to folkloristic research as well. He was inspired to write this book after a symposium in Visby where two central questions were posed: about what folkloristic research needs, and what kind of knowledge folklorists think that they create, especially in a quickly changing university world. By folklore the author means narratives, rites, and performances.

Gustavsson has taken inspiration from auto-ethnographic research and therefore examines his own texts since the 1970s. Unfortunately, he restricts his auto-ethnographic approach to referring back to his own articles without analysing in detail why he wrote what he wrote or why he has now chosen to bring up these earlier works of his.

Since Gustavsson has worked both in Sweden and in Norway, some of his studies concern borderlands, and this justifies, as I understand it, his decision to call the book *Folkloristic Studies in Scandinavia*. That it is actually studies of his own previous works is not revealed in the subtitle, where his personal experiences and reflections are mentioned.

Gustavsson arranges his previous studies in four main groups: short narratives in a social context; rites; beliefs; and folklore and materiality. The first group deals with brief narratives, rumours, and prejudices, all of which ultimately serve to underline social inequality in order to create power. The text also deals with contradictory stories, emotional narratives, and what is kept concealed. The functions of these narratives are particularly emphasized.

The chapter about rites contains texts about vanished customs, revitalization, and newly created rites and national customs. The third chapter, about beliefs, is perhaps the most comparative in its approach. Here Gustavsson’s contacts

with free-church movements and ideas within the church serve as a basis for studies of evil and good, and for investigations of folk beliefs in rural society in relation to expressions of religion on the Internet in the twenty-first century.

The chapter about folklore and materiality is mainly based on a fairly extensive previous study of gravestones and the differences and similarities that exist between those erected in Sweden and the ones that can be seen in Norway.

The book ends with a brief summary.

Gustavsson is, as usual, highly pedagogical in his style of presentation. The greatest merit of the book is that the reader is guided through many different fields by an experienced researcher with a long career behind him, discussing how he has expressed himself and carried out his work.

*Ulrika Wolf-Knuts
Åbo, Finland*

Sailors' Wives in Denmark

Mette Eriksen Havsteen-Mikkelsen: Sømandskoner i Marstal – fortællinger fra sø og land. Marstal Søfartsmuseum, Marstal 2017. 94 pp. Ill.

The ethnologist Mette Eriksen Havsteen-Mikkelsen has worked at Marstal Maritime Museum on the island of Ærø in southernmost Denmark. She has now published a study of sailors' wives in the coastal town of Marstal, which has been wholly dominated by shipping. A map of the region would have been a useful addition to the book. Since the eighteenth century a significant part of the Danish merchant navy has had its home port in Marstal. There has been a school of navigation here since 1863. Many women in Marstal have married men who studied at this school and later settled in Marstal.

The men were away for long periods, travelling over much of the world, while

the women mostly stayed at home, with responsibility for all the work that had to be done there, and for the economy. In some cases the wife could accompany her husband on the voyages, either to cook or, in the case of captains' wives, for company. Then the children often had to stay at home.

The author uses notes and photographs in the collections of the maritime museum, besides which she conducted interviews in 2016 with several sailors' wives born either in the 1940s and 1950s or in the 1980s and 1990s. In addition she has had access to a large amount of photographic material in private ownership.

The book is divided into two chronologically separate sections, one covering the first half of the twentieth century (pp. 16–32), the other dealing with the second half of the century, in more detail (pp. 33–80). For the early twentieth century the notes left by the shipbroker and local historian Albert E. Boyes (1842–1924) have been important. Something that affected the lives of the sailors' wives besides all the practical tasks at home was the constant worry about the men's life and health far away at sea. This was especially palpable during the First and Second World Wars, when 54 and 82 Marstal sailors respectively lost their lives. A major commitment for the women was the church and the Bethesda mission house.

Conditions for shipping changed noticeably after the Second World War. Large iron ships were procured. The division of labour between women and men nevertheless remained largely unchanged. The women administered the economy alongside their duty to bring up the children and deal with all the practical tasks in the home. If a new house had to be built, the women took all the responsibility. At the same time, the women, who were all in the same situation, had a considerable sense of community with each other. The sewing club provided an informal network. According to interview data collected by

the author, the sailors' wives appear to have learned to accept having their husbands away for long periods. They made a virtue out of necessity and could simultaneously enjoy a degree of freedom in their everyday lives. As the men were away so long, their return was celebrated with fairly fixed rituals. At the very least there had to be a special dinner with wine.

In recent years some women have begun to do paid work outside the home. The men have been given more responsibility for housework during their spells at home. Captains' wives were highest in rank, often accompanying their husbands to sea, and not having any gainful employment. Working women were able to take leave from their jobs for a limited time in order to go on a voyage together with their husbands, but this practice has declined in recent years. In some cases the children came along too, but sometimes they were left at home, which made the women feel divided. On these journeys their thoughts tended to be with the children at home in Marstal. When the children were old enough to leave home, it could happen that a sailor's wife found employment as cook on the boat where her husband worked.

Contacts between wives and husbands have recently been facilitated by improved communications. In the first half of the twentieth century the women sent telegrams and letters to the men. It took a long time before they got an answer, which increased the worry they felt at home. This has changed radically thanks to satellite telephone, FaceTime, and Skype. Spouses can have daily contact and the children can see their father on the screen.

Finally: It is important that the author has devoted a thorough study to women in a maritime environment, where previous research on shipping and fishing has focused exclusively on the men. In this study it has been valuable to follow the external changes that have taken place in shipping and to see how communica-

tions have affected the women's everyday lives. I recognize many of the patterns in the women's situation from my studies of the lives of fishermen's wives in the province of Bohuslän on the west coast of Sweden in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The women's independence has been a prominent feature in both Marstal and Bohuslän.

Anders Gustavsson
*Oslo University, Norway/
Henån, Sweden*

Easter Celebrations in Norway

Ørnulf Hodne: Påskefeiring i Norge. Kirke, folketro og folkelige skikker. Novus forlag, Oslo 2018. 246 pp. Ill.

The Norwegian folklorist Ørnulf Hodne is known for his many popularizing works which have a broad readership in Norway. His latest book deals with the topic of Easter celebrations, concentrating on Norway in a long historical survey down to the present day. The emphasis is on the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. The author published an earlier look at Easter celebrations in 1988. That has now been greatly expanded and updated in this new publication.

Hodne examines both church ceremonies and folk beliefs and customs. Although Norway is in focus, there are sidelights and comparisons with the neighbouring Denmark and Sweden.

The book is based on a broad range of source material. This includes laws and ordinances, church handbooks, collections of sermons, topographical descriptions, questionnaire responses, and especially autobiographical texts collected from all over Norway on three occasions: 1964, 1981, and 1996. Printed source material can be found in the comprehensive series published over many years by the folklore organization Norsk Folkeminnelag.

In the first chapter the author examines the origin of the Christian Easter in the ancient church and during the Middle Ages. This is followed by a consideration of the period after the Norwegian Reformation in 1537.

The account is chronologically structured in that it starts with Lent and continues with Holy Week and the days after Easter. Lent is the subject of a separate chapter. Rules for fasting are well attested in church laws and sermons in the Norwegian Middle Ages. The reformers, however, abolished the duty to fast. The long Lenten fast was preceded by various folk carnivals which ended with Shrove Tuesday in both southern Sweden and Denmark, as well as on the Continent. In Norway, by contrast, there is scarcely any information about comparable practices, not even from the Middle Ages. One exception is the German-influenced trading town of Bergen up to the seventeenth century. One residue surviving from earlier Lenten customs is the twigs with coloured feathers, which in recent times have had a solely decorative function.

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, when people who went to church originally had their heads strewn with ashes and a cross drawn in ashes on their forehead. In Sweden this custom has undergone a certain renaissance in recent times, but there is no mention of any equivalent in Norway. The old Lenten prohibition on eating meat has long been respected by the peasants, especially in Vestlandet in Norway.

The next main chapter deals with Holy Week, which begins with Palm Sunday. Hardly any special customs or traditions are associated with this day, in contrast to Catholic countries with the dedication of palm branches and processions.

Several traditions and ideas are however connected to Maundy Thursday. According to folk belief, it was essential to protect oneself from supernatural forces which were particularly active on that day. Witches were thought to travel

around, and magical prophylactics such as iron objects were often used to shield both humans and livestock. What happened on Maundy Thursday was interpreted as an omen for the future. It was also a day for jesting marriage proposals. Maundy Thursday was one of the days in the church year when it was compulsory to take communion. Folk belief and church doctrine lived side by side. Hodne writes: "In our people's 'inner history' Maundy Thursday has been a time when the clash between faith and superstition, between ecclesiastical doctrine and folk religiosity, came to a dramatic head leading to the high point of Easter celebrations: Good Friday and Easter Sunday" (pp. 97f).

Good Friday was a day for living quietly and not visiting anyone. This is a distinct difference from the Middle Ages when people were supposed to do hard physical labour to be reminded of how Our Saviour suffered on that day. This kind of labour has also occurred since the Reformation, even as recently as the nineteenth century in southern Norway. In many places people dressed in mourning and flags were flown at half-mast. The sound of the church bells was muffled. What people ate reflected the solemnity of the day. Salted herring was a central dish which was intended to give people a powerful thirst, just as Jesus thirsted on the cross. There was a folk custom of giving each other a birching on the morning of Good Friday. This could be done both in earnest, as a way to remember Christ's suffering, and for pleasure. A youthful prank involved unmarried boys going round the district and sneaking into the dwellings of the unmarried girls. They could lash them with twigs and pour water on their beds.

A legend with accompanying ballads was linked to Good Friday in Norwegian folk tradition. It concerns the Wandering Jew or the shoemaker of Jerusalem, who is said to have taunted Jesus on his way to Golgotha. For this he was doomed to wander until Judgement Day, with no

rest and no homeland. Portents of forthcoming weather were associated with both Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. Fine, clear weather was interpreted as a bad sign for the coming year. Snow and sleet on Good Friday, on the other hand, were viewed as a good sign.

In contrast to what has occurred in western Sweden into our own times, no bonfires were lit on Holy Saturday in Norway. Easter bangers were however commonly ignited to keep the Easter witches away. The animals on the farm were also protected against witchcraft by magical means in the form of steel and crosses above the byre doors. Salt was also used for protection. A youthful prank that is known only from the county of Østfold on the border with Sweden was to go to the homes of friends and acquaintances with an Easter letter which carried a positive message and could sometimes contain a proposal of marriage. The letter had to be thrown into the house through a door or window, whereupon the sender ran away to avoid being seen. Hodne only mentions in passing what used to be a common practice, sending Easter cards by post. A follow-up might be valuable here. The author likewise omits a folk custom whereby adolescents, and in recent time children as well, dress up as witches on Holy Saturday and go from house to house collecting sweets. This has been studied in detail by the folklorist Fredrik Skott in a core area of western Sweden.

Easter Sunday was a great celebration when the mourning clothes were cast off and people dressed up in their finest garments. For breakfast they ate Easter eggs, which were often colourfully painted. The tradition of Easter eggs does not appear to be particularly old in Norway compared with other parts of Europe.

According to folk tradition, people had to get up early on the Sunday morning to see the rising sun dancing for joy at the resurrection of Christ. It was especially young people who gathered to

sing and greet the sun. Here the author could have had a reference to the Swedish historian of religion, Carl-Martin Edsman, with his profound historical account of the dancing sun. In more recent times the old tradition of the sun has been transformed in parts of Norway into an Easter walk with an outdoor service on the morning of Easter Sunday.

On Easter Monday there were some pranks involving marriage proposals. Although Easter Tuesday ceased to be a holiday in Denmark and Norway in 1770, some folk customs have persisted on this day in Norway. It was regarded as a semi-holy day when Easter auctions and associated festivities could be held.

The last part of the book is dedicated by the author to Easter celebrations in our days, both inside and outside the churches. This account is more summary in character, based on less source material than previous chapters concentrating on older folklore collections. In the churches there were large collections for needy people during Lent. It has become common for believers to walk outdoors carrying a cross on Good Friday. The author does not say anything about folk passion plays with amateur actors performed outdoors on Good Friday. These have started to occur in Sweden in recent years, with newspaper reports, for example, in Uddevalla in Bohuslän starting in 2003.

Since the inter-war years, many Norwegians have used their time off at Easter to go to the mountains to ski and get a suntan. The church has built 85 mountain churches to maintain contact with the tourists. The services in Holy Week attract the largest number of worshippers there.

One example that I have studied to see how new folk customs can emerge concerns the shopping trips and boat tourism from south-eastern Norway across the border into Sweden on Maundy Thursday, a practice that has become

common in recent decades. Young Norwegians from this area have moreover driven across the border in convoys of veteran cars, playing loud music, to party and consume large amounts of alcohol in Strömstad in the middle of the day. The background is that Maundy Thursday is not a holiday in Sweden whereas it is in Norway.

Hodne's book about Easter is based on the author's profound knowledge. It is written in accessible language aimed at a broad readership, for people who want to learn more about the ecclesiastical and folk history of one of our biggest holidays.

Anders Gustavsson
*Oslo University, Norway/
Henån, Sweden*

Encountering Trolls in Medieval Iceland

Ármann Jakobsson: The Troll inside You: Paranormal Activity in the Medieval North. Punctum Books, New York 2017. 240 pp.

The Troll inside You is prolific Old Norse scholar Ármann Jakobsson's attempt to rethink the paranormal in medieval Iceland, drawing on many years of study and published in a handy format. Rather than following the standard structure of argumentation of a conventional scholarly book, the work presents a series of meditations on themes related to the paranormal, each of them driven by a specific point. Accordingly, the individual chapters are fairly short, and are backed up by extensive endnotes making up one third of the total number of pages. This also makes it difficult to summarize the main points; it is a work best experienced firsthand.

A recurrent point, however, concerns the tendency to impose modern understandings of trolls and álfar, to name a few examples, on medieval material. As

the author demonstrates here and elsewhere, the medieval terms *troll* and *álfr* used to denote a range of beings that were held more separate in later periods. In a sustained interpretation, stretching over three chapters, of the enigmatic *Bergþía þáttur* which narrates the paranormal experiences of Þórðr and his nameless servant in a cave during a snow storm, Ármann Jakobsson proposes that we refrain from our usual impulse to focus on the paranormal creature, more or less treating it as part of the natural fauna, and turn our attention to the human actors instead. He suggests that the creature, be it troll or *bjargálfr*, is actually inside us, a "menacing double" that haunts our lives and reminds us of our mortality. This is certainly one of the highlights of the book, a compelling passage written with both acumen and poetic fervour.

Another theme covered in the book is the fine line between wisdom and magic, as well as the queerness of magic. The importance of gender and social position is emphasised in many sagas, as men with extraordinary abilities and high social standing are wise or well-educated, whereas women and men of inferior, perhaps even alien status, are readily branded as witches. With witchcraft culturally marked as a feminine domain, men who are associated with magic also raise doubts about their masculinity. This part centers on a discussion of an episode in *Eyrbyggja saga*, in which the young Gunnlaugr wishes to learn witchcraft. This turns out to be his undoing, as two women vie for the privilege of being his mentor and the spurned one attacks him, tearing his flesh from the bones.

Gunnlaugr's quest for occult knowledge is not without lofty precedent; it is not unlike Óðinn's, the Witchfather as Ármann Jakobsson cleverly calls him, but it is a path fraught with many dangers for ordinary men. In *Heimskringla*, Óðinn's magic is characterized as so queer that any other man could not prac-

tice it without dishonor. As a god, Óðinn alone is impervious to any charges of unmanliness. Gunnlaugr, a young man from a good family, might be holding a subversive interest he is eventually punished for.

A cluster of chapters focus on stories of the undead, and the author observes that many of the most infamous ghosts in medieval Iceland started out as “shunned, anti-social, troublesome and gloomy people”, and these traits are exacerbated in their undead state. Sometimes they also infect others, creating veritable zombie cohorts. Some of these restless dead were witches in life, once more illustrating the thin line between witches and ghosts. Especially in these cases, the fear of the undead as a fear of the past is manifested, encapsulated in one of the terms for magic, *forneskja*. Ármann Jakobsson argues that time was seen as an enemy, as it inevitably leads to our own demise, and those who have gone before us – our ancestors – were perceived as terrible allies of the past.

Ultimately, he interprets the stories he studies as testament to the human desire for controlling an uncontrollable universe through magic. Thus, the stories reveal the trauma of impotence, without which they would lose their driving force. The troll and its kin are viewed as metaphors for human fears. Accordingly, the book inscribes itself into a growing body of literature viewing traditional beliefs in a new light.

This summary does in no way do justice to the book, given its contemplative structure. It is written in an accessible style, and the language is frequently verging on the poetic; in other words, I really enjoyed reading it. Sometimes I feel the format is somewhat restraining, when the author is addressing issues of broader scope that would require more space, but this is usually solved quite satisfactorily by devoting several chapters to these issues.

The reader is also commonly left to her/his own devices in creating a synthesis out of the wealth of information and interpretations provided in the book, which is quite unusual and not without merit. For newcomers to the topic, however, I would recommend reading the book in concert with Ármann Jakobsson’s other publications, through which the present discussions can be contextualized. Sometimes I miss references to parallel work in folkloristics, for instance the discussion of the Linnéan influence on categorisation in folklore studies could have referenced Valdimar Hafstein’s “Biological Metaphors in Folklore Theory”. This does not detract from the quality of the book, however.

*Camilla Asplund Ingemark
Visby, Sweden*

Cultivated and Cultivating Sounds

Jens Henrik Koudal, Skæbnesymfoni og krokodillepolka. Musikkulturen på en stor gård mellem 1880 og 1960. Historika [Danish Humanist Texts and Studies, New Series, Volume 61], Copenhagen 2016. 239 pp. Ill., music examples.

In 2011 the Danish Folklore Collection (today a part of the Danish National Library) received a unique donation: a complete collection of musical notation, manuscripts – including some 10,000 handwritten diary pages – along with tape recordings left by the Danish folklore collector, music teacher, and writer Christian Olsen (1881–1968). Senior researcher Jens Henrik Koudal could thus combine his day-to-day work at the folklore collection with a research project that has culminated in this book.

Koudal has worked a great deal with historical musical material, and his doctoral dissertation on the Danish system of town musicians (from 2000) can be

counted as the main work in his rich scholarly production. Koudal writes here that he wishes “to study music as culture from an ethnomusicological perspective” (p. 14). What makes Koudal’s project original is that it differs from most of what goes under the name “music history” and “ethnomusicology”. Music historians often focus on the development of “works” (especially those with high status), performance practices, or social, cultural, or biographical circumstances which can place the works in a broader context. And ethnomusicologists often focus on the relationship between music and culture in a geographically defined area, within an ethnic (or other identity-shaping) group, or the practice associated with specific instruments, dance forms, or other musical *situations*. And usually they study living sources, in other words: music as contemporary culture.

Koudal tries to combine these perspectives by using insights from anthropological approaches to music when he interprets his historical material. And the actual material – with its large element of autobiographical text – is of such a character that it is well suited for “historical reconstruction of the pursuit of music on the farm. Through Christian Olsen’s diary and other descriptions we can become flies on the wall at Torpelund, on festive and everyday occasions, and through his pen we obtain an account of what he felt and thought” (p. 10). This may seem like a slightly naïve outlook on the complexity of interpretation, but in the course of the reading it becomes clear that Koudal avoids academic shortcuts. Instead he combines perspectives from different humanistic and social sciences to view Olsen and his musical practice in a broader context. Koudal benefits particularly from Christopher Small’s concept of “musicking”. This means more than just performing music. It covers *all* the processes involved in musical situations –

not just those dealing with composing or producing sound.

Folklore collectors through the ages have had different academic motivations. The most common has been (and still is) to document special linguistic or aesthetic expressions, or to document the culture of a specific nation, region, or group. For Olsen, in contrast, the motivation is to restrict the description to comprise folklore/music connected to his own family, materialized through the large property of Torpelund, which according to Koudal is an example of “non-noble agricultural enterprises that were larger than a farm and smaller than an estate” (p. 15). So when Olsen transcribes dance music from north-west Sjælland, it is not to document musical life in the region, but because this music was part of the musical inventory of the family and of Torpelund.

But it was not just folk dance music that was pursued there. The title of the book – meaning “The Symphony of Fate and the Crocodile Polka” – reveals the aesthetic span of Olsen’s musical project: “The Crocodile Polka” is the title of a dance tune that was composed for a wedding in the family, and “The Symphony of Fate” is a name given to Beethoven’s fifth symphony in C minor, reckoned by many as the zenith of western art music. And it is precisely this combination of folk dance music and entertainment with the highest European culture that characterizes musical life at Torpelund.

An interesting appendix to the book is Olsen’s table of “Music played at Torpelund or elsewhere in ‘our circle’ 1915–40” (pp. 223–227). Dance music is not included here, but all the major works of well-known composers. And the table shows that Beethoven dominated, with 15 works, followed by Mozart (11), Glass (10), Schubert (9), Chopin (8), Bach (7), Grieg (5), and Schumann (5). This list shows that the favourites were composers who were numbered among the greatest, “the classics”. The excep-

tion is the (late) romantic composer Louis Glass (1864–1936), because he was a friend of the family. The rule was: “One did not play newly composed contemporary music” (p. 123).

The popular music of the day, such as hits, ragtime, and jazz, was also banned. Koudal writes: “His total rejection of this dance music was grounded in a fear of the depravity that other races’ culture, in his opinion, could entail” (p. 185). Olsen’s preference for, on the one hand, *classical* music, and on the other, *old* dance music, was an expression of his scepticism of modernity and his worry about cultural decay.

Koudal sums up the musical culture at Torpelund in three concepts: “Conservatism, privacy, and exclusivity” (p. 211). This “privacy and exclusivity” meant that only invited guests could take part in musical life at Torpelund, that is, the family, selected farm workers, and friends/acquaintance of the family who went under the designation “our circle”. In other words, there were never any public concerts or dance events. Nevertheless, Koudal stresses that “everyone in the Torpelund circle *participates* in the musicking to a high degree and they acknowledge each other as being equally entitled” (p. 204). The environment was private and exclusive in the sense that there was a sharp dividing line between being included or not. But once a person had been brought in out of the cold, it was a community that crossed generation boundaries, where amateurs could play alongside professionals. Musical life at Torpelund thus had an educational function by socializing the participants in what was perceived as a *high-grade* culture – whether this was local or European. Or, as Koudal so precisely puts it: “The musical soirées also *created* the past” (p. 209). This can be interpreted as social constructivism, but at the same time it shows that conservatism (in a broad sense) is something that was maintained and revived at the time.

Koudal’s presentation has copious

quotations from archival material, and is richly illustrated, chiefly with photographs. There is little musical notation, however, but that is not necessary in this type of musical scholarship. Koudal mostly avoids unnecessary academic jargon in the text, and the book can therefore be read by a general audience with an interest in music and cultural history. But Koudal’s notes are detailed, following the highest academic standards.

As regards the use of theoretical perspectives, Koudal has chosen to concentrate most of this in the last two chapters of the book. Readers who are familiar with Tia DeNora, Lars Liliestam, Ruth Finnegan, or Alan P. Merriam will no doubt notice the influence of these scholars when reading Koudal’s descriptions and interpretations. But a great deal of the theoretical discussion could well have been integrated more throughout the presentation.

It is odd that a piece of research in which diaries are such a central part of the source material does not include more theoretical problematization of self-presentation in literature. The same applies to theory about civilizing processes and mechanisms of social distinction. In a Nordic content the ethnologists Jonas Frykman and Orvar Löfgren are pioneers in this field, and in international terms it is difficult to avoid the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu.

This book is nevertheless a very good example of how stimulating the combination of rich archival material and different theoretical approaches can be for cultural studies. The book should be an inspiration particularly for students and researchers interested in interpreting material on musical history in a perspective that is broader and nuanced than simply considering “the man and the work”.

*Sigbjørn Apeland
Bergen, Norway*

Conflicts over Folklore Collections

Eirik Kristoffersen: Kampen om folke-minnesamlingen. Da folkeminnene ble et forskningsfelt og folket krevde dem tilbake. Scandinavian Academic Press, Oslo 2017. 240 pp. Ill.

This book deals with three still active institutions with “Norwegian” and “folk” in their names. These are *Norsk Folkemuseum*, *Norsk Folkeminnesamling* and *Norsk folkeminnelag*, which were founded about a hundred years ago, partly as a way to boost the citizens’ national sentiment. Among those who wanted to strengthen the nation, opinions differed between advocates of centralization and proponents of decentralization, and this generated bitter conflict on the personal level as well. The national was of great significance for liberation from the Danish heritage, but above all from the union with Sweden.

The Nordic Museum in Stockholm saw it as its task to describe folk life in both Sweden and Norway, which irritated nationalist circles in Norway. A Norwegian open-air museum was established on the model of Skansen. The creation of a Norwegian Folk Museum was not uncontroversial. The right wing in Norway wished to uphold the union with Sweden. The question of who represented the people was not resolved, and the centralization of Norway’s history and culture in institutions in Kristiania (Oslo) was problematic for many strata in society.

The antagonisms were exposed in connection with the publication of folk-songs and folklore. *Samlaget for norske Dialekter og Folketraditioner*, an association for preserving Norwegian dialects and folk traditions, was founded in 1881. It was short-lived, but a new folklore association, *Norsk folkeminnelag*, was established in 1920. All the important actors in collecting Norwegian folklore were involved in these two associations.

Norsk folkeminnelag had as its aim to publish works for a general readership, presenting the oral traditions that had

been collected since the start of the nineteenth century. *Norsk Folkeminnesamling* (NFS), founded in 1914, was a public archive, but the records were in practice not accessible to the public.

The publication of folk music was complicated by copyright disputes. Much of the material had been collected by private persons. The conflicts were propagated between those who worked with the editing of the material.

Rikard Berge (1881–1969, elementary school teacher, homesteader, museum director, and folklorist) was married to Johanna Bugge, daughter of the deceased linguist and researcher Sophus Bugge (1833–1907). Berge owned part of his father-in-law’s collections. The University of Oslo thought that Bugge’s material ought to go to *Norsk Folkeminnesamling*. Berge was opposed to the idea of assembling all the material in a central institution for the elite in Oslo and planned instead for county and local collections. A folklore collector should be in close contact with the people, a contact that he said was lacking in Knut Liestøl (1881–1952, professor of Norwegian folklore, who founded *Norsk Folkeminnesamling* in 1914).

As a consequence of the differences of opinion, the people involved sought actively to thwart each other. For example, Rikard Berge borrowed Bugge’s material which was archived in the manuscript department at the University of Oslo and sent it to Copenhagen. Moltke Moe (1859–1913, professor of Norwegian vernacular language and folk tradition) engaged a lawyer and had the material sent back to Oslo and had Berge’s name removed from the contract for the publication of the collections. However, Knut Liestøl, who represented *Folkeminnesamlingen*, was not satisfied with the contract as regards the public material.

After several attempts to arrive at a joint agreement on the accessibility of the folksong material, the Ministry of Education finally regulated the agree-

ment between Berge and Liestøl by setting up a Folksong Committee with an advisory and editorial function. Berge was to gain access to Moltke Moe's scholarly work, but Berge was given the right to publish Sophus Bugge's material, which did not become state property until after Berge's death in 1969. None of those involved lived to see the publication of the Norwegian folksongs and ballads.

Finland had made most progress, but Denmark and Sweden were also ahead of Norway in founding institutions with responsibility for collecting and researching folklore. Liestøl emphasized that the work should be scholarly, but some people criticized him for his condescending attitude to the folklore collectors. The categorization of Norwegian folklore according to international perspectives, in terms of types and migratory paths, was unknown and irrelevant to the local collectors. Liestøl was worried that private collectors could be reluctant to let others study the material. A legal obligation to submit folklore material to a state archive would protect against harm and make it generally available.

The first folklore collectors had concentrated on the traditions in which they themselves were most interested, which led to disparate collections. The first guide to collectors, which came into frequent use in Norway, was in Swedish, *Folkminnena och deras insamling – råd och anvisningar* by Carl Wilhelm von Sydow, published in 1915. Norwegian counterparts appeared two years later. One of them was written by Reidar Th. Christiansen (1886–1971), archivist at *Norsk Folkeminnesamling* and professor of folklore), and the other by Tov Flatin (1878–1945, teacher, local historian, folklore collector, left-wing politician). A comparison of the two Norwegian guides shows that Christiansen had an academic definition of research on folklore. Flatin had a broader definition, aimed at collectors with a local perspective.

What was to be counted as folklore

was uncertain, but it often included folk music, dialects, and place names. In the nineteenth century historians began to take an interest in local history, regarding that and folklore as a unit. In 1913 a committee was founded for local history, *Den norske historiske forening, Landskomitéen for lokalhistorie*. It was run by academically trained historians with links to international research settings.

Berge tried to form an association of all local historians as a counter to the committee. At a meeting in Lillehammer in 1919 it was decided to found a league of local folklore collectors, *Landslaget for folkeminnesamlarar*, to counterbalance *Norsk Folkeminnesamling*, whose representatives were not invited, nor could they join the new body. *Landslaget for folkeminnesamlarar* was to give financial support to local collectors so that they would not be dependent on state funding. However, not as many people joined the league as the founders had hoped, and its activity dwindled. The movement demonstrated the shared interest and identity, but it brought all researchers on folklife and folklore into bitter conflict.

Berge viewed world history as a struggle between two forces: centralization and decentralization. It was also a class struggle that led to the centralization of culture. Centralization could overturn a whole society and cause world wars. Berge was discontented with the centralization of archival material, which made it difficult for the local population to access it. Berge was in favour of the foundation of more and more local museums. Another problem was that central institutions lacked the ability to protect local cultural monuments in the whole of Norway.

Berge believed that "the local scholar" (*bygdevitskapsmannen*) had the best access to sources and the best knowledge of folklore and local history. For Liestøl the collector was someone with suitable properties who was selected for the task but needed instruction. Collectors did not need to have been

born in the place where they recorded folklore, but they had to be good judges of character.

Berge thought that urbanization, international urban culture, and the emergence of an industrial working class were harmful for society. The Norwegian historian Edvard Bull (1881–1932, professor and foreign minister), on the other hand, believed that the people could build up a new identity with the aid of folklore. The study of folklore was not a local project but a source of the nation's history. The future lay in the development of the working class and the class struggle. Bull was in favour of folklore being managed by a state authority and believed that research should be undertaken by trained historians.

The author of this book, Eirik Kristoffersen, concludes that Rickard Berge was a representative of the *Heimat* idea that is central to identity creation, a sense of community, and the outlook on the nation. The local history and culture movement follows this line of thought. Berge was also a carrier of the Norwegian farmer ideology. The Norwegian Agrarian Party created a dichotomy of evil and good. Farmers were good because they lived off the land, whereas other social classes and town dwellers were parasites.

The conflict over the accessibility of Norwegian folklore material was resolved in a way that might make us laugh today: what was then a radical a suggestion, put forward by some people, was that the records could be copied. Nowadays the technology for that has been developed and is easily available.

The opposition between folk/local and amateur/academic researchers is interesting to study because folklore is so closely associated with the common folk. Certain actors insisted that one had to be a carrier of the folk tradition oneself to be able to do research on it. Despite accusations that some people lacked the right background and atti-

tude, all the prominent folklore scholars considered by Eirik Kristoffersen had grown up on ancestral farms in Norway. It is also interesting to gain insight into how the folklore was used to create an independent Norwegian nation with a shared national sentiment. At the same time, it is rather unfortunate that it generated controversies between people who wished to rescue and study the folk traditions. Yet I get the feeling that the conflicts were pursued by just a few individuals, and that many collectors and people with an interest in cultural history took no part in the disputes and simply continued their research on folklore and folklife on their own and together with other local stakeholders. Perhaps that is why *Landslaget for folkeminnesamlarar* did not gain the support its founders had hoped for. The opposition between central control and local interests can also be found in Swedish cultural heritage management in the period described in this book. Research has shown that those who completed the Swedish folklore archives' questionnaires later said that they had both local and national reasons as well as personal grounds for their efforts. Some people wanted to show the good sides of the older folk culture, while others wanted to tell of how difficult it was to live in meagre circumstances in a class society.

Göran Sjögård
Lund, Sweden

Fieldwork into Fandom

Jakob Löfgren: ...And Death proclaimed 'Happy Hogswatch to all and to all a Good Night.' Intertext and Folklore in Discworld-Fandom. Åbo Akademi University 2018. 96 pp + 67 pp. Ill. Diss.

Although fandom studies have become more popular in recent years within folkloristics and ethnology,

there have not been many ethnographic studies on fandom as such. Jakob Löfgren's thesis is a well needed and important work.

Jakob Löfgren's thesis concerns the folklore of Discworld fandom as expressed in the annual celebration of Hogswatch in Wincanton, England. The book is based on extensive fieldwork and Löfgren approaches his material and research subject mainly through intertextuality. The celebration of Hogswatch in Wincanton is based on the Discworld novels written by Terry Pratchett. Hogswatch is a Christmas-like holiday and celebration and the details of this celebration are described in many of Pratchett's Discworld books. These descriptions in turn form the basis of the Hogswatch celebrations in Wincanton, which is the main research subject of Löfgren's book. Terry Pratchett uses a lot of intertextual reference in his books, for example, Hogswatch has different intertextual connections to folklore and to different Christmas traditions. The Hogswatch celebrations in Wincanton also have several intertextual connections with Pratchett's books. It is these different levels of intertextuality that form the basic research questions in Löfgren's book which are "How is intertext used within fandom?" and "In which manner can the field of fandom be studied with-in folkloristics?". In addition to these main research questions, Löfgren mentions that his thesis could also be partly read as an investigation of ethnographic field methodology.

Jakob Löfgren's book is an article thesis and it consists of introductory or summary chapters and four articles concerning various aspects of intertext, intertextual practice, and various 'goings-on' of fandom. In the introductory chapters, Löfgren introduces his research subject and his research questions. He also writes a short introduction about Terry Pratchett and the Discworld and the different places and

places of Discworld. Löfgren then introduces his five fieldwork trips, methodological and theoretical contextualization, previous studies in fandom and intertextual studies as well as his preferred fieldwork method participant observation and the three main theoretical notions folklore, fandom and intertextuality. After this Löfgren presents his articles before presenting the conclusions of his research. The four articles are compiled at the end after the bibliography.

Because Löfgren mentions that his book could partly be read as an investigation of ethnographic field methodology and because the articles are based on the fieldwork, the fieldwork should be examined a little closer. The five fieldwork trips to Wincanton were made between 2010 and 2014. The fieldwork was done by approaching the field with a key concept. Most of these key concepts were also utilized in the articles. The key concepts were intertextuality, trade, costuming, carnivalism and gender and change. Out of these themes or key concepts, gender is not researched in the articles. This is explained in the book by the author's lack of expertise in the field of gender studies and I applaud the author for acknowledging his own shortcomings. Then again, one theme or key concept that is not mentioned as such in the fieldwork is used in one of the articles and that is narratives and the use of staged narratives. This is of course understandable and a part of doing fieldwork, what the researcher thought beforehand to be of interest was replaced by something he came upon during the fieldtrip.

The main tool for Löfgren's fieldwork was participatory observation, by taking notes and by conducting a set of informal talks as well as by recording performances and by taking pictures. One traditional way of doing ethnographic fieldwork is missing from Löfgren's work and that is proper interviews with key informants and/or active

members. Löfgren acknowledges this and explains it to be a "...conscious choice due to the situation studied being a celebration". While this is understandable, the interviews could have been made before or after the celebration. Whether or not this would have brought any new or important information is however debatable, so Löfgren's choice is understandable and justified. In addition, Löfgren writes that his fieldwork has "...yielded a lot of material in the form of field reports, photos, printworks (such as tickets and program sheets) and audio recordings". As to the actual amount and content of this material, it could have been described in more detail. The source material is critically reviewed and credited reliably through correct quotes and references and Löfgren discusses with the source material especially when contemplating his own research viewpoint and positioning with the two dominant yet opposing schools of thought within fandom studies (the sociopsychologist school and the social constructivist school). Löfgren also used netnography as a research tool although not very extensively. The pages concerning the fieldwork are where the thesis is at its strongest. Unfortunately, it is also here that the major point of critique is to be found. Löfgren describes his own position to the field and his immersion into the field.

Löfgren chose to participate in the celebrations as much as possible and saw his role as being both a fan and a researcher and thus abandoning the more traditional view of a researcher being a more detached observer. Löfgren describes his immersion to the field by utilizing terms from game studies, namely different levels of immersion. Löfgren quotes an article called "Measuring Player Immersion in the Computer Game Narrative" where the levels of immersion are described through six terms: curiosity, concentration, comprehension, control, challenge and empathy. Löfgren uses these

six terms in describing his fieldwork and immersion into the field that he is researching. He also states that these terms could be made into a set of questions aiding in the description of ethnographic fieldwork, but unfortunately, he does not develop this idea further in his thesis. A chart of "Levels of immersion within ethnographic fieldwork" would have been a tremendous help for other researchers to use in their work. As such, Löfgren's thesis can be used in this way already, but a separate chart would have been great. I am hopeful that he will do that in the future in an article or a book.

Although the immersion into the field and Löfgren's own position towards it are one of the best and strongest parts of the book scholarly, they are unfortunately also the point of the biggest critique. Although Löfgren describes the positive sides of immersing oneself into the field one is researching, he overlooks the negative sides quite casually. It has been argued that immersing oneself too deep in to the field can cause the researcher to become blind to some negative aspects of the research subject. If the researcher gets too close, it can be hard to criticize or even see any negative aspects of the research subject, in other words it can be hard to criticize your own tribe. This is specially the case within fandom studies where the researcher usually is a fan also, like in this case for example. Such things as gender issues, racism, bigotry, homophobia and misogyny for example can become hard to notice or bring forward if the researcher is too immersed with a group he or she is researching. There is also the danger of the researcher to misuse his or her position as an insider. I am by no means suggesting that this is the case with Löfgren's work, in fact I truly believe that it is not the case, but the challenges that Löfgren describes concerning the immersion into the field seem quite superficial. Also, because Löfgren writes that his thesis could partly be read as an investigation

of ethnographic field methodology and even offering “new set of theoretical and methodological approaches” (p. 86) for fandom studies, this critique and the possible negative sides to immersing oneself into the field, should have been more thoroughly investigated and handled in the book.

In an article thesis, it is very hard to avoid repetition. Although there is some overlapping ideas and repetition in the articles in this book, they do approach the subject, namely the intertextuality in the Hogswatch celebration in Wincanton, in different ways. The first article *Death and a Pickled Onion – The construction of fan culture and fan identity in the Hogswatch celebration of Wincanton* (Gramarye 3 2013) is an analysis of the intertextual and contextual construction of fandom in the celebration in Wincanton. The article shows how by using the idea of re-situation process by Robert de Caro and Rosan Augusta Jordan, folklore can be re-situated not only from socio-cultural context to a literary one, but also from a literary context to a socio-cultural context. The second article, “*Thank you so much for keeping all of us in the Emporium gainfully employed*” – *The Relationship between Fan and Merchant in the Wincanton Hogswatch Celebration* (Fafnir 2:3 2015) deals with intertextually linked trade where intertext is used to sell merchandise. Löfgren argues that because the merchants and the visiting fans share a mutual understanding of the fandom in question, the economic interaction can be seen as a form of gift exchange based on loyalty. While this might indeed be true, one could also argue that all small businesses that want to hold on to their clientele might operate in a similar way and thus this would not be exclusive to fandom-based business like in Wincanton. Nevertheless, the article offers a good example of both how intertextuality is used in trade and

how fandom based trade can be studied through intertextuality. The third article, *‘It’s a Good Job Nobody Mentioned Hedgehogs’: The Use of Narratives in Discworld Fandom* (Folklore 128 March 2017) deals with the use of narratives, especially staged narratives in the celebration. Löfgren uses the notion of “qualia” to show how the feel or feeling of Discworld is re-situated from the novel to the celebrations using staged narratives. The fourth article “*The scythe is the bit that I actually made*” – *Folk art as expressions of fandom* is published in this book and it deals with material expressions of fandom. Löfgren analyses the material manifestations of fandom culture (cosplay, needlework, graffiti) through the concept of folk art.

Löfgren concludes that the celebration of Hogswatch in Wincanton is intertextual through and through. The celebration is based in and draws upon intertextual common sense and contextual knowledge, the trade is based in and the staged narratives draw upon intertextual common sense, and the folk art of fandom follows intertextual common sense. Löfgren argues that intertext permeates fandom culture and by using intertext, the researcher can explore and investigate fandom expressions. Although Löfgren’s thesis is about Hogswatch in Wincanton and specifically about fandom connected to Terry Pratchett’s books, the results can be used in other fandom studies. Overall, Löfgren’s work is an excellent ethnographic and folkloric research in to fandom and fandom studies as well as folklore studies will surely benefit from this work tremendously. The thesis works as a good example on how to do fieldwork within fandom and anyone who has an interest in fandom studies should definitely read this book.

*Tuomas Hovi
Turku, Finland*

Indigenous Groups versus Mining Companies

Kristina Sehlin MacNeil: Extractive Violence on Indigenous Country. Sami and Aboriginal Views on Conflicts and Power Relations with Extractive Industries. Faculty of Arts, Centre for Sami Research. Umeå University 2017. 53 pp. Diss.

In her thesis, Kristina Sehlin MacNeil explores situations of conflict and asymmetrical power relations between Indigenous groups and mining companies in Sweden and Australia. More specifically, the thesis draws on the situation for two groups of indigenous people: Laevas čearru in northern Sweden and Adnyamathanha Traditional Owners in South Australia. Both communities describe various forms of violence at the hand of extractive industries that threatens their livelihoods and cultures. Sehlin MacNeil argues that in order to confront these types of assaults against Indigenous peoples and their country and to promote processes of conflict transformation, concepts that include Indigenous people's perspectives on violence and power relations must be taken into account.

Sehlin MacNeil's thesis is based on four papers. The first one, "Shafted: A Case of Cultural and Structural Violence in the Power Relations between a Sami Community and a Mining Company in Northern Sweden" (2015) is published in *Ethnologia Scandinavica*. The paper revolves around how cultural and structural violence are manifested in the power relations between Laevas čearru and the Swedish government-owned mining company LKAB. "On Equal Terms? Exploring Traditional Owners' Views Regarding Radioactive Waste Dumps on Adnyamathanha Country" (2016) is published in the *Journal of Australian Indigenous Issues* and is centred on a case study involving Adnyamathanha people's experiences regarding proposed radioac-

tive waste repositories on their traditional land. In the paper, Sehlin MacNeil further explores the ways in which cultural and structural violence are expressed in the power relations between Adnyamathanha Traditional Owners and the Australian and South Australian governments. Sehlin MacNeil's third paper, "Let's Name It: Identifying Cultural, Structural and Extractive Violence in Indigenous and Extractive Industry Relations" is a two-case study that approaches the results from papers 1 and 2 and compares the situations for Laevas čearru in Northern Sweden and Adnyamathanha Traditional Owners in South Australia. In the paper, Sehlin MacNeil puts forward the term extractive violence. Extractive violence, according to Sehlin MacNeil, is a term that illuminates how extractivism affects Indigenous peoples negatively and how this is often ignored or trivialized. In the fourth and last paper of the thesis, "Indigenous Research across Continents: A Comparison of Ethically and Culturally Sound Approaches to Research in Australia and Sweden" (2015), Sehlin MacNeil together with Jillian Marsh reflect on some of the challenges within Indigenous research. The paper throws light on the ethical and methodological framework underpinning Sehlin MacNeil's thesis and puts particular weight on articulating a Decolonizing Standpoint. According to the authors, a Decolonising Standpoint places responsibility on Indigenous as well as non-Indigenous researchers engaged in Indigenous research to decolonize the research process.

The key theoretical basis for Sehlin MacNeil's analyses of asymmetrical power relations between Indigenous communities and extractive industries is the Norwegian peace researcher Johan Galtung's violence triangle. Galtung's model includes structural violence (unequal advantages and structures), cultural violence (those aspects of culture that can be used to justify or legitimize

direct or structural violence) and direct violence (visible violence; both physical and verbal assaults and threats). In Sehlin MacNeil's thesis direct violence is replaced by extractive violence (violence on people, animals and land caused by extractivism) to allow for the type of violence that the Laevas and the Adnyamathanha experience when their lands are destroyed by extractive industries, industrial proponents, and governments. The concept of extractive violence is both interesting and relevant, but only one of Sehlin MacNeil's papers targets the term. A further elaboration of extractive violence would thus have been desirable.

Sehlin MacNeil describes her methodological approach as *yarning*, which is referred to both as a form of interview method and a narrative method. It is not clear how yarning differs from the qualitative research interview that precisely aims to privilege the voices of the research participants and where a sharing of knowledge and experiences is in focus. The direct quotations open for insight into the research participants' thoughts and experiences, but preferably the author's own voice; her questions and response to the interviewees could have been added for a better contextualization of the yarning sessions.

In her case study on the relation between the Laevas community and LKAB, only two of the community members' narratives are approached in the analysis. It can be questioned if these people's perspectives are representative of the whole Laevas community. The paper could have benefited from a broader range of interviewees' perspectives on the violence caused by extractive industries on their lands, societies, livelihoods and cultures.

Despite these minor objections, Sehlin MacNeil's thesis, is a well-written and important contribution to the subject of ethnology by introducing an internationally comparative perspective ex-

plored through the use of Indigenous methodologies.

*Trude Fonneland
Tromsø, Norway*

Beliefs Associated with Witchcraft Trials

Göran Malmstedt: En förtrollad värld. Förmoderna föreställningar och bohusslänska trolldomsprocesser 1669–1672. Nordic Academic Press, Lund 2018. 237 pp.

Many historians and folklorists have taken a keen interest in the seventeenth-century witchcraft trials. The latest to do so is the Gothenburg historian Göran Malmstedt with this book "A Bewitched World". The author concentrates on the witchcraft trials held in the western Swedish province of Bohuslän in the years 1669–1672. This province had been acquired by Sweden not long before, in 1658, having formerly belonged to Denmark/Norway. Some Danish laws were still valid in Bohuslän, for instance that torture was permitted in witchcraft cases. Other Swedish witchcraft trials took place in Dalarna, Norrland, and Stockholm at roughly the same time, 1668–1676, and they have been studied by other scholars.

The Bohuslän witchcraft trials were examined a hundred years ago, in 1918, by the church historian Emanuel Linderholm in Uppsala. Here Malmstedt has been able to find important background data on the course of the trials. He has also benefited from an edition published in 1970 by the local historian Lars Manfred Svennungsson of the records of the Bohuslän trials. In addition to this, the author himself has consulted detailed investigation records and appeal court records containing both questions and answers. The names of the accused are stated throughout, but the interrogators

remain anonymous. Besides the jurists in the court, clergymen also played a part in the inquiries.

The interrogation methods included torture and ordeals by water. In the latter case the suspect's hands and feet were tied with a rope that ran crosswise over the chest and then the person was thrown in the water. If he or she floated it was believed to be due to help from the devil. According to the general perception in the church, women who practised witchcraft were in a pact with the devil, which entailed a conspiracy against Christianity. And it was a confession of a pact with the devil that the court sought to extract through the severe interrogation methods. The torture could involve preventing the accused from sleeping for one or more nights, and in certain cases being denied food.

In several cases the court passed a death sentence, although this required a confession on the part of the accused. All judgements were referred to the court of appeal, where the judgement of the lower court was usually approved. Those accused and sentenced were mostly women, but there were also some men. Of the total 63 people accused (57 women and 6 men) in Bohuslän, 28 were executed. In addition, at least ten died in prison or committed suicide before judgement was passed. The accused were mostly middle-aged or older people.

Malmstedt's study differs from Linderholm's in that he focuses on the conceptions and beliefs that can be detected in those who led the interrogations and in the accused. Questions about the outlook on magic, dreams, the power of words, and ideas about the devil are important in the author's analysis. Harmful magic was called *förgörning* 'destruction' and was common according to folk belief. This meant that illness, accidents, or in certain cases death affected humans and animals in the immediate surroundings. On the other hand, pacts with

the devil were not mentioned in accusations put forward by the local community. In the few witness statements about the devil in the interrogation records, it is obvious that his power was considered limited compared to what was believed by the church. This agrees with what has later been found in folkloristic studies based on folklore collected since the late nineteenth century.

One chapter in the book deals with the questions asked about dreams and how they could be linked to supernatural experiences. Several of the accused told of their own dreams. The court regarded such dreams as reality and as evidence that contacts with the devil had occurred. This in turn served as a basis for the judgement.

A characteristic feature of those versed in witchcraft was that they were believed to be able to change shape, turning into cats, dogs, and certain birds. The raven, the crow, and the magpie were associated in folk tradition with witchcraft and the devil. Judgements mentioned that accused persons had turned themselves into animals, which suggests that both local courts and the appeals court believed that this did happen.

Ideas about powerful emotions were also attached to those accused of witchcraft. This could include anger and envy, which folk belief could ascribe to harmful magical power. This led to palpable anxiety among other people, as is clear from the testimony presented to the court.

That magical power was also ascribed to words is noticeable from witness statements to the effect that the accused had uttered curses. Verbal threats were commonly believed to be linked to harmful magic, presaging misfortunes. The attitude of the church was that verbal threats were associated with the devil, but according to Malmstedt there is no evidence that this outlook had any impact on popular conceptions.

Healing or protective formulae were

called *signelser*. These too were regarded as witchcraft by the church. Some of the accused said that they had performed *signelser* using special formulae which ended with them naming the holy trinity. This, however, was not a mitigating circumstance in the eyes of the court.

Physical matter and concrete objects were believed to have the ability to contain supernatural power. They could thus be used to perform witchcraft through black magic. These things were often bundles and bags known as *trollklutar*, with varied contents such as cemetery soil, hair, and nails. The court believed in such narratives and could cite evidence of *trollklutar* as a basis for the verdict.

The narratives of the accused sometimes name God, who was perceived both as the strict and just judge and as the omniscient being who could give forgiveness after death. Some of the accused warned the people sitting in the court that they would have to answer to God after their death for their actions in the investigations and for their judicial decisions.

Finally: Malmstedt's study is a good example of how new knowledge can be gained when a scholar applies new perspectives, in this case the conceptual world, to a previously studied research field and its source material. It is not easy to get at information about folk conceptions before the time when folklore collection began; it is easier to find evidence for the elite's beliefs, the conceptual world of the representatives of justice and the church taking part in the inquiries. Malmstedt's most important thesis concerns the striking difference between folk perceptions and the outlook of the elite as regards the devil's influence and power.

The book is written as popular scholarship and simultaneously analytically interesting. There are numerous references to international literature on witchcraft. It may be painful for the reader to learn of the repulsive interrogation meth-

ods. It appears to have been important for the court to extract a confession at any price. It can also be beneficial for people in our time to read about horrifying aspects of history and not just positive and glorifying accounts. The book can be recommended to all those who want to know more about a problematic phase of Swedish history. It is also a major contribution to women's history.

Anders Gustavsson
*Oslo University, Norway/
Henån, Sweden*

The Ideas behind Questionnaires

Åmund Norum Resløyken: "Ein lut av det nære levande livet". Tradisjon, tradisjonselementer og tradisjonsforskere. En studie av spørrelisteserien Ord och sed 1934–1947. Det humanistiske fakultet, Universitetet i Oslo, Oslo 2018. 202 pp. Ill. Diss.

Åmund Norum Resløyken has presented a doctoral dissertation in cultural history at the University of Oslo. It is a history of a discipline, the archive sector. It leans slightly towards intellectual history in that the focus is on the ideas behind the creation of the questionnaires that have been distributed by the archive. The questionnaires studied here were sent annually to informants in the years 1934–1947. They were part of a series of questionnaires entitled *Word and Custom*. The groundwork was done by Nils Lid, who became the first professor of ethnology in Oslo in 1940. He was the author of the majority of the questionnaires concerning Norwegian folk traditions, while others were compiled by the folklorists Svale Solheim and Kjell Bondevik, the ethnologist Rigmor Frimannslund, and the physician Ingjald Reichborn-Kjennerud.

Resløyken has chosen to analyse one third of the total 141 *Word and Custom* questionnaires. He wants to shed light

on the ideas that impelled the questionnaire authors. How did they perceive folk traditions? The questionnaires “reify” different elements such as artefacts, customs, words and expressions, beliefs, and narratives. Customs and ritual acts were considered older than myths and legends. They were therefore interesting to study. It was especially important to ask about beliefs in supernatural beings, since they could show long continuity back to the saga age. Lid had a particular interest in magic and witchcraft. The words and expressions that were to be collected could give information about the occurrence of magical beliefs.

Resløkken calls the different cultural elements “objects of tradition”, which in turn communicate traditions. He writes: “In this dissertation it is this selection and construction of the objects of tradition that I want to examine” (p. 5). The objects of tradition are said to have been constructed by the questionnaire authors on the basis of theories of culture that prevailed in contemporary research. The author writes: “I argue that *Word and Custom* articulated folk culture as talk *about* the people rather than *from* the people”. The people are consistently referred to in the third person. In line with this, the author does not investigate the responses to the questionnaires that were sent to the archives. In that respect he differs from the studies of questionnaires undertaken by the Swedish ethnologists Agneta Lilja and Fredrik Skott.

The ethnographer Wilhelm Mannhardt is said to have been important for Lid with his questionnaire collections during the nineteenth century. These concerned customs in several European countries, including Norway. He wanted to get at what the customs could say about Indo-European beliefs. Theories of fertility, evolution, and historical continuity were prominent.

Another source of inspiration for Scandinavian folkloristics in the 1920s and 1930s was James George Frazer’s

book *The Golden Bough*. It is based on a collection of ethnographic material from the whole world. According to Lid, national material collected in Norway had to be put in relation to international research likewise based on collected material.

The analytical tools used by Resløkken consist of current anthropological research, in particular Marisol de la Cadena’s book *Earth Beings*. His use of the term actants, the entities acting in a network, comes from actor-network theory (ANT). The author equates actants with objects of tradition but also with actors.

In his empirical analysis of the questionnaire texts the author first devotes a chapter to material objects of tradition, then to customs, and finally to supernatural beings in folk belief as the primary elements. In the material sector, building practices played an important part. This also includes rituals and folk beliefs associated with house construction. The questionnaires asked for very detailed information about what supernatural beings were believed to look like. This reminds me of how the Western Swedish folklife painter Carl Gustaf Bernhardson (1915–1998) visualized these beings in his art, based on what he himself had experienced and heard tell.

Resløkken’s dissertation is stringently executed. The running theme is easy to follow, but the detailed and – in places – complex reasoning makes the dissertation heavy reading. It is noticeable that the author has derived inspiration from international anthropology. I would have liked to see more comparisons with comparable Nordic studies about the collection of material for ethnological and folkloristic archives. Here I am thinking especially of the dissertations by Agneta Lilja and Fredrik Skott mentioned above. They are only briefly named in the author’s introduction.

Anders Gustavsson
*Oslo University, Norway/
Henån, Sweden*

Memoirs of Meetings

Lutz Röhrich: *Begegnungen. Erinnerungen an meinen Kollegen- und Freundeskreis. Mit biobibliographischen Anmerkungen und einem Gesamtverzeichnis der Publikationen Röhrichs.* Hrsg. von Wolfgang Mieder, Siegfried Neumann, Christoph Schmitt, Sabine Wiencker-Piepho. Waxmann, Münster & New York 2016. 224 pp. Ill.

When Lutz Röhrich passed away in 2006, at the age of 84, he left behind him an impressive body of folkloristic writings, especially on proverbs, folktales, legends, folksongs and folk art. During the last years of his life he was totally blind. He then hired as his assistant one of his former students, Johanna Ziemann, and with her help he was able to deliver his last contributions to the *Enzyklopädie des Märchens*. She also wrote down, from Röhrich's dictation, some forty anecdotic recollections of teachers, colleagues and students whom he had met during his long career, the last one in the series being Johanna Ziemann herself, who received his thanks for fruitful cooperation.

From the outset these recollections arose without any thought of publication. Röhrich told his assistant what he remembered and did not care about years or other details. However, several readers of the manuscript expressed the opinion that it had a wider interest. The work of the four editors has been restricted to the removal of some few sharp wordings which could have caused hurt feelings and the addition of a footnote apparatus. The book can be seen as a complement to *Freundschaft ist des Lebens Salz* (English edition: *Best of All Possible Friends*), containing the correspondence during three and a half decades between Lutz Röhrich and his younger colleague and close friend, Wolfgang Mieder. The latter was born in Germany but came already as a teenager to the USA, where he became a

leading authority on proverbs. Their correspondence is not only of great interest to paremiologists but also a beautiful token of friendship.

My own acquaintance with Lutz Röhrich was initiated at a congress in Jerusalem in 1969, where we shared a room at the university campus. I was surprised to see him unfastening an artificial leg and jumping on one leg to the washbasin. He had been only twenty years of age when in 1942 he was commanded to the Eastern Front and was seriously injured. I had previously read his *Märchen und Wirklichkeit*, which had given me totally new insights into how to look at folktales. His great personal charm, cheerful mood and vast learning all made him an admired source of inspiration, both as a folklorist and fellowman.

Lutz Röhrich played, together with Hermann Bausinger, a leading role when German folklore scholarship liberated itself from the Nazi yoke and was incorporated into an international folkloristic network. They both shared a culture-historical perspective on the source material with a special focus on interpretation, but older sources gained more place in Röhrich's research than in that of Bausinger, who primarily focused on folklore of our own time. This perspective, however, was not unfamiliar to Röhrich; his authoritative study *Der Witz: Figuren, Formen, Funktionen* (1977) provides ample evidence.

The recollections in *Begegnungen* make up an unfinished project which would certainly have been more extensive if Röhrich had lived longer; an expected portrait that is missing is that of Hermann Bausinger. One also notices that no Nordic colleagues are portrayed, in spite of the fact that Röhrich had close contacts with Reimund Kvideland and other Nordic scholars. His earliest teachers were Germanists. The first folklorist to influence him more deeply was John Meier, the founder of Deutsches Volksliedarchiv in Freiburg. Röhrich was

nineteen years old when he visited him for the first time, and he describes him as being a rigorous North German patriarch. He had no money for the journey so he went to Freiburg on bicycle. Later he became Meier's successor as director of the folksong archive.

Among other German-speaking colleagues in the book one finds Will-Erich Peuckert, Max Lüthi and Kurt Ranke. Röhrich gives a sympathetic portrait of the folksong specialist Wolfgang Steinitz, in spite of the fact that they embraced different political ideals. Steinitz was of Jewish descent and a communist, educated as a Fenno-Ugrist. In 1937 he left a position in Leningrad for Sweden and was teaching Hungarian languages at Stockholm University during the years 1943–46, after which he got a professor's chair in East Berlin. His integrity and honesty led to critical remarks about DDR, with less pleasant consequences.

Legendary American folklorists portrayed in the book are Archer Taylor, Stith Thompson and Wayland D. Hand. Among his younger American colleagues Röhrich regarded Alan Dundes as the most gifted one, although his theoretical approaches, structuralism and Freudian psychoanalysis, were different from his own. He felt closer to the outlook of colleagues from the European continent such as Linda Dégh, Giorgios Megas and Isidor Levin.

No less than 65 folklorists wrote their dissertations for Lutz Röhrich. Two of them are portrayed in the book: his first doctoral candidate, the American Donald Ward, creator of an important commented English edition of *Deutsche Sagen* by the Brothers Grimm, and Rolf Wilhelm Brednich, judged by Röhrich to be the most successful of them all and his successor as director of the Deutsches Volksliedarchiv. The book ends with a more than 60 pages long bibliography of Lutz Röhrich's scholarly production. All those who were part of the international folkloristic scene of the

late twentieth century will read his personal memories of colleagues with recognition.

Bengt af Klintberg
Lidingö, Sweden

The Poetics of Kalevalaic Poetry

Jukka Saarinen: Runonlaulun poetiikka. Säe, syntaksi ja parallelismi Arhippa Perttusen runoissa (The poetics of oral poetry. Verse structure, syntax and parallelism in the texts of Arhippa Perttunen). Helsingin yliopisto. Humanistinen tiedekunta, Helsinki 2018. 317 pp. + 5 appendices, total 417 pp. Diss.

Jukka Saarinen's thesis, with its informative title, is, in a way, synthesis of his long-lasting research work. The title also reflects a central aspect, the use of the common poetic language in folk poetry performed by one singer. Arhippa Perttunen is an interesting subject because he is the most famous of singers whom Elias Lönnrot met in Russian Arkhangelsk Karelia (Vuokkiniemi, Viena Karelia) and he has been considered to have been one of the most skilled singers, an iconic tradition bearer. His son Miihkali became known as a singer as well.

In the study of Kalevalaic poetic language Saarinen has a number of well-known precursors: Wolfgang Steinitz, Matti Sadeniemi, Matti Kuusi and Pentti Leino, whose results have given perspective to Saarinen's observations. What is new in Saarinen's research is, first of all, the linguistic analysis of the whole material recorded from Arhippa, as the starting point of the work. The corpus consists of 81 songs and 5,996 lines. Based on his experience of Karelian language and supporting literature, Saarinen has reconstructed the texts in the form in which they probably were performed by Arhippa. This is reasonable because at the beginning of the

nineteenth century collectors of folklore wrote down texts using pen and paper during the performance, and initially very scarce notes were later further reworked, during which the language came closer to Finnish, because linguistic details were of no importance to the collectors. This reconstruction of the language of the songs has been a laborious task, and the corpus of materials thus produced is in the appendix.

Saarinen has a profound knowledge of the folkloristic research relevant to his topic and he engages in a competent discussion with it. Of particular value is the presentation of the composition-in-performance perspective, also known as the Lordian perspective. In the theory of poetics, his important author is Roman Jakobson. The amount of linguistic literature used by Saarinen is not very large but sufficient for the study. In this, the main source is the net version of the descriptive grammar of the Finnish language, *Iso suomen kielioppi*. It describes the use of modern Finnish but is useful also in the study of Karelian poetic language of the nineteenth century.

The thesis consists of six chapters, supplemented by five appendices. In the first chapter, "Individual and tradition", Saarinen describes the topic of the research and the general aims, as well as the structure of the thesis and the main concepts. The introduction also presents the relationship between the individual, text and tradition and the aims of research on text and its process of composition among different schools. The question of the character of the composition process has already been answered in Saarinen's earlier research, and the thesis does not add significant new information on this. The metre and alliteration are discussed in the second chapter devoted to the poetics. These results primarily give a more detailed picture of what has already been outlined in earlier research.

The third chapter exposes more closely the actual subject of the study,

Arhippa Perttunen, by giving fresh and more detailed information about his life and background. In this the author could have noted explicitly the fact which becomes apparent to a careful reader: Arhippa must have learned his poetic tradition from other persons and not from his father whom he lost already as a small boy. The chapter discusses three collecting operations carried out by Elias Lönnrot, Cajan and Castrén with their varying results and presents Arhippa's exact repertoire consisting of epic songs, incantations and lyric songs, and proverbs. It is noteworthy from the point of view of Arhippa's tradition profile that, unlike many other well-known singers, he was not a sage and, apparently, he considered that kind of activity sinful.

The chapter devoted to the study of syntax is the largest in the thesis, which is unusual for a folkloristic work. The linguistic literature used in this chapter is not extensive and the text of the thesis comes sometimes close to a report. Anyway, the study creates a basis for a more comprehensive study of parallelism. Saarinen presents well the earlier research on parallelism and makes critical comments. He also discusses problems in the identification and delineation of parallelism. Saarinen joins the phenomena of parallelism and repetition together in a hierarchic system, making exceptionally good use of the results of the study of Estonian folklore.

In the concluding chapter Saarinen brings together results of the study of poetic register, syntax and its influence on the structures of lines, formula and composition, and Arhippa as a runo singer. The sequence of the chapters forms a fluent presentation, albeit with some unavoidable repetition.

Jukka Saarinen has formulated six main research questions in his thesis. The first two of them, the construction of the language of runo texts and poetic structures, are given a profoundly reasoned answer. The third question, the process of composition of Arhippa's

poems, has partially received an answer in the earlier studies of the author. The thesis brings to this more accuracy without substantial changes: the Lordian theory of composition in performance does not describe particularly well Arhippa's performance of poems with quite stable texts. The question of individual and collective traits in Arhippa's songs receives scant illumination, because a reasoned answer would call for a separate study and because the comparative materials are lacking. The other subject of a relatively superficial comparison is the poetry of Arhippa's son Miihkali, which was recorded forty years later. This theme as well as the singer portrait of Arhippa and his genre system are briefly discussed in the concluding chapter.

Jukka Saarinen's thesis does not bring forth any radically new information; it primarily supplies more profound and reasoned knowledge about Kalevalaic folk poetry in Russian Arkhangelsk Karelia. The work includes several detailed ideas, about how syntax, parallelism and other poetic structures are connected to each other and create meanings in Arhippa's poems.

*Pekka Hakamies
Turku, Finland*

Video Game Play

Jukka Vahlo: In Gameplay: The Invariant Structures and Varieties of the Video Game Gameplay Experience. Faculty of Humanities, School of History, Culture and Arts Studies, Department of Folkloristics. Turun Yliopiston Julkaisuja-Annales Universitatis Turkuensis, University of Turku 2018. 335 pp. 9 appendix pages. Finnish summary. Diss.

As far as I am aware, Jukka Vahlo's dissertation is the first completed in a folkloristics department on the subject of video games. Although the production

of memes and social media has attracted folkloristic attention as part of digital culture, video games have not, probably because they are commercial and do not apparently rely on face-to-face communication. The few published studies of video games available to date from a folkloristic perspective have focused on the use of folk narrative themes and characters in video games rather than the action of playing them as traditional practices. Although research of folk games as (1) historical artifact, (2) medium for narrative and ritual content, and (3) social practice has a long history in folkloristics, the relatively new investigation of video games, as Vahlo acknowledges, primarily has been the domain of communications, media studies, and popular culture studies because of the distinction that folklorists often make between naturalistic folk contexts and the commercial world that supposedly works against tradition. Vahlo makes a strong case for video game play as a tradition displaying continuities with previous forms of social play, and it is this contention that will undoubtedly spark discussion among fellow folklorists and ethnologists. And it deserves attention from other fields associated with game research such as media studies, communications, and cultural studies for its consideration of folkness as an aspect of mediated play.

Vahlo breaks new ground by interpreting how video games are played as a "vernacular" experience comparable to playground, or "social," games. Indeed, he finds a high level of social interaction in the play experience of video games, although they are often perceived exoterically as solo activities. He encourages further research by folklorists on video games as a primary form of play in contemporary society across all ages and genders, Vahlo introduces the concept of "persona narrative" (rather than "personal narrative" as an oral literary genre) consisting of character types associated with storied

actions to represent the distinctive emotional and performative experience of “video game gameplay.” While the game has as an object with rules, to gamers it is part of a broader experience of stylized, structured play that is separable as a “frame” or “magic circle” from everyday life.

Vahlo’s interpretation of the similarity of gameplay experience in analog and digital culture is based on both quantitative and qualitative evidence. He surveyed three populations (N=2,594, N-845, N-1,053), drawn from Finnish and Danish participants in video gameplay. He added to this qualitative data from 32 interviewees on gameplay preferences, gaming memories, and motivations to play. Further, he conducted a manual rhetorical analysis of video game magazines for keywords of the gameplay experience to correlate with the responses of “gamers” in interviews. Self-identifying himself as a gamer, Vahlo also shared from a phenomenological viewpoint his own experiences of gaming and his observations of others at play (“virtual life” of a “gameworld” or VL) in contrast to their “real-life” (RL) pursuits. Vahlo’s goal is to use behavioral evidence, rather than textual evidence as has been the norm in studies of digital culture, to identify cognitive patterns that underlie actions within “play frames” (a concept from the work of psychological anthropologist Gregory Bateson).

The title and content of the dissertation repeat in different forms three keywords of folkloristic research: game, play, and variation. One might therefore assume a generic position for the research as much as folklorists might pick up books with tales, songs, and houses that display variation as a characteristic of their folkness. Indeed, “structures” is part of the title, paired with “experiences.” The term suggests a sociolinguistic basis of performance to construct narratives based on a cognitive grammar that is outside of the awareness of the

performer. It further connotes patterning as an indication of folk practice. These last words, action and practice, are not apparent at the outset, but are significant in the dissertation, along with tradition and phenomenon, to placing it at the forefront of a contemporary paradigm shift in folkloristic history that I have called a “hyper era of convergence” in line with a practice turn in social behavioral theory. That is, rather than look for classifiable “items” in video games as much as one would look for proverbs, beliefs, or legends in literature, or the Internet, and therefore render them as separable objects, Vahlo has proposed that the experience of playing videogames is a *phenomenon*, in the sense of a repeatable event that raises questions about itself, that can be observed to follow tradition and show continuities with unmediated folk games. He refers to it as “vernacular,” but I am not convinced that this is the right term because sociolinguistic usage refers usually to localized expressions that are circumscribed by communities with linguistic, or material, resources from the immediate environment. He appears to use it in the sense of expressiveness on the part of the user rather than material managed by the producer. I understand that he wants to use this term to establish the folkness of the phenomena of video game playing, but I would point him more to behavioral routines, or even forms of “habitus” (a term from Bourdieu for embodied dispositions) arising out of the framing of events as play. Vahlo is concerned not only with “ordinarized” practices within a gamer community but also the kinds of experiences that participants who do not claim the “gamer” identity have when playing video games. Vahlo does not make judgments on whether these experiences are positive or negative, as is common in the literature replete with fears of game addiction and promotion of violence. His work precedes this kind of judgment by calling for an assessment

first of what video game play is, and how it varies and has evolved.

Methodologically, he is careful to not universalize these activities, since he works from a sample of Finnish and Danish participants, and he calls for similar studies in other national contexts to be able to propose more sweeping conclusions on video gameplay environments.

As a study purporting to break down the binary in folkloristics between natural and commercial worlds, Vahlo spends much of the dissertation explaining how video games are, or should be, in the purview of folklorists. The video game market specializing in packaged commodities has been assumed to be a passive experience much in the fashion of network television and popular movies. Vahlo extends the scope of folkloristic inquiry into video game play with attention to the interactive practices of players across different types of games. The key component of their play, he finds, is tradition in the sense of repeatable, variable actions perceived as based on precedent. Although the content of video games might be derived from folk sources such as mythology (i.e., characters and plots), which Vahlo aptly considers “folkloresque” (following the work of Michael Dylan Foster and Jeffrey A. Tolbert), he concentrates on the kind of traditional practice, or enactment as he writes, in video game play that conveys the often-paradoxical message “this is play” or even “this is tradition,” that could be outside the awareness of the participant. Vahlo hypothesizes that there is continuity in the “action procedures” of video games with social games, a view that goes against the frequent assumption of digital culture constituting a break with analog culture, if one accepts that constructed binary which favors the digital turn.

The results and conclusions might be assessed on three related but different levels. One is the impact on folkloristics while another is on game theory and par-

ticularly the understanding of video game experience. A third is on the philosophy of enactivism. On the first level, the “object” of video games he brings into the folkloristic laboratory for scrutiny in comparison to the traditional “social” game and its relationship as folklore to other folk processes of ritual, narrative, and play are critical during this period of folkloristics in which expressive communication might give way to repeatable, variable behavior as folklore. Yet he might be asked to locate the artistic sense of folklore drawing attention to itself in this shift. Is gameplay really performative if it is done without a physical audience? To his credit, his reconsideration of game as “personal narrative” to “persona narrative” is an original idea that revolves around the idea that taking an avatar drives the game, and the player, to continue through his or her storied journey. It raises possible connections to Carl Wilhelm von Sydow’s idea of memorate from individual experience with the supernatural, but in this case the experience is mediated and involves fantasy that is often supernatural in content. It is an idea worth elaborating with the analysis he gives to first-person experience drawing on the “I-me” distinction of philosopher George Herbert Mead and modern ideas of self-development and identity in a post-modern world. In addition to narrative, the role of play behaviors as transitional action, that is to say, ritualizing strategies that often take on the tripartite structure of rites of passage, might be linked to narrative in videogame play or analyzed separately.

On the second level, the identification of invariants in video game gameplay connects to ideas of underlying structures for expressive culture that are outside the awareness of participants. He deals with questions of “fun” as deflecting self-analysis for the gamer which might be cognitively disturbing, but does this not again suggest a psychoanalytic concern for how anxieties from

RL are projected or channeled in VL? His analysis derives from ideas of flow as an ideal activity state and playworlds as immersive environments that allow for distinctive behavior in the social psychological theories of Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Brian Sutton-Smith, respectively, but do these go far enough to uncover “deep play” (from anthropologist Clifford Geertz) as a form of metaphorical social construction? And from a material culture viewpoint, does it make a difference whether one engages a play frame, or can engage a play frame, from a mobile device, or even dedicated gaming device, rather than a computer station, which is the central device in Vahlo’s study?

The application of enactivism to cultural issues that Vahlo proposes could answer the above questions, particularly the adaptive or evolutionary role of play in human lives as people define themselves as individuals. Enactivism appears to be distinguished from enactment-oriented folkloristics by the former’s connection of environmental issues to folkloristic situations in which tradition bearers are forced to embrace a double consciousness of themselves in relation to the way others perceive them as well as what they want for themselves in relation to their heritage and location. These are behaviors that perceived as “praxis” are repeated practices taking on symbolic characteristics form community and constitute traditions. Of particular significance from this idea philosophically as well as folkloristically is the way that traditional knowledge is externalized and perceived within social frames—how it is enacted, recognized, and differentiated—and indeed how play and tradition, despite worries about its obsolescence in a massifying information society become essential adaptive tools of navigating the world. Moreover, Vahlo’s foray in this dissertation into embodied cognition and enaction in mediated play provides a model of predicting events and attitudes in the future.

With rapid changes in digital technology, the platforms of video game play will undoubtedly change, but Vahlo has shown that what makes gaming playful in whatever form it takes will invoke traditional ideas of a lusory attitude resulting in “gameplay” experience.

*Simon J. Bronner,
Harrisburg, PA (USA)*

Catholic Materiality in Post-Reformation Sweden

Terese Zachrisson: Mellan fromhet och vidskepelse. Materialitet och religiositet i det efterreformatöriska Sverige. Göteborgs Universitet, Göteborg 2017. 395 pp. Ill.

In official and ecclesiastical terms, the Reformation was implemented in Sweden during the reign of Gustav Vasa in the sixteenth century. It took time, however, before it was respected and applied among the common people throughout the country. Many features of Catholic piety survived into the seventeenth and even the eighteenth century. The study of this continuity, as well as how changes took place up until the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century, is the main theme of Terese Zachrisson’s doctoral dissertation in history, defended in Gothenburg in 2017. Her chief concern is to trace how material objects from Catholic times, both inside and outside churches, survived after the Reformation and retained a religious function among the common people, even though the leaders of the Reformation church had rejected them. The dissertation does not focus so much on the objects themselves as on people’s relation to them. The author follows the “material turn” in international historical research in recent years. One of the models is Caroline Walker Bynum’s book *Christian Materiality* from 2011.

The author has used the churches' inventories of artefacts, mainly from the diocese of Skara and its 375 parishes. There she has found information about side altars, sculptures, saints' images, and occasionally relics in the churches. In the countryside one can also find sacred wells and prayer crosses. For comparison with the parishes in the diocese of Skara the author has also studied inventories from 566 parishes in different parts of Sweden. The total number of parishes studied is 941. The church's official outlook on the use of these material objects is obvious from the bishops' visitation records. We have few of these from the sixteenth century but they increase in number in the seventeenth century and become even more numerous in the eighteenth century. Beliefs and actions associated with the material objects were sometimes condemned as superstition and idolatry. The objects had no inherent spiritual power; they were dead and powerless.

In addition, the author uses data from the seventeenth-century inquiries into local antiquities, often written by priests, and for the provinces of Skåne and Blekinge she has consulted clergymen's reports. From the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries there are moreover several descriptions of specific parishes and provinces, as well as travelogues. The difficulty has been to obtain information directly from the peasantry and not merely via extant objects and the statements of priests and bishops. This is before the time the collection of folklore began in the nineteenth century. The author has however been able to use certain items of folklore transmitted orally over a long time.

The first empirical chapter (pp. 53–162) deals with objects in church interiors. In 284 of the total 941 investigated parishes in Sweden there were still side altars from the Catholic period. In the diocese of Skara this was the case in 159 of 375 churches. There these altars were mostly called women's altars. An

important custom for which they were used was the "churching" of women after they had given birth. Offerings in kind were made on a woman's first visit to church after childbirth. These offerings were prohibited in 1720, after which many side altars were removed; few of them have been preserved to our day.

Martin Luther did not condemn the use of images in the church. The Swedish Reformers shared Luther's tolerant view of images, as ratified in Laurentius Petri's church ordinance of 1571. However, pictures and sculptures could not be abused through actions that had been performed in Catholic times. This could include lighting candles or incense, scraping off a splinter, kneeling before the images, or carrying them in processions. If any misuse occurred, the images could be removed. During the eighteenth-century Enlightenment there was an increasingly negative attitude to the medieval images. This is particularly noticeable in Bishop Daniel Juslenius' report on his visitations during the years 1744–1752. On several occasions he demanded that saints' images, and especially those of the Virgin Mary, should be removed from the churches for fear that they might be misused by the parishioners. Superstition was equivalent in the bishop's eyes to idolatry because it conflicted with the belief in God's omnipotence.

The second major empirical chapter (pp. 185–262) is entitled "The Holy Landscape". It deals with places where people could come into contact with the sacred in nature. This had been a widespread practice in pre-Reformation times. The author's source material mentions in particular the sacred wells or "saints' wells" as they are called. The water was believed to have special power, primarily for healing people who drank it or washed in it. People also made offerings of coins or objects in these wells in return for the help they received.

The church authorities say nothing about the cult of wells in the sixteenth century, merely passing over it in silence. Condemnation on the grounds of superstition and idolatry did however become noticeable in the first half of the seventeenth century. The secular authorities also tried in the second half of the seventeenth century to impose prohibitions and punishments to eradicate the cult of wells. Some holy wells were destroyed precisely to counter superstitious practices.

Sometimes crosses or crucifixes were raised at the holy wells. There were moreover freestanding prayer crosses not connected to any wells. People were still going to these crosses at the start of the eighteenth century to make offerings, to cross themselves, and to say prayers. People also hung clothes and human hair on these crosses, which was perceived as giving away a part of oneself.

The dissertation is summed up in an analytical chapter (pp. 263–300) which weaves the threads from previous chapters together. The sections have the headings “The Power of Things”, “Networks of Sanctity”, “The Ambivalent Attitude of the Authorities”, and “Continuity and Change”.

It is easy to follow the author’s reasoning throughout the dissertation. She makes constant references to international historical research and shows her independence with regard to this literature. She not infrequently draws different conclusions based on the extensive Swedish evidence that she has analysed. In that respect she has performed a mammoth task. In the middle of the book (pp. 163–184) there are 24 colour illustrations of objects and natural settings.

What I miss in this dissertation is more references to research in the ethnology of religion. In the *Société Internationale d’Ethnologie et de Folklore*, SIEF, a working group on *Folk Religion* has been active since 1990. Many publications have appeared. I would also have liked to see references to the church historian Hilding Pleijel, who coined the term “kyrklig folklivsforskning” (ecclesiastic folklife research) and started the Archive of Church History in Lund in 1942. He emphasized the complex character of folk piety, which is highly relevant to Zachrisson’s study.

Anders Gustavsson
*Oslo University, Norway/
Henån, Sweden*