FAR OUT TO UNKNOWN LANDS

Images and Representations of the Extreme North at the End of the Middle Ages and Early Modern period.

Rune Blix Hagen
Department of Archaeology, History, Religious Studies and Theology (AHR)
Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education
University of Tromsø (UiT) The Arctic University of Norway

Conference paper.
The text below combine two papers read at The International Medieval Congress (IMC) in Leeds, from sessions in 2010 and 2017:
«Images and representations of the Extreme North at the End of the Middle Ages», paper read at session no. 1522 *Northern Travels and Meetings, Fishy Tales from the North*?, The International Medieval Congress, University of Leeds, 15. July 2010.
And
«Far out to Unknown Lands: The Medieval background to the Writing and Map Drawing of Olaus Magnus», Session 115: *Scandinavia in Europe, I: An Imagined 'Other'*, The International Medieval Congress 2017, University of Leeds, 3/7-2017.

In chroniclers, accounts and anecdotal legends the farthest north has for many centuries been considered to be the realm of strong, evil magic and demonic forces. Peoples who lived up north were renowned magicians and sorcerers. These assumptions, among others, created images of a supernatural north, which came to have a heavy influence on people who travelled up north and wrote about their experiences. To grapple with these kinds of perceptions and depictions from the exploration of what was strongly believed to be previously inaccessible northern regions can indeed result in exciting and sombre - if not appalling reading. All kinds of things could have happened when adventurous Europeans set off for unknown lands beyond the Arctic Circle to experience strange creatures - both human and animal - and to observe odd natural phenomena. It is especially interesting to see how cultivated European travellers of the pre-18th-century era typically depicted their northern experiences. The northern narratives and discourses are often unequalled in their drama and suspense, and should be studied in the context of a lengthy tradition with enduring images and long held assumptions about the extreme north with its midnight peoples.

In this text, I set out to reveal some of the strange sights and sounds that travellers and learned European writers claimed to have met upon their mental and imaginative mapping of the otherness north. The visitors' trips to far away regions for ethnographical exploration, and their strong desire to discover differences from the familiar form a part of my investigation. Their attempts to understand the foreign lifestyles and cultural divergence of their journeys will also be shown as illustrations of what was common in the various portrayals of the northern boundary at the turning point of the late medieval and early modern era. At this time

travellers started to explore less well known European countries. Those "…who wanted to experience and learn something new, shifted their attention from the centres to the periphery of civilization" (Stagl 1995: 85). From an historical point of view, these kinds of foreigners' descriptions are valuable as sources for the process of cultural encounters and for the study of the history of travel (Burke 2000: 176 and 188). In other words, my aim is to outline and discussing some of the varied artefacts of European expansion and the encounters with the foreign and the extreme Otherness *within* Europe. The travelogues and treaties from this period are looked upon as a question about the early identity of European civilization. To penetrate into a peripheral region devoted to all kinds of wildness and bestiality with attempts to portray foreign lifestyles and encounters with the 'Other' became a way to identify and create a hegemonic European culture.

"Nordmythos"

The Nordic peoples were regarded as barbarian, wild, unpolished, and uncivilized by continental Europeans during the late medieval and early modern period until the mid-eighteenth century. Misery and demonic darkness were thought to cover a land populated by savages and terrible monsters. Learned Europeans, in the Renaissance humanist tradition, wrote about the innate cruelty of northern peoples and spoke of the dreadful and repulsive wildness with distaste. The peoples were of sanguine temperament, and their customs were similar in cruelty to those of the bears and wolves which hunted in the same territory (Lestringant 1997: 86-87). In his famous *Les six livres de la République* from 1576 the French lawyer Jean Bodin (1529/30-1596) considered the nature of northern peoples by writing about "a savage nature which cannot be easily tamed". Bodin talked about "the barbarity and cruelty of northern races" and believed that they "share the brutal nature of beasts" (Bodin 1955: Book V, Chapter 1). And since ancient times the Europeans had though of the indigenous people of North Europe, the Sami, as a native population with inferior ethnic elements sustained by extraordinary spiritual abilities. In general the authors characterized the native people as simple-minded, brutal, and physically and emotionally crippled. They further wrote that their women "prostitute themselves to all Comers if they can do it unknown to their husbands" (La Martinière 1706: 31). Because of this sexual weakness, "they are shut up when any Strangers come among them" (ibid. 53). Assertions of this kind are well known among demonologists of the early modern era, such as Jean Bodin. The notion of sexual weakness was used to explain why there were so many females among Europe's witches. According to

central viewpoints of demonology, the carnal appetites and general failings of women made them the devil's preferred target (Clark 1997: 113).

At the end of the medieval period, the people living up north were generally associated with negative images like barbarism, brutality and remoteness, and as such posing a serious threat to the true Christian faith. "The northern peoples would be defined through a counter-image of civilization, lacking control over their primitive instincts" (Stadius 2007: 65). Considered as the end of the world, civilised life was almost impossible in the far north – this was Ultima Thule, way beyond the frontier of European civilisation. Ultima Thule was understood as a prevalent metaphor for terra incognita, in other words as the end of the world as they knew it. The crusade preacher Aeneas Sylvio Piccolomini shook his head in dismay and gave up his attempts to recruit the Scandinavian countries on a crusade mission against the Turks. "Danes, Swedes, and Norwegians live at the end of the world, and they are not capable of doing anything outside of their homes", he told the Reichstag gathered in Regensburg in 1454. The Danish-Norwegian king, Christian I, could not participate in any crusades because he had to fight against the barbarians who lived in his border regions and frequently raided his subjects. He spoke of hordes of pagan and heathen peoples numbering 150.000 warriors attacking his wide-stretching realm of Norway. These warriors came from the ferocious nations of "Tartars, Cumans, Erpions, Manbres, and Lapps" (whole section and quotations from Jensen 2007: 81-82).

Northern nature and climate, too, were looked upon as ugly, frightening and dangerous. Indeed, the legendary magical abilities of the midnight peoples and all the strangeness of nature both shaped the prevailing representations of the utter north. The lands under the seven stars were wrapped in continuous darkness and buried under ice and snow. The bitter cold of winter - frequently combined with thick fog, severe snowstorms, or storm-tossed seas – tried the strength of the most daring explorers. And so did the horror and terror of the dark polar nights. The vast, unknown seas represented the incarnation of deep chaos. The German canon, Adam of Bremen (1993: 192 and 214) working at the end of the 11th century, wrote of "the immensely frightening ocean", and claimed that the coastal inhabitants on the other side of "the barbaric sea" were dubious individuals. Their magical conjuring was reputed to be strong enough to control the forces of chaos; in other words, they could control or raise the sea at will. Even the best skilled sailors had little to show for the northerners' satanic tampering with nature. Adam of Bremen even implied that wild, ravenous women lived in the Nordic mountains, in a land of female inhabitants (*terra feminarum*) (1993: 199). Beautiful women turned out to be monstrous witches, and the whole nature appeared to be

populated with female demonic beings with extraordinary abilities. Menacing natives, equipped with evil weather plagues, hid in the rocky cliffs and mountains. These terrible gluttons could, without any warning, conjure forth horrendous storms. The northerners were indeed, readily blamed for inclement weather. Furthermore, to the *Historia Norwegiae*, one of the earliest text on Norwegian history, written down supposedly sometimes during the second half of the twelfth century, the native Sámi are described as ungodly sorcerers and as people working *diabolica superstitio in magica arte* (see Hansen 2000: 68-70, and Hansen and Olsen 2014: 345).

Andreas Walsperger created a world map in 1448 which illustrated the satanic powers present in the northern regions. Published in Constance, this map portrays northern Scandinavia thus: *Here demons frequently appear in the guise of humans - whom they stalk.* Drawn, too, within the same area of the map is a figure which devours human flesh. Here the image text states: *The antropofags* (cannibals) *devour human flesh*. And just outside the coast, in a region that perhaps portrays the North Pole, the following may be read: *Hell, according to scholars, may be found in the heart or bowels of the Earth itself*. According to Walsperger the regions of the north were populated by "many and various monsters who, however, use human reason" (Friedman 2000: 58 and Visted 1923: 270). A poet called *The Owl and the Nightingale*, written between 1189 and 1216, illustrates this medieval Gog and Magog tradition:

> The land is horrible and wretched,
> Its inhabitants wild and miserable.
> They have neither peace nor calm
> And do not care how they live.
> They eat fish and raw flesh
> And tear at it like wolves.
> They drink milk and whey -
> They know no better.
> They have neither wine nor beer
> But live as do wild animals
> And go about clad in rough skins
> Just as if they came up out of hell.
> (Quoted from Friedman 2000:85)

North to the down path to hell

When it, after 1560, became of interest for the Dutch to sail and trade between the North Cape and Russia, the Dutch philosopher Guillaume Postel (1501-1581) warned his fellow countrymen of the dangers involved in challenging Satan on his own home turf. The North

was said to be the haunt of demons and devils with its heinous cold and wicked winds and among the most active were the demons of the air. Demons from the far-northern latitudes could conjure mighty whirlwinds, according to Postel, who claimed that Europe's northernmost inhabitants were the embodiment of evil and ugliness. Such people, wrote the philosopher, were placed there to raise the Antichrist. Indeed, Postel characterized Europe's northernmost outpost as the kingdom of Antichrist (Spies 1997: 78). Storms, dangerous sea creatures, and merciless pirates wreaked havoc at this threshold to hell. In the extreme north, wild, murky seas and monstrous cliffs rule, according to the article "The Norwegian Pig" (Nor.: "Den norske So") which was written by an unknown author in 1584. Nautical sorcery was a specialty of Norwegian witches. The French jurist and political scientist, Jean Bodin could tell his terrified readers how the North swarmed with sorcerers. In no other European country are there more witches than in Norway. They torment people all day long and all through the night, Bodin reported. And among the people of northern Scandinavia, many were tremendously skilled in sorcery (1580: 90 and 120).

During the final decades of the 16th-century, members of the Scottish, Danish and Swedish royal families came to feel the curses of Norwegian witches in their confrontations with poor weather, fog, thunder and lightning along the coast of Norway. A late autumn wedding in 1589 between the Danish and Scottish royal houses had to be held in Oslo, and not in Edinburgh, because witches of the North Sea conspired against a Christian alliance between the Oldenburg and Stuart monarchies. But measure for measure, the Scottish Stuart king, James VI, reacted by proclaiming himself to be Satan's mortal archenemy. James wrote a textbook in 1597 on demonology and how to combat sorcery, based upon his painful experiences fighting evil weather witches of the North Sea. And because of this book, the king became the era's foremost expert on the connection between sorcery and meteorology. He had lots to tell about the northern witch affliction. The devil's worse havoc occurs in "such wild parts of the world, as Lapland and Finland", wrote the monarch with great pathos, and pointed to the horrible roar of the oceans (James VI 2000: 414).Witches of the far north could raise storms with the Devil's help. Magical winds could be bought from the native Sami for a mere slant.

The English gave up attempts to find a northeastern sea route (the Northeast Passage) to Cathay (China) after their encounters with pack ice, severe cold and poor weather. Several Englishmen, however, were known to have told of the torment of witches in the North, as a result of these experiences travelling northbound. They related how the world's most notorious witches were found in the far north. Norway is a detestable nation where many are

renowned for their sorcery wrote one of them and asserted that Satan, the lord of the air, was the one who assisted the witches of Norway and Lapland.

The *Septentrionale* region and the Big Dipper [1]

During the late Medieval Ages and the beginning of the modern era, the northern peoples were renown throughout all of Europe for their handling of wind magic. Numerous reports began to surface of foreign traders who had purchased wind from the natives (Witthoff 1997: 74ff and Dolan 2000: 58). Two people, in particular, have played a part in giving the Nordic people a reputation of sorcery related to wind magic. One was the Danish chronicler, Saxo Grammaticus (c.1150-c.1220), while the other was the Swedish Olaus Magnus (1490-1557), an exiled Catholic bishop. Their accounts, which dealt with the tenacious belief in sorcery among the Sami and Nordic peoples, became known when their writings were distributed during the 16th-century. This happened simultaneously with the golden age of Europe's scholarly demonology. Saxo tells how some northern peoples, such as the Finns and the Biarmians, could control the elements of nature, and use magic instead of defending themselves with weapons. Saxo writes about weather magic as primarily a Nordic specialty. As examples of Nordic sorcery, Olaus Magnus mentioned wind magic, spell casting, the ability to foresee the future, signing and the skill at brewing witches stews that brought good fortune. The Nordic people were admirable fortune-tellers, as well. They are in harmony with nature and can interpret the weather. He tells how the inhabitants of the far north can attach "wind knots" to straps and use magical powers to protect against harm. The inhabitants of Finland and Lapland are experts at this art, writes the apostle of Nordic culture who brands the art of sorcery as mad and deranged. "The entire world is irresistibility fascinated by this devilish art. Sailors are forced to buy wind because of the wind conditions in the north, and for a slant of money they get three bewitched knots tied to a strap. Bad things will happen to those who doubt the power of the knots, but they are nonetheless, forced into seeking advice from sorcerers" (Olaus Magnus 1996: 173-174).

[1] *Des pais septentrionaux*, meaning the Lands under the Seven Plough-Oxen, (or under the Plough [i.e. Big Dipper]). The North had been called the septentrionale region since ancient times in Europe. Dominating the northern sky is the constellation Ursa Major. The asterism Big Dipper or Plough is formed by seven of the stars in Ursa Major or the Great Bear. A neighbouring constellation called Bootes has its name derived from the Sumarian Riv-but-sane, which means the "man who drove the cart". So Bootes was identified with a farmer who ploughs the land during spring. The Romans called Bootes the Herdsman of the Septentriones, that is, of the seven oxen represented by the seven stars of the Big Dipper, which was seen as the cart or the plough. Big Dipper never touches the horizon in northern Europe. This is why the northern part of the world was called the Septentrionale region.

Olaus Magnus account of the septentrionale people was the first report in Latin that thoroughly described the Nordic countries to a geographically interested Renaissance Europe. Until the advent of this era, the northern regions were basically regarded as a "terra incognita." This work was based upon a journey that Olaus Magnus took to Norrland in 1518-19. He visited Nidaros (Trondheim), and travelled as far north as Pello, in Övertorneå. Torneå is described as a meeting place for the people of northern Scandinavia.The criterion of Olaus Magnus scientific values and truthfulness were based upon visual observations and firsthand experience. The Swede has situated himself within the genre of first person narrative of travel. He had been on the spot and made observations of all the strange things with his own eyes, at least according to himself.

Olaus Magnus' grand map of the north, "Carta Marina" or "Carta Gothica", which was published in Venice in 1539, has also played a part in spreading terror of the distant northern regions. In the first extensive map of the Nordic countries, the coastal waters of northern Norway were portrayed as a deep chaos filled with sea monsters preying upon sailing ship, and how they, as ship-destroying leviathans, tear human beings apart with their horrible teeth. A huge and long sea serpent can be seen demolishing a ship. Furthermore, close to islands of Lofoten, for instance, a devouring abyss was portrayed that sucked down all vessels in its vicinity. Norway's most famous natural phenomenon in ancient times - the whirlpool near Værøy (Moskstraumen) - was feared by sailors for centuries (Lockert 2010 and 2011). Demonic powers of all sorts manifested themselves in the north. In his renown work on the northern peoples, published in Rome in 1555, Olaus Magnus commented upon this map where he wrote in great detail on the dangers that explorers and traders risked by travelling in regions under the Plough (or Big Dipper). In this book, which was translated into several European languages, the Swedish author wrote extensively on dangerous and malevolent demons who called on people in the wintertime during the dark periods and how these creatures together with numerous witches broke into house and robbed people's beer cellars. Polar people, according to Olaus Magnus, use nature to their advantage in warfare. In a warning directed to foreign powers not to intervene in the affairs of the northerners, the author writes that ice, snow and the cold have produced a hardy people that are distinguished by their courage, strength and bravery. The rough, harsh and cold climate had created fearless warriors of a robust habitus. Exceptional depictions are common traits in this work. The North was depicted as both the Arctic Eden and the ancient home of evil.

The French jurist, Pierre de Lancre (1553-1631), explained in a 1612 publication that few sorcerers were to be found in Europe during ancient times, but those who did, existed in the northern countries:

> It is necessary to note that since the witches were not formerly as numerous as they are today, and since they kept themselves separate in the mountains and the deserts and withdrew into Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Gotland, Ireland, Livonia, and other northern countries, their idolatries and curses were not as well known, and what was said about them was taken to be fables and old wives' tales.
> (Pierre De Lancre (1612) 2006: 282-283, see also Ginzburg 1992: 137).

When witches encroached upon Europe around 1550, this invasion came from the north. De Lancre, who led an extensive hunt on witches in Bordeaux, in southern France, in 1609, gathered all his information on the northern witches from none other than Olaus Magnus.

The Art of Storytelling on the North

Equipped with rarity, wonder and curiosity courageous men set out on journeys penetrating into the wilderness of nearly uninhabitable regions. The way to the wild Nordic landscape seemed to follow what often was labeled as terra incognita, a more or less imaginative place where one odd event triggered another. As readers we sense a sinister atmosphere. It is questionable if they truly experienced all the strange things they wrote about; indeed, we can question whether some of the trips actually occurred. Nonetheless, their narratives are tales of northern adventures – kinds of cultural construction that have set standards for following perceptions of the north long after the medieval world. The travelogues are valuable as a cultural representation of the North, telling us about pre-modern perceptions, mentality, and understanding. The cultural shock encounters with the North also becomes a part of the great tale about discovery, masculine conquest, cultivation and discipline.

The late medieval and early modern representations of the northern mist experienced, reflected on and wrote within a cultural context that was characterized by two traditions of conveyance. These traditions were strengthened shortly after seafaring European nations such as England, Scotland, Flanders and Holland had (re)discovered the northern trade route to Russia from the mid-16th-century. Among other things, it gradually became tempting to sail northwards to discover what kind of trade could be established with the native people of the far north. Stories had spread of the existence of valuable furs and exotic hand-crafted articles, the likes of which could be bartered for enormous amounts of tobacco and liquor.

Two ways of telling things grew out of the numerous depictions that were eventually published on Europe's unknown corner. One of these versions emphasized the hard facts

related to hydrography, navigation and cartography, all of which were complemented by historical-topographical reports. These reports had obvious aims. They were meant to be of practical use for exploration, polar expeditions and, not least, trade. Typical for this kind of narrative, and an expression of the times, are the chronicles written by the Dutchman Jan Huygen van Linschoten; these accounts were recorded during the Willem Barents expeditions to Svalbard and the far north in 1594, 1595 and 1596. Van Huygen's report was first published in 1601. A new version came about in 1624. These did not achieve much recognition, but today van Linschoten's narrative is worth its weight in gold. There, among other things, one will find the first maps drawn of Finnmark's coast and the Kola Peninsula. Van Linschoten is also the one responsible for the first well-known drawing of Vardø, a northeast Norwegian settlement, and numerous trading towns and fishing villages along the coast of northern Russia. Lots of topographical and navigational facts have been included, too, by the Dutchman.

Representing the second tradition we can choose another Dutchman, Gerrit de Veer, who had also participated on a couple of the Barents' expeditions. His version was published as early as 1598. The account was received by the reading public in a totally different manner than Linschoten's book. De Veer got to see that his book was translated to Italian, German, French and English. In Holland alone his book was published in 12 editions by 1664. The reason for this recognition was the way in which De Veer was able to combine objective reporting, based upon the ship logs, and strong personal anecdotes that contained provocative and often derogatory remarks on people and nature (Sicking 2000:100ff). Another instance occurred when the London-based *Muscovy Company*, a company that ran lucrative commodity trading with the Russians, via the northern route from the North Cape to Archangel, attempted to ban a book written by Giles Fletcher in 1591. Fletcher had been the English ambassador to Russia, and he had dedicated his report on Russia to Queen Elizabeth I. Sir Fletcher did not have much to say about Russians – they were an evil people consisting of cannibals, sodomites and sorcerers living in a strange, barbaric and despotic realm. Drunkenness was the chief Russian vice, Fletcher wrote in his book *Of the Russe Commonwealth*. The Muscovy Company felt that the report would ruin their trade since the contents were offensive for the Czar and his subjects. However, it was precisely this kind of fictitious account of foreign conditions that appealed to the reading public (Anderson 1958: 13; Willan 1956: 177, Berry and Crummey 1968: 107, Poe 2000: passim). Later on, Russian authorities had to use a great deal of energy to refute strong cultural representations of their country as a nation populated by sorcerers and shamans (Porter 1999: 218).

We can choose Simon von Salingen as another example of one who worked devoutly on cartographic research of the northern borders. In the rivalry over this region, von Salingen's knowledge had great political significance for Denmark-Norway in their dealings with Sweden, Russia and other European maritime states at the end of the 16th-century. He worked as a tradesman for Antwerp trading companies between the 1560s and 1583. And he was known to be an expert on the north. Von Salingen, it was claimed, knew about every single harbor and stretch of land in northern Scandinavia. One of von Salingen's trading vessels was seized by the Danish-Norwegian fleet in 1582. The fleet was then patrolling the northern Russian coast under the leadership of Erik Munk. During the negotiations von Salingen must have been convinced to work for the Danes since he settled in Copenhagen immediately after. During the following two decades, he functioned as an independent trader and as an envoy and specialist for Danish interests in the north. He was often used by the Danish royal house because of his local knowledge. As early as 1584, too, he was working for the Danes in Malmis to negotiate with the Russians about the "Lapp business". He was sent to the Kola Peninsula under similar instructions in 1586 and 1588. During the winter of 1597-98, he also travelled with the district governor of Finnmark across large tracts of land in northern Norway to ascertain the extent of taxation upon the coastal Sami by Swedish tax collectors. With unprecedented determination, these two men made an outstanding effort to fulfill the Danish king's wishes of northern sovereignty. Von Salingen drew detailed maps and wrote extensive reports on the landscape and borders in Lapland. His research was priceless for the Copenhagen government's previous lack of knowledge on the northern realm. The Danish king, Christian IV (1577-1648), was probably a persistent user of von Salingen's reports. This he did in preparation for the Danish-Norwegian fleet's renown voyage to Finnmark and the Murman Coast in 1599 (Hagen and Sparboe 2004). Since then von Salingen's maps and depictions of northern Scandinavia have laid hidden away in the void of history. These kinds of empirical studies were not widely read at the time because of their lack of ethnographical imaginations.

We seldom find these two kinds of unadulterated narrative traditions in the travel narratives of the early modern age. Overlapping, or the combination of fact and fiction, is more typical for most narratives. The collecting and conveyance of empirical deeds will usually be enlivened by the anecdotes and speculative philosophy of apocryphal works (Spies 1998: 315-316). But, as we have witnessed, every single narrative may show influential tendencies of one kind or another. There are differences in degree rather than in kind.

The Northerners' Meteorological Knowledge

Both Saxo Grammaticus and Olaus Magnus mention the art of Sami sorcery, but this art is always related to a greater tradition of Nordic sorcery. Both Sami and people within the Old Norse culture are able to course bad weather. In both cultures magic is used to cause both harm and healing in much the same way (Mundal 1996: 112). Nonetheless, the comments on Sami sorcery, and its diabolical characteristics, were what caught the attention of early modern Europe. The notion of the northern regions as a hothouse for the forging of witchcraft and idolatry became increasingly a question of Sami sorcery. Like other peoples who lived at the farthest edge of the geographical and cultural periphery the Sami were considered to be the most potent sorcerers.

The magic of tying and untying knots is known throughout all of Europe, and it is not geographically isolated to the northern regions or to weather magic. Three knots were tied during French wedding ceremonies to make the husband impotent. The symbolic fear of castration was so widespread by the mid-16th-century that couples got secretly married outside of the local church to avoid affliction. Leading French intellectuals at the time, like Jean Bodin, feared population fall-offs as a consequence of this diabolical art (Le Roy Ladurie 1981: 89).

Nonetheless, the magic of knots is best associated with wind forces and fishing communities. To raise destructive winds, or sometimes to prevent them by knot magic, are skills known ever since ancient times. From coastal areas in Europe, where sea transportation, fishing and trade were of importance, records show how witches could undo knots to conjure storms, frighten off the fish and sink fishing boats and larger trading ships. From Homer's Odyssey, for instance, we know of the story of Aeolus - the king of the winds - who gave a bag to Ulysses filled with wind. The knot on the bag was to be opened when there was a need for fair sailing winds. Jean Bodin told of the Sardinian captain who bought a rope with three "wind knots", and, he added, there were fifty vile ways of using the knots (1975: 82). Wind knots were widespread in Iceland and other coastal parts of Europe. As early as the 14th-century, the English monk, Ranulph Higden, wrote about a barren island, west of Denmark, in his world chronicle, *Polychronicon*. On this island the inhabitants sold wind in knotted ropes to sailors who arrived there (Vaughan 1982:324, Davidson 2005: 64). Higden is supposed to be among the first to write of the northerners' meteorological knowledge. He likely copied an even earlier work entitled *Geographica Universalis*. This work is supposedly from the 13th-century and written by an unknown author. Perhaps this is the source of the myth surrounding the selling of wind in the north. The story is well-known:

"The people are barbarously savage and ugly, and practise magical arts, therefore they offer for sale and sell wind to those along their coasts, or who are becalmed among them. They make balls of thread and tie various knots on them, and tell them to untie three or more knots of the ball, according to the strength of wind that is desired. By making magic with these knots through their heathen practices, they set the demons in motion, and raise a greater or less wind, according to whether they loosen more or fewer knots in the thread, and sometimes they bring about such a wind that the unfortunate ones who place reliance on such things perish by a righteous judgment" (quoted by Nansen 1911: 190-191).

A bit earlier, in a work printed in1591, another version of wind magic can be found in the writings of Sir Giles Fletcher, the English ambassador to Russia and a man we already have met. Taking up his position in Russia, Fletcher had sailed all the way from London, via northern Norway and to the White Sea where he then went by horse to Moscow. Describing the life of the "wild Sami" of the Kola-Petsamo, he writes: "For practise of witchcraft and sorcerie they passe all nations in the worlde. Though for enchanting of ships that saile along their coast, (as I have heard it reported) and their giuing of winds good to their friends, and contrary too ther, whom they meane to hurt by tying of certaine knots upon a rope (some what like to the tale of Aeolus his windbag) is a very fable, devised (as may seeme) by themselves, to terrifie sailers for comming neare their coast" (Fletcher in Berry and Crummey 1968:204, see also Tanner 1929:248 and Witthoff 1997:146).

The central motifs in stories about purchasing wind are very similar to the basic plot structure which can be found in the maritime migratory legend of The Three Wind-Knots and the ship-sinking witches. Versions of the tale can be found all over western and northern Europe, especially in Scotland, England, Ireland, and in the Nordic countries. Some scholars have suggested that the legend in itself may be derived from seafaring communities in Scandinavia and Lappland (See references in Foran 1995: 56-59).

Iceland

The imaginative geography of scholarly treatise on Iceland is a central part of the medieval discourse on the extreme north. Swarthy, ugly, nasty, rude and brutal were the common adjectives used to describe the Icelanders. "They are almost all of 'em Wizards and Witches" (Le Martinérere 1706: 243). The island inhabitants are masters of magic. "They have all Trolls, which are a sort of Familiar Spirits" (ibid. p. 244). They worship, too, the devil who appears before them in the guise of a human. A description of the active volcano, Hekla, is a favourite motif. The flames that spewed out of the volcano bore witness of the fury of hell

itself. In reports on the violently raging fire of the mountain, the imaginations really run wild. "Those who are fishing under Mount Hecla… can see Devils going in and out at the Mountain, fetching and carrying of Souls very busily" (ibid. p. 244). The chronicles are enlivened by the terrifying screams heard originating from Hekla. "Those Noises were the Lamentations of the Damn'd, whom the Devil tormented, and that when he roasted them in the Flames of Hecla, he cool'd them in the Ice on the Coast", the French traveller Pierre-Martin de Le Martinère explained (p. 242). The accuracy of this was emphasized by references to individuals who had returned from the dead. These had witnessed the devil's doings in the pits of fire and brimstone far below Hekla's surface. With wailing and tears, the damned explained that they were in the hands of the devil, who was a stern master (p. 245). Eternal torture and wailing were "welcomed" experiences that confirmed ruling medieval theological thoughts. Such places could be refereed to in order to raise fear of eternal damnation in hell.

The Stories of Storytellers

Georges-Louis Leclerq de Buffon (1707-1788) could profit from earlier travel writings and scholarly treatise in his impressive 44 volume encyclopedia *Historie Naturelle* (published in 1749-88), hailed as one of the enlightenment's most highly esteemed works. In the volume containing the natural history of man, we can find a section called *Of the Varieties of the Human Species*. This section begins with Buffon's account of the peoples of the very far north:

"These people not only resemble each other in deformity, in smallness of stature, and in the colour of their eyes and hair, but also in the dispositions and manners: They are all equally gross, superstitious, and stupid. The Danish Laplanders have a large black cat, to which they communicate their secrets, and consult in all their important affairs; such as, whether this day should be employed in hunting or fishing. Among the Swedish Laplanders, a drum is kept in every family for the purpose of consulting the devil; and, though they are a robust and nimble people, such is their pusillanimity, that they never could be persuaded to face a field of battle. Gustaphus Adolphus endeavoured to embody a regiment of Laplanders; but he was obliged to relinquish the project (Buffon, vol. 3, 1781:60, see also Koerner 1999:416).

In this work, Buffon also repeats the story about the "Laplanders" offering their wives and daughters to strangers - this custom "may proceed from a sense of their own deformity", (Buffon, vol.3, 1781: 63/64).

These treatises and travelogues are delightful reading in any case. Their writings have the exhilaration and a sheer emotional appeal. The narrative simply has a magical power of attraction. We should not consider the outsider's gaze as a complete fake, but instead "speak

of an imagined travel in the extensive border area between fact and fiction" (Burke 2000: 186). We can look at them as stories from the earlier centuries, which with a sense of acuity, also informs its readers of spiritual journeys on a perilous and intellectual road. Thus we end up with texts that relates just as much about the bizarre views of intellectuals of the pre-modern era as it does about the northern landscape. The narratives and treatise are, of course, based upon their own cultural background. The reports can be read as an account of the travel-narrator themselves. Their derogatory remarks and weird imaginary reflect a way of thinking that must be understood in light of the unparalleled and triumphant civilization which they represented. Consistent with their understanding of themselves, their civilization was the one which dispenses the right kind of knowledge, the greatest culture and the highest moral standards. The authors can be perceived as an incarnation of civilization's fight against the wild nature among man, beast and land (Larsson 2001: 102ff, Johannsen 2011: 233). Their representations of people and nature were created in the light of these cultural codes. These were then employed in the interpretation and understanding of those who thought differently. The images stand out as entanglement in a well-known narrative pattern, á la *The Odyssey*, where the traveller gets lost in the dark, or in a world of dreams and self-delusion. As in many other travel narratives, those who talked about the extreme north saw numerous devils which constantly jumped out of the closet. And this is in keeping with the vehement depictions of Europe's previously unknown regions. There darkness, misery and chaos ruled, creating powerful metaphors and imagery. The way to the north was used as a strategy to acquire knowledge of themselves and their own cultural insecurity through the perspective writing of wild and savage peoples. It is, indeed, a question about shaping and reshaping of European identity.

Sources and Literature:

Acerbi, Joseph 1802: *Travels through Sweden, Finland, and Lapland to the North Cape In the Years 1798 and 1799*. Vol.II. London.

Adam av Bremen 1993: *Beretningen om Hamburg stift, erkebiskopenes bedrifter og øyrikene i Norden*. From Latin. Introduction, notes and index by Bjørn Tosterud Danielsen and Anne Katrine Frihagen. Postscript by Helge Ingstad, Oslo.

Anderson, M.S. 1958: *Britian's Discovery of Russia 1553-1815*. London.

Barraclough, Eleanor Rosamund, Danielle Cudmore, Stefan Donecker 2013: "Der übernatürliche Norden – Konturen eines Forschungsfeldes", *NORDEUROPAforum* 23 (2013): 23-53.

Full-text (Retrieved 31/1-2019)
http://edoc.hu-berlin.de/nordeuropaforum/2013-/barraclough-eleanor-rosamund-23/PDF/barraclough.pdf

Behringer, Wolfgang 2004. *Witches and witch-hunts: a global history* Cambridge: Polity

Berry, Lloyd E. And Robert O.Crummey (ed.) 1969: *Rude & Barbarous Kingdom. Russia in The Accounts of Sixteenth Century English Voyagers*. Madison, Milwaukee and London

Birkeland, Inger J.2000: "Representasjoner av Nordkapp og norsk natur 1860-1900" in *Menneskers rom*. Edited by Inger J. Birkeland and Bjørg Lien Hanssen. Oslo.

Bodin, Jean 1580: *De la Démonomanie des sorciers*. Paris.

Bodin, Jean [1576] 1955: *Six Books of the Commonwealth*. Abridged and translated by M.J. Tooley, Oxford.

Bodin, Jean 1975: *Colloquium of the seven about secrets of the sublime*. Translation with introduction, annotations, and critical readings, by Marion Leathers Daniels Kuntz, Princeton, New Jersey.

Bring, Samuel E. 1954: *Itineraria Svecana. Bibliografisk förteckning över resor i Sverige fram till 1950*. Stockholm.

Browne, Edward 1677: *An Account of Several Travels through a Great Part of Germany* http://penelope.uchicago.edu/travels/travels1.html (retrieved 31.01.19)

Buffon, Georges Louis Leclerc, comte de 1781: "The Natural History of the Globe" Volume 3 in *Natural History: General and Particular*. Translated by William Smellie. London.

Burke, Peter 2000: "Directions for the History of Travel" in *Rätten. En festskrift til Bengt Ankarloo*. Edited by L.M.Andersson, A.Jansdotter, B.E.B.Persson and C.Tornbjer. Lund.

Carey, Daniel and Claire Jowitt (Eds.) 2012: *Richard Hakluyt and Travel Writing in Early Modern Europe* (Hakluyt Society Extra Series 47), Ashgate.

Chard, Chloe 1999: *Pleasure and guilt on the Grand Tour. Travel writing and imaginative Geography 1600-1830.* Manchester and New York.

Clark, Stuart 1997: *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe.* Oxford.

Consett, Mattew 1789. *A Tour through Sweden, Swedish-Lapland, Finland and Denmark.* Stockholm.

Corbin, Alain 1994: *The lure of the sea: the discovery of the seaside in the western world 1750-1840*. Berkeley.

Dass, Petter 1954: *The Trumpet of Nordland*, Translated by Theodore Jorgenson, Minneapolis.

Davidson, Peter 2005: *The Idea of north*, Reaktion Books, London.

De Lancre, Pierre (1612) 2006: *On the Inconstancy of Witches*, General Editor: Gerhild Scholz Williams, Brepols and ACMRS, Tempe, Arizona.

Den norske So (unknown author) 1868, printed in *Norske Magasin*, bd.II. Christiania.

Dictionnaire des lettres francaises: le dic-septième siècle 1954. Paris

Dolan, Brian 2000 *Exploring European frontiers: British travellers in the age of Enlightenment*. New York.

Donecker, Stefan 2010: "The Lion, the Witch and the Walrus. Images of the Sorcerous North in the 16th and 17th centuries", *TRANS Internet-Zeitschrift für Kulturwissenschaften* Nr.17, Februar 2010, Retrieved 31.01.2019 from
http://www.inst.at/trans/17Nr/4-5/4-5_donecker.htm

Ehrensvärd, Ulla (2006): *The History of Nordic Map: From Myths to Reality*, John Nurminen Foundation, Helsinki.

Fletcher, Giles [1591] 1968: *Of the Russe Commonwealth*, printed in Berry and Crummey (ed.)

Foran, Derek 1995: "The Three Wind-Knots: A Maritime Migratory Legend in Irish Tradition", *Sinsear. The Folklore Journal*, Vol. 8, 1995:55-69

Fournier, Vincent 2001: *Le Voyage en Scandinavie. Anthologie de Voyageurs 1627-1914*, Paris

Friedman, John Block 2000: *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought*. New York

Friis, Peder Claussøn 1881: *Samlede Skrifter*. Kristiania.

Fjågesund, Peter and Ruth A. Symes 2003.*The Northern Utopia. British Perceptions of Norway in The Nineteenth Century*, Amsterdam – New York.

Giddens, Anthony 1985: *The National-State and Violence: A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism*. Vol. 2, Cambridge.

Ginzburg, Carlo 1992: *Ecstasies. Deciphering the Witches' sabbath*. London.

Hagen, Rune 1999: "The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Finnmark", *Acta Borealia.* No.1:43-62.
Extract in *The Shaman of Alta*: http://ansatte.uit.no/rha003/shaman.html Retrieved 31.01.19.

Hagen, Rune 2001: "Trolldomsforfølgelse i Nord-Norge på 1600-tallet", *Ottar* nr. 234, 1/2001: 23-30.

Hagen, Rune Blix and Per Einar Sparboe (ed.) 2004: *Kongens reise til det ytterste nord. Dagbøker fra Christian IVs tokt til Finnmark og Kola i 1599.* Ravnetrykk. Tromsø.

Hagen, Rune Blix 2012. *The Sami – Sorcerers in Norwegian History. Sorcery persecutions of the Sami,* Kárásjohka-Karasjok.

Halmesvirta, Anssi 2012: „Between the Darkness of Barbarism and the Light of Civilization: British Images of the Finn in Late Eighteenth Century", *Sjuttonhundratal Nordic Yearbook for Eighteenth-Century Studies 2012.*

Hansen, Lars Ivar 2000: Om synet på de „andre" – ute og hjemme. Geografi og folkeslag på Nordkalotten i følge *Historia Norwegiae*, in Inger Ekrem, Lars Boje Mortensen, Karen Skovgaard-Petersen (eds.) *Olavslegenden og den latinske historieskrivningen i 1100-tallets Norge*, Museum Tusculanums Forlag, Københavns Universitet 2000: 54-87.

Hansen, Lars Ivar and Bjørnar Olsen 2014: *Hunters in Transition. An Outline of Early Sámi History,* Leiden: Brill.

Hartmann, Regina 2000: *Deutsche Reisende in der Spätaufklärung unterwegs in Skandinavien. Die Verständigung über den "Norden" im Konstruktionsprozess ihrer Berichte,* Frankfurt.

Hastrup, Kirsten 2009: "Images of Thule: Maps and Metaphors in Polar Exploration", in Sverrir Jakobsson (ed.) 2009: 103-116.

Hellesnes, Jon 1999: *René Descartes*. Oslo.

Huitfeldt, Carl 1932: *Norge i andres øine*. Oslo.

Høydalsnes, Eli 1999: *Møte mellom tid og sted: bilder av Nord-Norge*. Tromsø.

Ilsøe, Harald 1963:*Udlændinges Rejser i Danmark indtil år 1700. En Bibliografisk fortegnelse*. Copenhagen.

Jakobsson, Sverrir (ed.) 2009: *Images of the North. Histories – Identities – Idea,* Studia Imagologica, Rodopi B.V., Amsterdam – New York.

James VI 2000: Daemonologie in form of a dialogue. (Originally published Edinburgh 1597). Printed in *Witchcraft in Early Modern Scotland. James VI's Demonology and the North Berwick Witches*, edited by Lawrence Normand & Gareth Roberts. Exeter.

Jensen, J.M 2007: *Northern World, Volume 30: Denmark and the Crusaders, 1400-1650,* Brill, Boston MA.

Jessen, Erich Johan 1763: *Det Kongerige Norge fremstillet efter dets naturlige og borgerlige Tilstand*. Kjøbenhabn.

Johanssen, Dirk 2011: ”Crossing the Ecotone. On the Narrative Representation of Nature as ‘Wild’”, in Bojan Borstner (ed.) *Historicizing religion. Critical approaches to contemporary concerns*, Plus. Maggio, p.233-248.

Koerner, Lisbet 1999: "Daedalus Hyperboreus: Baltic Natural History and Mineralogy in the Enlightenment", in *The Sciences in Enlightened Europe* edited by William Clark, Jan Golinski, and Simon Schaffer, Chicago & London

La Martinière, Pierre Martin de 1682: *Voyage des pays Septentrionaux*. Paris.
La Martinière, Pierre Martin de 1706: *A new Voyage to the North*. London.
La Martinière, P.M. 2001: *En oppdagelsesreise mot nord.* Translated by Hans Lindkjølen. Flisa.

Larsson, Lars Olof 2001:"Eine andere Antike und die wilde Natur. Das Bild des Nordens in Der bildende Kunst der frühen Neuzeit", in Annelore Engel-Braunschmidt, Gerhard Fouquet, Wiebke von Hinden und Inken Schmidt (Hrsg.) *Ultima Thule. Bilder des Nordens von Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, Frankfurt am Main

Le Roy Ladurie, Emmanuel 1981: "The Aiguillette:Castration by Magic" in *The Mind and Method of the Historian*. Translated to English by Siãn Reynolds and Ben Reynolds. Chicago.

Leem, Knud 1975: *Beskrivelse over Finmarkens Lapper 1767*. Copenhagen.

Lestringant, Frank 1997: *Cannibals. The Discovery and Representation of the Cannibal from Columbus to Jules Verne.* Cambridge.

Lewis, Laura A.2003: *Hall of Mirrors: Power, Witchcraft, And Caste in Colonial Mexico*. Durham

Lilienskiold, Hans H. 1998: *Trolldom og ugudelighet i 1600-tallets Finnmark,* Edited and revised by Rune Hagen and Per Einar Sparboe, Ravnetrykk nr.18. Tromsø.

Lindkjølen, Hans 1993: *Nordisk Saga. Samene i litteraturen*. Oslo.

Lockert, Sigri Skjegstad 2010: *De Charybdi Septentrionali: kontinuitet og endring i forestillinger om Moskstraumen fra 1539 til omkring 1900*, Masteravhandling, Tromsø http://www.ub.uit.no/munin/handle/10037/2506 (31.01.2019).

Lockert, Sigri Skjegstad 2011: *Havsvelget i Nord. Moskstraumen gjennom årtusener*, Orkana Akademisk, Stamsund.

Loux, Francoise 1988: *Pierre-Martin de La Martinière un mèdecin au XVIIe siècle*. Paris.

Moyne, Ernest J.1981: *Raising the Wind. The Legend of Lapland and Finland Wizards in Literature*. Edited by Wayne R. Kime. Toronto.

Mundal, Else 1996: "The perception of the Saamis and their religion in Old Norse sources" in: Juha Pentikäinen (ed.): *Shamanism and Northern Ecology*, Berlin and New York 1996

Murray, Margaret Alice. 1921: *The witch-cult in Western Europe: a study in anthroplogy*, Oxford.

Nansen, Fridtjof 1911: *In Northern Mists. Arctic exploration in early times*. Volume Two. Translated by Arthur G. Charter. London.

Nigg, Joseph 2013: *Sea Monsters. A Voyage around the World's most Beguiling Map*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London.

Nordenskiöld, A.E. 1880: *Vegas färd kring Asien och Europa: jemte en historisk återblick på föregående resor längs gamla verldens nordkust* , Vol.1. Stockholm.

Nigg, Joseph 2013: *Sea monsters: a voyage around the world's most beguiling marine map*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London.

Olaus Magnus 1996: *A Description of the Northern Peoples 1555*, Volume 1, Edited by P.G.Foote. The Hakluyt Society, London.

Page, R. I. "Lapland Sorcerers", *Saga-Book*, Vol. XVI, Viking Society for Northern Research, University College London 1962-65: 215-232.

Poe, Marshall T. 2000: "*A people born to Slavery" Russia in Early Modern European Ethnography, 1476-1748.* Ithaca and London.

Porter, Roy 1999:"Witchcraft and Magic in Enlightenment, Romantic and Liberal Thought", In: *The Athlone History of Witchcraft and Magic in Europe Volume 5. The Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, Bengt Ankarloo and Stuart Clark (General Editors). London.

Povlsen, Karen Klitgaard (ed.) 2007: *Northbound. Travels, Encounters, and Constructions 1700-1830*, Aarhus University Press 2007.

Regnard, Jean-Francois 1992: *Voyage en Laponie*. Paris.

Roberts, Alexander 1971(1616): *A Treatise of Witchcraft.* Printed in *Witches and Witchhunters*. Wakefield.

Saxo Grammaticus 2000: *Saxos Danmarks historie*, translated by Peter Zeeberg; illustrated by Maja Lisa Engelhardt. Two volumes. Copenhagen.

Schefferus, Johannes 1956: *Lappland*. Uppsala.

Schiötz, Eilert H. 1970 and 1986: *Itineraria Norvegica. Utlendingers reiser i Norge inntil år 1900. En bibliografi*, Vol. 1. Oslo. Bind II: Supplementer. Oslo.

Sicking, Louis 2000: "Dutch Exploration Beyond the North Cape: History, Archaeology and Historiography" in *Voyage and Exploration in the North Atlantic from the Middle Ages to the XVIIth Century*, Edited by Anna Agnarsdóttir. Reykjavík.

Spies, Marijke 1997: *Arctic Routes to Fabled Lands*. Translated to English by Myra Heerspink Scholz. Amsterdam.

Spies, Marijke 1998: "Humanist Conceptions of the Far North in the Works of Mercator and Ortelius", *Abraham Ortelius and the First Atlas*, Edited by Marcel van den Broecke, Peter van der Krogt and Peter Meurer. Houten.

Stadius, Peter 2007: "The Gothic Tradition and the North: The Images of Gustavus Adolphus and His Men in Seventeenth Century Spain" in Povlsen (ed.) 2007: *Northbound.*

Stagl, Justin 1995: *A History of Curiosity. The Theory of Travel 1550-1800.* Chur.

Søndergaard, Leif 2001: "At the Edge of the World: Early Medieval Ideas of the Nordic Countries", in *Medieval Spirituality in Scandinavia and Europe*, Edited by Lars Bisgaard, Carsten Selch Jensen, Kurt Villads Jensen and John Lind. Odense

Tanner, V.1929: *Antropogeografiska studier inom Petsamo-området. I Skolt-Lapparna* (Fennia 49, No.4). Helsingfors.

Talbot, Ann 2010: *The Great Ocean of Knowledge. The Influence of Travel Literature on the work of John Locke*, Brill, Leiden and Boston.

Talbot, Ann 2010: "Locke and the Lapland Witches", Chapter Three in Talbot 2010.

Terrall, Mary 2002*: The man who flattened the earth: Maupertuis and the sciences in the Enlightenment,* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002

Thorndike, Lynn 1958: *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, Vol.VIII. New York.

Tingbok for Finnmark 1620-1633, revised by Hilde Sandvik and Harald Winge 1987.Oslo.

Tommasini, Daniela 2001: "From the Sacred to Commonplace. Tourist Representations and Images of the Arctic" in Karin Granqvist and Ulrike Spring (eds): *Representing Gender, Ethnicity and nation in Word and Image,* Kvineforsk Occasional Papers, University of Tromsø

Vaughan, Richard 1982: "The Arctic in the Middle Ages", *Journal of Medieval History*, 8

Visted, Kristofer 1923: *Vor Gamle Bondekultur*. Kristiania.

Willan, T.S.1956: *The Early history of the Russian Company 1553-1603*. Manchester.

Witthoff, Ekkehard 1997: *Grenzen der Kultur: Differenzwahrnehmung in Randbereichen (Irland, Lappland, Russland) und europäische Identität in der Frühen Neuzeit.* Frankfurt am Main: Lang.

Rune Blix Hagen, UiT
e-mail: rune.hagen@uit.no
Website: http://ansatte.uit.no/rha003/hagen.htm