

SACRED

XXXXXX TO THE XXXX

TOUCH



NORDIC
AND
BALTIC
RELIGIOUS
WOOD
CARVING

XXXXXX

XXXXXX THOMAS A. DUBOIS XXXX

NEW DIRECTIONS IN SCANDINAVIAN STUDIES

Christine Ingebritsen and Andy Nestingen

Series Editors

NEW DIRECTIONS IN SCANDINAVIAN STUDIES

This series offers interdisciplinary approaches to the study of the Nordic region of Scandinavia and the Baltic States and their cultural connections in North America. By redefining the boundaries of Scandinavian studies to include the Baltic States and Scandinavian America, the series presents books that focus on the study of the culture, history, literature, and politics of the North.

Small States in International Relations

Edited by Christine Ingebritsen, Iver B. Neumann, Sieglinde Gstohl, and Jessica Beyer

Danish Cookbooks: Domesticity and National Identity, 1616–1901

Carol Gold

Crime and Fantasy in Scandinavia: Fiction, Film, and Social Change

Andrew Nestingen

Selected Plays of Marcus Thrane

Translated and introduced by Terje I. Leiren

Munch's Ibsen: A Painter's Visions of a Playwright

Joan Templeton

Knut Hamsun: The Dark Side of Literary Brilliance

Monika Žagar

Nordic Exposures: Scandinavian Identities in Classical Hollywood Cinema

Arne Lunde

Icons of Danish Modernity: Georg Brandes and Asta Nielsen

Julie K. Allen

Danish Folktales, Legends, and Other Stories

Edited and translated by Timothy R. Tangherlini

The Power of Song: Nonviolent National Culture in the Baltic Singing Revolution

Guntis Šmidchens

Church Resistance to Nazism in Norway, 1940–1945

Arne Hassing

Christian Krohg's Naturalism

Øystein Sjøstad

Fascism and Modernist Literature in Norway

Dean Krouk

Sacred to the Touch: Nordic and Baltic Religious Wood Carving

Thomas A. DuBois



Sacred to the Touch

NORDIC AND BALTIC RELIGIOUS WOOD CARVING

Thomas A. DuBois

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON PRESS

Seattle and London

Sacred to the Touch *was made possible by grants from the Royal Gustavus Adolphus Academy for Swedish Folk Culture, the Halls-Bascom Professorship of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and the Department of Scandinavian Studies at the University of Washington.*

Copyright © 2018 by the University of Washington Press

Printed and bound in China

Design by Katrina Noble

Composed in Caslon Pro, typeface designed by Carol Twombly

All photographs by the author unless noted otherwise.

Cover artwork: *Noaidi* drum, signed L L Sunna (Lars Levi Sunna), birch, decorated antler, leather. 11 × 27 × 18 cm, with two antler accessories. Photo courtesy Stockholms Auktionsverk

Frontispiece: *Stave church in the village of Røldal, Odda, Hordaland, Norway, built ca. 1200–1250.* Photo by the author.

22 21 20 19 18 5 4 3 2 1

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

University of Washington Press
www.washington.edu/uwpress

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: DuBois, Thomas A. (Thomas Andrew), 1960- author.

Title: Sacred to the touch : Nordic and Baltic religious wood carving / Thomas A. DuBois.

Description: Seattle : University of Washington Press, 2018. | Series: New directions in Scandinavian studies | Includes bibliographical references and index. |

Identifiers: LCCN 2017026639 (print) | LCCN 2017027430 (ebook) |

ISBN 9780295742427 (ebook) | ISBN 9780295742410 (hardcover : alk. paper) |

ISBN 9780295742434 (pbk. : alk. paper)

Subjects: LCSH: Wood-carving—Scandinavia—Themes, motives. | Wood-carving—Baltic States—Themes, motives. | Religious articles—Scandinavia. | Religious articles—Baltic States. | Cultural awareness—Scandinavia. | Cultural awareness—Baltic States.

Classification: LCC NK1653.S34 (ebook) | NK1653.S34 D83 2018 (print) |

DDC 736/.40948—dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2017026639>

The paper used in this publication is acid-free and meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48–1984. ∞

For people, past and present, who have felt the joys,
challenges, and significance of making art in wood

Contents

Acknowledgments xi

INTRODUCTION I

1. Eva Ryyänen:
Karjalan Kukkiiva Puu (The Flowering Tree of Karelia)
and Continuity Uncovered 31
2. Phillip Odden and Else Bigton:
In Search of Knowledge and Continuity Covered 51
3. Sister Lydia Mariadotter:
“Försök! Fortsätt!” (“Try! Continue!”) and
Continuity Rediscovered 73
4. Lars Levi Sunna:
“Välde dat dego dat lea ja don boadát oaidni!” (“Take it as
it is and see what happens”) and Continuity Recovered 103
5. Algimantas Sakalauskas:
Tikeimas (“Belief”) < *Tik Ėjėmas* (“Just Walking”)
and Continuity Discovered 129

CONCLUSION 159

Works Cited 177

Index 193

Acknowledgments

I owe a debt of thanks to many people for help in creating this study. During my graduate studies in the Department of Folklore and Folklife at the University of Pennsylvania back in the 1980s, my teachers Henry Glassie and Don Yoder challenged students to commit to someday writing at least one monograph that would substantively engage folklife or material-culture scholarship. Although I have tried to live up to the folklife side of my PhD in folklore and folklife in various ways over the years since graduating, I have always thought of this book as my main way of meeting that challenge. So for better or worse, here it is.

Doing fieldwork in Denmark, Finland, Lithuania, Norway, and Sweden was expensive and time consuming. I am very grateful for the funding that made this study possible. My Lithuanian fieldwork was undertaken with the help of a grant from the Franklin Fund of the American Philosophical Society. My research in the Nordic countries and here in the United States was generously funded through a Vilas Research Associate Award and Kellett Mid-Career Faculty Research Award from the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, with funding from the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation. I am honored to have held the Birgit Baldwin Professorship in Scandinavian Studies from 2007 to 2009 and now to hold a Halls-Bascom Professorship in Scandinavian Studies and Folklore, both at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. The final stages of this project took place during my time as a fellow of the Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study in Uppsala, Sweden, and support for the publication of this study came from the Scandinavian Studies Publication Fund, the Kungl. Gustav Adolfs Akademien, and the Halls-Bascom Professorship of the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

I thank the many informants who shared their views and expertise with me, without whom this study would never have been possible. They include Else Bigton, Raimo and Pirkko Kärkkäinen, Sister Lydia Mariadotter, Phillip Odden, Susanne Österlund-Pötzch, Howard Rockstad, Algimantas Sakalauskas, Lars Levi Sunna, and Scott Winner.

I also thank my many colleagues in the fields of Scandinavian studies, folklore studies, and Baltic studies, including Patricia Berman, Barbro Blehr, Susan Brantly, Marcus Cederström, Coppélie Cocq, Liisa Eskelinen, Tim Frandy, Harald Gaski, Lena Gerholm, Janet Gilmore, Lizette Gradén, Rob Howard, Peter Jackson, Lars Kaijser, Barbro Klein, Kristin Kuutma, Jim Leary, Arne Lunde, Scott Mellor, Corrie Norman, Ruth Olson, Leonard Primiano, Jordan Rosenblum, Anna Rue, Tracey Sands, Guntis Šmidchens, Hanna Snellman, Krister Stoor, Mikael Svonni, Tim Tangherlini, Gunnar Ternhag, Nancy Wicker, Björn Wittrock, and Kirsten Wolf. Each of these colleagues generously gave me advice over the course of the project and/or facilitated work that helped me complete this book. An earlier version of the analysis I present on Lars Levi Sunna was published in the journal *Temenos* (DuBois 2012b) and I acknowledge and thank the editors and reviewers of that journal for valuable advice.

At the University of Washington Press and at the University of Washington, Seattle, I am grateful to New Directions in Scandinavian Studies series editors Christine Ingebritsen, Terje Leiren, and Andy Nestingen for their enthusiasm for this monograph. Larin R. McLaughlin of the UW Press shepherded the manuscript through the vetting process and was a source of encouragement and sound advice as I worked to revise the text in line with the wise recommendations of the manuscript's reviewers. Niccole Leilanionapae'aina Coggins handled the vexing image issues that my manuscript presented. Margaret K. Sullivan was project manager for the book and ably kept things moving at a brisk and orderly pace. Kris Fulsaa performed thoughtful and much-needed copyediting, improving my work in more ways than I can count. I am hopeful that the current work, despite its many shortcomings, does at least some service to the many wonderful people who have helped me along the way.

On a personal level, I am grateful to Brendan, Conor, and Greer DuBois, all of whom traveled with me on one leg of my fieldwork or another, sharing the miles and keeping me sane. And I am grateful to Wendy Vardaman, who remained positive and encouraging in this, as in so many things.

SACRED TO THE TOUCH

Introduction

RIDE Stockholm's clean and efficient T13 subway south and west from the city center for about a half hour, and you will arrive eventually at the Hallunda stop. There you will find yourself in a modern Swedish urban-suburban landscape, surrounded by multistory buildings, retail outlets, and wide roads but also interlaced with wide pedestrian paths lined with trees and grass. Following one of these paths to the south, you will soon come to a quiet, winding pedestrian way and road still named after Saint Botvid, the twelfth-century Swedish merchant-turned-missionary who met with Christianity in England and returned to his native district to preach the faith, suffering martyrdom, legend relates, when an ungrateful Finnish slave slew him in his boat. Within a few minutes of walking Sankt Botvids *väg*, you will see the handsome spire of a medieval church, the origin of the name Botkyrka, originally Bothwiidia Kirkia (Saint Botvid's Church; figure I.1).

Across the street lies a tall wooden house painted yellow, originally a poor-house erected by local factory owners in the late eighteenth century to accommodate poverty-stricken indigents, later repurposed as a home for the elderly. It is now an elementary school, filled with children of a wide array of racial and cultural backgrounds, illustrative of the rich cultural makeup of modern Sweden and of a Botkyrka municipality that bears the distinction of being one of Sweden's most culturally diverse communities. A small housing development sits behind the school, with densely clustered, pleasant one- and two-story homes painted red or yellow.

If you follow Sankt Botvids *väg* farther, you will pass the Lake Aspen and Hammarby parsonage, where Saint Botvid is said to have grown up, and the home of Saint Botvid's wealthy brother Björn, the builder of the original church. Björn's sandstone tomb, decorated with relief sculptures and inscriptions in both Old Swedish runes and Latin capitals, was once proudly displayed inside the church. Today it resides in



Figure I.1. Saint Botvid's Church today. The current stone church was dedicated in 1149 when it replaced an earlier wooden church originally constructed at the behest of Saint Botvid's brother Björn in 1129. With its long history of remodeling yet seeming unity of form and location, the church illustrates the complicated notions of "continuity" associated with medieval artifacts in Northern Europe. Stockholm, Sweden.

Stockholm's Historical Museum. Walking farther, you will also come to the southern shore of Bornsjö, the lake in which Saint Botvid had miraculous fishing luck. The shore is also the site of a holy spring that is said to have emerged from solid rock in the place where the martyred saint's bodily remains—his "relics"—were briefly set down while the men who were carrying the casket rested during a procession from Salem Church to Botkyrka church in 1129. The spring still flows today.

On the other side of Botkyrka church however, across a small field, you will hear the flow not of water but of traffic, noise from the numerous cars and trucks on the heavily used E20 highway that passes close by the church. Three lanes of traffic speed by in each direction, and although the church can clearly be seen from the highway, there is no convenient exit for drivers to stop and visit.

The church's imposing stone steeple displays in large wrought-iron letters the year 1128, but that year refers not to the completion of the present building, but to an earlier wooden stave church that had stood on the spot before being replaced by

a larger church of stone in 1176. The steeple that bears the inscription does not itself date from 1176, however, but was added later, possibly in the early thirteenth century. It is topped by a spire that dates from the eighteenth century.

Inside the church itself you will find a fine medieval altarpiece carved by Flemish artists in Antwerp in the sixteenth century and imported into Sweden during the Hanseatic era. Its elaborate, gilded depiction of the events surrounding and including the Crucifixion contrasts markedly with the austere whitewashed walls of the church. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, many medieval churches' vivid, sometimes lurid, wall paintings became hidden from view through such whitewashing. A few of the church's earlier paintings can still be glimpsed, though they are much faded by the passage of centuries. Behind the altarpiece you can notice the lines of the window that is still visible from the outside of the church but that was sealed and plastered over during the postmedieval era so as not to detract from the altarpiece.

The church's main medieval crucifix, once displayed above the altar, is now conserved, like Björn's tomb, in Stockholm's Historical Museum (figure I.2). Depicting an emaciated Christ writhing on the cross, it was completed in the fourteenth century, during a time when Botkyrka church was a prominent pilgrimage site. Small portions of the crucifix's original elaborate polychromy still remain around the Savior's face, ears, and neck, and there you can see a pattern of white skin marked by stylized drops of blood, a reflection of the prevalent devotion to the Savior's blood that was prominent during the fourteenth century (Bynum 2007). The crucifix must have moved and inspired pilgrims of its era, when Botkyrka represented a valuable benefice, providing income to the bishop of Strängnäs. Today the crucifix is seen largely as a curious piece of art history, housed alongside other medieval sculptures no longer displayed in their original environs.

As the above description makes clear, nine hundred years of history become sedimented or displaced in the landscape, buildings, traffic networks, and artworks of Botkyrka, Sweden. It is possible to look and see physical remains of the era of Sweden's earliest Christianization, and even before. But these glimpses of the past are overlapped and sometimes masked by products of later eras—donations or innovations of late-medieval merchants and bishops, eighteenth-century industrialists and antiquarians, twenty-first-century refugees and museum professionals. The distant past, the more recent past, and the present become jumbled and intertwined—not through random accretion but, rather, through a process of continual contemplation, a weighing of the interests of the present against the value of the past that scholars have come to term *heritagization*, *heritage formation*, or *heritage regimes* (Walsh 1992; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998; Smith 2006; Bendix, et al. 2012; Kuutma 2012; Gradén



Figure I.2. Crucifix that once hung above the high altar of Saint Botvid's Church. Produced by a local workshop in the early fourteenth century, the crucifix depicts Christ emaciated and exhausted. Remnants of the sculpture's original polychromy, which can be seen on the ears, cheek, and neck, indicate that the figure was once painted with ample depictions of blood, typical of sculptures of this period. Anonymous (Swedish, probably from Mälardalen). *Crucifix* (early fourteenth century). Hardwood, fragmentary polychromy; height 77 cm. Swedish Historical Museum, Stockholm.

and Aronsson 2013; Meyer and de Witte 2015). By turning your sights in one direction and narrowing your vision, you can see the same images that met the eyes of medieval pilgrims walking to the church of Saint Botvid nearly a millennium ago. But by crossing the pedestrian overpass that spans the nearby highway and climbing one of the prominent wooded hills that now exist to the south (constructed of rubbish deposited in a landfill here through much of the twentieth century), you can see the same medieval church in a thoroughly novel and modern context.

From such a vantage point—on a hill in a former dump, peering across a highway—it becomes clear that any experience of the church as a medieval site is in part imaginative. To see the church as medieval, you must turn away from a present

that nonetheless impinges with force and insistence and that, in many ways, facilitates your visit and experience. You walk on an ancient road that is newly repaved and view an altarpiece or crucifix carefully conserved.

It is the desire to imagine the past through concrete religious artifacts that forms the focus of this book. I examine the ways in which artists of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries (and, by extension, their patrons and viewers) use modern renderings of past religious art to *recall*—remember and call back—a particular past, asserting a continuity that is both concretely demonstrable and at the same time consciously constructed.

LOCATING NORTHERN EUROPE

This study focuses on a handful of artists from the vast region of the northern periphery of Europe and the North Atlantic, home to some 33 million people and increasingly referred to by geographers and scholars of cultural studies as Northern Europe (Jones and Olwig 2008; McEachrane 2014). Historians and political scientists of the post-World War II era tended to subdivide the region into Scandinavia or the Nordic region on the one hand—Denmark, Faeroe Islands, Finland, Greenland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden (Derry 2000)—and the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania on the other, the latter long occupied by the Soviet Union (Kasekamp 2010). Such a division reflects or reflected political realities of the time: the divergent economic and political systems that prevented easy passage of people or ideas from one part of the region to the other. The Nordic states began a process of economic and cultural cooperation in the aftermath of a devastating World War II and in varying ways became integrated with each other and with their Western European neighbors during the postwar era. The Baltic states similarly became integrated (albeit unwillingly) into the sprawling Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, tied further to a looser confederation of Eastern European countries bound by the Warsaw Pact. The demise of the Soviet Union, the reemergence of the Baltics as independent nations, the passage of states such as Greenland from a status of protectorate to home rule or independence, and the rise and further integration of many of the countries listed above into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) alliance, the European Economic Area, and/or the European Union are prominent parts of the recent history of Northern Europe.

Beneath blanket terms and wider transnational alliances characteristic of an era of globalization lie the individual Northern European countries themselves, each with its own name, constitution, national culture, and society—“nation-states” that for the most part developed their modern forms in the nineteenth century or early

twentieth century, in a context of European nation-building that transformed the map of Europe in profound ways (Anderson 2006; Hobsbawm 2012). Although thoroughly modern in terms of political structure and cultural trends, these various countries often assert close connections with past kingdoms and states—medieval realms of the sagas or chronicles (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). Often, they root their modern existence in a glorious or strikingly independent past, one codified and celebrated today in all the trappings of what Michael Billig (1995) cogently describes as “banal nationalism”—schoolbooks, flags, holidays, museums, monuments. Such emblems of national culture intersect with or defy processes of globalization or modernity that pull individuals and societies into wider networks (Giddens 1991; Giddens 2007). Prominent in these celebratory emblems are ideas of religion, be they past non-Christian belief systems, forms of Christianity, enduring folk beliefs, notions of religious diversity, or other religious identities. Such national identifications are often part of the sense of continuity that the artists I discuss in this study seek to reference, support, or question.

Beneath or beyond the level of internationally recognized political nations, there exist further distinctive cultural entities in Northern Europe: linguistic and cultural minority groups, such as the Sámi people—the indigenous population of what is today Finland, Norway, Sweden, and the Kola Peninsula of the Russian Federation. As we shall see in our examination of one of the artists in this study, the twentieth century saw concerted efforts by Sámi artists and activists to proclaim a distinctive Sámi identity within the competing national discourses of Northern Europe. Sámi assertions of identity are paralleled by others in places including Greenland and Estonia, not directly addressed in this study but characteristic of the various and sometimes conflicting ways in which a sense of continuity with the past becomes articulated in modern art and culture.

Finally, the region I have described here is not entirely limited to its geographic bounds. In fact, people migrated from this region widely in the medieval period as well as more recently, establishing medieval colonies in places such as Scotland, England, the Isle of Man, and Ireland and modern colonies in North and South America, Australia, and elsewhere. Today, millions of North Americans consider themselves part of a wider Northern European ethnic community, although usually framed in reference to a single Nordic or Baltic country or a single ethnicity. My study’s small selection of artists makes no claims at covering the full diversity and complexity of this geographic region or its many and far-flung cultures. It does, however, seek to suggest some of the ways in which artists of this region tend to relate to images of the past as a means of rooting the present and routing a path forward for themselves and their communities.

The artists I have chosen to write about are very distinct in terms of their artistic styles, religious identities, careers, life histories, and specific cultural backgrounds. But, I will argue, they are united by certain features: they are well read and knowledgeable about their cultures and about their nations' artistic traditions, and they have cultivated and developed great expertise in the creation of wooden sculptures, a form of art that in various ways has been viewed as emblematic of their cultures. They use this knowledge to make art that takes up—in whole or in part—themes of a religious nature, which they make or made for sale to both religious institutions and secular clients. They are producers of “religious art.”

In the self-consciously secularized world of Northern Europe, some would define these artists and their interest in creating religious art today as exceptional or idiosyncratic—they can be seen as less-than-satisfactory representatives of contemporary “folk” or “common people,” concepts still lurking in the minds of academics and ordinary people alike when they turn their thoughts toward those “imagined communities” called nations (Anderson 2006) or when they consider reading about people who are not superstars or moguls. As I detail below in my discussion of the history of academic interest in folk art, scholars of the past have wanted to find arts—and, later, artists—that reflect the particularities of a national tradition, that somehow sum up the essence of a cultural experience of a wider polity imagined to share essential characteristics and viewpoints. Frequently, these shared characteristics and viewpoints are seen as disappearing, as pieces of the past, becoming replaced by a “modernity” that is at once more cynical, more secular, more atomized, more globalized, more “disenchanted” than what came before, views that have been cogently problematized (Frykman and Löfgren 1987; Gauchet 1997).

As I hope to show in my study, the artists I present in these pages seek to both participate in and push against these dominant paradigms of nation and modernity by which people interpret as well as shape their personal lives. These artists perform acts of interpretation and representation that are meant to enable themselves and their communities to reconnect with past notions of the sacred characteristic of their cultures in the distant past, ones that had supposedly all but disappeared in the frenzy and materialism of more recent eras. They seek to reincorporate these notions into a collective, lived present that can stand as an alternative to the seemingly homogenized, globalized, assimilated secularism offered—and often embraced, by and large—by their surrounding societies.

That these artists do this work through the production of wooden sculptures is no small detail: in fact, as has been amply demonstrated in the scholarly literature, and as I intend to underscore in this study, wooden sculptures have served key sacred functions in Northern European societies for countless centuries. At the same time,

wood holds for many a powerful sense of incongruity and anachronism: where once wood was the obvious material choice for most products in daily life, today it has been definitively replaced by metals and plastics. As a result, objects of wood can seem exceptional and alluring, reminders of past traditions of craftsmanship and pride of production that are seldom evident in mass-produced pressed plastic objects or cold metal (Sloane 1965).

In creating art in the here and now, the artists surveyed in this study enter into dialogue with past artistic practices and practitioners, interrogating both their motives and their technical methods and restoring or repurposing them for the modern communities that commission, receive, and experience their art. Their views are historicizing—archaeological—in the sense that they try to unearth a belief system evidenced to later viewers in surviving sculptures and architecture from the past. But their views are also deeply spiritual, seeking to discern the transcendent sense of the sacred encoded in past sculptures or in past artistic practices and recoverable by an artist through the revelatory act of sculpting in the style and medium and topic areas of one's forebears.

THEORETICAL AND DISCIPLINARY UNDERPINNINGS

My study is grounded in the intersection of three fields: folklore studies, art history, and religious studies. My principal training is as a folklorist, particularly with reference to the Nordic and Baltic region. As Regina Bendix has shown in her seminal study *In Search of Authenticity* (1997), folkloristic and art-historical formulations of notions like “authenticity,” as well as the equally widespread and potentially vexing terms *folk*, *folk art*, and *continuity*, have leaked out beyond the covers of academic treatises, museum exhibits, heritage preservation schemes, and conference presentations to influence and often to shape the discourse of people more generally. These notions have had profound intellectual, social, and economic effects for the artists I examine in this study and for the artistic enterprises in which they participate. In the following section, I discuss the scholarly traditions in which I situate my study and acknowledge the ways in which these academic traditions have influenced the artists I examine. The discursive realms of artists and of academics writing about artists overlap and interpenetrate, particularly in contexts such as Northern Europe, where people are often well educated and critically engaged, particularly in the matters that interest them most. While examining concepts of folklore studies and art history more generally below, I also pay particular attention to the ways in which these fields have approached questions of religion, a topic that I will explore further in the discussion of religious studies perspectives.

FOLKLORISTIC APPROACHES TO (FOLK) ART

Interest by the European elite in the cultural products and traditional practices of farmers, farm laborers, mariners, and other persons living outside of cities and towns arose in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Popular antiquarianism developed at least in part in response to massive processes of industrialization, technological innovation, urbanization, rural depopulation, religious heterodoxy, and emigration summed up in the notion of “modernity” (Cocchiara 1981; Abrahams 1993). These “forces” seemed to spell the immanent demise of the rural way of life, a mode of living imagined by educated aristocrats, clergymen, and middle-class townspeople as simple, honest, and humble. Of course, the practice of imagining rural life as an idyllic, pastoral antidote to the stress and responsibility of higher stations has its roots deep in European arts and letters, as the very terms *idyll* and *pastoral* remind us. Such imagining of rural livelihoods carried differing sorts of appeal: it could serve as a diversion from the stresses and worries of daily life, a reminder that town or manor life or upper-class existence afforded comforts unknown to the lower classes, and a reassuring image of an immense rural population—in many parts of Europe, the vast majority of the national populace—docile and obedient to the dictates of their superiors.

Despite the conservative and often condescending impetus behind such fascination, however, elite celebration of what came to be known as “folk culture” brought with it a powerful potential for social change. Romantic intellectuals came to perceive that the heart and soul of the nation—what the Baltic German philosopher, Lutheran pastor, and folk-song collector Johann Gottfried von Herder called the *Volksgeist*—resides not in the monarch or his cosmopolitan court but in the simple, culturally rooted daily life of the peasantry (Šmidchens 2013). And by extolling this peasant culture, shaped by centuries of coexistence with the land and the broader environment, intellectuals developed a capacity for imagining a society based on principles of equality and universal human rights. As they became comfortable with the notion of relinquishing some of the power they had enjoyed as lords, directors, or even owners of other people, the potential for new social configurations arose. In the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the map of Europe transformed from a patchwork of incestuous inherited realms and empires to a system of discrete nation-states ruled by elected officials, albeit with enfranchisement limited to native-born men alone. Not every cultural and linguistic group was lucky enough to be granted its own state; some, like the Sámi population, remain partitioned between several states, despite the continent’s intellectual investment in the nation-state model.

The elements of folk culture that first interested early folklorists like Thomas Percy, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, M. Winther, Elias Lönnrot, Jakob Hurt, Gunnar Hylltén-Cavallius, Peter Christen Asbjørnsen, and Jørgen Moe were discrete and highly collectible items of verbal culture—songs, tales, legends, proverbs. These could be recorded from the lips of the peasantry, edited to fit the refined tastes of the elite (or their children), and released to a reading public in the form of anthologies or musical collections. By the middle of the nineteenth century, collectors had begun to focus on items of material culture as well, particularly objects associated with agrarian life and seemingly reflective of the aesthetic sense and worldview of the peasant (Löfgren 2012; Klein 2013). Sometimes these items were lightweight and easily portable; increasingly, however, they could include more ponderous acquisitions like entire houses, churches, or barns, which collectors relocated to open-air museums located in parks within cities (e.g., Norway’s Norsk Folkemuseum, Sweden’s Skansen, Helsinki’s Seurasaari) or transformed into monuments in or near their original sites. This self-conscious production of “heritage” for the rising nation-state enshrined regional and local cultures as stable, timeless, and aesthetically pleasing, with elements of religious outlook or practice folded into the picture where applicable. In the open-air museums of Norway and Sweden, items of folk Lutheran religiosity—religious wall paintings or altarpieces or pulpits—were collected and displayed alongside butter churns, folk dress, and wagon wheels. Items of earlier religious tradition—for example, sculptures of Mary or the saints from the countries’ Catholic past—were consigned to separate historical museums. At the Norsk Folkemuseum, only the early thirteenth-century Gol stave church (figure I.3)—a gift from King Oscar II and the centerpiece of his own earlier open-air collection—defies this Catholic-Lutheran division within the museum’s organization of exhibits.

Where items of verbal culture spoke quintessentially to scholar-collectors’ fascination with history—old forms of language, ancient myths, mysterious trails of transmission that brought a foreign tale to a local setting—items of material culture often fed scholars’ interest in geography. The distinctive dress, buildings, and accouterments of different regions and locales within the nation-state became highlighted in ways intended to acknowledge the cultural diversity that was to be amalgamated, assimilated, into the national culture. In some cases, as Göran Rosander (1986) has shown for Sweden, a single region came to be “nationalized” as a symbol for the entire country; in other cases, as in Finland, distinctive regional tendencies became codified and celebrated as separate “tribes.” In his 1875 *Boken om Vårt Land*, Finnish writer and educator Zacharias Topelius enshrined the cul-



Figure I.3. Detail of the thirteenth-century Gol stave church. The church's ornamentation combines Christian and pre-Christian elements. The church was slated for demolition in 1880 but saved through a combination of royal and private donations. Anonymous (Norwegian). *Gol stave church* (ca. 1212). Wood, glass, metal. Norsk Folkemuseum.

tural differences between residents of Karelia and Häme on the one hand and between speakers of Finnish and Swedish on the other. This same logic is evident in nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century overviews of folklore and folklife from throughout the Nordic-Baltic region. Eventually, such geographic mapping of folk cultures led to the production of printed folk-culture atlases aimed at furnishing the reader with the same sorts of insights available in the open-air museum.

If in Europe one of the primary aims of such research was to define the nation for the nation, in the United States, where I live and work and where two of the artists of this study reside, folklore research took on the challenge of defining a nation built

on cultural diversity. The 1888 opening statement of the *Journal of American Folklore* identified distinct cultural traditions as parallel interests of American folklorists: remnants of ancient English culture, African-American tales and songs, the folklore of various European-derived ethnic groups, and the vast and varied traditions of America's indigenous peoples ("On the Field and Work of a Journal of American Folk-Lore" 1888). The folk arts and material culture of European immigrants figured centrally in a 1919 exhibit organized by Allen Eaton and entitled "Arts and Crafts of the Homelands." The exhibit was mounted in Buffalo, New York, and included some 40,000 objects. Eaton went on to write an influential book on the topic, his 1932 *Immigrant Gifts to American Life* (Greenwold 2014).

Simon Bronner (2002), in examining the history of folklore studies in the United States, notes the importance of the 1930s in particular for the development of notions of folk art in the United States. In the midst of the Great Depression, both Eaton and the scholar and New Deal administrator Holger Cahill collected, extolled, and promoted folk arts among American scholars, museum patrons, and general citizens. Cahill was responsible for a federal project that employed artists to make water-color renderings of nineteenth-century agricultural implements and objects, aiming to create an Index of American Design that would enable traditional objects to inspire and inform modern artists (Bronner 2002, 162). Cahill also spearheaded the influential exhibit "American Folk Art: The Art of the Common Man in America, 1750–1900," installed in 1932 in the New York City Museum of Modern Art. That exhibit, and Cahill's various writings, helped shape the way the fine-art world came to view and appreciate folk art.

In these American works, religious elements were downplayed so as to emphasize the melting-pot ideology of the era: folk arts were to be seen, as the subtitle to Eaton's 1932 catalog and study put it, as "Immigrant Gifts to American Life," not as signs of a resistance to acculturation or the persistence of marked institutions of cultural distinctiveness, the most apparent of which were religious in nature. Folk arts were presented as nonthreatening illustrations of the spice and verve contributed to American life through the arrival of new immigrants (Greenwold 2014, 109–10). As items of visual culture, of course, folk art avoided the language barrier and skirted the question of linguistic assimilation that hovered around items of verbal lore. In a pleasing folk shawl or carving, the English-speaking viewer could seemingly take the same delight as a person who came from the country of origin of the artist or the object's owner.

The folkloristic examination of religious art in particular developed gradually in both Europe and the United States. In Nils Bringéus's classic study of Swedish folk art, *Bildlore* (1981), as well as Don Yoder's (2013) contrast of Catholic and Protestant

styles within American folk art, presented in an updated retrospective to the Folk Belief and Religious Folklife Section of the American Folklore Society, overall stylistic tendencies and content choices in items of folk art are presented as reflective of underlying religious perspectives. Where Catholic art like ex-voto paintings focus on bodies and sensual experiences, Yoder argues, Protestant folk art—such as Pennsylvania Dutch Fraktur—celebrates the word and the internal contemplation of the divine. In a fascinating rejoinder to Yoder’s important observations, Henry Glassie (2014) examines a similar dichotomy between Hindu and Islamic art observable in the folk arts of Turkey, India, and Bangladesh. Glassie builds his general points not solely on the analysis of collected items but also through fieldwork interviews with artists, presenting their viewpoints and perceptions as key pieces of evidence alongside their art. His study employs a framework for attending to the personal within the general examination of folk art, in a manner that he promotes theoretically in his *Material Culture* (1999) and that is paralleled by the work of other folklorists working on folk art today (Wojcik 2008; Correll 2014).

SCHOLARSHIP ON ART

Critics and historians of art also took an interest in the traditions and products that inspire the artists of this study. Iceland-born Sveinn Kristjan Bjarnarsson, rechristened Holger Cahill, rose to national prominence in the United States as the head of the Works Progress Administration’s Federal Art Project. His labors helped shape the art market in which folk artists around the world make their livings today. Cahill writes without hesitation about folk art as “the sincere, unaffected, and childlike expression of men and women who had little training or book learning in art and who did not even know that they were producing art” (Bronner 2002, 164). In the same 1932 essay, he states that folk art’s “peculiar charm results from what are technical deficiencies from the academic point of view—curiously personal perspective and a childlike sense of proportion” (167). Such backhanded compliments helped establish a consumer taste for folk art, but one that insisted on its disjunction from more highly valued, more lucrative “fine” art, even when folk art was to be recognized, as Cahill maintained, as a precursor and intellectual ancestor of his day’s modern art. Folklorists after Cahill may have adopted a more inclusive and respectful attitude, but a lingering dichotomy between folk and elite worth remains.

The exoticization of folk art in Cahill’s pronouncements, and a resulting trivialization and marginalization of such art as somehow “less,” found a powerful extension and refinement in Clement Greenberg’s 1939 “Avant-Garde and Kitsch.” For Greenberg, folk art was largely irrelevant, a part of the irrecoverable past, a “folk

culture whose background was the countryside.” The present era, in contrast, was dominated on the one hand by a characteristically self-conscious and intellectually informed avant-garde, whose works were increasingly abstract and challenging to understand, and a vast and pernicious array of deceptively simplistic “kitsch,” mass-produced, inauthentic, imitative art produced for an ignorant urban proletariat and petty bourgeoisie. Kitsch, Greenberg stated, was “ersatz culture . . . destined for those who, insensible to the values of genuine culture, are hungry nevertheless for the diversion that only culture of some sort can provide.” Born in the cities, it had “flowed out over the countryside, wiping out folk culture.” Greenberg looks back with certain disdain on medieval art as well, seeing artists’ personal vision during the centuries prior to the Renaissance decisively subordinated to the interests of “public meaning” and Christian religiosity. Greenberg’s avant-garde–kitsch dichotomy largely erased folk art from scholarly attention, except to the extent that it became imitated and reproduced in kitsch or, more rarely, refined into abstract expressionism (as by artists such as Picasso). Religious art—art connected with personal or communal belief systems—became defined either as a part of the past, inimical to the thrust and value of the avant-garde, or symptomatic, again, of the invasive industry of kitsch. Greenberg’s essay shaped views of art for generations, even after many of its points were rejected or modified by later critics (including Greenberg himself). The art–kitsch dichotomy, and the marginalized, largely forgotten category of the folk, remain powerful elements of the ways in which scholars, consumers, and producers of art think about their work today.

In her influential study *The Artificial Kingdom*, Celeste Olalquiaga (1998) draws on the writings of Walter Benjamin to shift definitions of kitsch from Greenberg’s combination of mode of production and social class of consumer to one focused on the experience of wonderment and longing evoked by a viewer’s contemplation of objects that are both reminiscent of past notions of authenticity and sacrality (what Benjamin describes as a work’s “cult value”) and that simultaneously display the characteristic qualities of modernity: commodification, secularism, and mass production (Benjamin 1969). The discord between these perceptions, experienced as either nostalgia or melancholy, creates a sense of fascination, Olalquiaga argues, that is characteristic of the modern condition. In certain ways, as we will see in coming chapters, the artists in this study seek to bypass or elude this effect, finding ways to return in their art to a sense of authenticity and sincerity in which a sense of sacrality is palpable and operative. They seek a path forward that presents folk art and natural materials not as remnants of a past artistic system (as in Greenberg), objectified, finite, and closed, but as a generative alternative mode of art production and meaning-making in and for the present (figure I.4). Their art rejects the modes and

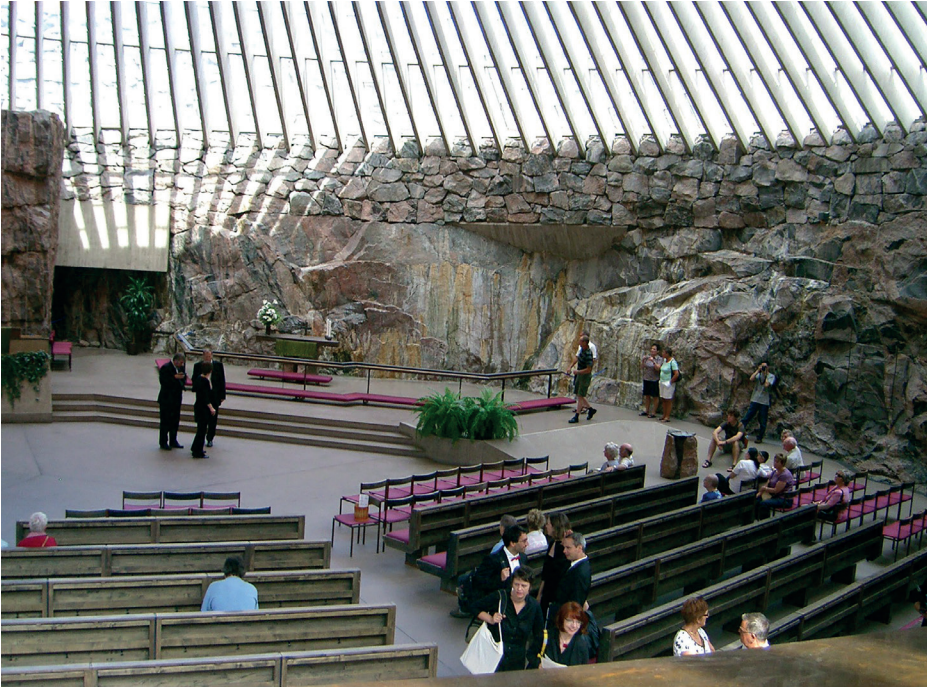


Figure I.4. Interior of *Tempeliaukio-kirkko*. The church in the Töölö neighborhood of Helsinki was formed by blasting a hole in a naturally occurring granite outcropping and capping it with a roof of steel, copper, and glass. Timo Suomalainen (Finnish, 1928–) and Tuomo Suomalainen (Finnish, 1931–88). *Tempeliaukio-kirkko* (1969). Helsinki, Finland.

economics of mass production, preferring to enact the personalized and meaningful qualities of the handmade expression of religious conviction.

In a wry characterization in his 1979 textbook *The Dynamics of Folklore*, Barre Toelken describes key divergences between the ways in which folklorists and art critics approach art:

Nothing seems to infuriate art historians, art collectors, and museologists more than folklorists who insist that the process by which an artifact is produced and the community taste it represents are more important than a question like “Is it suitable for framing?” Similarly, nothing bulges the eyes of folklorists faster than art historians, collectors, and museum folk who concern themselves with single artifacts (often described as unique)

because they “come up to” the expectations of the art critic as worthy of display. The professional art people feel the folklorists are concentrating on sociology, not art; the folklorists feel the art historians are being elitist (and stuffy). Both are probably correct in their own way. . . . (182)

Toelken’s dichotomy, of course, while holding a kernel of truth, disguises the roles of crossover folklorists in developing the sometimes rarified and highly judgmental standards by which galleries and museums have evaluated the works of “folk” artists. And it misses the many fascinating and important contributions made by art historians to the study of the history of culture and ideas. Scholars of the field have extended their interests beyond the fine arts into a broader array of artistic endeavors, and they have also grappled more and more with the social functions of art in context. Much fascinating work has been done in the classic mode of art history—in tracing the development and change of techniques, technologies, and themes over time, sometimes via the gradual accrual of innovations and solutions, sometimes via the unique insights and achievements of exceptional artists. Many valuable art-historical studies are cited in the coming pages, but I note particularly the ones that helped shape my understandings of what my project could address: Van der Sanden and Capelle’s (2002) examination of pre-Christian wooden sculptures in Europe, Mareth Lindgren’s (1991) examination of the production and use of images of Saint Birgitta in Sweden, Anne Lidén’s (1999) examination of depictions of King Saint Olaf of Norway, Lena Liepe’s (1995) regional examination of sculptures in Skåne, Gabija Surdokaitė’s (2004) perceptive analysis of the Lithuanian *Rupintojėlis* figure, and the fascinating studies of medieval artistic techniques by Tångeberg (1986) and Plahter (1992).

Instructive, too, have been works that examine religious art as a medium for expressing and achieving religious understandings over time, in which artistic genres and motifs are revealed to reflect and even shape evolving religious formulations (Thordeman 1964; Camille 1992; Kenaan-Kedar 1995; Schmidt 1995; Nischan 2004; Nordanskog 2006; Pentcheva 2006). Such scholarship, richly contextualized in historical, theological, and technological detail, has helped me understand the roles artists and artistic traditions can play, not necessarily in *leading* religious innovation but often as *illustrating* it for a community. This important line of art-historical research has enabled me to better understand the past sculptural traditions that the artists of this study draw on, as well as the roles that these modern artists may play in the religious communities, loose or formal, to which they belong.

A further instructive category within art-historical research are studies that examine with acuity the complex, sometimes tense, relations between the produc-

ers of art and the persons or communities commissioning them, including Carina Jacobsson's (2002) examination of the people who commissioned and paid for medieval religious art, examinations of specific sculptures (Svanberg and Qvarnström 1998), and examinations of specific artists—for example, Tilman Riemenschneider (Bier 1982) and Berndt Notke (Eimer 1985)—and the workshop of Håkon Gulleon (Karlsson 2005). Because the artists I look at all seek to support themselves through their art, they have to negotiate with care the complex line between personal vision and marketability. Whether producing artworks for church commissions or personal collections, issues of content and meaning are central to whether or not a work of art is sold. That relationship between producers and financiers, explored so cogently in Jacobsson's study of medieval ecclesiastical commissions, and wryly described in Greenberg's influential essay as the "umbilical cord of gold," plays a powerful role in the work and careers of all the artists I discuss in this study.

Partly because of this economic dimension to their professional lives, the artists I interviewed for this study often showed marked anxiety about the ways their work was interpreted or categorized by scholars, particularly by critics of art. Art critics and academics have an impressive arsenal of potentially denigrating pronouncements at their disposal for passing judgment on the relative merits of artists and their art. In addition to the standard watchwords academics can employ in connection with (folk) art in general—questioning a work's authenticity, originality, intellectual interest, artistic merit—items of religious art can be judged in terms of theological questions of orthodoxy and insight as well. It is little wonder that the artists I interviewed expressed irritation and sometimes downright frustration regarding their scholarly interlocutors. Sister Lydia—who describes herself not as "self-taught" but as "God-taught"—smiles at the presumption of commissioning bodies that would disqualify her from competing for commissions at prestigious church venues because she lacks "higher training" in art. "What's higher than God?" she asks. Phillip Odden turns the tables on academics, noting that he is free to think and say what he wants, while academics (like me) must always play it safe if they want to find a publisher for their works or advance in their careers. Academic pronouncements can have direct economic effects for artists and for academics, as Odden knows firsthand from his very positive experiences with Marion Nelson (1924–2000), a professor of art history at the University of Minnesota and longtime director of the Vesterheim Norwegian American Museum of Decorah, Iowa. I too know the fears and effects of academic judgments from my own experiences both producing art and writing scholarship. And it should be obvious that trivializing or disparaging remarks directed toward art that expresses an artist's deeply held religious convictions and understandings can be doubly painful. Lars Levi Sunna

noted with irony that art industry–shaped standards that would allow him to earn thousands for the production of a traditional knife also conspire to make it difficult for him to locate a commission for a piece of religious art. I am deeply grateful to the artists I interviewed for their willingness to not only share their artworks with me but also to discuss the sometimes very personal ways in which they think about their work and their roles as artists. In my study I have wanted to respect and to acknowledge the intellectual gravity of these artists’ views and the works that they have produced during their careers.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Where scholars of folklore studies and art history have long disciplinary engagements with art and other forms of material culture, scholars of the discipline of religious studies tended to ignore these areas until relatively recently. The “material turn” in the field came about in response to research in material-culture studies, visual studies, popular-culture studies, and ethnography (McDannell 1995; Morgan 1998; Plate 2002; Keenan and Arweck 2006). In his important study *The Embodied Eye*, David Morgan points out that religious material culture—the objects produced and used within religious communities and practices—can be seen as “instantiation[s] of a history of power relations” (2012, xvii). The production of a sense of the sacred involves, Morgan shows, both an empowering of the individual’s imagination and the channeling of that imagination along pathways defined and ratified by a wider community. That process highlights what is acceptable, right, to think or do, and castigates that which becomes defined as unacceptable—often the practices and viewpoints of an earlier religious system or opposing religious polity. The “sacred” is a form of disciplining the self to see the world in a way that a wider social body has identified and promotes. And it is a framework that can prove hostile to both religious difference and individual understandings. Morgan’s seminal ideas have found powerful and diverse extension in the many articles that have appeared in the academic journal he helped found with other luminaries of the field, including Birgit Meyer, Crispin Paine, and S. Brent Plate (Meyer, Morgan, et al. 2010). Inspired by ethnography and the fields of material-culture studies and visual studies, scholars of religion have aimed increasingly at exploring the “materiality” of religious experience and ideas. Scholars in this area of research have also increasingly drawn inspiration from the scholarly examination of the senses, the emotions, and the bodily experience of interactions with material culture (Brenneman, et al. 1982; Meyer 2008; Verrips 2008; Primiano 2016). Research in this area has contributed in valuable ways to my understanding of the sensory and emotional experience of art

and art production described at times by the artists of this study and implicit in the title *Sacred to the Touch*.

While many contemporary scholars of religion have provided insightful approaches to material culture, other scholars in the field have developed useful models for understanding the ways in which individuals or communities may engage with an imagined past. Harvey Whitehouse (2004) has argued that religious systems tend to oscillate over time between an “imagistic”—prophetic—mode of thinking and a “doctrinal” mode. In the imagistic mode, an individual may offer, out of personal or spontaneous religious experience, new ways forward for the community, often innovative and challenging but frequently couched in the potentially more reassuring discourse of a return to the past or to past practices. This tendency, when it engages with spirituality of the past, can sometimes lead to collective shifts in attitude within a community of belief—a “revitalization” that Marjorie Balzer, building on earlier anthropological scholarship, defines as “a group-level attempt to recapture an idealized past in order to reintegrate it with an uncertain future” (1999, 75). Balzer’s definition lays emphasis on the contemporary nature of the revitalization movement: although it can seem on the surface to entail a retreat into the past, it explores and represents the past so as to intervene in key ways in the present and future. Balzer’s definition also underscores the role of the charismatic leader in reformulating communal approaches to its past. Each of the artists in this study, I would argue, display that charisma as they manifest—boldly or quietly—an alternative way of looking at their cultural heritage, the belief systems of their communities’ past, and strategies for living in the present. Although these artists have immersed themselves in the art and outlooks of past generations, they are not mired in a disempowering nostalgia, and their art is not meant to be a historical reenactment, something meant to illustrate the ways people thought or acted in the “old days.” Instead, they seem to offer a determined countercultural stance, a set of actions and attitudes that are meant to chart a way through life in the present world, both for themselves and for those who look at and contemplate the art they have produced.

Religious-studies research cautions against a unitary reductionism that could easily be applied to the works of religious art or religious culture more generally, a tendency to assume that a sculpture has a particular, singular meaning for its maker or those who contemplate it. Interpretation can never fully pierce the veil of another’s perception, and this simple fact is underscored in religious-studies research. As Morgan writes, “Why an image seems powerful to a person or group of people is something we may never fully explain. But that should not deter the scholar from proposing accounts that trace the history of power over time as it shapes and takes shape in historical events” (2012, xvi). Talal Asad points out that symbols do not

carry meaning in themselves but, rather, point to “a set of relationships between objects or events uniquely brought together as complexes or as concepts, but having at once an intellectual, instrumental, and emotional significance” (1993, 31). While these scholars have provided valuable theoretical frameworks for understanding ways of examining religious thought over time, I have also benefited intellectually from studies that provide good models for tracing such power dynamics in their concrete manifestations, such as the works of Caroline Bynum (1982; 2007) and various theoretical discussions of religious heritage formation (Karlström 2013; Meyer and de Witte 2015).

One of the key perspectives explored in the discipline of religious studies is the development and change of religious ideas over time, both in and of themselves and as reflections of or shapers of complex processes of social interaction and power. In a framework of argument originating in the turn-of-the-twentieth-century writings of Max Weber (1976), Marcel Gauchet (1997) argued for the “disenchantment” of the world through the rise of a particular set of assumptions regarding a monotheistic God and the concomitant rise of notions of secularism. In the years since Gauchet’s influential work, scholars in a wide range of disciplines have investigated to what extent people have yearned for a “re-enchantment” of the world as an antidote to the perceived ills of modern secular societies (Elkins and Morgan 2009; Mitchell 2014). Important in understanding the work of several of the artists discussed in this study is the research of Sabina Magliocco (2004), a folklorist and scholar of religion who focuses particularly on American neopagan movements. Magliocco explores the ways in which modern Americans express a yearning for and occasional experience of a cosmos that is filled with supernatural meaning and with continuities with a pre-Christian past. The phenomena she describes find parallels in other parts of the West, including Northern Europe (von Schnurbein 1992; Blain 2001; Wallis 2003; Strmiska 2005).

Another increasingly pervasive element of contemporary secular spirituality is an interest in more fervent, intentional, and sustained relations to objects and daily activities. With respect to woodworking, such interests are evident already in Eric Sloane’s 1965 *A Reverence for Wood*, a work still in print today. Inspired in part by Bill Brown’s *A Sense of Things* (2003), scholars have sought to understand this interest, while more populist developments like the slow food movement and broader “slow” analogues in other areas of life—“maker” culture, “DIY” (do it yourself) culture, and hacker spaces—have aimed at restoring a sense of the artisanal, the personal, and the inventive in a world increasingly sustained and performed online, one in which producers and consumers are often completely unknown to each other, while life proceeds at a frenetic and relentless pace (Petrini 2003; Lysaght, et al. 2013; Petrini

2013). A sense of reflection and intentionality, unlocked through creative production or consumption of objects that take great care and thoughtfulness to produce, figures prominently in the secular spirituality of many Westerners today and can be seen in many of the works discussed in this study.

THE PROJECT OF THIS BOOK

This study grows out of my engagement with each of the fields discussed above and with each of the artists whose work I discuss in the coming pages. From the field of folklore studies, I have taken an interest in the relation of the individual to tradition as can be explored both through examination of an artist's work and through discussion with the artist. I have sought what Henry Glassie describes as the goal of good scholarship, folkloristic or otherwise: "to engage in collegial exchange with nonacademic individuals, discovering in conversation new arts of discourse and new theories of time" (1999, 9). From the discipline of religious studies, I have taken a readiness to contemplate the nature of the experience of sacrality that artists contribute to through their art and through the ways they discuss it. From the discipline of art history, I have taken sensitivity to the techniques artists use to achieve their effects and the ways these relate to both prior and contemporary artistic and social practices. From the fields of Scandinavian studies and Baltic studies, I have taken a profound respect for the intrinsic value of the small countries that occupy the northern rim of Europe and that in so many ways offer striking alternatives to the ways life is organized in bigger countries to the south, east, or west. I have absorbed from my decades of work as a Scandinavianist, and from my deep admiration but less extensive knowledge of the Baltic countries, a great respect for the capacity of Nordic and Baltic societies to nurture and value their members while endeavoring to find common ground and a basis for moving forward that will be good for one and all. I have perceived in the works I describe in this study the products of an outlook that seeks to balance the individual and the collective, and I have sought to understand the workings of this outlook in the lives and careers of the artists I studied.

Each of the artists discussed in this study creates or created sculptures of wood that engage with past notions of the sacred within their cultures. They do so self-consciously, programmatically, aiming to articulate a continuity that ties themselves to their predecessors and offers to help their contemporaries move forward with a secure mooring in the past. In this way, their works, though often referencing the past, are created for people in the present. So frequent was these artists' reference to the notion of continuity that, drawing on the model of Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (2006) and informed by Stephen Mitchell's (2014)

thought-provoking study of the concept of continuity, I came to think of my project in part as “imagined continuities”—ways in which the artists discerned and asserted continuity despite sometimes cataclysmic and tragic disjunctions that separated themselves from people of the past. In many ways, I found that the artists aimed, heroically, at revivifying a continuity despite processes of interruption, suppression, or supplantation that had intervened between the present and the past and that had made continuity seem improbable or impossible.

By using the term *imagined* here, I by no means seek to imply that the processes at work in these artists’ projects, the sense of the sacred that they promote, is somehow fictive, “imagined.” Rather, I want to underscore the sense of *revelation*, or imaginative engagement, that these artists display and describe in their works. Continuity, like disjunction, is a matter of perception, of attitude. Within religious thought, people choose to see themselves as connected to or separate from people of the past. They can see themselves as sharing in a view of the world that stretches back into their community’s (pre)history, that connects them with an itinerant Jewish preacher two millennia ago, or that links them to pious people of the medieval era or Reformation. Imagining continuity is a way in which communities enact a sense of the sacred and a means by which an artist expresses that sense for a broader community. And, as we shall see, that sense of continuity need not entail a chain of unbroken transmission from generation to generation from the distant past to the present: continuity can be reinstated, restored, through active engagement and processes of revelation, even in the aftermath of powerful and seemingly decisive disruptions like religious conversion, or what Rydving (1995) terms religious shift.

The artists in this study articulate various pathways of continuity that help make sense of their work and of the experiences of their communities. The late Eva Ryynänen, the artist I examine in Chapter 1, saw her work as *uncovering* an atavistic continuity characteristic of Finns. Drawing on characterizations of Finns as particularly drawn to nature and emotionally linked to quiet ruminations in the country’s abundant forests, Ryynänen felt that all Finns share certain age-old attitudes toward nature and toward trees, ones that she could uncover and celebrate in her art. By folding these elements of ancient worldview into the décor and design of a Lutheran chapel, Eva sought to remind her Finnish viewers of a continuity that was always already there but that had been disguised or overlaid by the details of Christianity. The church she built on the grounds of her forested *ateljé* (workshop) in eastern Finland underscores in various ways the fact that trees are living beings and that they, too, participate in praise of the divine. Although not stated overtly in her church’s presentation to a wider public, this theme is enunciated for an audience in powerful ways within the church’s décor, creating a sense of continuity *uncovered*

for the audience that visits the church and that contemplates its details. Uncovered continuity is an appealing aspect of Eva's art, especially for modern Finnish viewers who may feel estranged—as Eva did—from some of the specific doctrines and practices of Finnish state Lutheranism but who nonetheless treasure a notion of the sacred as an unstated element of their understanding of the world.

In chapter 2, the husband-and-wife artistic team of Phillip Odden and Else Bigton describe continuity in a related but slightly different way. For them—and particularly for Phil, who spoke most in the interview I conducted with them—the act of enacting again the ancient methods and motifs of Norwegian wood carving equips them with insights into the worldview and symbolic understandings of earlier artists and the communities for whom they produced their works. Here I draw on the concept of “covering” as used in popular music: in other words, when one singer or band “covers” (i.e., repeats or adapts) the song of someone else. I call the work that Odden and Bigton do *covered* continuity, in that the artists create a new version of a past work in order to make it available to a contemporary audience in a new way. Phil's work in making exact and adapted replicas of stave-church portals that survive today in historical landmarks and museums (figure I.5) affords insights into the logic that caused medieval Norwegians—working in an era on the cusp of pre-Christian and Christian belief systems—to incorporate dragons and other symbols into their ostensibly Christian products. His replicas connect the present artist with a continuity of worldview that pervaded life in the agrarian past and that, Odden and Bigton suggest, has persisted through the centuries despite conscious shifts in religious adherence or practice. In covered continuity, an artist gains understandings of past ways of thinking through carefully reenacting the artworks and creative processes employed by earlier artists. The continuity awaits such reenactment, encoded into the details and construction of the past object and retrievable through the patient and creative act of imitation. An artist who learns to imitate truly well learns how to create works completely in the style and mind-set of the old, embodying past practices and understandings in a contemporary body while also updating those traditions to meet modern needs and ideas. In the context of Norwegian America, where connections to a Norwegian heritage can grow tenuous through the processes of acculturation and the passage of time, the notion of regaining continuity through acts of reenactment can serve powerful symbolic and communal ends. By creating stave-church replicas in modern American contexts, Norwegian Americans can seek not only to express their ethnic heritage but also to revivify it in the here and now. Phil and Else's work in creating carvings for a stave-church replica at Thousand Oaks, California, serves as a particular illustration of this process.



Figure I.5. Detail of the thirteenth-century Hylestad Portal. The hero Sigurðr thrusts his sword upward into the belly of the dragon Fafnir. Anonymous (Norwegian). *Hylestad Portal* (ca. 1200). Wood; full portal dimensions 215 × 53 cm. Norwegian Museum of Cultural History.

The notion of bringing past forms of sacrality into present Lutheran practice is evident in the works and views of Sister Lydia Mariadotter, discussed in chapter 3. A sister in the Lutheran monastic order known as the Daughters of Mary of the Evangelical Way, Sister Lydia is part of a community founded in Sweden during the 1940s that has sought to explore Catholic monastic traditions and practices as resources for female religious life in contemporary Lutheran society. As an individual attracted to this spiritual project, and as an artist who came to produce sculptures for a wide variety of churches and chapels throughout Sweden, Sister Lydia spoke powerfully of *rediscovered* continuities. Even when adopting elements of past Catholic practice and outlook—for example, the adoption of a celibate religious life, the wearing of a habit, the creation of a sculpture of Mary or an altarpiece of the kind that standardly graced medieval Catholic church altars (figure I.6)—



Figure I.6. Detail of an altarpiece depicting Saint Anna, Mary, and infant Jesus. The altarpiece, produced in a northern German workshop sometime before 1500, was originally housed at Hägerstad church, Östergötland, Sweden. A smiling Saint Anna hands an apple to her naked grandson Jesus as the Virgin Mary looks on. Anonymous (northern German). *Altarpiece* (late fifteenth century). Wood, gilding, polychromy; 174 × 108 cm. Swedish Historical Museum, Stockholm.

Sister Lydia, like other members of her order, seeks to rediscover and invest in these practices an integrally Lutheran and Swedish sense of the sacred. I use the term *rediscovered* continuity to describe this process in order to acknowledge this crucial sense of active rediscovery that characterizes Sister Lydia's work. She is surprised and delighted by the realizations—the rediscovery—that her explorations of past Catholic understandings have engendered, and she responds to them overtly and covertly in her art. Where Eva Ryyänen's uncovering of an underlying sense of the sacred implies a largely unconscious view that all Finns are assumed to hold, Sister Lydia wishes to rediscover a conscious sense of the sacred hidden in medieval art.

The ferocity of the process of suppression of religious outlook and tradition during the missionization of Sámi people in northern Sweden, Norway, and Finland

in the 1700s and after forms the historical backdrop for chapter 4. Although Sámi had been exposed to Christianity for centuries starting around the year 1000 and had adopted the religion in a syncretic form in the medieval period, the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw a renewed missionary effort in the realms of Sweden-Finland and Denmark-Norway aimed at stamping out old vestiges of Sámi belief and practice, to be replaced by a more orthodox embrace of the state Lutheran church. In the nineteenth century, under the leadership of the Swedish-Sámi minister Lars Levi Læstadius, many Sámi adopted a particularly rigorous and ascetic form of Lutheranism that became known as Laestadianism. Lars Levi Sunna, raised in a Laestadian household and community, became active as a catechist within his local church. At the same time, in his practice of creating traditional Sámi handicrafts (*duodji*), and when listening to his elders tell stories about supernatural occurrences and individuals, he became aware of the fact that members of his community were still familiar with and still actively upheld elements of the old pre-Christian Sámi worldview. While rediscovering this continuity in his elders, Lars Levi also began a process of *recovering* that continuity in his own art, actively studying historical and ethnographic accounts of the old religion and creating works that take up again the imagery and understandings of the Sámi pre-Christian past and bring them into conscious conjunction both with Laestadian—and broader Lutheran—religiosity and with the artistic traditions of his community's *duodji* handicrafts. Lars Levi's artistic and intellectual project is not to replace his community's Laestadian belief system with the pre-Christian beliefs that had been criminalized and suppressed during the era of Lutheran missionization but, rather, to acknowledge these beliefs as a once-viable and satisfying belief system that had been violently attacked and destroyed by missionary forces. Lars Levi seeks to *recover*, to recuperate, his community's past so that it can be acknowledged and celebrated as part of the Sámi present, even while the community continues to embrace and make use of the Christianity that displaced it.

Notions of religious syncretism and of religious suppression play important roles in my examination of the art of Algimantas Sakalauskas, discussed in chapter 5. Algimantas describes the meanings of motifs of traditional roadside shrines that once marked the Lithuanian countryside (figure I.7) but that were removed or destroyed during the long period of Soviet occupation. Although the roadside shrine tradition undoubtedly had predecessors in medieval Christian practice throughout Northern Europe (and more broadly), the Lithuanian roadside shrine took on particular cogency in the context of the eighteenth-century Counter-Reformation, in which the relatively recently converted Lithuanians were initially attracted to the Lutheranism of the German Reformation and then subsequently drawn back to

Catholicism, along with Poles and other communities of Northern Europe. In the first era of Lithuanian independence, roadside shrines became important symbols of Lithuanian national culture. During the post-WWII Soviet occupation, these same roadside shrines became at first physical manifestations of religious traditions to be suppressed, then products of artistic traditions to be secularized along lines consonant with Marxist-Leninist philosophy, and finally vehicles for protest against Soviet oppression. In learning the art of carving such figures in the context of late Soviet Glasnost and Perestroika, and continuing that practice now in the era of regained Lithuanian independence, Algimantas speaks of *discovered* continuities in which he is able to connect his present artistic practices not only with the past practices of Catholicism — overtly emblemized in the figures he carves — but also with earlier native Lithuanian understandings of the cosmos incorporated in unspoken but nonetheless spiritually efficacious ways in the geometric details and placement of roadside shrine structures and motifs. With insights gained from New Age literature and scholarly presentations of the roadside sculptural tradition advanced in the Soviet era, Algimantas discovers a complex understanding of the cosmos in Lithuanian religious carving and reproduces it in the roadside ornaments, municipal monuments, and cemetery grave markers that he produces for the benefit of his community.

All of the artists in this study hearken back to prior eras of religious art that they have come to know and in some ways seek to emulate in the present. In order to better understand these artists' activities, then, we need to know about the past artistic traditions that they draw upon, both as these have been characterized by modern scholars in the fields of folklore studies, religious studies, and art history and as they have been interpreted by the artists themselves. For this reason, each of the coming chapters also surveys some era of past Nordic-Baltic religious art, one that has proved important to the modern artist at hand as a source of inspiration and a model of content or style. My study is by no means a complete history of Nordic-Baltic religious art over time. Rather, my excursions into pre-Christian, medieval Christian, and Reformation-era art are meant primarily to shed light on the modern artists whose work and careers are the focus of my study. The specific eras of importance to these artists have determined the order in which I discuss them in this study. In chapter 1, on Eva Ryyänen, I survey some of what is known about pre-Christian religious sculpture in the Nordic-Baltic region and the ways in which abstract figural sculptures were deployed in the natural landscape and used as interlocutors with the sacred, notions that underlie and help justify the approach that Eva took in her modern artistic adaptations of Christian spaces and motifs. In chapter 2, on Phillip Odden and Else Bigton, I look at the syncretic sculptural



traditions of early Nordic Christianity, in which old elements of pre-Christian religious outlook and narrative became invested with new meaning in Christian contexts and the ways in which that syncretic tradition can become an emblem of enduring Norwegian identity that can unite communities separated by religious, historical, and geographic disjunctions. In chapter 3, on Sister Lydia Mariadotter, I trace that imaginative contemplation of the past into the more recent present in the ways in which Lutheran thinkers—particularly members of Sister Lydia’s monastic order—have opened themselves to medieval Catholicism as a source of inspiration and practice. In chapter 4, on Lars Levi Sunna, I look at the ways in which a Sámi intellectual of the later twentieth and early twenty-first centuries made peace with the pre-Lutheran past and came to value as cultural heritage objects that express earlier understandings of the supernatural. In chapter 5, on Algimantas Sakalauskas, I examine the medieval notions of sculptures as implements of intercessory prayer, a tradition that was suppressed in the Reformation but reasserted in the Counter-Reformation, and the ways in which this medieval genre became an implement of cultural activism in the late Soviet era and present. Through looking at the historical sources that these artists reference and employ, I hope to delineate some of the complex ways in which the artists at the center of this study seek to make the past part of the present and formulate articulations of cultural and religious identity for themselves and for the communities for whom they have created their art.

Figure I.7. (*Facing*) Hand-carved and mass-produced crucifixes, rosaries, and pole shrines at Kryžiu Kalnas (the Hill of Crosses) in Šiauliai, Lithuania. The hill had already become the repository of religious sculpture in the nineteenth century and continues to receive new additions down to the present, despite concerted efforts during the Soviet era to suppress the tradition. Anonymous (Lithuanian). *Pole Shrine*. (twentieth century). Wood, metal, plastic. Kryžiu Kalnas, Lithuania.

Eva Ryyönen

Karjalan Kukkiva Puu (The Flowering Tree of Karelia)
and Continuity Uncovered

IN a quiet grove of towering pine trees, on a former farmstead on the outskirts of the village of Lieksa, in the Finnish district of North Karelia, stands a serene and welcoming church. Its creator, Eva Ryyönen (1915–2001), embraced wood as both an essential element of her personal religiosity and as a part of her Finnish national and cultural identity. In an overview of her art and philosophy that appeared several years after her death, Eva notes: “*Maa on minun lähtökohtani. Ihminen on yhtä luonnon kanssa*” (Simola, Tissari-Simola, and Repo 2004, 7), which translates as “The land is my source. The human being is one with nature.” The words *maa* and *luonto* employed in this statement possess a polysemy of great importance to Eva: *maa* means both “land” and “country,” so that Eva identifies her source simultaneously as both the natural landscape and the country of Finland in particular. *Luonto* means “nature” in the sense of the plants, animals, earth, and water that make up the deeply forested and lake-strewn landscape of North Karelia, as well as “nature” in the sense of a being’s personality and characteristics. To be one with both “nature” and with “one’s nature” is to fully realize oneself in the concrete context of one’s surroundings and one’s self. This, I will argue, is the fundamental message of Eva’s church (figure 1.1), her *taitelijan temppeli* (artist’s temple), built near her dairy-barn-turned-*ateljee* (workshop) on land that she lived on and loved for much of her long and richly rewarding career. As her statement implies, Eva’s religious views were broad and pantheistic, finding cultural expression in the Lutheranism of her society, but also always gesturing toward a view that recognized the inherent sacrality of tree or animal within the grand totality of the cosmos. As I hope to show in this

chapter, Eva sought to uncover a continuity that binds Finns to a broader web of natural beings—all of whom, in their own way, acknowledge and offer praise to their Creator. To understand her work, I will touch upon the significance of forests and nature in modern Finnish culture and survey briefly some of the most ancient wooden expressions of sacred beings surviving in the Nordic-Baltic region. I will then offer a close examination of Eva's remarkable church in light of this context and in relation to her career as one of the most successful artists in the medium of wood in twentieth-century Finland, a career summed up by the title of one of the important surveys of her work, Margit Laine's 1992 *Karjalan Kukkiiva Puu* (*The Flowering Tree of Karelia*).

EUROPE'S MOST FORESTED COUNTRY

Forests, trees, and wood matter a great deal in the Nordic-Baltic region, geographically, economically, and culturally. This fact is particularly the case in Finland, where forests cover some 86 percent of the country's overall terrain, earning it the title of Europe's most forested country. Forestry represents the country's second-largest industry, generating roughly 20 percent of its export revenues and more than 5 percent of its gross domestic product (Forest.fi 2009). Understandably then, forests have become important in the cultural representations of the country, both domestically and abroad.

It should be noted that this geographic and economic significance of forests masks to a certain degree the fact that the majority of Finns live today in urbanized environments, primarily in the southern tracts of the country. According to United Nations Common Database population estimates reported on the Globalis website, 61 percent of Finns live in urban areas, as compared with 83.4 percent of Swedes, 81 percent of Americans, and 89 percent of residents of the United Kingdom (United Nations 2009a; United Nations 2009b). The lower urbanization rate for the Finnish population does not mean, however, that Finland is "one huge forest with five million people hiding in it" as a 2009 *New York Times* article reported (2009). Arvo Peltonen (2002) points out that although the Finnish population distribution is sparse, at seventeen persons per square kilometer, the vast majority of the populace lives in areas where the population density hovers between thirty persons per square kilometer (the average for the entire southern coast region) to more than two hundred per square kilometer (the Greater Helsinki area). These statistics reflect the realities of life in this highly affluent, highly centralized Nordic nation, where an individual's actual concourse with the forest may be limited to summer holidays, weekend mushroom or berry picking, and skiing vacations.



Figure 1.1. Eva Ryyänen's chapel. The building as it stands today, on her farm-workshop Paateri, combines logs in a largely natural state with extensive glass to allow people inside the church to easily view the surrounding evergreen stand. Eva Ryyänen (Finnish, 1915–2001). *Taitelijan Temppeli* (1991). Wood, glass, steel. Lieksa, Finland.

Given the tendency of formal religion to address disparities between actual and ideal situations, forests and trees in particular can become very important in Nordic religious representations. Where urban life clearly represents the actual experience of many citizens, life in close association with the forest can be seen as an idyllic alternative existence, a respite from ordinary life. Heikki Ylikangas underscores this notion in his discussion of modern Finnish experiences of the forest: “*Hän kokee*

sammumatonta kaipuuta sinne, missä ei ongelmia eli muita ihmisiä liiemmin ole, siis metsän yksinäisyyteen. Sinne hän pakenee . . .” (“The Finn experiences an unquenchable longing for a place where there are not too many problems, or in other words, people: that is, the solitude of the forest. There he flees . . .”; 1996, 41). Veikko Anttonen (1996a) describes the “Lutheranization” of the landscape, by which the shadows and isolation of the forest environment become a privileged site of personal reflection and transformation. The view of the forest as a refuge from the pressures and conflicts of ordinary social life, and as a privileged site of contemplation and meaning-making, lends the forest—and, by extension, trees and wood—powerful resonance for modern Nordic viewers, a resonance that underlies part of the effect and agenda of the artworks discussed below.

The personal significance of the forest suggested above exists in Finland alongside a specifically *national* significance as well. The forest as a national symbol has its roots in the nineteenth century and the intellectual milieu of political and cultural nationalism (Germundsson 2008; Lehtinen 2008; Mead 2008). As emerging Western nation-states searched for distinctive features of national history, culture, or economy to highlight in their self-portrayals to the wider world, Finland came to attach great significance to its natural landscape. The fact that outsiders regarded the country largely as wilderness contributed to this choice: the Italian traveler Giuseppe Acerbi, for instance, writes in the preface to his influential memoirs of his travels through Finland-Sweden in 1798–99 of the “novelty, the sublimity, and the rude magnificence of the northern climates” (1802, vi), elements that warranted a visit from someone even from the very center of European art and civilization, like himself. Johan Ludvig Runeberg’s poem “Vårt Land,” published as the preface to his *Fänrik Ståhls Sägner* of 1848 and eventually the text of Finland’s national anthem, makes warm and copious reference to the country’s natural terrain. Significantly, however, in its enumeration of the beauty of the natural landscape, the text makes no explicit mention of forests in any way. As Leea Virtanen has shown, nineteenth-century Finns tended to view the forest as unsightly and unavoidable, finding aesthetic value in the *absence* rather than the presence of trees. The notion of even sporadic plantings of trees near Finnish housing arose only in the latter half of the century, diffusing into the country as part of an aristocratic landscape aesthetic of forested parklands that had developed elsewhere on the continent (1994, 135).

By the end of the century, however, forestry had become a major industry in Finland, and images of forests and forest activities became increasingly more common and more positive in the arts and literature (DuBois 2005). Rural folk and lumberjacks became heroes of Finnish novels and plays, as in Aleksis Kivi’s *Seit-*

semän Veljestä (1870), Teuvo Pakkala's *Tukkijoella* (1899), and Johannes Linnankoski's *Laulu tulipunaisesta kukasta* (1905). Zacharias Topelius's *Boken om Vårt Land* (1875) enshrined the forest as part of the Finnish character and presented it as such to generations of Finnish schoolchildren. The image of the Nordic lumberjack became widely known in Scandinavian America as well, where the popularity of the image correlated with the historical reliance of immigrant Swedes and Finns on logging as a means of employment (Leary 2001). Images of Ole and Lena, Paul Bunyan and Husqvarna chain saws helped develop and sustain this trope of Nordic identity internationally, with significant popular, literary, and economic ramifications.

At the outset of the twentieth century, the forest and its most noticeable product, wood, also began to emerge as important elements in Finnish approaches to modern architecture, expressing national identity and an asserted Finnish "nature" in the loving embrace of wood as a medium (Pallasmaa 1994). In 1937 Alvar Aalto contributed to the rise of wood in functionalist architecture through the house he designed for Harry and Maire Gullichsen (Gaynor 1984, 37–43; Pallasmaa and Futagawa 1985). Aalto sought to echo nature in the forms and materials of his resulting Villa Mairea, incorporating wooden columns into his design that were meant to suggest the trunks of trees, and even wrapping steel columns in wood so as to make them appear more natural. The roof of the house's sauna was covered in turf, and the interior spaces of the house made ample use of polished blond wood, cut in simple, smooth lines and covered with a clear finish. Local stone and brick were also employed in the interior, lending the home a rustic feel that contrasted with the villa's refined lines and owners. The furnishings of the house were especially designed by Aalto's wife, Aino. Her lamps, stools, chairs, and tables would eventually become the trademark items of Artek, an interior-decorating firm founded by the Aaltos and Gullichsens together with Nils-Gustav Hahl (Artek 2009). As Elizabeth Gaynor writes, "In Villa Mairea, Aalto achieved not only the bridge he sought between man and nature, but a harmony between man and manmade that was to have lasting impact on architecture in Finland and throughout the world" (1984, 41). Through Artek, Aino's innovative designs literally became household items, eventually finding imitation in the works of many other Nordic designers, perhaps especially IKEA. Aalto's furniture made frequent use of birch and pine, finished in clear synthetic coating, so that its color and grain would remain prominent. Eva Ryyänen's church, as we shall see, draws on these associations broadly, linking the building both to notions of Finnish love of nature and to ideas of Finnish nationhood.

In terms of broader architectural planning, the Helsinki region's postwar garden-city project Tapiola aimed to combine forest settings and urban life. Conceived of by

Finnish social-welfare activist and philanthropist Heikki von Hertzen with a name drawn from the Finnish national epic *Kalevala*, Tapiola means “place of the forest god Tapio.” Yet the community was situated not in some distant Karelian forest tract but, rather, in convenient commuting distance from Helsinki. With its combination of apartment houses, single-family dwellings, and woodland, Tapiola represented for Finns of the twentieth century an idyllic fusion of the serene forest—now an established element of national identity and ideals—and the convenience and efficiency of stylish urban modernity. For Finns, it came to represent the core of what Frykman and Löfgren (1987), writing about Sweden, identify as the ideal of Nordic postwar modernity: a seamless unity between the technology and efficiency of the modern world on the one hand and the simplicity and humanity of the agrarian past on the other. As Frykman and Löfgren note, nature enjoyed a key place in Nordic postwar décors, but primarily as a clean, smooth, and lovely reworking of the rough surfaces and smells of the past. It is telling that the various municipal and architectural planners of Tapiola employ a name from the Finnish pagan past for this forest community, suggesting a linkage between the twentieth-century love of the forest and the ancient heritage and history of Finland.

In 1969 Helsinki’s church architecture came to partake of this new natural aesthetic through Temppeliaukio-kirkko, an underground church designed to occupy an open space in downtown Helsinki that had long been dominated by a single granite slab (Mehtälä 2003; see Figure 1.4 in the introduction). Architects Timo Suomalainen (1928–) and his brother Tuomo Suomalainen (1931–1988) called for a pit to be blasted in the rock and for the resulting crater to be covered and fitted out as a church. Temppeliaukio-kirkko’s walls are formed of the natural granite of the once-unassailable rock, capped with a ceiling of copper and glass. Wooden furnishings inside the space lend it a warmth and intimacy that its creation would seem to make unlikely, and the resulting church has become one of the favorite tourist sites in Helsinki. On any given day, one can observe busloads of visitors from Europe, North America, and Asia all admiring the “rock church” for its technological innovativeness, beauty, and seeming acknowledgment of the essential sacrality of nature. The church’s unfinished pink and gray granite walls, as well as its furnishings of stone and wood, convey the idea that natural forms and objects are holy in and of themselves, even with minimal human alteration. Such treatments of natural materials in twentieth-century Nordic design and architecture became suggestive of the famed Nordic “Middle Way,” a humanized, privatized, aestheticized approach to socialism that embraced the common person and yet sought to propel this imagined citizen into the sleek and efficient modernity of postwar society (Reed 1998).

If twentieth-century architects and designers asserted an ancient esteem for wood and forests, their assertions were based in part on historical fact. At the end of the first century AD, the Roman writer Tacitus refers to sacred groves among the barbarian peoples to the north of the Roman empire (1999, chs. 39–40). The groves are sacrosanct: entry into them is strictly prohibited except in connection with specific ritual acts. Medieval texts as well as historical accounts from as late as the fourteenth century attest to the existence of sacred groves and trees in Nordic as well as Baltic tradition. In Baltic cultures, sacred groves were protected from all intrusion, and certain trees, particularly oaks, were regularly consulted for guidance regarding the future (Richardson 1998, 23). Bronze-Age Scandinavians buried their dead in oaken coffins already in the fourteenth century BC (41), and the Celts likewise considered the oak sacred (47). Examining the broader geographic and historical range of such practices, Anders Andrén notes accounts of oracular oaks that were associated with the Greek god Zeus at Dodona and consulted for more than a thousand years (2014, 39).

Basing his relations on travelers' and missionaries' reports, the eleventh-century Adam of Bremen describes the pagan temple at Uppsala (Bremen 2002, Book 4, xxvi, 207). A later hand (possibly Adam himself) includes a scholium that reads:

Near that temple there is a great tree whose limbs extend broadly and which remains green in both winter and summer; of what variety it is no one knows. (Bremen 2002, scholium 134)

The tree, evidently an evergreen, is said to stand near a spring used in divinatory rites. Adam also describes a sacred grove near the temple, which is said to have been the site of various sacrifices:

The bodies are hung in a sacred grove located near the temple. This grove is indeed so sacred to the gentiles that every single tree is believed to have become divine because of the death or rotting of the sacrificial victims. Dogs as well as horses hang there along with humans, whose suspended and mixed bodies have been described by a certain Christian eye-witness, some 72 years old. (Bremen 2002, Book 4, xxvii)

Anders Hultgård views these elements of Adam's account as likely reflections of actual pre-Christian traditions at Uppsala (1997, 27).

Archaeological finds from the island of Frösö, Jämtland, Sweden, provide tangible evidence of pre-Christian tree rituals, at least in one locale. There, a sacrificial tree—a birch—regularly received the cremated remains of animal sacrifices until the tree was cut down and the site surmounted by a Christian church (Iregren 1989; Iregren 1999). Significantly, Frösö seems to have been an area of cultural hybridity, in which Norse agrarian religion mixed syncretically with Sámi hunter-gatherer livelihoods and religious traditions, a fact reflected in the mix of wild and domesticated animals sacrificed at the site (DuBois 2012a).

Among Sámi, trees could be unearthed and turned upside down, their roots now in the place where one would expect branches (Pentikäinen 1995, 149–53). Alternatively, branches or trunks could be altered so as to suggest in abstract a human form. Particularly in the case of poles, these could be fashioned to resemble people, albeit in a highly stylized manner. A tree could be denuded of its branches except for one or two and left standing, a face carved into its trunk. Among both Sámi and Finns, a tree located on a shore where good fishing had occurred would be altered—its lower limbs cut away—so that community members could remember the site of success in future years and also bring offerings to ensure that the supernatural beings responsible for the past success would deign to continue their assistance in the future (Pentikäinen 1995, 153). Trees altered in this fashion—known in Finnish Karelia as *karsikot*—could serve as intimate recipients of sacrifices: sites both to celebrate past luck and to ensure its abundance in the future.

Textual accounts from later centuries corroborate these indications of sacred trees among pre-Christian Scandinavians. The Eddaic poem “Völuspá” mentions a sacred ash named Yggdrasill:

Asc veit ec standa, heitir Yggdrasill,
hár baðmr, ausinn hvítaauri;
þaðan koma döggar, þærs í dala falla,
stendr æ yfir, gröenn, Urðar brunni. (Kuhn and Neckel 1983, 5)

An ash I know that stands, called Yggdrasill,
a tall tree, watered with white droplets;
from it comes dew that falls into the valleys;
it stands ever green, above the spring of fate. (1983, strophe 19, 5)

Yggdrasill is also mentioned in the Eddaic poem “Grímnismál” in association with a cosmic eagle, hawk, squirrel, deer, and serpents (1983, strophes 29–36, 63–64). The

tree is described as having roots that stretch to some of the key waters in the cosmos, including the spring of fate. “Grímnismál” also mentions another tree named Lærað, locating it beside the god Óðinn’s hall and populating it with the goat Heiðrún and deer Eicþyrnir (strophes 25–26). Scholars have tended to equate the two trees, as well as the tree Glasir mentioned by Snorri in his “Skaldskaparmál” (Sturluson 1987, 96). A fourth named tree, Mímameiðr, is mentioned in “Fjölsvinnsmál” strophes 20 and 24 (Andrén 2014, 31). “Völuspá” strophes 17–18 relate the origin of human beings in the middle world as pieces of transformed driftwood, while “Vafðrúðnismál” strophe 45 credits tree trunks as the means by which human beings survive the cataclysmic Ragnarök. In “Grímnismál” strophe 35, Óðinn expresses sympathy for Yggdrasill’s many trials:

Ascr Yggdrasils, drýgir erfiði
meira, enn menn viti; hiortr bítr ofan, enn á hliðo fúnar,
scerðir Níðhoggr neðan. (Kuhn and Neckel 1983, 64)

The ash Yggdrasill suffers torment
more than men know;
deer bite from above, rot afflicts from the side,
the serpent Níðhoggr gnaws from below. (1983, strophe 35)

The lines show an awareness of mature trees as crucial biotopes for dependent species and as beings with consciousness, sensations, and perhaps understanding.

Andrén has suggested that three-cornered stone settings—some nine hundred of which survive in southern and central Sweden and Norway, as well as (to a lesser extent) in Denmark, Skåne, and northern Norway and Sweden—may symbolize the world tree (2014, 48–49). Such settings appear as straight-sided triangles from circa 500 BC to AD 550 and as triangles with concave sides circa AD 200–1050 (55). They are often sited on a high point in the landscape (54) and are strongly associated with cremation burial. Sometimes the cremated remains of an individual are contained within the interior of the stone setting; in other cases, the stone setting is surrounded by burials that occurred later (54). In northern Scandinavia, such settings are sited alongside lakes and include deposits of elk and reindeer antlers, evidence that has suggested a diffusion of the custom from Scandinavians to Sámi in the region (55). Andrén suggests that such three-cornered settings may have surrounded a guardian tree of a village or farm (37) or contained a post or pole as discussed below (49–51). A few of the surviving settings have remains of a wooden post or one

or more stone pillars in their centers (51), features that correlate well with textual accounts of the tree at Old Uppsala or archaeological evidence of the sacrificial birch at Frösö (37).

A mark of the prominence of groves, trees, and poles in Northern European worship can be gleaned from accounts of their systematic destruction during the region's sometimes violent process of Christianization. According to the "Annales Lauris-senses maiores" for the year 772, Charlemagne is said to have ordered the destruction of this pillar in his efforts to suppress the pagan religions of the region (2014). Saint Boniface is said to have attacked and cut down a similar such oak at Geismar during the eighth century (Schnürer 1956, 395), and Kurt Villads Jensen (2013) notes similar practices among Cistercian Christianizers in later centuries. Sometimes, as Villads Jensen notes, such trees could be left standing but marked with a carved sign of the cross so as to make clear the dominance of the new faith (223). Saxo's account of the destruction of a wooden object (a statue) at Rügen in 1168 shows no such clemency, however: the object is hacked into pieces and used as fuel for cooking the Christian Crusaders' dinner after battle (222). Hultgård also notes a papal bull of Pope Innocent III, dated to 1199, which lists objects of pagan veneration as including both trees and springs (27). The term *lundr* in Old Norse referred specifically to sacred groves, and the fact that the first major seat of Christianity in Denmark was established in the city now called Lund indicates a likely process of supplantation of such sacred sites (Nilsson 2004).

EVA RYYNÄNEN AND HER ART

Although I never had the opportunity to interview Ryynänen personally, I did get to meet her lifelong friends Raimo and Pirkko Kärkkäinen (2006), who then managed Paateri, Ryynänen's farm and studio, now a state museum. Raimo and Pirkko showed me Ryynänen's art and discussed their memories of the artist and her views. I also consulted the two books about Ryynänen to date, the first written with her cooperation and approval before her death (Laininen 1992), the second completed with a strong sense of respect for the artist's own self-portrayal (Simola, Tissari-Simola, and Repo 2004). Both works confirmed the Kärkkäinens' description of Ryynänen and her career. They detail the deep spiritual relation that Ryynänen felt between herself, her people, and wood. Ryynänen developed a sculptural style that highlighted the natural qualities of her favorite medium and explicitly linked these with concepts of God and the cosmos.

Eva Ryynänen was born Eva Åsenbrygg in the Savo village of Vierimä, near Iisalmi, in 1915. Throughout her life she recalled the evenings she spent as a child,

whittling small birds and animals while her father repaired farm equipment during long winter's nights (Laininen 1992, 5). A *Suomen kuvalehti* article from 1934 recounts the young artist's new discovery by the Suomen Taideyhdistys art institute of Helsinki (Heikinheimo 1934). In the photo included in the article, she is a lean and resolute nineteen-year-old, seated beside a carving of a moose, her long pigtails chest length, her fists clenched. Great things were expected of this young woman with a grade-school education and childhood experience as a cowherd. She had come to the attention of the academy through her remarkable carving of a scene from Aleksis Kivi's classic 1870 novel *Seitsemän Veljestä*. In the sculpture—never sold, and now a part of the permanent collection at Paateri—the seven brothers of Aleksis Kivi's comedic masterpiece are depicted stranded atop the massive rock Hiidenkivi, mournfully calling for help, encircled by angry bulls. The sculptor portrays the young men as lean bumpkins, slouching, their mouths agape, their expressions humorous and yet not stereotyped. The figures are executed with rough scalloping over most of the bodies but their faces are finished glassy-smooth. In the style of folk carving, their heads and hands are slightly enlarged, although without the grotesque exaggeration typical of caricature works. The bulls are carved in relief in front of the rock, prancing in a stylized, decorative fashion. The piece is finished in a bright clear lacquer that sets off the golden tone of the wood while lending the surface a glassy shine.

According to the article, Eva hit upon the theme and form of the piece by contemplating the dry, half-rotted alder stump from which she carved it. After removing the rotted parts of the stump, the figures' heads began to emerge, and gradually the entire sculpture materialized in the carving. This notion of *uncovering* the form hidden within a piece of wood became a characteristic of Ryyränen's work for the entirety of her career. As she stated, "*Kun on nähnyt kuvia puun sisässä, niitä sieltä aina etsii*" ("Once you have seen pictures within the wood, you always look for them there"; 7). Of course, such a method precluded the use of models or plans: all her works came from her own internal understandings of the objects she depicted, detected and then unveiled in the wood she carved. In this way, carving was for her a process of negotiation, in which the wood itself played an active role, nearly equal to that of the sculptor.

This deep-seated respect and affection for the wood she carved became manifested in various ways in which Eva described and practiced her art. In terms of materials, Eva favored pine in particular, noting that its light color reflected the Nordic complexion and comparing her choice to the affection of African carvers for ebony (7). The wood becomes not simply a medium in which to execute a work, in other words—as was the case with medieval religious wood-carvers, who covered

their works in gesso and paint, disguising their material's identity—but is instead transformed into surrogate flesh, a mimicking of the human, angelic, or animal bodies that it depicts. Further, Eva generally used only a single piece of wood for a given work, resisting the temptation to join pieces together in order to accomplish difficult angles or extensions, a common practice among earlier religious wood-carvers as well as modern wood-carving hobbyists. By resisting the expediency of supplementation, Eva highlighted the identity of the tree or branch from which a given work was produced, permitting it to retain its autonomy as a site of meaning in its own right, while uncovering within it the image that Eva perceived. Her approach thus accorded the wood a share of responsibility—and credit—for the work that emerged from within.

Although Eva's entry into the national spotlight portrayed her as having gained an inside track toward fame and success in the Finnish art world, Eva never truly embraced the enterprise that so courted her initially. She enrolled in the art academy as invited, traveling to Helsinki to do so, and spent five years there, dutifully taking courses while cleaning house for a diplomat to make ends meet (Laininen 1992, 6). It was at a Helsinki hospital where she was working after the war that she first met Paavo Ryytänen, the man she would eventually marry in 1944 (Simola, Tissari-Simola, and Repo 2004, 17–18). At the end of her studies, however, she returned to her home village, gratefully leaving the pretensions and agendas of the art world behind. In fact, on her first day back in her home village, Eva entered a milking contest and won (Laininen 1992, 6). She and Paavo soon moved to land in North Karelia that Paavo had acquired from his father. There the young couple built a sauna in which they lived for the first seven years of their marriage while they constructed the barn and other buildings of their new farm. They lived out their lives as farmers, with Eva sculpting on the side, until one day when Paavo sold the cows and insisted Eva devote her energies full-time to her art (5). It was thus Paavo's insistence that compelled her to accept the artist's mantle. And it was not until 1974, at the age of fifty-nine, that Ryytänen had her true breakthrough as an artist, with a one-person exhibition of her works at the Amos Andersson Art Museum in Helsinki. Her exhibition ran concurrently with the Ateneum's *Ars 74*, a multi-artist display of the latest products of the art world that Eva had renounced. According to Laininen, visitors to the two exhibits told Eva, "*Siellä tuli sairaaksi, täällä taitaa parantua*" ("There you grow ill, here you can heal"; 7).

While more mainstream artists of Eva's generation sought out and received commissions for pieces to be displayed in largely secular contexts, such as galleries, museums, or public buildings, religious art became a staple of Eva's career. Her angels, flowers, and animals found appreciative response from church authorities as

well as congregations, who pronounced them both delightful and inspiring. Eva's first commission for a work to be displayed in a church had already come in 1953, and many more followed over the next five decades (6–7). Eva noted that she enjoyed making angels and Madonnas more than crucifixes: "*Kristusta tehdessä minä kärsin ihmisen pahuuden tähden—minun mielessäni välkkyi tuollainen lempeä aurinkokulttuuri, missä rakkaus on hallitsevana, ei sota*" (8; "I suffer for mankind's evil when I make Christ—in my heart shines a gentle culture of the sun, where love prevails, not war"). This element of her work often allows it to transcend strictly Christian readings, an important feature in a society whose members frequently feel estranged from many of the tenets of formal religion. Where a believing Christian can admire one of Eva's many depictions of an angel as an image of its stated referent, in other words, a more agnostic viewer can enjoy the work as a rendering of the spirit of the tree or an acknowledgment of the transcendent beauty of nature and form.

These elements and ideals of Eva's art became most powerfully enunciated in her greatest masterpiece, the chapel she created on her own farm. With its towering roof, natural wood, evocative sculptures, and carefully chosen landscaping, the church at Paateri, Eva's *taiteilijan temppeli*, seeks to unite seemingly opposing concepts such as nature and religion, inside and outside, animate and inanimate in spiritually uplifting and revelatory ways.

Eva began work on this ambitious project in 1989. The idea for a church at Paateri came from a visitor who admired the large number of pine trunks that Eva had drying on the property as the material for future sculptures, noting that there were enough logs stockpiled to build an entire church (Simola, Tissari-Simola, and Repo 2004, 66). The idea stuck in Eva's mind, and she soon began to discuss it seriously with the municipal authorities of the nearby town of Lieksa. She and Paavo donated the land for the building, its wooden building materials, copper roof, and gilded cross. The town of Lieksa paid for the remaining materials and labor, and local builders worked alongside Eva and Paavo during the construction. Raimo Kärkkäinen was one of the men involved in the project, and he reminisced about the difficulties of the work: artist that she was, Eva had not thought about the practicalities of incorporating electrical wiring into the building at all. Raimo devised a means of electrifying the structure that did not detract from the overall artistic unity of Eva's design, and a grateful Eva carved Raimo's name in the wall alongside her own as a coproducer of the work (Kärkkäinen and Kärkkäinen 2006).

The church is built primarily of logs, joined in a traditional log-cabin fashion, with chinking of fiber material. Most of the beams and logs used in the structure were imported from the Russian Federation, particularly the Komi Republic. The trunks had been deemed too large for conventional uses but proved highly effective



Figure 1.2. Exterior detail of Ryynänen's chapel. The front door is framed by upright posts showing sapping striations from the period when they were newly cut. Eva Ryynänen (Finnish, 1915–2001). *Taitelijan Temppeli* (1991). Red pine, red cedar, electric lighting; 2.5 × 2.5 m. Paateri, Lieksa, Finland.

for achieving the verticality and power of Eva's planned structure. Horizontal logs are anchored and offset by logs set upright but upside down, some of which show the parallel striations formed in the process of resin sapping (figure 1.2), conducted at the trees' site of origin when they were newly cut. Eva oriented these logs carefully so as to incorporate their striations into her design, where they appear as part of the walls' ornamentation. In Eva's placement of the trunks, they seem to be yielding their sap upward toward heaven, rather than downward toward the earth and human consumption. In any case, the personal history of the logs is made evident to the viewer, who may take the markings as part of Eva's own carving.

For the doors of the church, Eva and Paavo traveled to the Canadian west coast to select a massive western red cedar trunk to import. It furnished not only the building's two large doors (figure 1.3) but also the material for the church's hourglass-shaped baptismal font and several other pieces elsewhere on the property (Simola, Tissari-Simola, and Repo 2004, 69). The handles for both the interior and exterior



Figure 1.3. Interior detail of Ryynänen's chapel. The altar pews are shaped out of whole logs with outer bark only partly removed, decorated with floral patterns. A flooring of crosscut slices of tree trunks set in mastic allows viewers to see the rings and shape of the original trees. Eva Ryynänen (Finnish, 1915–2001). *Täitelijan Temppeli* (1991). Wood, glass, steel, mastic, electric lighting. Paateri, Lieksa, Finland.

of the doors were gouged from the wood in a manner that reflects Eva's career-long commitment to avoiding supplementation or joining in her sculptures. Likewise, each of the church's fourteen pews was carved whole from its own red-pine trunk, sanded to a glossy texture, and then ornamented with decorative floral patterns (figure 1.4).

The floor was made from crosscut sections of pine trunk combined with droplet-shaped pieces of pine, surrounded by a mastic of sawdust, woodchips, and glue, a refinement of a very pragmatic flooring Eva first developed for use in her studio, here raised to the level of high art. As in the other elements of the building, this choice in flooring, with tree rings prominently displayed for the viewer to count or admire, underscores the identity and individuality of the trees that form it, reminding the viewer of the cooperation of all these beings in the creation of the church as it stands.



Figure 1.4. Interior detail of Rynänen's chapel. The pulpit depicts a woman holding a sheep, a rendering of the motif of the Good Shepherd. Striations made to collect sap from the logs are evident both on the backs of pews and on the wall. Eva Rynänen (Finnish, 1915–2001). *Taitelijan Temppeli* (1991). Wood, glass, steel, mastic, electric lighting. Paateri, Lieksa, Finland.

The church's main altarpiece consists of the imposing roots of a gigantic tree known as Karjalan Kuusi (the Spruce of Karelia), which had grown in the village of Ruokolahti, South Karelia, before being struck by lightning and dying in the 1970s (Simola, Tissari-Simola, and Repo 2004, 72). It was a famous tree in its locale, and its use in Eva's church décor seems to suggest the kind of tree-related sacrality described above. Eva turned the trunk on its side and removed the trunk itself, leaving only a ring of gnarled and undulating roots which she smoothed slightly and



Figure 1.5. Interior detail of Ryynänen's chapel. The chapel's altar is constructed of glass and the roots of a single spruce tree that died in the 1970s after being hit by lightning. The altar table is formed of an inserted piece of beveled glass. An hourglass-shaped baptismal font and carved crucifix accompany the altar. Eva Ryynänen (Finnish, 1915–2001). *Altar* (1991). Spruce, red cedar, glass; 2.7 × 2.1 m. Paateri, Lieksa, Finland.

finished (figure 1.5). Glass windows behind and above the altar allow the viewer to take in the towering living trees that overshadow the church on all sides, reminding the viewer of the building's woodland setting and figuratively incorporating the forest into the congregation's circle of prayer. In order to minimize obstruction of this view, Eva made the altar proper out of a thick sheet of glass, inserted unobtrusively into the spruce roots.

One of the conscious ways in which Eva tried to make her trees' participation in the church palpable and respectful was by leaving them whole as much as possible. The tree trunks that form the walls are only slightly processed and remain evident as individual logs, stacked one on top of another. The pews are formed of logs that

have had only a quarter of their overall girth removed. The flooring is fashioned so that the viewer can see and contemplate the series of rings that notify the viewer of the age and history of the tree during its life. And the altar, formed of a root mass, remains unmistakably natural looking and unprocessed in appearance, however carefully planned and executed it is as a furnishing of the church.

Four overtly Christian iconographic pieces accompany the altar: an hourglass-shaped baptismal font (designed to remind the viewer of the passage of time through one's life), a pulpit, a crucifix, and a silhouette sculpture of Mary and the baby Jesus, Eva's evocation of the Christmas season (Simola, Tissari-Simola, and Repo 2004, 72). Eva had carved the crucifix and pulpit during the 1950s for the chapel of the Vuonismaa parsonage; their return to Paateri as part of the new church held important symbolism for her. Given the prominence of a silhouette sculpture of Mary and the infant Jesus placed above the altar, Eva felt uncomfortable leaving the pulpit as she had originally carved it, that is, as a depiction of Mary with the baby Jesus in her arms. So she altered the carving so that the woman held a lamb instead, describing the resulting work as a depiction of the Good Shepherd. In this way, her work appropriates the masculine image of the biblical shepherd and reenvisions it as an image of feminine nurturing and care.

Eva's church was consecrated on midsummer 1991 and remains an active place of worship for the Lieksa parish today. It is used for holiday services as well as life-cycle rituals such as baptisms, weddings, and funerals. It is also, however, a site for secular tourism, as thousands of visitors come each year to admire the craftsmanship, ingenuity, and aesthetic sense of an artist whose deep spirituality they glimpse in every aspect of her former home.

Part of what Eva's church does is to remind a visitor of the norms of a Lutheran church environment while working to stretch those expectations into a more capacious embrace of the sacrality of all things and of the participation of nature—and especially of trees—in the worship of the divine. That she planned the church for use particularly at Christmas is both a pragmatic acknowledgment that Finnish Lutherans tend to attend church only sporadically, limiting their visits to major holidays like Christmas and Easter, as well as key life events (baptisms, confirmations, weddings, funerals). Also, however, Christmas suggests the parallel divine gesture of Eva's artistic statement: if the trees are willing to embody worship of the divine, so the divine chose to embody engagement with the world through the incarnation. Or to put it another way, just as Eva's church reveals the divinity within trees, so God reveals the divinity invested in the human body—and, by extension, in all earthly creation—in the miracle of Christmas. Theologically and liturgically, Christmas is a feast of generosity and inclusion, not an occasion reserved for only a select few but,

rather, one that celebrates the sharing of the divine with all creation and the union of humans, angels, animals, plants, and other creatures in rapt praise for the goodness of life and existence.

It is not so much that the trees incorporated into the church, or those that tower outside its altar windows, are to be seen as actively “praying” alongside the human visitors to the church in some anthropomorphized or conscious manner. Rather, in a sense familiar within the Finnish language, they seem to be expected to bear witness to the divine in their very existence, in a nonagentive fashion, as it were. One can distinguish in Finnish between the transitive act of opening a door (*avaa oven*), the passive act of a door being opened by someone (*ovi avataan*), and a door opening nonagentively, that is, seemingly of its own accord (*ovi avautuu*). The same distinction occurs in the verb forms for seeing, so that one can say that a person sees God (*näkee Jumalan*) or that God is seen by someone (*Jumala nähdään*) and that God “is seen,” that is, becomes manifest, visible (*Jumala näkyy*). In a sense, the praise that takes place within the presence and the witness of Ryyränen’s trees fits this third category of seemingly agentless but nonetheless consequential action. In Eva Ryyränen’s church, *Jumala näkyy*.

With her *taitelijan temppeli* constructed toward the end of her life and on her own property, it seems likely that the church described above represented a very personal and idiosyncratic interpretation of the divine. Yet little that Eva did in her artistic contemplations of *maa* (land, country) and *luonto* (nature, character) was devoid of a consciousness of wider cultural and national ideas. In a very concrete sense, Eva sought to speak for her nation, uncovering a sense of sacredness connected with forests and trees that had always been there but that had become disguised or partly effaced by the human trappings of Christianity. As the Kärkkäinen attest, Finnish visitors often describe Eva’s church as pleasant and welcoming in a way they do not perceive in more typical Lutheran churches in Finland: in a country deeply estranged from many of the tenets of Christianity, Eva’s church offers a syncretic vision of Christian sacrality rooted in nature and in the forest for her fellow denizens of the most forested country in Europe.

Phillip Odden and Else Bigton

In Search of Knowledge and Continuity Covered

WHEN I first met Phillip Odden and Else Bigton in January 2014, at their adjoining home workshops on the second floor of a barn on their farm in Barronett, Wisconsin, Phillip was busy working on a relief carving of cats (figure 2.1), a close copy of a panel that appears on the ornate ceremonial wagon buried with two unnamed aristocratic women in the famous Oseberg ship burial of the early ninth century, one of the best known archaeological relics of pre-Christian Norway. Phillip modeled his reproduction on a photograph of the cat panel as it appears in a book he owns: a Norwegian-language study of medieval art. While following the pattern of the original closely, Phillip was nonetheless cognizant of the information that the visual form cannot supply: Why make cats on a panel for a wagon in what appears to be a royal burial? Perhaps the cats can be connected with the cat-drawn wagon of the goddess Freyja, mentioned in Snorri Sturluson's thirteenth-century *Prose Edda*. But why associate a goddess with cats? Or are the cats, as some art historians contend, Norwegian approximations of lions, a standard Mediterranean and Roman emblem of royalty and, later, of Christ? Certainly the Oseberg cats are definitely not leonine in any way. Setting that issue aside for the moment, what are the genders of the cats? In Phillip's view, Norwegian carvers always made or make explicit reference to an animal's gender when depicting it, for symbolic reasons and simply because animals act and look differently because of their genders: a stallion and a mare are not the same thing to anyone who has to deal with horses in a real, daily context, as Phillip knows well from his work with Norwegian Fjord horses, which he and Else raise on their farm in the stables below their workshops. Nor are bulls the same thing as cows any more than roosters are



Figure 2.1. Phillip Odden in his workshop, January 2014. Odden is shown using a chisel to carve a relief that follows the pattern of a panel appearing on a ceremonial wagon buried with the early ninth-century Oseberg ship. Phillip Odden (Norwegian-American, 1952–). Norsk Wood Works, Barronett, Wisconsin.

the same thing as chickens. Phillip recognized male features in one of the Oseberg cats, female features in another. “You have a lot of time to think when you stand here carving,” he observed with a chuckle. Reproducing the Oseberg cat panel became not a rote act of mechanical reproduction, but a slow and thoughtful contemplation of the original piece of art, of the artist who made it, and of the culture and world-view in which they existed. There are mysteries that such contemplations cannot resolve. But there are also insights that arise when one follows in the footsteps of an artist of the past: understandings born of negotiating the same issues of technique, medium, space, and visual form; understandings gained from observing carefully the many small and large decisions the artist made while bringing the piece into being.

In the last chapter, I suggested that Eva Rynänen regarded trees and wood as beings with which she, and perhaps all Finns, had a particular relation. Trees and

human beings are alike in that they acknowledge, give witness to, their creator in their very existence. This underlying unity of all creation rests beneath the surface of Finnish spiritual experience, becoming narrowed and in some ways distorted by human religious systems like Christianity that, often, focus on the exceptionalism of human beings and overlook the other creations of the cosmos with whom they could join in praise. By *uncovering* this unity within works produced for Christian worship, Eva Rynänen sought literally to make a place for nature in the Finnish Lutheran church. She sought to uncover a continuity that makes Finns characteristically Finnish as well as manifest elements of a meaningful cosmos.

In this chapter, I examine the work and ideas of Phillip Odden and Else Bigton as they explore a *covered* continuity, born of careful emulation and contemplation of past art. For Odden and Bigton, the pre-Christian world of the Oseberg ship burial, the early Christian world of Norwegian stave churches, the premodern agrarian world of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Norwegian farmsteads, the socially mobile and economically fraught world of late nineteenth-century Norwegian emigration, and the postmodern world of Norwegian-American “volitional ethnicity” are all alike in their entitlement to the cultural designation of “Norwegian.” Continuities exist to some extent, in part because of shared physical environment and lifestyle: early Christian Norwegians never completely left behind the worldview and experiences of their pagan forebears, for instance. But continuities also need to be reestablished, particularly in a context of an affluent modern Norway or a geographically distanced existence in Scandinavian America. Covering—learning through emulating—allows the Norwegian or Norwegian American to regain a sense of continuity with the past and to come to see the world (again) in the way it was understood by one’s ancestors. I will explore the workings of this act of covering in my examination of three works produced by Odden: a stave-church portal reproduction, commissioned and now owned by the Scandinavian American Cultural and Historical Foundation of Thousand Oaks, California; a traditional *kubbestol* chair, made of a tree trunk locally harvested in Barronett, Wisconsin; and a work of relief sculpture employing pre-Christian themes, entitled *In Search of Knowledge*.

In order to explore the artworks of Phillip Odden and Else Bigton, I present a brief overview of the religious sculptural art that survives from one of the periods that most interest them: the span of centuries that include the late-pagan Viking Age of the Oseberg ship burial (eighth through eleventh centuries) and the early-Christian era of the Norwegian stave churches (twelfth through fourteenth centuries). I also touch on the ways in which these materials—particularly stave churches—have become emblems of Norwegian ethnicity in both Norway and America, from the nineteenth century to the present, a creative exploration that

also gave rise to the school at which Phillip and Else learned their crafts as well as an American museum in which they have taught these skills to others. I suggest that covering is an important means of asserting and achieving a sense of continuity in Norwegian performance of identity, a phenomenon richly evident not only in wood-carving traditions but also in various other aspects of Norwegian culture, including painting, folk dress, food, dance, and music. While covering is grounded in specific historical artifacts from specific regions and moments in time, the process creates, I suggest, a sense of overarching unity that dissolves perceptions of historical disjunction or geographic distinctiveness or distance. The continuity achieved by acts of covering transcends time and space, making the past available as a tool for the creation of identity in the present, even when the covering entails, necessarily or by choice, some elements of updating.

A SYNCRETIC PAST

Two moments in sagas written in the thirteenth century depict vividly ways in which medieval Christian Scandinavians viewed the sculptural and decorative carvings of their pagan forebears. The saga *Ragnars saga Loðbrókar* appears in a single manuscript dating from around 1400. It recounts the life and times of a heroic king Ragnarr and his sons, who were widely known in legends and annals of both Scandinavia and England (McTurk 1991; Rowe 2012). The saga's ending portrays a chieftain or merchant named Ögmundr who sails with five ships to the Danish island of Samsey. There he and his men come upon a gigantic wooden sculpture of a man or deity, hidden in the island's forest. As they behold the monument, covered in moss and moldering in Danish rains, the statue speaks, identifying its makers as the famous sons of Ragnarr and noting wistfully:

nú skýtr á mik skýja gráti,
hlýr hvárki mér
hold né klæði.

Clouds weep upon each of my cheeks,
For now neither
Flesh nor clothing shelters me. (Borovsky 2017; Van Dyke 2013, ch. 20)

The heroes and ritual practices of the past have passed into legend, yet the statue endures as an abandoned but persisting reminder of a once central and prestigious belief system.

Laxdaela saga survives in far more medieval manuscripts than *Ragnars saga* and was clearly a very well-known text in Iceland during the Middle Ages. It recounts the settlement and early generations of the Breiðafjörður district of western Iceland. In the course of the saga, the prominent landowner Ólafr pái (Peacock) travels to Norway to purchase timber for a new house. He obtains the needed materials from no less than the ruling earl of the time, Hákon Sigurðsson, one of Norway's last pagan leaders. The saga describes what happens when Ólafr returns to Iceland:

Þat sumar lét Ólafr gera eldhús í Hjarðarholti, meira ok betra en menn hefði fyrr sét. Váru þar markaðar ágætligar sögur á þiliviðinum ok svá á ræfrinu; var þat svá vel smíðat, at þá þótti miklu skrautligra, er eigi váru tjöldin uppi.

That summer Ólafr had a hall built at Hjarðarholt, larger and finer than anyone had ever seen before. The wainscoting and ceiling were adorned with fine carvings depicting the old legends: the craftsmanship was so superb that people thought the hall even more magnificent when the wall-hangings were not up. (Kálund 1889–91, ch. 29, 99; Magnusson and Pálsson 1969, 112)

At a wedding feast soon after, the skald Ulf Uggason composes a poem about his host and the legends depicted in these apparently carved panels, an ekphrastic poem, that is, one that translates a piece of visual art into words. The poem survives in fragmentary quotations in Snorri Sturluson's *Prose Edda*, where it is known as "Húsdrápa" ("The Poem of the House"). It relates stories of Thor's fishing trip, Baldr's funeral, and a competition between Loki and Heimdallr for the necklace Brísingamen. The saga account seems to confirm that wooden walls could bear narrative representations of important myths. The poem also signals a continuity of tradition from the pre-Christian to the Christian era: although the gods and their worship may have been set aside, memories of their former fame and narratives of their feats have lived on. Like the narrative of the lonely statue at Samsey, the house poem—and the carven walls it recalls—provide a glimpse of a prior belief system as well as a prior tradition of sacred sculpture, still remembered in the Christianity of the thirteenth century.

The notion of a pagan sculptural tradition appears echoed or adapted in early thirteenth-century carvings on Christian church portals and furnishings from continental Scandinavia, carvings well known to modern artists like Phillip Odden and Else Bigton. The early thirteenth-century Hylestad portal, for instance—a set of

carvings that once graced the entry to a stave church in the Sogn district of western Norway, but that are now preserved at the Norwegian Museum of Cultural History in Oslo—includes depictions of the dragon Fafnir and the warrior-hero Sigurðr (see Figure I.5 in the introduction). That the exploits of a dragon-slaying epic hero were deemed an appropriate visual accompaniment to one's entry into a Christian worship space is a piece of evidence that informs the views of continuity in worldview that Phillip discussed with me and that he explores in his art.

The notion of continuity of both style and worldview is reflected not only in stave-church portals, but in stave churches themselves, such as the famed Gol stave church, now preserved at the Norsk Folkemuseum in Oslo (see Figure I.3 in the introduction). The earliest wooden Christian churches in the Nordic region almost certainly resembled the Romanesque church architecture of the continent, but a uniquely Nordic style of church building developed. Although named for their construction technique (i.e., the use of vertical posts—"staves"—as a key element of the buildings' structure), stave churches are best known for their impressive verticality. Where the Romanesque church achieves grandeur through horizontal length, the stave church evokes awe by towering above its surroundings like a massive pine tree or spire. Although the total floor space of a stave church may be no greater than a small chapel, the visitor to such a church is compelled to gaze upward in wonder at the many meters of space contained within the church's series of stepped roofs. Stave churches can be seen as early Christian sculptures in themselves: shadowy sacred spaces that invited the faithful into an intimate, deeply mystical union with the holy. Although apparently once widespread across early Christian Scandinavia, the stave-church tradition survived best in remote tracts of Norway, where tiny villages, sharply limited by the landscape's characteristic lack of arable ground, remained small enough to continue using the same tiny churches that their ancestors had first erected.

If stave churches escaped the tumult of medieval wars and the iconoclasm of the Reformation (apart from being emptied of much of the artwork they contained), the buildings often met their demise in the face of nineteenth-century modernizing. In a speech to the congregation of the parish of Pjätteryd, Sweden, in 1830, poet and bishop Esaias Tegnér aimed at convincing Swedish parishioners of the need to tear down their church: "We are told that five hundred years have passed since your church was built. If that be so, you ought to have realized, indeed, your forefathers ought to have realized, that it had long ago served its time and was worn out" (Thordeman 1964, 24). As art historian Bengt Thordeman points out, Tegnér's speech had its desired effect. The parishioners agreed to tear down their church, destroying it

completely and replacing it with a large neoclassic structure, one of those buildings that architectural historians now call “Tegnér churches.” No plans or images of the original church remain, although it has been surmised that Pjätteryd had possibly the largest stave church in Sweden, far larger than any that survive today in Norway.

In the wake of such a pronounced Swedish commitment to progress, it is understandable that a coalition of Norwegians, including artists, professors, and architects should found the Foreningen til Norske Fortidsmindesterkers Bevaring (the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Norwegian Monuments) in 1844. The society began its work under the patronage of King Oscar I, monarch of both Sweden and Norway. One of their most famous *fortidsmindesterker* was the Gol stave church, built in 1212 and slated for demolition in 1880. After the society rescued the church from destruction, it was purchased by none other than King Oscar II (in 1884) to become the centerpiece of his private collection of buildings, a collection that was eventually incorporated into the nascent Norsk Folkemuseum in 1907. Norwegian traditions became a key means of differentiating Norway from Sweden during the royal union of the nineteenth century. In the twentieth century, after Norwegian independence, reviving craft traditions became a major goal of the new state. It is here where the Phillip Odden and Else Bigton enter the story.

HJERLEIDS SKOLE AND TEACHING NORWEGIANS TO BE NORWEGIAN

Phillip has deep roots in the locale in which he and Else now live. His great-grandfather and grandmother were among the first immigrants to the Barronett area in the late 1800s. Like others in the migration to northern Wisconsin, they came from the Gudbrandsdalen district of Norway, although other settlers in the locale came from the Stavanger and Rogaland areas. Phillip graduated local high school, then went to college in River Falls. He worked for the US Forest Service in Montana and chased wildfires in Alaska. Phillip describes his Montana cabin as “twelve miles from electricity and twenty miles from the nearest town.” Eventually, he sought out relatives in Norway and noticed the wooden objects and carvings they had in their homes. With his family’s help, he enrolled in the Hjerleids Skole, a vocational school specializing in handcraft arts. There he began his training in the traditional carving techniques of Norway. The master carver of the school was a relative of one of Phillip’s relatives and was from the very area that Phillip’s grandparents had left when emigrating. In that sense, Phillip’s study in Norway was a recovery of familial traditions in the manner of ethnic identity formation described

by Nelson (1995, 98). While studying at the school, Phillip met Else, who had grown up not far from the Hjerleids Skole and had enrolled as well, originally with the intent to become a weaver. The couple eventually married.

The Hjerleids Skole presented students like Phillip and Else with training in a span of different Norwegian wood-carving traditions, including the “dragon style” of the early stave churches as well as further adaptations of the dragon style that developed during the revival period, 1860–1915. The curriculum also included later acanthus and other decorative styles that developed in subsequent centuries, as illustrated by Else’s acanthus ornamented shelf (figure 2.2). Students learned by copying the techniques and content of earlier works, gradually learning to produce original works within each style. As such, the curriculum participated in the codification and stabilization of Norwegian folklore genres that became widespread and dominant in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Storaas 1986; Goertzen 1997) and that found parallels in Sweden and other parts of the Nordic-Baltic region (Klein 2013). If the school offered Phillip and Else a means of gaining skills that had been part of their regional and familial past, Phillip sees the school itself as having served two purposes for Norwegians: it helped equip local people with a means of servicing the growing tourist trade in the region, and, on a more philosophical level, it helped restore a specifically national Norwegian artistic tradition after centuries of foreign domination. As Phillip puts it, “It helped teach Norwegians to be Norwegian.” This was an important goal in the leaner days of Norwegian history, before the discovery of the vast oil deposits that transformed Norway into the affluent high-tech country it is today. Thirty years ago, when Phillip and Else enrolled at the trade school, folk art was considered a valued and useful vocation and a meaningful supplement to farming livelihoods. Today, the government still sponsors a small number of students to pursue one-on-one apprenticeships in traditional arts, so as to keep the traditions nominally alive, but in other respects, Phillip and Else agree, the Norway of today seems to have turned its back on the commitment to traditional arts that made their education a reality. “People are more likely to have a summer house in Spain than in rural Norway,” Else notes. The Hjerleids Skole no longer offers the full curriculum that Phillip and Else once took, one that equipped them with the skills for their careers as artists.

MAKING NORWEGIAN ART IN AMERICA

After completing the course of study at Hjerleids Skole, Phillip and Else decided to live in Wisconsin. The young couple faced an uncertain future as professional artists. They joined another Norwegian-trained Upper Midwesterner, Jay Smith, originally



Figure 2.2. Carved acanthus-ornamented shelf displaying decorative plates. Else Bigton (Norwegian-American, 1956–). *Untitled* (2013). Wood; 15 × 20 × 366 cm. Scandinavian American Cultural and Historical Foundation, Thousand Oaks, California.

from Sioux Falls, South Dakota, who had returned from Norway to start a traditional boat-building company in Barronett. When Jay left the area to try his luck in Washington State, Phillip and Else took over the business alone. They recall the first stool they ever sold: after finishing it, Phillip put a “for sale” sign on it and plopped it down on the roadside next to the farm they had purchased, a piece of property that had once belonged to some of Phillip’s ancestors. In virtually no time at all, someone stopped and bought the stool. The couple knew then and there that they could make a living from their art, even in a fairly remote rural area in the north of Wisconsin. A state-of-the-art website (www.norskwoodworks.com) and a series of tours and teaching engagements help the couple maintain their business today.

Phillip and Else do not know who the person was who bought that first stool, but they know that many of their clients today are Norwegian Americans, who see the purchase and display of such art as a means of celebrating and sharing their ethnic heritage. As folklorist James P. Leary puts it, this procurement of Norwegian artifacts—for both public and domestic environments—transforms Norwegian homes and halls into “temples to the land their forebearers left” (Leary 1997, 61; Gilmore and Leary 1986). Two developments helped establish and shape this tendency in North America: the establishment of the Vesterheim Museum, and the practice of building stave-church replicas. Phillip and Else have been involved with both.

The Vesterheim Norwegian American Museum of Decorah, Iowa, founded in 1877, documents the material culture and historical experiences of Norwegian immigrants to the United States and includes a Folk Art School that teaches traditional genres of painting, cooking, woodworking, metalworking and fiber arts. Norwegian-American artists can compete to win the museum's gold medal for particular art forms, an achievement that greatly enhances the artist's reputation in the Norwegian-American art market and may result in employment as an instructor in the museum's Folk Art School. Anna Rue has explored the influence of the museum and its longtime director, Marion Nelson, in shaping and institutionalizing Norwegian-American expressive culture in North America (Rue 2014). In 1980 Nelson hired Phillip and Else as instructors at the museum, roles that not only boosted the Odden-Bigton household's finances but also assisted them in building a client base. Phillip's published writings also helped build their profile in the Norwegian-American community. Although both Phillip and Else have competed in and won medals in Vesterheim's various annual competitions, they do not describe themselves as big fans of contests. Nor do they attempt to follow past models and patterns with slavish fidelity. For both artists, carving is about self-expression and creativity. In Nelson's influential catalogue *Norwegian Folk Art: the Migration of a Tradition* (1995), two of Phillip's carvings are featured—a rocking horse (plate 76 in that volume) and an “ale hen” drinking vessel (plate 90). While emphasizing the continuity of Phillip's work within the Norwegian tradition, Nelson also writes approvingly of Phillip's originality, praising the ale hen's “playfulness and fantasy” (96) and noting that Phillip “advocates retaining the freedom within tradition that characterizes early work” (plate 90). In a sense, Nelson's inclusion of Phillip's pieces in his book, and praise of them for their innovations, conferred a stamp of approval for the couple's artistic explorations.

THE ARRIVAL OF STAVE CHURCHES

The second major influence on Norwegian-American folk art, and a further area that has affected the art and careers of Phillip and Else, has been the practice of producing replicas of Norwegian stave churches (DuBois 2015). Just a decade after the preservation of the Gol stave church, thousands of miles away in the American Midwest, the city of Chicago readied itself for the World Columbian Exposition, better known as the Chicago World's Fair of 1893. The fair took place over a sprawling 2.4 square kilometers of land. It celebrated technology and natural science and made monumental use of electric lighting. In just over six months, it drew 27 million visitors. As the title World Columbian Exposition indicates, the fair was intended

to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the arrival of Christopher Columbus in North America in 1492. Spain sent replicas of the ships the *Pinta*, the *Niña*, and the *Santa María*. Norway sent a replica of the Gokstad ship, built, launched, and sailed from Norway to New York City and eventually down the Saint Lawrence River and across the Great Lakes to Chicago. In addition, the Norwegian display was to have a building, a stave church: a loose replica of the Borgund stave church. Built in 1892–93 in just nine months at the Strandheim Brug in Orkanger (now part of Orkdal) on the Trondheim Fjord, the “Norway Building” was designed to evoke the charm and atmosphere of its medieval model but was also adapted to secular use as a pavilion for displays through the addition of windows, a parquet floor, and simplified interior and exterior sections (see Figure C.4 in the conclusion). It featured an elaborate carved portal as well as a wide array of fanciful carvings produced by artist Peder O. Kvaale. It was built in thirty-seven vertical sections that slot between pillars and are pegged top and bottom, making its disassembly, transport, and reassembly easier.

In 1927 Norwegian-American farmer Isak Dahle decided to launch an open-air museum on a nineteenth-century Norwegian homestead in a small valley between Blue Mounds and Mount Horeb, Wisconsin, a place he named Nissedahle—known in English as Little Norway. Dahle acquired the abandoned farm of the Norwegian settler Osten Olsen Haugen, whose original mid-nineteenth-century cabin and other fairly modest outbuildings became a core part of the museum’s displays. Haugen first lived in a dugout, the remains of which still exist beside his eventual cabin. Located on County Road JG, Little Norway was meant as a seasonal “attraction,” a place that motorists could drive to on a weekend to enjoy the countryside and air. By 1927 there was one car for every 3.3 people in the United States, and recreational driving was a standard Sunday pastime, though roads in the countryside were not usually paved, and pleasure driving was generally limited to the summers and fall. Dahle’s museum was inspired not only by pleasure driving but also by the open-air museums like the Norsk Folkemuseum that Dahle had seen during a visit to Norway. His innovation took place a year before Henry Ford’s Greenfield Village (1928) and well before Connecticut’s Mystic Seaport (1929), Virginia’s Colonial Williamsburg (1934), and Massachusetts’s Old Sturbridge Village (1936) and Plimoth Plantation (1947). New York art critic Allen Eaton writes enthusiastically in his 1932 exhibition catalog and study *Immigrant Gifts to American Life*:

In addition to large and central museums of source materials for the whole country there should be hundreds of small local ones wherever any considerable number of immigrants have settled. Here again the Norwegian deep sentiment for tradition has put a suggestion into practical form.

Isak Dahle, a native American whose four grandparents came from Norway to America and settled in Wisconsin, has converted the old homestead in which he himself was born, near Mount Horeb, into a memorial of his pioneer forebears. (Bronner 2002, 175–76)

Over time, the Dahle family amassed some seven thousand Norwegian and Norwegian-American artifacts, one of the largest such collections outside of Norway. One of these artifacts was the Chicago World's Fair's Norway building, which Dahle purchased in 1935 and transported to Little Norway. It remained a highlight of the museum until the museum closed in 2012 (see Figure C.4 in the conclusion). In 2015, the building was transported back to Norway to become the centerpiece of an attraction in the village in which it was first produced.

The idea of a stave church symbolizing not only Norwegian heritage but also Norwegian-American identity caught on in the years following the first display of the Norway Building. There are today stave-church replicas in Blue Mounds, Appleton, and Washington Island, Wisconsin; Minot, North Dakota; Rapid City, South Dakota; and Epcot Center at Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida, and one is planned in Thousand Oaks, California. Phillip and Else were involved with the portals of the Disney World stave church and those of Minot and Thousand Oaks. The reproduction of these stave churches has been motivated by varying understandings and intentions. In some cases, as in the Borgund stave-church replica of Rapid City, South Dakota, the intent has been explicitly religious: the 1969 building is used for church services by a Norwegian-American Lutheran congregation (Chapel in the Hills 2014). For the 1988 Gol stave-church replica at Epcot Center and the 2000 Gol stave-church replica at the Scandinavian Heritage Park in Minot, North Dakota (Park 2014), the intent has been largely cultural-historical, employing the stave church to express the aesthetics and identity of Norwegians in general. Often, however, the line between such motives blurs, as many Norwegian Americans regard Lutheran religiosity as an integral part of their familial or wider ethnic heritage. Such is perhaps the case with the planned stave-church replica at the Scandinavian Center of the Scandinavian American Cultural and Historical Foundation, located on the campus of California Lutheran University. It was for the planned stave church in this location that Phillip produced his most recent major portal (figure 2.3).

As with earlier stave-church portals he had produced, the Thousand Oaks portal involved both careful reproduction of an earlier stave-church portal and some necessary adaptations. Phillip was one of four carvers to work on the Gol stave-church replica for Epcot Center over the years 1987–99, an effort that employed both Norwegian and Norwegian-American artists. In 2016 Phillip and Else were also invited



Figure 2.3. Phillip Odden's stave-church portal as displayed today at the Scandinavian American Cultural and Historical Foundation. Phillip Odden (Norwegian-American, 1952–). *Stave Church Portal* (2013). Wood; 275 × 177 cm. Thousand Oaks, California.

to contribute carvings to a refurbished and expanded Norwegian exhibit at Epcot undertaken in the aftermath of the tremendously successful film *Frozen*.

Subsequent to the first Epcot commission, the couple was hired to produce a second reproduction of the Gol stave-church portals for Dr. Myron Peterson of Minot, North Dakota. This reproduction was to be full sized and complete in all details, with the portals some 4.2 meters in height but slightly widened from the original in order to meet modern accessibility standards. The Thousand Oaks portal, completed in 2013, was modeled after the Borgund stave-church portal but widened from 74 to 91 centimeters. This expansion meant that Phillip had to largely redesign the top, reworking the plans he had generated from onsite photographs and measurements supplied by a fellow artist.

The Thousand Oaks portal was commissioned by a community with strong Norwegian-American and Lutheran ties, as Howard Rockstad explained to me when I visited with him in Thousand Oaks in January 2015. The hardy farmers who

settled Thousand Oaks are famous for having built their own road from the uplands where their farms were located down a steep mountain slope into the coastal lowlands where they could sell their crops. They were do-it-yourself kinds of folks. One of the descendants of these Norwegian immigrant farmers, Richard Peterson, donated land in 1957 that became the campus of the newly founded California Lutheran University, with its first president a Norwegian American, Orville Dahl, originally from Duluth, Minnesota, and a graduate of Saint Olaf College. Today, the Norwegian-American descendants of these important figures work together with people of Danish, Finnish, Icelandic, Sámi, and Swedish ancestry to maintain the Scandinavian American Cultural and Historical Foundation (SACHF), which operates an impressive array of institutions and activities, including an annual Scandinavian festival every April, an annual Nordic Spirit Symposium every February, and a Scandinavian Center at California Lutheran University that maintains both a library and a museum, made up mostly of a diverse array of objects donated by members or, in some cases, commissioned by the organization.

In contrast to Little Norway, the activities and the outlook of SACHF is intentionally and emphatically pan-Nordic. At every opportunity, the organization displays all the Nordic flags, and although symposium topics are sometimes limited to those of only a single country, as was the case with the Icelandic theme of the 2015 symposium, the organization strives intensely to be evenhanded and fair to all its ethnic constituents. In this, the organization is much like the Nordic Heritage Museum in Seattle, Washington, as well as the Scandinavian Heritage Association and Park in Minot, North Dakota. The SACHF museum's contents make this pan-Nordic focus abundantly clear. The museum's planned stave-church replica would be part of this presentation of pan-Nordic heritage.

In 2011, trying to strategize about how to make the dream a reality, the museum's leaders contacted Phillip. Phillip's advice was simple: produce the portal and use that to help the community imagine the project as a whole. It could be the first step in a multistaged fund-raising plan. The organization embraced Phillip's suggestion, and soon the SACHF newsletter began to run stories about the campaign, raising money for the portal and following its progress back in Wisconsin. Another artist, blacksmith Kjetil Grovel, was commissioned to do the metalwork for the door. The portal and door were unveiled at the April Scandinavian Festival in 2013. The organization's hope is to produce the first stave-church replica west of the Rocky Mountains. In the meantime, a magnificent carved shelf acquired from Else Bigton (see Figure 2.2) now also occupies a place of honor in the displays of the SACHF.

Phillip reflected on the work of creating the portal replica. As Phillip notes, "I have a full-scale drawing, so when I'm doing that, it's like having a conversation



Figure 2.4. Detail of Phillip Odden's stave-church portal. The carvings of the portal replicate those of the twelfth-century Borgund stave church. Phillip Odden (Norwegian-American, 1952–). *Stave Church Portal* (2013). Wood; 275 × 177 cm. Scandinavian American Cultural and Historical Foundation, Thousand Oaks, California.

with the people who did the original drawing.” Although copying faithfully, Phillip enjoys the freedom to conjecture and theorize, a freedom he possesses by virtue of “coming from the trade side of things.” Whereas scholars have to qualify their statements at every turn and end up usually “afraid to stick their necks out,” artists can think what they like and say so. Phillip has developed clear understandings of the significance of the figures contained in stave-church portals, and these help him understand and appreciate the carvings he copies.

Regarding the images of the portals, such as dragons (figure 2.4), Phillip states, “I think it was about protection; it was about security.” The carvings of undulating dragons and other mysterious figures on the Gol and Borgund stave-church portals are neither Christian nor pre-Christian in any narrow sense but, rather, demonstrations of the fact that an older earth religion persisted in Norwegian understandings of the world from the time of the Vikings through the early modern era. Forces of

chaos, danger, and disease awaited at every turn, and the knowing person could keep these at bay only by protective acts, a sense of “apotropaic function” that underlay ancient carved forms (Roy 2011). Figurative carvings, Odden notes, occur at places of entry—doorways into buildings, handles of spoons, ale bowl bodies and handles—anywhere the human body could be rendered vulnerable to attack. In depicting dragons on the outside of churches, medieval artists performed valuable protective work for themselves and their communities, creating portals that could ritually cleanse churchgoers as they entered the building. Some figures were defensive, protecting the person, while others were offensive, reaching out to attack and control such threats. These were acts tied up integrally with the artists’ understandings of the world and its forces. “Nothing was by chance,” Phillip notes; “it all had meaning.”

In the view of Phillip and Else, perhaps no item of sculpture expresses this notion of an elemental earth religion as solidly and unmistakably as the *kubbestol*, a chair carved out of a single tree trunk, with an added seat. The fact that the discrete identity of a tree is retained in the width and form of the seat contributes to this meaning, one of life and death and persistence. For Phillip and Else, these chairs reflect the close association of farm people to the land. The chair “hugs” the body in a warm and supportive way. It expresses the natural aspects of farm life and the way in which plants and animals shape all aspects of daily life on a farm. As Else puts it, the farm and the land were constants in people’s lives—people came and went, but the land endured. Phillip harvests the basswood trees he uses for his stools himself. He relies on local mill owners for board wood—top-quality pine, birch, basswood, and butternut—but he cannot assume that they will understand what is needed for a stool. So he cuts local trees to eight- or nine-foot lengths and hauls them home with the help of his brother’s farm machinery to work on. He hollows the trunks out using hand tools and then applies relief carving to the surface. A composite board of glued pieces of wood for the seat is the only addition to the original trunk.

A *kubbestol* that Phillip was working on when I visited his workshop illustrates some of these elemental ideas. On the back, the person who has commissioned the chair has asked for a depiction of a stave church, which Phillip has added. In the front, however, Phillip has added a pair of dragon’s heads (figure 2.5). “People have to accept that they’re going to get dragons somewhere,” he notes. Dragons are significant figures, and people can sometimes recognize their power as a symbol.

Figure 2.5. (*Facing*) One of Phillip Odden’s *kubbestol* chairs, carved out of a natural tree trunk. Phillip Odden (Norwegian-American, 1952–). *Untitled* (2014). Basswood, 40 × 55 × 92 cm. Norsk Wood Works, Barronett, Wisconsin.



Phillip and Else told of a client in northern California, a well-educated and wealthy psychiatrist with a deluxe home and oceanfront property. When the woman realized that she was dying of brain cancer, she contacted Phillip and requested that he make a bed for her covered in dragon figures. The dragon figures, she felt, would protect her. As Else puts it, “She knows she is going to die in that bed. That’s why she ordered it.” Phillip and Else delivered the bed to her, along with some *kubbestol* seats with dragon figures on them, at the same time that they delivered the carved portal to its purchasers in Thousand Oaks. So the journey to California transported two very distinct kinds of art: one ostensibly Christian, public, and made in imitation of a historical source; the other overtly pagan, private, and created out of Phillip’s imagination, albeit with stylistic features drawn from Norwegian tradition. Both commissions were for Norwegian Americans, and the woman with the dragon bed had grown up in Minnesota. Phillip speaks of both projects with enthusiasm, but he holds particular regard for the dragon bed, which so captivated and comforted the dying woman who had ordered it.

EXPRESSING A PERSONAL ARTISTIC VISION

“Artists tend to do things in series,” Phillip notes, “and I’m doing things now that are just purely mine. It’s about time.” This new stage in Phillip’s carving life is perhaps best epitomized by his recent original carving *In Search of Knowledge* (figure 2.6). Like Phillip’s *kubbestol* renditions and dragon bed, the panel represents an independent creation that draws on Norwegian folk-art traditions and mythology in a novel and original way. The piece fuses seamlessly a one-eyed Óðinn, a Viking ship, dragons, and what Phillip describes as acanthus triads or trifoliate leaves. A face of the god Óðinn, though central to the piece, is not rendered as a simple portrait but, rather, as the core symbol of a depiction of *searching*.

At the time that I visited Phillip and Else, the piece hung in one of their home’s sitting rooms, the same room where another recent sculpture (of a dragon) was placed along with photographs of their son’s wedding. The wedding took place on the family’s land, involving not only traditional dress and music but also a wagon pulled by Norwegian Fjord horses, animals that Phil and Else raise on their property. *In Search of Knowledge* was thus surrounded by deeply important and personal items, but also ones steeped in Norwegian cultural identity.

The framed panel features a robust Viking ship, its dragon-headed prow atop an elegant sweeping neck and facing to the left. The ship sports some nine round shields and rides upon a series of eighteen stylized waves. The dragon prow seems



Figure 2.6. One of Phillip Odden's newest reliefs. The god Óðinn is shown on a Viking ship sailing in search of knowledge. Phillip Odden (Norwegian-American, 1952–). *In Search of Knowledge* (2014). Wood, stain, paint; 38 × 58 cm. Norsk Wood Works, Barronett, Wisconsin.

to be emitting a stylized stream of lappets, which curl around its neck, undulating downward in an array of parallel tendrils.

Above the boat's midship hovers the searching face of Óðinn, staring not forward or backward but, rather, directly out at the viewer. His face is surrounded by a portal-like ring that contains three articulations suggestive of a triangle. From these articulations grow long acanthus branches, each terminating in a trifoliate leaf reminiscent of typical acanthus carving. Phillip has read the opinion that triad forms, so typical of the acanthus style, were an import from Central Europe brought by ecclesiastical carvers. Yet, notes Phillip, the Vikings traveled widely for centuries and certainly had the opportunity to see and take note of stylistic details in various parts of Europe. Why couldn't the triad have come earlier? Perhaps, Phillip suggests,

it did. Or perhaps when it came with the Central European artisans, it took on new meanings in the Norwegian context. In Phillip's piece, the trifoliate leaves play a prominent role in its overall appearance and may carry mystical or philosophical symbolism from antiquity, connoting such things as eternity or completion.

The back of the boat sports a tall tail, and a dragon growing out of the tendrils of the acanthus carving is depicted biting into the tail with prominent teeth. The dragon seems to be seated on top of the ship's tail, but the dragon's own tail forks and is lost into the spirals of the acanthus-vine scroll. In this way, the ship seems poised between forces urging it in opposite directions. The Óðinn figure at the center may be in charge of navigating the vessel, but he does not seem to do so with his body or hands. Rather, his is a ship of the mind, sailing on a sea of the imagination, in search of knowledge. This piece is far from the overtly Christian content of some of Phillip's earlier sculptures, and it incorporates motifs that have more to do with pre-Christian Vikings than Phillip's instructor at the Hjerleids Skole might have liked some thirty years ago. Yet it reflects a new and important turn in Phillip's art, one that he is pleased to share with friends and with potential clients. As the Minnesota psychiatrist's commissioning of a dragon bed may indicate, Norwegian Americans are increasingly comfortable exploring an earth religion that they have inherited as part of their heritage.

It has been some four decades since UCLA professor Stephen Stern wrote his article "Ethnic Folklore and the Folklore of Ethnicity," which appeared in the journal *Western Folklore* in 1977. Stern's theoretical discussion of the "folklore of ethnicity," which he expanded and refined in a collection of co-edited essays in 1991 (Stern and Cicala), shifted folklorists' attention from the study of cultural adjustment and tradition retention in the first and second generations of immigrant migration toward an examination of the "creative ethnicity" that can emerge in later, more fully acculturated generations of ethnic Americans. In the third or later generations after migration, community members may select elements of past traditional culture to invest with symbolic importance as markers of ethnic identity. These can be items of dress or foodways, songs or instrumental musical traditions, holiday celebrations, and the like. In such selection, the item takes on new meanings, becoming emblematic of connections, continuous or revived, with the ancestral culture. Artists who produce such works, like Phillip Odden and Else Bigton, as well as persons who purchase or commission pieces from them, participate in an enactment of ethnicity, a demonstration of a supplemental ethnic identity that Finnish folklorist Susanne Österlund-Pötzsch has described as the "American Plus" phenomenon (2003).

Covering—imitating the art of past artists—is a powerful and complex way to reestablish continuity with a past tradition. The work of Phillip Odden and Else

Bigton illustrates this fact, demonstrating a capacity to embrace artistic traditions and an underlying worldview that span the era of first conversion of Norwegians from a pre-Christian worldview much like that posited by Eva Ryyänänen to a syncretic medieval Christianity that retained and repurposed many of the key symbols and ideas of the prior belief system. That this temporally remote historical era of transition could serve as a symbol for Norwegian identity in the nineteenth century, and for Norwegian-American identity in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, testifies to the creative potential of covering as a way to regain connection with heritage—a heritage that contains, in the eyes of Phillip and Else, as in the eyes of many fellow Norwegian Americans, a particular transcendent understanding of the cosmos. In the coming chapters, we shall see this attitude paralleled in the views of other Nordic and Baltic artists.

Sister Lydia Mariadotter

“Försök! Fortsätt!” (“Try! Continue!”)
and Continuity Rediscovered

SISTER Lydia hands me a small, roughly executed crucifix made of pressed resin and ash wood and finished in a combination of beeswax and linseed oil that makes the piece warm and smooth to the touch. The length of its arms is nearly equal to its height, and the cross is almost completely obscured by the figure of a fully robed, haloed, but faceless Christ, arms outstretched with a demeanor of triumph (figure 3.1). It is a reproduction of the first wooden religious sculpture Sister Lydia ever made, as a result of a vision she had on Easter in 1975, in Vallby, Sweden. At the time, she lay in bed, prevented by influenza from attending the services of the religious order she had recently joined, the Daughters of Mary. Battling a high fever and regretting her situation, she was consoled by a note that she received from the order’s founder and leader, Sister Paulina, assuring her that although she may be sick in body, she was healthy in spirit. In joy and relief, Sister Lydia envisioned an image of Christ resurrected upon the cross, and after her recovery, she set about making it. The piece is small, meant to be kept in one’s pocket, where one can finger it in fondly, recalling the wonder of divine grace and salvation that it commemorates.

“Det här är för dig (That’s for you),” she says.

“No,” I respond, feeling the gift is too great.

“It’s okay,” she chuckles; “I’ve made about two thousand of them.”

Sister Lydia, dressed in a bright blue habit and accompanied by her associate Sister Helena, welcomed me into a parlor of their order’s house in Malmö one morning in 2003. With serenity and fervor, Sister Lydia told me about her growth



Figure 3.1.

One of many small crosses Sister Lydia Mariadotter has made in accord with her original design of 1975. Sister Lydia intended the cross to be a small personal devotional item to be kept in one's pocket and fingered at will. Sister Lydia Mariadotter (Swedish, 1953–). *Hand Cross* (1975). Ash wood, resin, beeswax, linseed oil; 5 × 4 cm.

and development as a Christian, as a female religious, and as a woodworker. In many ways, she has found continuities between her life in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries and that of Christians a millennium earlier, during the long era of Swedish Christianity before the Reformation. Hers is a *rediscovered* continuity, one that—in the footsteps of Sister Paulina—explores unabashedly the traditions and understandings of the pre-Reformation church, readopting some of the devotional practices and institutions suppressed by the Reformation, while not losing sight of the strong emphasis on faith, redemption, and contemplation that are the hallmarks of Lutheran religiosity, something which Sister Lydia, in keeping with Swedish practice, describes as an “evangelical” approach. Part of that reembraced past includes substantive roles for sculptures and images, produced, contemplated, and appreciated as visible witnesses of God’s saving plan for the world.

For the bulk of her career, until spinal issues forced her retirement in 2003, Sister Lydia followed in the footprints of myriad past artists and woodworkers of the medieval North, fashioning statues of Christ, Mary, and the saints for use in churches throughout Sweden. As in the case of her medieval antecedents, she had to balance the competing pulls of religious insight and audience taste, spiritual essence and craft technique, creating works that uplift and instruct while also being decorative and appealing. In this work, she finds a partner in the wood she uses and in the traditions and techniques of past religious artists that she readily explores through the

form, content, and intended use of her sculptures. As in her order as a whole, Sister Lydia rediscovers continuities between her Lutheran present and a Catholic past. At the same time, as I hope to show in this chapter, her works respond to trends in twentieth-century Christian liturgical art, echoing at times the expressionist intensity and hieratic approach of the German Ernst Barlach and other twentieth-century artists, but also evincing what Colleen McDannell has cogently described as a feminine idiom of sentimentality and intimacy, one that threatens at times to fall under the proscriptive masculine rubric of kitsch (McDannell 1995, 164). We can see these aspects of Sister Lydia's art in her Passion and Resurrection group, prominently displayed each Lent in Stockholm's medieval cathedral Storkyrka, as well as in the altarpiece Sister Lydia produced for the small but historically significant Kalmar church in the town of Håbo, outside of Stockholm.

As in other chapters of this study, I seek to shed light on the present work of Sister Lydia in part by examining the historical understandings and artistic expressions that she responds to in her work. Eva Rynänen (see chapter 1) engaged with a notion of a transcendent non-Christian animism that could take shape, or at least be acknowledged, within the narrower compass of Christianity, making a place for the sacrality of trees within a Lutheran worship space. Phillip Odden, and to a certain extent Else Bigton (see chapter 2), find inspiration in a pre-Christian "dragon style" as well as an embrace of early Christian stave churches as syncretic holdovers of an earlier earth religion. Sister Lydia, for her part, locates her inspirations in the Hanseatic statuary of the Catholic era as well as her order's firm conviction that the Reformation's rejection of Catholic devotionism deprived the faithful of valuable tools for the achievement of spiritual experience. In order to understand the significance of both these views in Sister Lydia's art, below I survey briefly both the statuary traditions of the medieval era and the history and ideas of Sister Lydia's religious order. In examining Sister Lydia's Passion and Resurrection group and Kalmar church altarpiece, I discuss her artwork in relation to notions of *l'art sacré* and feminine sentimentality, as discussed in Colleen McDannell's important study of American religious culture, *Material Christianity* (1995). And I suggest that Sister Lydia's works, like her order, help rediscover a link to empowered feminine vision and leadership hearkening back to the strongly emotive and bodily feminine spirituality discussed by Caroline Bynum in her influential *Jesus as Mother* (1982).

MEDIEVAL CATHOLIC STATUARY

From an examination of works like the twelfth-century Hylestad portal or Gol stave church (Figures I.5 and I.3, respectively, in the introduction), it would be easy

to assume a clear and uninterrupted artistic tradition from the pre-Christian past to the Christian medieval era. When it comes to the question of sacred sculpture, however—that is, statues of Jesus and the saints—there are more interruptions and more developments than one might at first assume. In this very brief survey, I hope to chart a few of the main lines of that artistic evolution, one that can be seen to culminate in the richly ornate and nuanced wooden altarpieces of the early sixteenth century, produced in Hanseatic cities and purchased and displayed in Nordic churches prior to the Reformation. Figure I.6 in the introduction—a detail of a particularly vivid and masterful altarpiece made in honor of Saint Anna, her daughter the Virgin Mary, and her grandson the savior Jesus, produced in a North German workshop around the year 1500 and long displayed at the Hägerstad church in Östergötland, Sweden, before the Reformation—can serve as an apt illustration of the remarkable evolution of statuary that Sister Lydia seeks to recall in her art.

Christianity was by no means monolithic on the question of religious statuary and of images more generally. For the Jews of ancient Israel, the carving of religious statuary seems to have fallen squarely into the category of activities prohibited in the Bible's Decalogue. Both Exodus 20:4 and Deuteronomy 5:8–9 specifically castigate the creation of idols representing God or gods, whether in the form of something in the heavens, on the earth, or in the waters. To do so would bring punishment upon one's community and family line for generations. The injunction is repeated with force several other times in the Torah, where maintenance of idols is ascribed to backward foreign populations or foolish backsliders (Deuteronomy 4:28, 27:15, 29:16). In the Psalms and prophetic books of the Bible, idol making is depicted as an emblem of dim-witted and counterproductive worship: idols are portrayed as pathetic substitutes for the animate and omnipotent power of the true God, who needs no concrete representation from the hands of an artisan (see also the prophetic books of Isaiah 40:19–20, 42:17, 44:17–18; Jeremiah 2:27–28, 10:3–5; Ezekiel 6:9, 14:7, 16:17–18; Hosea 4:12; Micah 5:12; Habakkuk 2:19).

This negative view of visual imagery contrasts nonetheless with reports of the sumptuous ornamentation of Jewish worship spaces, filled with carven images of beings, earthly as well as heavenly, as the detailed instructions and descriptions in Exodus 25–28 and 1 Kings 6:23–32 indicate. Alongside detailed instructions for the construction of the Arc of the Covenant, God commands Moses to make an image of a bronze serpent as a healing device in the Book of Numbers (21:4–9), a divine call for efficacious art. The sculpture purportedly thus fashioned was preserved as a powerful relic until being destroyed by iconoclastic reformers during the reign of King Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:4).

From the perspective of biblical discourse, then, one might well expect that Christianity would retain this central Jewish taboo and banish all artistic representations of the godhead from its sacred places and practices. In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul includes “idolators” among the sinners who will not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9), and he warns sternly against eating meat sacrificed to idols (8:4, 10:14). Yet in reconciling Jewish tradition with the richly imagistic religiosity of the Roman Mediterranean, Saint Basil (329–379) reasoned that the Christian’s homage to or reverence for an image is not directed toward the image itself but toward its referent: in other words, the image becomes the “prototype” of the saint or power it depicts (Mangrum and Scavizzi 1998, 26). In tackling the numerous Old Testament injunctions against the creation and use of idols, Saint Augustine (340–430) maintained that the Decalogue’s taboo against graven images was intended as an *example* of idolatry, not as a specifically prohibited act, thus leading to the loosening of the prohibition against images in subsequent Catholic (and, later, Lutheran) understandings. At the same time, Augustine was skeptical of the capacity of visual images to truly convey the complexities of divine revelation to the faithful, seeing them as deeply inferior to words and reasoning (Noble 2009, 35–38). In a famous and much-quoted letter, the sixth-century missionary pope Saint Gregory the Great (circa 540–604) distinguished between images as idols and as teaching tools, writing to his brother bishop, the iconoclastic Serenus of Marseilles, noting that for the illiterate masses of peasant Europe, images were essential vehicles of the faith: “A picture, therefore, serves as a book to the common people” (Gregory 1982, 872–75; see also Schmidt 1995, 36).

Isidore of Seville (ca. 560–636) notes the fictive quality of all image making but nonetheless sees its positive effects in the thoughts it stirs in the meditating mind (Carruthers 1990, 200). Gregory of Tours (c.a. 538–594) describes the wife of Bishop Namatianus of Clermont reading aloud to the painters decorating the walls of the basilica so that they could better depict the events described, and Gregory himself commissioned a series of narrative paintings on the life of Saint Martin for the cathedral he was rebuilding (Noble 2009, 39–40). The Northumbrian monastic Bede (673–735) responds to iconoclastic sentiments with fervor: “If it is permissible to raise up the brazen serpent on a tree that the Israelites may live by looking at it, why is it not permissible that the exaltation of the Lord our Savior on the cross . . . be recalled to the minds of the faithful pictorially?” (Noble 2009, 113). Bede recounts the valuable role imported images of the Madonna and the Apostles had for instilling the faith in the seventh-century monks of Wearmouth and Jarrow at the outer reaches of Christendom (Noble 2009, 115). Brought to the monastery by the abbot

Benedict Biscop (ca. 628–690) after his sojourn in Rome, the images allowed the abbot to propagate the new faith among his followers. The idea of images as *Biblia pauperum*—the paupers’ Bible—inscribed in Pope Saint Gregory’s letter and embraced by the likes of Isidore, Gregory, and Benedict was explicitly developed in the writings of Saint John of Damascus (ca. 675–749; Mangrum and Scavizzi 1998, 8, 27).

To be sure, the anti-image view occasionally prevailed, sometimes with the highest ecclesiastical and royal support, as, for example, in the Byzantine and Frankish courts (Noble 2009). The Byzantine emperors Leo III (717–741) and his son and successor Constantine V (741–775) vigorously opposed the production and use of images in churches and monasteries. In 754 Constantine organized an ecclesiastical council in the city of Hieria to address and condemn the use of images in the faith, although the council’s pronouncements were soon rejected by the Lateran Council of 769. The Second Council of Nicaea (787) definitively upheld the use of sacred art, noting Saint Basil’s contention that the honor paid to sacred images passes naturally to its prototype. In the West, however, Charlemagne, his English advisor Alcuin (ca. 735–804), and his wider ecclesiastical circle received the council’s pronouncements with considerable displeasure, leading eventually to the Council of Frankfurt (794), in which the Frankish clerics tempered or reversed some of the earlier council’s formulations (Noble 2009, 169–80).

Frankish hesitance regarding the veneration of images was matched by a ninth-century decree of Pope Leo IV forbidding altar decorations apart from those enhancing items of essential importance to the celebration of the Mass (Jacobs 1998, 12). Books, vessels for holding hosts or wine, or reliquaries for the conservation of sacred relics were permitted, but other embellishments were to be avoided. Reliquaries, however, gradually grew more and more ornate, becoming a medium for cultivating a taste for figurative sculptures. Saint Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153) criticizes visual arts adorning monastic architecture as leading monks to a laxity of mind, exposing them to the ever-present danger of *curiositas* (Carruthers 1990, 84). Intrigued or distracted by an image, the mind could grow crowded with extraneous thoughts, jostling for attention as the meditator battles vainly to regain a concentrated attention on a particular idea important for salvation. Yet Bernard’s teachings did not mean a wholesale rejection of images: the Cistercian chapter for 1134 calls for wooden crucifixes in order churches (Kunz 2007, 78).

The thirteenth-century Saint Thomas Aquinas (ca. 1225–1274) sought in his writings to explain and formalize the church’s teachings on images. He divided the salubrious effects of sacred images into three. The first purpose of such images, Aquinas wrote, is to instruct the faithful (“*ad instructionem rudium*”). Second, by representing

the saving acts of Christ and the holy example of the saints, such images ensure that the faithful keep these crucial events ever in mind (“*ut . . . in memoria nostra essent*”). And, finally, the images are useful for stirring the viewer to devotion (“*ad excitandum devotionis*”), an effect that they accomplish more effectively than is possible through merely hearing of such things from sacred readings (Schmidt 1995, 115–16). Aquinas’s threefold function is telling, for it identifies a role for sacred images long after the period of initial instruction. After initial catechization, images are to remind viewers of the sacred history they already know and to excite them into a more fervent, emotional response to it. As we shall see, these aims are evident in the sculptures produced in the high and later Middle Ages.

As noted above, the decree of Pope Leo IV forbidding altar decorations allowed for embellishment of certain objects central to the Mass, including books, chalices, and reliquaries (Jacobs 1998, 12; Fuglesang 2004, 12). Reliquaries in particular, as the repositories of parts of the bodies of saints, became some of the first foci for the development of Christian sculpture. They provided a visual depiction of a servant and friend of Christ, while offering to the faithful mediated access to the saint’s actual physical remains, items that could result in miraculous cures or other boons through intercessory prayer (Brown 1981). Around 947 at Clermont-Ferrand, Bishop Stephen II (937–984) requested the embellishment of a Marian reliquary housing remnants described as the Virgin’s hair, drops of her milk, and fragments of her dress (Fuglesang 2004, 12). Manuscript depictions of this original statue, which has been lost since 1792, show a seated Mary crowned with a veil and a halo, with an infant Jesus on her lap. The roughly contemporaneous reliquary of Saint Foy, housing the skull of the saint, depicts a crowned and enthroned woman (13). Bernhard of Angers wrote a detailed account of the many miracles attributed to this statue—*Liber miraculorum sanctae Fidis*—between 1014 and 1020. Addressing the saint whose relic resided within the statue that met the viewer’s eye, the faithful could hope for divine assistance from an otherwise invisible God in crises of health, loss of luck, or other turns of fortune.

Bernhard notes a synod of 1013 in the city of Rodez, to which a number of reliquary statues were brought, and he describes his own wonderment at a statue of Saint Gerald when he first encountered it on display above an altar: “When I first saw the statue of the holy Gerald placed above the altar, of purest gold and costly jewels and made so like a man in his whole appearance, it seemed to most of the rustics as if the statue looked at them and through them, and that it waited with penetrating eyes to hear their petitions” (14). As Ilene Forsyth (1972) has demonstrated, such reliquaries seem to have paved the way for sculptures that contained no relics but that were nonetheless accepted as valuable objects for contemplation and prayer,

displayed on altars in medieval churches and cathedrals, and also echoed in painted depictions within churches and prayerbooks (Ross 1994; Hahn 2001).

Statues of saints marked devotions and could also reflect shifts in popularity or understandings. New emphases on the emotive and human aspects of Jesus and Mary over the centuries became reflected in new sculptural representations (Pegelow 2006; Bynum 2007; McNamer 2010). The regal and serene Christ of the crucifixes of earlier eras became replaced with more emaciated and agonized Christs, as illustrated in the Botkyrka crucifix (Figure I.2 in the introduction) of the fourteenth century discussed in the introduction. Similarly, fairly rigid, serene Madonnas of the eleventh century became replaced by more naturalistic, dynamic Madonnas, in some cases even offering the divine Infant their nipples for suckling. Toward the end of the medieval period, other female saints, such as Saint Anna (the legendary mother of Mary) became favorite subjects for statuary and altarpieces as well (Wolf 2001, xi–xlv). In the lavish altarpiece of Hägerstad Church, in Östergötland, Sweden—produced in North Germany around the year 1500 and now preserved at the Swedish Historical Museum in Stockholm (Figure I.6)—a magnificently dressed matriarchal Saint Anna lovingly extends an apple to her naked grandson, held in the Virgin Mary’s arms, while male members of the extended family (including Mary’s husband, Joseph, and Anna’s three successive husbands) are depicted to the side and behind. The expressions of Anna, Mary, and Christ evince a serenity and familial love that is unmistakable, reflective of the strong embrace of emotion and of the feminine in late medieval spirituality (Bynum 1982).

The prominence of feminine spirituality, and of the leadership of female religious, became epitomized by the cult of Saint Birgitta (1301–1373), visionary, founder of the Order of the Most Holy Savior (the Birgittines), and perhaps the Nordic region’s most famous saint of either sex during the later Middle Ages. Saint Birgitta’s visions gave people of her day direct insights into such powerful events as the Nativity and the Crucifixion. Crucially, her cult was advanced in the Nordic region in part via statuary. A letter from Birgitta’s daughter Saint Katarina (1331–1381) to Swedish Archbishop Birger Gregersson specifically calls upon the cleric to promote awareness of Birgitta among the general populace through the production and installation of her likeness in Swedish churches, even though she had not yet been canonized, an honor that was to come only in 1391 (Svanberg 2003, 204, 214). Katarina scolds the bishop for the lack of images of Birgitta in Sweden to date, and notes that the pope himself has a portrait of her in his chambers. Many churches in Italy also contain images of the immigrant saint by that time, writes Katarina. Katarina’s exhortation must have moved the bishop to action, for in the following centuries numerous Nordic images of Birgitta were produced or commissioned, particularly

in her native Sweden, where nearly three hundred images survive (Lindgren 1991). After her death in 1373, Birgitta's body was escorted back to Sweden by Saint Katarina and Birgitta's son Birger, and her relics became a prime focus of pilgrimage for laity of all stations. Birgitta has received much scholarly attention in the twentieth century within the Nordic region and beyond (Stolpe 1973; Klockars 1976; Tjader Harris 1990; Nyberg 1991; Holloway 1992; Härdelin and Lindgren 1993; Nordahl 1997; Morris 1999; Sahlin 2001; Beskow and Landen 2003; Hagberg 2003; DuBois 2008; Salmesvuori 2009).

THE CARVER'S TRADE

As church regulations on images loosened and statuary rose in prominence, church authorities, wealthy patrons, and myriad monastic communities and guilds began to commission depictions of saints to grace the high altar or side chapels of churches and cathedrals. The production of religious statues became a major trade activity for workshops in Hanseatic centers like Lübeck and Antwerp, and both artists and artworks circulated throughout the Hanseatic world, facilitated by Low German as a *lingua franca* and by the relative freedom of movement and commerce afforded merchant cities in the Holy Roman Empire. Techniques of carving, finishing, gilding, and painting evolved in competing workshops, while the form and attributes of the saints depicted became progressively more standardized to aid in recognition and client satisfaction. Wealthy parishes in urban settings commissioned statues or, increasingly as the medieval era progressed, unified altarpieces. They sought out the finest internationally known workshops, often consigning their church's earlier sculptures to less affluent, more remote parishes. Local artisans also emulated or adapted works emanating from leading centers, creating imitations for use in other public or private devotional settings. While statues helped focus viewers' prayers on particular saints whose intercession the petitioners sought, statues and altarpieces could also become the focus of prayer in themselves, as miracles became associated with particular sculptures at particular locations. Gifts to altars from grateful petitioners who found their prayers answered increased the reputation and appeal of particular altars or sculptures. The rich and varied economy of prayer that this evolution of ideas fomented became the object of intense condemnation in the preaching and writings of the Reformation, making medieval statuary often unwelcome in the Lutheran worship spaces that developed from the sixteenth century onward. As we shall see, Sister Lydia attempts in her work to mitigate this rejection, rediscovering the scriptural and spiritual insights of medieval religious sculpture and looking for ways to reintroduce these positive aspects into contemporary Lutheran spiritual life.

In 1387 the Icelandic priest Ólafur Halldórsson copied into the final three pages of a manuscript he had prepared (MS AM 194.8°), a brief but richly informative set of instructions for how to make and decorate a wooden sculpture (Plahter 1992). The text is written as a letter and begins in pious fashion:

Jesús Krístr faðir sonr [ok] heilagr andi, hverr er yfir meisari er ok höfuðsmiðr ok upphaf allra listanna í veröldinni, styki oss með sinni miskunn, at vér mættim þess heldr biðja hann, sem oss lægi mest á at þiggja andliga ok líkamliga. Meðr þessum orðum heilsar elskuligum manni, bróður Mag., einn lítill ok óvendingr maðr, T., biðjandi fyrir þau enu fá orð er vit höfum með talazk, at þér forsmáið ei þessa hina litlu fellu, at hon til nokkurrar nauðsynlegrar menntar yrði, til sálubótar vætandi at þér biðið fyrir mér. (Plahter 1992, 167)

May Jesus Christ, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who is Lord of all, chief smith and source of all arts in the world, strengthen us with his mercy, that we might better pray to him for what we need most, both in spirit and in flesh. With these words a small and unworthy man T greets the beloved man, Brother Mag., praying that, on account of the few words we have had with one another, you may not disdain this little work, and that it may be of some help to you, in the hopes that you will pray for the good of my soul.

Therein follows an elaborate set of instructions for shaping a sculpture, coating it in a layer that will allow smoothing and hold paint, and painting and gilding it in such a manner that its yellow portions will look like red-hued gold and its other colors will remain true and lovely. The writer's instructions, with frequent borrowings of terms he must have heard in English, French, German, and medieval Latin, reflect a writer well informed in the art of sculpting and painting as practiced in the finest centers of the continent (170). "Small and unworthy" as T describes himself, he was nonetheless evidently confident in his ability to impart to a respected colleague the precise details of an exacting and prestigious art.

A handful of medieval illustrations as well as physical markings on the surviving sculptures themselves indicate the ways in which carving occurred. Thirteenth-century stained glass in the Cathedral of Chartres, France, depicts carvers at work with chisels, gouges, and hammers over statues laid on an incline over the ground. This same method, but with a somewhat more upright positioning of the sculpture, is indicated in a manuscript illumination of a female carver in a late-fifteenth-

century French illumination (Wixom 2001, 9). Markus Hiekkänen (2003) describes a somewhat more refined system for Nordic sculptors of the same period in which the sculpture was suspended over a table by metal fittings inserted into its intended top and bottom and then carved horizontally, as on a modern lathe. The piece could be turned to allow the carver access to its different surfaces. Statues surviving in Scandinavia frequently have a plug in the top of the head that indicates that they were probably produced on such a lathe-like device. The head hole was also apparently used to hang the pieces during the finishing process (Tångeberg 1986, 179). Such holes are common in sculptures produced from 1225 to 1390 (32).

As we will see with one of Sister Lydia's pieces discussed later in this chapter, the use of cabinetry, as well as limits of space on medieval altars, imposed another requirement upon the sculptor: pieces needed to be fairly shallow in depth. Viewed frontally, altarpieces needed to convey a sense of depth and fullness; at the same time, they needed to be closed off from view during Lent, necessitating a range of craft techniques that would allow the scenes to be contained in a single cabinet.

Before the era of Tilman Riemenschneider (d. 1531), Northern European carvers were not interested in celebrating the grain or appearance of wood in the manner customary among artists today. Wood was a medium that was intended to be disguised to look like stone, and thus a durable wood that held its carving well was viewed as the ideal, regardless of its appearance. Sculptural cabinetry could be made of pine, but sculptures surviving in the Nordic region tended to be of alder or birch. Imported works from northern Germany were often of the harder and more durable oak, and oak provided the medium for many of the accessories a sculpture received, such as crowns or attributes (Karlsson 2005, 26). Guild regulations in Lübeck specified the use of oak for religious sculpture (Hiekkänen 2003, 99), while carvers in Rostock were prohibited from using alder, willow, or ash. In practice, however, since the wood of a statue would be enveloped in thick coatings of gesso and paint (see below), artisans had little worry about combining separate pieces or types of wood into composite sculptures.

Tångeberg (30) points out that it is unclear whether artists used dried or green wood for their sculptures. Wooden sculptures sometimes show a blackening that may indicate that the wood was dried beside a fire in preparation for carving (30), a process parallel to the kiln drying typical in the modern preparation of wood for building or carving today. Regardless of whether the piece was carved of green or dry wood, however, many cracks often developed before any finish was applied. Cracks are a natural outcome of the drying process, and artists had to find ways to mitigate their effects and/or minimize their occurrence. Hollowing out a piece into a relative thin shell was one way of accomplishing this end. The thinner pieces of wood could

dry more evenly, thus reducing the tendency toward cracking. In his fourteenth-century letter of instructions quoted above, T advises his correspondent to let cracks form on the sculpture during the shaping and then fill them with wood of a similar degree of dryness along with glue, coating the outside surface with a “plastr” apparently composed of glue and chalk (Plahter 1992, 168). In his examination of extant sculptures, Tångeberg finds that larger gaps, seams, or cracks tended to be covered by pieces of linen or parchment glued over the cracks to create a surface suitable for further layers of glue, gesso or paint (1986, 57). Since in practice the entire surface of sculptures would be covered by layers of glue, lime or chalk, and paint, cracks occurring during production could easily be patched and hidden.

One of the major sources of variation in carving technique over time concerns whether artists used a single piece of wood for a sculpture or combined several pieces. Sometimes, as with early Madonnas, Mother and Child were carved separately and simply combined at the final stage of production; later stylistic developments led to the carving of Mother and Child out of a single block of wood, affording greater unity to the piece but also entailing greater challenges to the carver (Karlsson 2005, 14). In any case, heads, arms, and feet were usually produced separately and affixed to the main sculpture through pegs, nails, and glue. A deep and elaborate sleeve, for instance, allowed the artist to insert a separately carved hand into a piece without the issue of having to try to conceal the seam. This notion of composite production—far distant from the methods of Eva Ryynänen discussed in chapter 1—survived in Eastern European carving into the twentieth century, finding its way into such products as American carousel carvings through the activities of displaced Lithuanian Jews (Zimiles 2007). It is a technique that Sister Lydia embraces in her works in ways that echo or imitate medieval models.

The Reformation, or more particularly the reform movement inaugurated by the German Augustinian monk and theologian Martin Luther (1483–1546) in 1517, combined alterations in Catholic liturgy and ritual with substantial transformations in the worldview and institutional practices of European Christianity. Given the importance of both the Hanseatic League and the Teutonic Knights in the Nordic-Baltic region, German religious ideas—both from the north of Germany and from the Rhineland—diffused readily into the region and spread particularly in Hanseatic trade centers (Andreson 2010). The Duchy of Prussia adopted Protestantism as its official religion in 1521. The Reformation was embraced by the royal and ecclesiastical authorities of Sweden-Finland in 1527 and in Denmark-Norway in 1536. Despite the rapidity of its spread among the elite of the region, however, the movement seems to have enjoyed little popular support among ordinary laypeople for at least a century.

Notwithstanding initial popular resistance, the Reformation was destined to completely revise the material and artistic fabric of Nordic and Baltic Christianity, replacing the multicentered and communal devotional practices of late medieval Christian culture with a new set of practices, viewpoints, and artistic products focused on the individual, on a nationally organized church and clergy, and on a drastically reduced array of subjects deemed appropriate for artistic representation. In the programmatic drive to establish this new set of viewpoints among the Nordic faithful, art—and the possible destruction or replacement of art—was to play a central role. Actions taken toward statues helped establish the attitudes and orientations toward Christ, the saints, and salvation that would eventually become the unquestioned norm in the Nordic countries and at least part of the Baltics. In Lithuania and Poland, on the other hand, the restoration of religious sculptural traditions after the initial success of the Lutheran Reformation helped underscore the definitive triumph of the Counter-Reformation and the return of the realms to Catholic adherence.

Typical of the outrage and vitriol that reformers brought with them from the continent is the treatise of Andreas Karlstadt (1486–1541) published in 1522, *Von Abtuhung der Bylder* (*On the Removal of Images*; Mangrum and Scavizzi 1998). For Karlstadt, Roman ecclesiastical authority, the cult of the saints, and the production and veneration of religious art were all part of a single demonic growth that had to be rooted out and destroyed. In a polemic directed toward the laity, the clergy, and the secular authorities of Wittenberg, Karlstadt makes a fervent case against according any reverence to visual art in the name of education, honor, or religious devotion.

For Karlstadt, as for the Reformation thinkers he drew upon (e.g., Erasmus), the biblical injunctions against graven images set forth in the Hebrew scriptures were in force for Christians just as much as were the other commandments of the Decalogue, including injunctions against murder, theft, and adultery (42). Citing in detail the various condemnations of idol production in the Torah, the books of the prophets, and Paul's epistles, Karlstadt declares that "God hates and is jealous of pictures . . . and considers them an abomination, and proclaims that all men in his eyes are like the things they love. Pictures are loathsome. It follows that we also become loathsome when we love them" (22). Opposing the more lenient position of Luther, who was absent from Wittenberg at the time, Karlstadt calls for the secular authorities to remove and destroy all such images from the churches within their districts (40–41).

Karlstadt's views were extreme in comparison with other Lutheran reformers, including Luther, Melancthon, Hieronymus Emser, and Johannes Eck (Mangrum

and Scavizzi 1998), but they illustrate well some of the iconoclastic viewpoints of the wider Protestant movement that diffused into the Nordic region, including those of Calvin, whose ministry came somewhat later and was particularly attractive to Sweden's King Eric XIV (Senn 2004, 76). For Karlstadt, images were deplorable in that not only were they prohibited by biblical injunctions but also they cannot express anything more than the physical essence of things. Writes Karlstadt:

[W]hat good things could the laity indeed learn from images? Certainly you must say that one learns from them nothing but the life and the suffering of the flesh and that they do not lead further than to the flesh. More they cannot do. For example, from the image of the crucified Christ you learn only about the suffering of Christ in the flesh, how his head hung down, and the like. Now Christ says that his flesh is of no use but that the spirit is of use and gives life . . . Since, then, images are deaf and dumb, can neither see nor hear, neither learn nor teach, and point to nothing other than pure and simple flesh which is of no use, it follows conclusively that they are of no use. (27)

As such, images are far inferior to words and books, which Karlstadt sees as ideal vehicles for holy edification. In Karlstadt's view, Pope Saint Gregory was badly mistaken—or willfully misleading—in describing images and *Biblia pauperum*. Further, books are produced by learned men (34), while images are the work of ignorant craftsmen from whom nothing of value can be learned. Writes Karlstadt: “You yourself must confess that you will not ask an image-maker what profits you for salvation because he is an image-maker. How, therefore, can Pope Gregory make so bold as to say, Images are the books of the laity, when artists can teach nothing useful for salvation?” (31). Karlstadt opines that his only hesitation toward seizing and destroying the “knavish and seductive blocks of wood” that pollute churches of his locale is the superstitious conditioning he has received in his upbringing: “[M]y heart has been trained and grown up in the veneration and worship of pictures. And a harmful fear has been bred into me from which I would gladly deliver myself and cannot. As a consequence, I stand in fear that I might not be able to burn idols. I would fear that some devil's block of wood . . . would do me injury” (39). Karlstadt's invective aims at convincing his readers to regard iconoclasm as a holy and heroic act, one desperately needed for the recovery of a proper attitude toward God, uncorrupted by papist fallacies.

Addressing his readers with simple black-and-white arguments and stirring invective—“you idolatrous unbeliever” (31), “you holy gluttons” (32), “you blockhead”

(32), “you fat and rotund image-maker” (32), “Devil’s whores” 37) — Karlstadt leaves little room for a reasoned rebuttal. Chronicles of the early Reformation in Sweden record marked violence against sculptures, precisely of the sort Karlstadt called for. One chronicle depicts an agitated populace of Stockholm “making war on the effigies, injuring them, as well as organs, pictures and other contents of monasteries and churches; some they smashed and pulled to pieces, some they burned, and on some they mutilated noses and hands and dragged them out into market-places and streets” (Thordeman 1964, 7). Such is parallel to the situation described in John Knox’s 1559 description of iconoclasm in Perth, Scotland: when the priest opened the altarpiece on the high altar in preparation for saying mass, the congregation rose up in fury and destroyed the altarpiece (Jacobs 1998, 18).

Similarly, the early Reformation in Denmark provoked parallel iconoclastic actions at the cathedral of Roskilde. The cathedral’s patron saint was Pope Saint Lucius, whose legend was celebrated in an altarpiece on the high altar (now lost), as well as a stained-glass depiction and a magnificent wooden sculpture. Carved of wood but adorned with pearls and gems, the saint was depicted holding a bishop’s staff and a sword, a symbol of his martyrdom. King Christian III’s advisor in introducing the Reformation to Denmark, Luther’s former pastor Johannes Bugenhagen (1485–1558), happened to inspect the statue and interpreted its sword as a symbol of the power of the papacy over royal authority. At Bugenhagen’s urging, the king had the statue destroyed (Kruse 2003, 22). The silver altarpiece of the Cathedral at Trondheim — the focus of one of the largest pilgrimages in medieval Europe — was similarly confiscated and melted down. King Saint Olaf’s relics — once prominently displayed — were removed from their reliquary and unceremoniously buried somewhere within the cathedral. Hundreds of altarpieces and statues — along with the relics they sometimes contained — seem to have met similar ends, although it is difficult to estimate precisely the number of works destroyed in this period.

In Sweden, Gustav Vasa’s German Reformer Georg Norman undertook similar clearances, particularly of sacred objects made of valuable metal. Between 1540 and 1541, some 90 percent of the silver treasures housed in the churches of Östergötland, Västergötland, and Småland were confiscated and melted down. Among the populace, such acts led members of the laity to regard the king not so much as a righteous reformer as a church plunderer, spawning an image of the king that remained alive in folk legends and songs for centuries after (Nyman 1997, 81). Implementation of Lutheran liturgical reforms outside of Stockholm occurred only gradually: the first use of Swedish in the mass liturgy in Skellefteå took place only in 1536 and in Umeå in 1537. In both towns, Latin continued as the normal language of the liturgy into the 1540s (Senn 2004, 79).

Although violent destruction and removal of sacred images certainly occurred in the Nordic Reformation, the countries' newly ensconced Lutheran clergy often took a more measured, even tolerant approach to church art. Like Luther, they recognized the value of visual artworks as sources of instruction and inspiration for the laity, particularly in the overwhelmingly rural countries over which they presided. The Nordic region had never displayed the tendency toward heterodoxy and heresy of England, Central Europe, or Southern Europe, and Nordic clergy seem to have reasoned that they could turn their countries' relatively docile populace to the new religion through judicious exhortations and education. In this they were largely correct. Olaus Petri (1493–1552), the first Lutheran archbishop of Sweden and a leading force in the implementation of the Reformation, wrote in 1528 that altarpieces, sculptures, and paintings were purely human devices, but he did not insist on their removal (Thordeman 1964, 7). In his Church Ordinance of 1571, Olaus's brother Laurentius permitted the continued use of effigies, but prohibited their being clothed during Lent or on feast days (Thordeman 1964, 10). New items were to be introduced as well: pulpits were to be installed so as to refocus attention within divine services on preaching and the reading of scriptures in the vernacular. By focusing the attention of congregations onto the word and its interpretation, and gradually marginalizing the visual works that the faithful had formerly venerated, ecclesiastical authorities could gradually reform the laity without dramatic gestures that might offend them. In terms of clerical workforce, monastic orders were sometimes allowed to remain active both in Denmark-Norway and in Sweden-Finland, although their finances and activities were severely limited and the reception of novices denied (Nyman 1997, 59, 73). The last Birgittine nun in Finland died in 1591; the abbey at Vadstena was finally closed during the following year.

THE DAUGHTERS OF MARY

Sister Lydia belongs to an order of sisters entitled *Mariadöttrarna av den Evangeliska Mariavägen* (the Daughters of Mary of the Evangelical Way of Mary)—a Lutheran women's religious order founded in the mid-twentieth century by Sister Paulina Mariadotter (born Gunvor Norrman, 1903–1985). The order developed out of Sister Paulina's personal spiritual awakening in Vallby, Hornö, and Fågelång, Sweden, an awakening influenced by the ideas and faith sharing of the Protestant evangelist Frank Buchman (1878–1961), whose followers became known as the Oxford Group and later, more formally, as the Moral Re-Armament (MRA) movement. Trained as a teacher but strongly shaped by her own spiritual growth in Oxford Group experiences, Sister Paulina created an order of women who live today

in small faith-sharing communities, engaging in contemplative life and good works in Sweden, Finland, and Denmark (Mariadotter 1990; Laghé 2004).

As Birgitta Laghé shows in her history of the order, the development of Sister Paulina's vision for female monasticism within twentieth-century Swedish, Danish, and Finnish Lutheranism developed gradually, building on the small-group faith-sharing methods of the Oxford Group and incrementally adding elements of Catholic religious tradition, such as devotion to the Virgin Mary, wearing of a habit, taking of vows of celibacy, conferral of liturgical consecration, and development of a formal rule. In the context of mid-twentieth-century Lutheranism, this spirituality conflicted stridently with a Lutheran image of women's vocation centered on marriage and motherhood. It was also distinctive in the importance it placed on Sister Paulina's visionary experiences and devotion to the Virgin Mary. These elements play a role in the art that Sister Lydia eventually came to produce.

Particularly after a dramatic instructive vision of Jesus and Mary in 1949, known in the order as Besöket (the Visitation), Sister Paulina's life, and that of the other women who came to follow her, became more directly tied to mystical insights. One important such experience came one day in 1953 when Sister Paulina was looking at a map of Europe with her colleague Maria Elisabeth (born Else Wolf). The two noticed the name Trier and recognized in it a place in which Catholic and Lutheran traditions converged and where the women could possibly do valuable work in rebuilding a war-torn Germany (Mariadotter 1990, 100). They traveled to Trier the following year, open to being led to the role that they might play there in the service of God. At the very end of a demoralizing visit of the city, which had received extensive damage in the course of the Second World War, they visited the Abbey Basilica of Saint Matthias, where, in a chapel dedicated to the Virgin Mary, they encountered a striking icon of a meek Virgin Mary, adorned with a cross-emblazoned halo that signified that she was pregnant with Jesus. Here they found the central insight that just as Mary had borne Jesus in her body for the good of the world, so the members of their order would bear Jesus and Christian life to the world around them. A copy of the icon was made and is included in every house of the order today. Fundamentally, its prominence in the order's received history underscores the power of art as a means of communication from God, one that members are called to contemplate and reverence in their daily lives.

Also striking about the Trier experience was the women's openness to immersion in a Catholic religious atmosphere. Writes Sister Clara in her very personal biography of Sister Paulina: "*Att få ta in atmosfären i kyrkorna, leva med i gudstjänsterna, inte minst i den stora Domen, ta in all konst som samlats genom århundradena, det blev stort och dyrbart för oss*" (100). ("To be able to take in the atmosphere and

experience the services, particularly in the great cathedral, and take in all the art that had accumulated through the centuries — this was grand and valuable for us.”) Close contact with Catholic monks and nuns, and translation of materials they had produced, including older and newer rules and devotional practices, greatly shaped the women’s actions. By 1959 they had adopted a blue habit, and by 1990 the Swedish Lutheran church had accepted their way of life as a valid monastic expression of spirituality within the state church (173). At the same time, while embracing these elements of Catholic devotionism and spirituality, a sense of deep loyalty to the form of Christianity in which they had been born convinced the women not simply to convert to Catholicism (although one of the houses of the order did eventually do so). Instead, the women decided to incorporate into their practices and outlooks as much of the Catholic influences as they could while still remaining true to Lutheran theology. This balancing informs centrally Sister Lydia’s art on all levels.

A further mystical and artistic experience within the order’s understanding of its history is the development of an important motif: a heart superimposed on the intersection of a cross. This symbol was one that women of the order began to wear as insignia of their profession already in the 1940s (102). It expresses the emotive relationship of the sisters with the idea of salvation and the love of Christ. Sister Paulina had developed the image as a product of her visionary experiences, and it became important for the sisters’ articulation of their understanding of grace and salvation. Significantly, Sister Paulina had come upon the image during her time at Vallby, in which she regularly attended Sunday services at the medieval church there with her students. In 1958 restoration of church frescoes formerly hidden by white-wash in the church revealed an image of a cross with a heart precisely like that which Sister Paulina had envisioned during her time there. The fact that the image had lain hidden beneath layers of paint, and that Sister Paulina had regularly looked at the particular wall on which it lay waiting to be revealed, proved an important mystical sign for the sisters, one that Sister Lydia recalls with great emotion and enthusiasm. For the Daughters of Mary, God communicates readily through art.

SISTER LYDIA’S ART AS REDISCOVERY

For a period of some two decades, Sister Lydia produced literally thousands of sculptures, large and small, from simple crucifixes for holding in one’s hand to major commissions for prominent cathedrals, churches, and chapels throughout Sweden. Perhaps her most recognizable work is the Lenten Passion and Resurrection group displayed each year in anticipation of Easter at Storkyrkan, the great medieval

cathedral in the heart of Stockholm's Gamla Stan. Sister Lydia herself considers the altarpiece she produced for Kalmar Church in the village of Håbo, not far from Stockholm, as her most mature and successful piece. All of her works, however, seek to express visually the essence of the Christian message—that is, the offer of eternal life through the grace of a loving and generous God. And many of her pieces do so through rediscovering and adapting aspects of earlier Christian sculpture, particularly that of the Catholic era.

For Sister Lydia, her art and her religious calling are bound up in single sacred unity. She cites several reasons for this fact. First, as she warmly recalls, it was the order's founder and leader, Sister Paulina, who first encouraged Sister Lydia to render her religious convictions in art and who subsequently asked her to continue. Sister Paulina's simple instructions, "*Försök!*" ("Try!") and "*Fortsätt!*" ("Continue!") emboldened Sister Lydia to devote herself fully to a career as a professional artist, first for the order alone, and eventually for an ever-increasing array of outside clients, predominantly other church congregations in Sweden. Second, Sister Paulina's particular understanding of visual art as a communication from God helps contextualize and give meaning to her work: members of the order, like their founder, expect that God may speak to their hearts and understandings not only through words but also through images. Thus the visual artist has a profound role to play in helping capture and transmit God's messages to willing viewers. Finally, with Sister Paulina's request that Sister Lydia continue in her efforts, the order came to sponsor her as a full-time artist, helping equip her workshop and facilitating her work and travels to the various venues in which her sculptures were to appear. In these ways, Sister Lydia's artistic endeavors can be rightly regarded as a ministry, a way in which the sisterhood reaches out to the countless viewers who encounter Sister Lydia's works in modern Sweden today.

Sister Lydia recalls her childhood as one in which art played a prominent role. Her father painted and her mother was active in the theater. During her teen years, the young Lydia wished to express herself artistically as well, but describes herself as too consumed by destructive energies at the time. At last, sometime during her teen years, she accepted Jesus Christ into her life and everything changed. Now she was filled with a longing to let her newfound experience of Christ pervade her life, not wishing to confine it to a weekly church service. At the age of nineteen she experienced her religious calling, not exactly as a voice but in any case as a clear invitation, to which she gladly assented.

Time went by and Sister Lydia became a member of the order in 1979. Sisters live a monastic life much like Catholic nuns, although Sister Paulina, the founder of the order, never took the title of Mother but remained simply a sister, like all the

rest. Nonetheless, Sister Paulina played an important role in guiding Sister Lydia's life and work. In 1980 Sister Paulina remarked in passing how much she enjoyed the small sculpture that Sister Lydia had made her and asked whether she could perhaps make something more. Sister Lydia was uncertain, but felt that perhaps through art she could express her wonderment at the fact that Jesus died for us all. Rather than express such ideas through words, perhaps she could do so through art. Sister Paulina's reply, "*Försök!*" started Sister Lydia's carving her first larger piece, one that would be followed by piece after piece for the next two decades, in accord with Sister Paulina's injunction "*Fortsätt!*"

Much of Sister Lydia's work finds inspiration in the liturgical art of the medieval church. Processional crosses, baptismal fonts, altarpieces, candleholders—such items permit the faithful to manifest their faith in visible and efficacious ways or bear witness to important moments of prayer that hold significance for the faithful. Sister Lydia remembers her confirmation ceremony when, at the age of fourteen, she was asked to carry a processional cross. Her confirmation class was very small, only three in number. As Sister Lydia recalls, the pastor asked one of the girls if she would carry the cross, but she declined. Then he asked the second girl. Sister Lydia remembers holding her breath and hoping excitedly that the girl would say no. In the end, this girl declined the honor as well, so Sister Lydia had the joy of carrying the cross herself. For her, works of *brukskonst* (art with practical uses) are among the most meaningful, and although the term is seldom applied to liturgical art, she feels few items could be more practical than those that aid in one's spiritual journey.

Access to important church commissions was as competitive for Sister Lydia as it must have been for medieval artists. She tells of a competition for a commission (in Växjö) in which the church authorities required applicants to have *en högre konstnärlig utbildning* (higher artistic training). Sister Lydia had no such training but was self-taught—or, as she put it, *Gud lärd* (God taught). When she was discouraged about the situation, one of her sisters remarked that since she always described herself as *Gud lärd*, one could hardly imagine any training higher than that! As a result, Sister Lydia filled out the application form, writing "God taught" in the space for indicating her higher-education degree. She received a formal reply from the board assigning the commission, and although the board did not award Sister Lydia with the contract, they thanked her for her contribution to their thinking.

STORKYRKA PASSION AND RESURRECTION GROUP

The statues that make up Sister Lydia's Passion and Resurrection group are carved of blocks of elm (figure 3.2). Accompanied by stone, candles, potted plants, and paper



Figure 3.2. Sister Lydia's Lenten sculptures as they were displayed in the Stockholm cathedral, Storkyrka, during the Easter season of 2014. The sculptures stand on a set of raised crypts toward the back of the cathedral, where pews face the center aisle. Sister Lydia Mariadotter (Swedish, 1953–). *Passion and Resurrection Group* (2002). Elm wood, stone, wax, potted plants, paper; figures circa 120 × 80 cm. Storkyrka, Stockholm, Sweden.

signs referring the viewer to pertinent biblical passages, the statues evoke the events of the Passion, with emphasis on the jubilation of the Resurrection. Like the Storkyrka cathedral's elaborate carved Nativity scene, produced by Eva Spångberg over the years 1992–2002, Sister Lydia's Passion and Resurrection group is displayed only seasonally, although three of its figures (Christ and two angels) are kept on display at other times of the year as well. During the season of Lent and the forty days leading up to Pentecost, the sculptures can be seen atop a set of raised crypts, encasing past notables of Swedish society along the side wall of the cathedral.

Sister Lydia recalls that the cathedral authorities, headed by the prominent female minister and theologian Ullabritt Berglund, wanted an artwork that would communicate with visitors to the cathedral who were coming for religious rather than cultural-historical reasons. Nestled in the very heart of Stockholm's Gamla Stan,

Storkyrkan receives countless thousands of tourists each year, as well as myriad school groups coming to the nation's capital on field trips. The church leadership wanted art that spoke directly and in a contemporary fashion to the religious purpose of the cathedral, and they asked Sister Lydia to create a work that would communicate with modern viewers, be they secular or religious, adults or children.

Sister Lydia's group sequence in some ways recapitulates earlier medieval and Renaissance depictions of key events in salvation history. Her sculptures can be seen as modern counterparts to the Holy Week sculptures used in dramatic reenactments of the Passion in the medieval era, and elements of the group also recall generic pictorial representations of the events of the Savior's final days, Crucifixion, and Resurrection. At the same time, her images often explicitly avoid or counter received (Catholic) notions of the events they depict, setting her group in complex dialogue with earlier art and calling for viewers to contemplate and savor. Unlike the folksy, brightly painted figures of Eva Spångberg's Nativity group, Sister Lydia's style emphasizes natural wood grain and adopts what art critics have called the "hieratic" (sacred and formal) expressionistic vocabulary of twentieth-century *art sacré*, as pioneered in the works of Ernst Barlach, with enlarged heads and hands and highly simplified body forms.

Sister Lydia's sequence, as displayed in the April 2014 Holy Week, begins with a table representing the Last Supper. The table is bare, apart from an earthenware chalice and a wooden depiction of an unleavened loaf. Here we see no human actors: the moment depicted is apparently after the end of the dinner, when Jesus and his disciples have gone off to pray at the Garden of Gethsemane and while Judas is busy carrying out his planned betrayal. Here we see no high-backed chairs or tall banquet table of the kind found in Renaissance and post-Reformation depictions of the event (e.g., like Da Vinci's *Last Supper* or Figure C.3 in the conclusion) but, rather, a simple, low-slung table, about which the Apostles will have sat or reclined as indicated in the biblical accounts. The low table also makes the image easily visible to children, despite the fact that the table is placed on a raised platform of medieval graves. Sister Lydia's depiction of the chalice and bread recalls Lutheran theology, in which the bread and wine of the altar are transformed into the body and blood of Christ for the duration of the service, but then return to their ordinary essence after the conclusion of the ritual. Thus here we see not a sanctified Host but, rather, a leftover loaf, a reminder of the very simple and homespun symbols that the Savior employed to convey his point to his disciples.

Sister Lydia's depiction of the Crucifixion again creates a visual echo but counter to medieval depictions of the moment. Here we see no writhing image of a crucified Jesus (although Sister Lydia has certainly produced such images in other works).



Figure 3.3. Sister Lydia's depiction of Mary Magdalen. As the first person to see the risen Christ, Mary is called the "Apostle to the Apostles." In Sister Lydia's rendering, she is youthful, confident, and joyful. Sister Lydia Mariadotter (Swedish, 1953–). *Mary Magdalen* (2002). Elm wood; 100 × 80 cm. Storkyrka, Stockholm, Sweden.

Instead, the cross is bare apart from indentations marking the hands and feet of Jesus, Pontius Pilate's scroll at the top of the cross, and a crown of thorns capped by a heart, the latter symbolizing the self-sacrifice of Jesus but also, more personally, the specific charisma and iconography of Sister Lydia's order. Beside the cross stand a spear and a hammer, signs of the brutal acts that have gone on at the site but that are left otherwise undepicted. A soldier stands alongside the empty cross, holding a spear: perhaps he is the Longinus of medieval legendry—the Roman soldier who pierced the side of Jesus after the Crucifixion and whose blindness was cured through contact with the Savior's blood. Yet he may also simply be a soldier, guarding the cross as well as the tomb to ensure that the body of Jesus is not stolen by his followers.

The tomb itself is represented by a round stone placed in front of a niche in the cathedral wall to simulate the biblical tomb. Outside it stands Mary Magdalene, the "Apostle to the Apostles," who first discovers the risen Jesus (figure 3.3). Sister Lydia has depicted her with flowing long hair and a jubilant expression, her hands



Figure 3.4. Angels at the tomb of Christ. Sister Lydia's two angels are depicted with eyes closed. Although placed near the statue of Mary Magdalen and the empty tomb during the Lenten season, the statues are also often displayed separately at other times of the year. Sister Lydia Mariadotter (Swedish, 1953–). *Angels* (2002). Elm wood; 100 × 80 cm. Storkyrka, Stockholm, Sweden.

outstretched so as to point to Jesus. Sister Lydia does not follow the medieval and Renaissance visual traditions of the *noli me tangere* motif, in which a crouching Mary tries to cling to a clearly impatient Christ. Rather, Mary is confident, jubilant, and autonomous in the scene. Her thick, flowing hair connotes her youth and vigor but also suggests from afar a veil, just as her belted tunic recalls a sister's habit. For a female religious, Mary Magdalen holds obvious appeal, and Sister Lydia gives her a prominent place in her group.

Mary Magdalene is turned toward two angels whose eyes are closed, conveying a sense of elegance and serenity not found in the group's human disciples (figure 3.4). They illustrate well Sister Lydia's adoption of a hieratic style, with simplified lines, indistinct body forms, and schematic wings. Tellingly, however, one of the angels is depicted tenderly touching the wing of the other, connoting their friendship and



Figure 3.5. Sister Lydia's risen Christ. A smiling Jesus greets viewers with outstretched arms. The figure's enlarged hands bear nail marks at the wrists, the place where Sister Lydia believes the nails of the Crucifixion must have been applied. A naturally occurring crack, formed as the wood of the sculpture dried, runs from the figure's left breast upward to the shoulder. Although the focal figure of the *Passion and Resurrection* group, the statue is also regularly displayed on its own in the cathedral during other times of the year. Sister Lydia Mariadotter (Swedish, 1953–). *Jesus* (2002). Elm wood; 120 × 90 cm. Storkyrka, Stockholm, Sweden.

their materiality. Beside them, the group includes a collection of small birds and a nest, along with a small food dish.

In the 2014 deployment of the group, the key sculpture of Jesus is depicted not in dialogue with Mary Magdalene, who remains by the empty tomb, but, rather, farther down the line, confronting a group of three adult male worshippers, two children, a dog, a cat, a lion, and additional small birds, all depicted in wonderment at the Resurrection. The figure of Jesus (figure 3.5) is depicted smiling broadly, arms spread wide in a gesture of welcome and salutation. Sister Lydia's contemplation of past art

and of the events of the Passion is evident in the sculpture's form. Sister Lydia made the sculpture's hands separately, in the manner of medieval artists, but she carved them oversized and durable, then anchored them into her sculpture in such a way that she hoped her work would never suffer the loss of limbs so common in surviving medieval statues. She also depicts the nail holes of Christ's hands as being located at the wrists rather than on the palms. She indicated to me that this was the location in which the nails *had* to be placed: spikes never could have held the body of Jesus aloft if nailed into the soft flesh and tendons of the palm alone: they needed the concrete anchor of bone. In this way, Sister Lydia inserts her own logical judgments into the sculpture, akin to early medieval depictions of the Crucifixion that include ropes holding Christ's arms in place in addition to the nails, and rejecting the unlikely but generically normative depictions of nailed palms in medieval crucifixes.

While locating her inspiration in medieval craftsmanship, Sister Lydia also eagerly acknowledges the ways in which her medium, wood, contributed to her work in ways reminiscent of those discussed in connection with Eva Ryyänen in chapter 1. Sister Lydia recalls the work of hollowing her figure of Jesus from below in order to reduce the likelihood of cracking, in the manner of medieval carvers. Nonetheless, she knew from experience that a piece of that size would eventually crack. As she was completing the work, it cracked across the center knot, right above the figure's heart, as can be seen in Figure 3.5. The crack came exactly where it should, symbolically, Sister Lydia told me, becoming part of the work's expressive design, a manifestation of the theme of Christ's broken heart and love for his people. Similarly, Sister Lydia recalls a story about the elms that furnished the wood for the statues. She had made her proposal for the cathedral commission and specified the size and nature of the pieces that would be included. But she had no wood of suitable dimensions available in her workshop at the time. As soon as she was granted the commission, however, a neighbor arrived and said that he was going to have to take down some very large elms on his property, each of them more than 150 years old. Disease had caused their deaths and Sister Lydia could have the wood if she liked. The property was actually the remains of a Franciscan friary. In Sister Lydia's view, the trees cooperated with the divine in providing the materials and some of the essence of Sister Lydia's sacred statuary.

While Sister Lydia's Passion and Resurrection engages and sometimes reverses medieval motifs and techniques and embraces the abstractions of twentieth-century expressionist religious art, it also incorporates both covert references to her order and open expressions of sentimentality and femininity. Her Resurrection includes a small girl holding a cat, a jubilant Mary Magdalen, a tender caress of an angel's wing, little birds at a feeder, and a Jesus who is welcoming and ready to hug. As

Colleen McDannell (1995) describes in her examination of the rise of *l'art sacré*, mid-twentieth-century artists and Catholic and Protestant art critics revolted against the openly effeminate and sentimental tendencies of nineteenth-century depictions of Jesus and the saints, produced initially in Paris and known internationally as *l'art Saint-Sulpice*. As McDannell demonstrates, critics called for art that was more “abstract,” but also more “virile,” ensuring, they claimed, that men would feel welcome in church, an environment dominated by old matrons and femininity. In Sister Lydia’s work, we see no such subordination to supposed male tastes: her figures are openly feminine and sentimental, and her message seems directed to all the saved, male and female alike.

KALMAR CHURCH ALTARPIECE

While the Storkyrkan Passion and Resurrection Group is probably the most-often viewed product of Sister Lydia’s career, she told me that she considered her altarpiece for the small medieval Kalmar Church, located in the village of Håbo, near Stockholm, her most mature and most successful work. The piece was completed in 2003, not long before back problems put an end to Sister Lydia’s carving career. Again recalling medieval antecedents, she created a hinged altarpiece that can be closed off from view precisely like its pre-Reformation counterparts. The altarpiece sits atop the church’s altar, partially blocking the tall clear-glass window in the wall behind it and differing in style from the other medieval and Reformation-era adornments of the church (figure 3.6).

The altarpiece consists of three sections (figure 3.7). In the center corpus stands a transfigured Christ in majesty, surrounded by an almond-shaped ring (a mandorla) with an inscription in Swedish: *Jag är med er alla dagar* (I am with you always). To the left stands a proud and devoted Virgin Mother, gesturing toward her son with the inscription *Gör vad han sager åt er* (Do what he tells you; John 2:5). Here, Sister Lydia has added a semitransparent blue stain to denote the Virgin’s dress, a gesture that recalls the medieval polychromy of the past and the symbolism of blue as the quintessential Marian color, but also a quiet reference to her order’s habit. To the right stands a depiction of the cross, surmounted by a dove, and accompanied by standing or kneeling figures, with the inscription *Jag är Fader Son Ande* (I am Father, Son, Spirit). The vertical portion of the cross is dominated by hourglass rays of light that converge on the figure of the dove. When the cabinet is closed—that is, in Lent, as per medieval practice—the altarpiece depicts the Crown of Thorns, palms, spear, and spikes of the Passion, as well as an image of a host and chalice. Most of the altarpiece is colored by the different pieces of wood used, but stain is used sparingly



Figure 3.6. Kalmar altarpiece in situ. Sister Lydia's altarpiece sits in the space for which it was designed: on top of the main altar of the Kalmar church in Håbo. The altarpiece is surrounded by other art from the medieval and Reformation eras. Sister Lydia Mariadotter (Swedish, 1953–). *Altarpiece* (2003). Wood, polychromy, intarsia, metal hinges; 120 × 15 × 180 cm. Kalmar Church, Håbo, Sweden.

to accent certain figures, such as the Virgin Mary and the people in the right-hand portion of the altarpiece. Sister Lydia recalls that she decided to use biblical texts plentifully in her altarpiece as a further link with medieval antecedents, breaking with later artistic conventions that avoid including texts within a work of art.

As with her *Passion and Resurrection*, Sister Lydia aims in her altarpiece to not just imitate but also answer the conventions of earlier religious art, bringing in a specifically evangelical (Lutheran) viewpoint. She tells of Sister Paulina helping her figure out what to do about depicting Mary: there are lots of Catholic and Orthodox images of Mary, but what would a Lutheran Mary look like? Sister Paulina suggested making Mary a little older, at a time when she was a disciple of her son,



Figure 3.7. Kalmar altarpiece. Sister Lydia's altarpiece adopts and adapts the closeable cabinetry format of medieval altarpieces. The figures of the corpus and wings play off images traditionally included in earlier altarpieces. Biblical quotations accompany the figures. Sister Lydia Mariadotter (Swedish, 1953–). *Altarpiece* (2003). Wood, polychromy, intarsia, metal hinges; 120 × 15 × 180 cm. Kalmar Church, Håbo, Sweden.

gesturing toward him and saying, “Do whatever he tells you,” as at the Wedding of Cana. She is both a doting mother and a devoted follower, directing the faithful to the Savior who stands, appropriately, at the center of the altarpiece. So, too, the images of the right-hand portion of the altarpiece recall the elaborate depictions of the Crucifixion found in medieval altarpieces but actually make different statements. The image that looks at first like a crucifix is actually a ray of light crossed by sacred words from the Old Testament, as well as John’s account of the Crucifixion, “I am.” The figures at the foot of the ray look like the huddled masses of worshippers and tormenters in medieval depictions of the Crucifixion, but are actually ordinary people engaged in the joys, sorrows, comforting, and conflicts of daily life. Sister

Lydia seems intent on rediscovering prime motifs from the Catholic past, but imbuing them with a modern Lutheran sense.

In many ways, Sister Lydia's artistic explorations of Sweden's Catholic past run counter to the norms of her country, in which scholars and the general public alike tend to dwell on pre-Christian mythology or the art and ideas of the Lutheran era. Sister Lydia's vocation and order are the epitome of counterculture: they find empowerment in a life of celibacy, fellowship, and service, and they celebrate and embrace devotional practices rejected in the sixteenth century. They insist on making room for a continuity that includes the Catholic half-millennium of Swedish culture and a shared heritage that links the Swedish church to the rest of Europe. In doing so, they rediscover an active role for women religious in Christianity, one in which celibate women devote themselves to ministry and live in community in ways that sustain and nourish their spiritual lives. While employing elements of twentieth-century hieratic *l'art sacré* abstraction, Sister Lydia also freely invokes a sentimentality and an attention to human interaction that is distinctly feminine. This rediscovery of continuity and of a place for feminine spirituality is deeply meaningful and rewarding to all the sisters of her order, and to Sister Lydia personally. It represents a key aspect of her acclaimed and highly successful art.

Lars Levi Sunna

“Válde dat dego dat lea ja don boadát oaidnit”
 (“Take it as it is and see what happens”) and Continuity Recovered

AT the bottom-center of Lars Levi Sunna’s powerful installation *Doložin Agá-lačči: Från Forntid till Evighet (From Antiquity to Eternity)*, beneath a majestic depiction of the mountains and plains of Sápmi, the Sámi homeland, sits a boat beached on the shore of what appears to be a river. The landscape scene above it serves as a transition, a place of passage between the warm depictions of the Sámi pre-Christian belief system arrayed in the left-hand portion of the installation and the moral exhortations and transformative cross of Christianity, depicted on the right (figure 4.1). The boat is tilted and faces outward so that its contents can be plainly seen: a seat, a bit of fishing net (taken, in fact, from the nets the artist’s own family used in his childhood), and a rudder board, but no oars. Across the expanse of the landscape, Lars has placed almond-shaped lozenges of reindeer antler, recalling the ear diagrams used by Sámi herders to register the various combinations of cuts and notches that herders make on a reindeer’s ears in order to designate the animal as personal property. One of these lozenges is placed immediately above the boat and bears an inscription in Northern Sámi quoting a passage from the Gospel of Mark (1:17–18): “*Jesús celkki sutnuide: ‘Čuoovvo mu, de mun dagan dudno olmmošbivdin.’ Dan seammás soai guđiiga firpmiideaskka ja čuovuiga su.*” (“Jesus said to them: ‘Come follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.’ Then they left their nets and followed him.”) The central portion of the installation recalls the key Sámi activities of herding and fishing, livelihoods that remain central to Sámi identity even among Sámi who do not own reindeer or fish regularly.

The oarless boat, Lars explained to me in our 2005 interview, symbolizes the fact that in life one is carried by currents that determine the direction and main circumstances, although a rudder allows the person to steer within that current to some extent. The boat's placement makes it clear that the river is flowing from the past (the part of the installation inhabited by pre-Christian Sámi deities) to the future (the portion dominated by the cross). By quoting the biblical passage in which Jesus first calls Andrew and Simon-Peter to become his disciples, Lars links the traditional Sámi livelihood of fishing with the way of life of Christ's first followers, reminding the viewer, perhaps, of the assertion of the nineteenth-century Lutheran preacher Lars Levi Læstadius (after whom Lars is named) that the Sámi way of life is closer to that called for by Christ than are the lives of the Swedish or Finnish settlers who had come to dwell alongside the Sámi in northern Sweden in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Depictions on the right-hand portion of the installation of the "broad road that leads to destruction" (Matthew 7:13) include modern conveniences like televisions and cell phones—items eschewed by observant Læstadian Christians and ones that remind the viewer that the message of the installation is not limited to a historical past but continues into the present. Yet the boat suggests an important act of reclamation of the past, of *recovering* Sámi history and tradition as key elements in a Sámi journey toward Christ. As Lars recounted to me in our conversation of 2005, it is impossible for him to leave his Sáminess at the door when he enters a church: his identity comes with him inside and shapes and colors every perception and experience that occurs there. Lars Levi Sunna's work seeks to restore a cognizance of this Sámi heritage within Sámi Christians like himself, while fully embracing the Christianity to which the community has come through the guiding currents of the divine. It is this act of recovering continuity that I explore in this chapter.

As we shall see below, and as I have discussed in an earlier publication on Lars's works (DuBois 2012), one of the events that launched Lars on the explorations that culminated in the installation *Doložin Agálaččii: Från Forntid till Evighet* was the realization that elders in his Sámi Læstadian community—people who piously attended services every week—retained unspoken continuities with old pre-Christian beliefs associated with the *noaidi* (shaman) and *sieidi* (sacrificial site or idol) of the old Sámi belief system. This realization can be viewed as a kind of uncovering, or rediscovery, of continuity parallel to that described in chapter 1 on Eva Ryyänen and chapter 3 on Sister Lydia Mariadotter. But more important in Lars's work, I argue, is a decolonizing act of *recovering*, of carefully studying the past—through examination of records and artifacts of old beliefs found largely in the scholarly works of non-



Figure 4.1. A boat on the passage from shamanism to Christianity. The boat stands at the center of Lars Levi Sunna's triptych depicting the historical collision of Sámi pre-Christian religion and Christianity. Lars Levi Sunna (Sámi from Sweden, 1944–). *Doložin Agálačii: Från Forntid till Evighet* (*From Antiquity to Eternity*; 2005). Wood, reindeer antler, reindeer leather, fishing net; 150 × 60 × 95 cm. Kiruna, Sweden. Photo courtesy Terre des Sames.

Sámi researchers—and consciously reintroducing these as elements of present Sámi identity through his own artistic interpretations.

The idea of the repatriation of past traditions—of recovering the past, reintroducing it in the present, and building acceptance for it as valued heritage—can be seen as parallel to the processes of active recovery taking place in other postcolonial contexts, particularly in many indigenous communities around the world. The process can also be seen as related to the important concept in modern Christian theology of inculturation, in which the cultural diversity and specificities of the various peoples of the world are seen as valuable reflections of the universality of the Christian message rather than as antiquated cultural baggage that must be shed for a proper embrace of the new faith. But while inculturation usually addresses living traditions within missionary contexts and seeks ways to incorporate indigenous traditions into a culture-specific embrace of Christianity, Lars Levi Sunna's acts of

recovery seek to acknowledge and celebrate religious traditions that were already suppressed and largely destroyed centuries ago. By reintroducing them within secular as well as church contexts, Lars seeks to replay the process of Sámi conversion in a more affirmative, less destructive manner, healing the wounds of past missionization, while also acknowledging the powerful cultural upheaval and demoralization caused by the colonization of Sápmi. On some levels, his artistic program can be seen as an attempt to renew Sámi feelings of commitment to Christianity in an era in which Sámi Christians, like other communities of the Nordic-Baltic region, have grown progressively less observant of the faith over time. For Sámi and for non-Sámi, however, and for Christians as well as non-Christians, Lars Levi Sunna's work underscores—recovers—the undeniable fact of Sámi pre-Christian religiosity, not as a source of shame (the dominant message of Christian teachers during the long era of colonization) but as a source of affirmation and appreciation. His works seek to effect an essential shift in attitude required for the decolonization of the Sámi mind and for the proper acceptance of Sámi culture and rights in a broader Nordic society.

In order to trace this intellectual journey within the works of Lars Levi Sunna, I present in this chapter some details on the pre-Christian Sámi belief system as well as the process of Sámi missionization that underlie much of the content of Lars's works. The important development of the Læstadian movement to which Lars Levi Sunna belongs is also surveyed. An examination of three of Lars's key installations helps trace the lines and ligaments of Lars's religious and artistic project as it has unfolded over the course of his career.

A SHAMANIC PAST

In a display case at the museum of the University of Tromsø, in coastal northern Norway, stand small wooden sculptures, surrounded by reindeer antlers and enclosed in a rocky cache. The two wooden figures show gentle shaping but are also allowed to remain largely faithful to their natural forms. Their heads are distinct, with eyes and noses, but their bodies are left undetailed. The figures are examples of what was known in eighteenth-century missionary texts variously as *bissie*, *storjunkare*, or *sieidi*, sacred objects of stone or wood that received offerings and ensured petitioners' success in various activities, for example, hunting, fishing, or herding. In some cases, the objects in question were distinctively shaped stones, either massive or small; at other times, they could be pieces of wood shaped or left natural. *Sieidi* sites often contained only a single such object, although collections of multiple figures were

also possible. A *sieidi* associated with fishing, often located near water, would be smeared with fish fat and other portions of a successful catch in order to ensure luck in future fishing trips. A *sieidi* associated with hunting or reindeer luck—often located higher on the landscape, such as on a mountain slope or cliff—would receive sacrifices of meat or bone or antler, intended to ensure similar good fortune in those endeavors. Such sacrifices were generally made by men; separate rituals involving other deities were presided over by women. The Tromsø university museum’s exhibit depicts a *sieidi* cache of the mountain variety, much as one might expect to have found it in the nineteenth century or before.

The term *bissie* is a Southern Sámi word that, like its Northern Sámi counterpart *bassi*, or the cognate Finnish term *pyhä*, means “something holy, set apart, sacrosanct” (Anttonen 1996b). Sámi demonstrated their respect for objects and places of power by keeping them separated from the activities of the everyday, secreting them in remote places that should not be visited except with specific ritual ends in mind. Women in particular were not allowed to visit such sites—in some areas, they were not even permitted to look in the direction of the mountain where such sites existed (Pentikäinen 1995, 149–53). In contrast, female deities guarding the doorway, hearth, and weapons of the Sámi household were intimate proximate participants in Sámi daily life, residing in the ground beneath wherever the Sámi family set up a *goahhti* tent or hut. These goddesses (figure 4.2)—Uksáhká, the woman of the door, Sáráhká, the woman of the hearth, Juoksáhká, the woman of the bow, as well as their mother, Maddaráhká—also required sacrifices and rituals, and these were seen as the province of women in particular (Mebius 2003). The Sámi belief system thus displayed a strong notion of gender complementarity characteristic of many hunter-gatherer societies and one in which both men and women played important roles in maintaining the spiritual welfare of the community.

The details of the Sámi pantheon are known today primarily through accounts written by missionaries and occasionally through the coerced testimonies of *noaidit*, shamans, condemned to death for their activities. Additional insights are provided by depictions drawn on the heads of confiscated shamanic drums owned by Sámi *noaidit* during the eighteenth century, some seventy of which survive in museum collections to the present day (Manker 1938). Drumheads served as maps of a shamanic cosmos, locating pathways to worlds above and below the visible and depicting the various spirits and deities that were said to inhabit these realms. By beating such drums with a special hammer-shaped beater and watching the movement of a marker or a metal ring across a vibrating drumhead, a *noaidi* could discover what deities needed to be placated, what issues needed to be addressed, or



Figure 4.2. Triptych detail, showing three Sámi goddesses. Sunna's depictions of Juoksáhká (left), Maddaráhká (center), and Sáráhká (right), made of curly-grained birch with inlays of reindeer antler, hold antler attributes that pertain to their areas of influence, as in two-dimensional representations of the goddesses on shamanic drumheads dating from the eighteenth century. The jagged wood appliqué behind them represents the Northern Lights. Lars Levi Sunna (Sámi from Sweden, 1944–). *Doložin Agálačč: Från Forn tid till Evighet (From Antiquity to Eternity)*, 2005). Wood, reindeer antler, reindeer leather, fishing net; 150 × 60 × 95 cm. Kiruna, Sweden.

what actions could lead to the healing of a patient or return of a client's luck. The worldview that these sources recall is explored and echoed in various of Lars Levi Sunna's artistic works, as we shall see (figure 4.3; see also cover photo).

Sieiddit of the type depicted in the University of Tromsø museum recall the assemblages of sculptures and offerings that Lars remembers from his childhood as places that his parents and other elders regarded as inviolable: nothing was to be removed from such a site, and this prohibition was observed just as faithfully by Sámi Christians as by others. Such respect for the monuments of a past belief sys-



Figure 4.3. Sunna's entire triptych on stage. The work's three parts depict the pre-Christian Sámi belief system (left), the time of transition (center), and the destruction of the old belief system with the triumph of Christianity (right). Lars Levi Sunna (Sámi from Sweden, 1944–). *Doložin Agálaččii: Från Forntid till Evighet (From Antiquity to Eternity)*, 2005). Wood, reindeer antler, reindeer leather, fishing net; 150 × 60 × 95 cm. Kiruna, Sweden. Photo courtesy Terre des Sames.

tem, Lars recalled, were seldom spoken of aloud; rather, a Sámi child learned proper behavior in the presence of such sacred places through observing the silent, respectful comportment of adults around such sites and coming to emulate these behaviors in their own acts.

It is important to note the differences between the Sámi experience of Christianization and that described in chapter 2 on Phillip Odden and Else Bigton, with reference to medieval Norwegian culture. Norwegians—along with Swedes, Danes, and, to a lesser extent, Finns—met with Christianity largely through trade with Christian centers to the south, west, and east, and they eventually adopted the new religion as a part of a consolidation of power and adjustment of culture within their own populations. In contrast, Sámi met with Christianity largely as an incursion

into Sámi society from the outside, coupled with the seasonal demands of tribute by Viking chieftain-merchants and gradually more extensive deprivations of properties and rights by representatives of the crown. The late-twelfth-century Latin *Historia Norwegiae*, written by a Norwegian Christian cleric, makes clear Christian disapproval of the Sámi as recalcitrant backsliders or irredeemable pagans, whose shamanic activities fill their Christian neighbors with terror and confusion (DuBois 2013). The paucity of churches and clergy in the sparsely settled regions where Sámi lived, along with Sámi migratory practices, meant that medieval Sámi, even when Christianized, came in contact with church authorities only sporadically, often at winter encampments, during which they were obliged to pay taxes. At other times of the year, as Håkan Rydving details in his important study *The End of the Drum-Time* (1995), medieval Sámi developed a syncretic religious practice that combined Christian rituals and deities—like Jesus, Mary, baptism, Christmas, and Easter—with pre-Christian deities and customs, including consumption of a spring porridge made of the inner bark of pine trees in honor of the sun (Bäckman 1984; Bergman, Östlund, et al. 2004). Regular sacrifices to *sieiddit* and the goddesses beneath the hut continued into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Mebius 2003), and clandestine rituals developed in this period as well, such as a “second baptism” that consisted of washing off an infant’s first (Scandinavian) baptismal name and renaming the child with a Sámi name once the minister had departed (Rydving 1995, 115–17).

The Reformation did not proceed among the Sámi with the same degree of tolerance as it did in the more populated southern districts of the Nordic countries. With the Reformation’s emphasis on access to scripture and services, the number of churches and clerics in the north increased in the sixteenth century. But a Lutheran focus on local churches, vernacular reading and preaching, and encouragement of personal revelation—although initially extended to the Sámi—was soon abandoned in favor of church policies that stressed Sámi assimilation into the broader majority culture. Where a translation of Luther’s catechism into Southern Sámi had already appeared in 1633, by 1773 the use of Sámi language in the instruction of Sámi children was not only dissuaded but condemned (Kvist 1992; Henrysson 1993). Sámi culture in all its forms was seen as a potential source of resistance to colonial control, a process that was rapidly claiming Sámi lands and resources for the crown and leaving Sámi disenfranchised, displaced, and maligned. In this antagonistic process, Lutheran ministers became agents of the state, monitoring the behaviors of local people, enforcing state norms, and punishing or reporting all transgressions. The corrosive effects of this entwining of Christianization and colonization—paralleled in the histories of indigenous peoples in other parts of the world—was acknowledged through a formal apology extended from the Swedish state church to the

Sámi people in 2000, a gesture advocated, and largely realized, through the activism of Lars Levi Sunna (U. Boström 1998, 81).

A turning point in Sámi history is associated with the ministry of Lars Levi Læstadius (1800–1861), a charismatic minister who has often served as a source of both inspiration and controversy for Sámi people (Pentikäinen 1995; Pentikäinen 2002). Læstadius was born of Swedish and Sámi parents in a village near Arjeplog and also married a Sámi woman. In contrast to many ministers of his day, he was able to preach fluently in Swedish, Tornedal Finnish, and Lule as well as Northern Sámi, drawing on Sámi imagery and motifs when preaching to Sámi audiences (Outakoski 1991). His road to the ministry began with studies at the University of Uppsala, a long-standing center for the training of young men for the ministry. Læstadius gained a fairly worldly outlook and scientific interests from his studies, receiving ordination in due time in 1825, while pursuing interests in mythology and botany. His views shifted dramatically, however, in the early 1840s, after he came in contact with a pious Sámi woman in Åsele whom he refers to in his autobiographical writings as “Maria.” Her simple testimony regarding her spiritual journey and the influence of the revivalist preacher Pehr Brandell provoked a spiritual conversion in Læstadius, after which he became a powerful, often vituperative preacher, advocating abstinence from alcohol and an asceticism that rejected coffee, secular music, and other pleasures or luxuries of life. His preaching stirred dramatic emotional responses from listeners, leading to ecstatic spiritual frenzies, which came to be known by the Finnish term *liikutuksia*. The Læstadian movement that developed around him remained part of the Lutheran state church but supplemented Sunday church services with additional prayer meetings, in which lay preachers held forth, often in Finnish or Sámi.

In 1852 followers of the movement in the Norwegian town of Guovdageaidnu reacted violently to the sale of alcohol, eventually capturing and killing a merchant and sheriff and beating the local minister (Gripenstad 1990; Zorgdrager 1997). The uprising was harshly suppressed by Norwegian state authorities, with two of the perpetrators receiving capital punishment for their roles and dozens of others placed in prison. An investigation of the uprising eventually absolved Læstadius from any direct blame, but the event lingered in Sámi culture as a powerful source of pain and scandal. This legacy, along with the movement’s forceful condemnation of many of the liberal tendencies of the Nordic state churches and societies more generally, as well as the movement’s strong rejection of many elements of traditional Sámi culture (e.g., the Sámi musical tradition known as *joik*) have led to strongly negative views of the movement from the outside. Nonetheless, many Sámi Læstadians, like Lars Levi Sunna, find great value in the movement’s Christian values of faith, hope, and

holiness and fervent embrace of one of the central tenets of Lutheranism—the joy of salvation despite the unworthiness and depravity of human souls (Nordvik 2015).

Lars Levi Sunna was born in 1944 in Årosjokk, near Kiruna, Sweden. Lars's parents were Læstadian Christians who had formerly made their living off reindeer herding. Sometime during the 1930s, before Lars's birth, a severe winter devastated his parents' herd and forced them to change livelihoods. They became small farmers who raised cattle, goats, and sheep and practiced handicraft (*duodji*). By the 1950s, the family had begun to produce handicraft for sale, offering goods to travelers on the Nordkalott highway from Kiruna to Narvik or at the Narvik train station. Lars learned craft as part of daily life, with little differentiation between workplace and home. As Lars recalled, craftwork was an inseparable part of daily life: it occurred at all times of day and in the same spaces used for the rest of daily life, a situation characteristic of Sámi *duodji* in general (Kihlberg 1999). This sense of integration of art into daily routines and spaces made a profound impression on the young artist. Lars learned to carve as a means of earning a little pocket money and gradually became proficient in a wide range of crafts, something he shared with other siblings, such as his well-known brother Tore Sunna, whose art was among the first pieces of Sámi craft to be selected for inclusion in the collections of the Swedish National Museum.

It was while the family was selling their works one summer day that Lars first heard about *noaidi* (shamanic) magic. He recalled his first experience of the term in a story he told about an old craftsman named Årpus. It was a Sunday, and Lars's family, along with a number of other Sámi, had set up their stand on a hillside along the Nordkalott route. This was a well-known spot for Sámi craftspeople to congregate in order to sell to visiting tourists. There were a great many artists there that day and some beautiful items. Årpus was there as well, with a selection of highly inferior works. For a long while, the various tourists passed him by without even looking at his goods. Then he disappeared into the woods and came back wearing a thick white reindeer skin. It was the height of summer and brutally hot, but nonetheless Årpus stood there in this heavy fur. At once the tourists flocked to his stand and bought up everything he had to sell. The other artists murmured to themselves that Årpus had used *noaidi* arts. It was the first time Lars had heard the term or become aware of the attributing of success to supernatural allies.

What seems to have struck Lars as particularly significant about this moment was that the adults shared a largely unspoken belief in *noaidi* magic, a belief that, though stigmatized in their Christian upbringing, still remained operative as a source of explanation for uncanny events. This same realization recurred to Lars later, around the year 1968–69 when, as a twenty-five-year old, he had just set up a workshop for

himself in the city of Kiruna. A number of older Sámi men had also recently moved to the city from the countryside, and they regularly congregated at Lars's shop in order to use his power tools on projects of their own. Time and again, such elders would tell stories of encounters with possible *noaidit* in their communities or of supernatural events in the locale. One elder, for instance, told Lars how he had been to an area near Karesuando where they had such big reindeer bulls with such large antlers that the man was afraid to enter the corral with them. He remarked that they were precisely like the animals in a *saivo* (*sájva*) herd and that their antlers would be especially valuable for a craftsman to use (Bäckman 1975; Outakoski 1991). Lars took the man's advice and acquired horn from the herd, which proved indeed enormous and thus very useful for his work. Again, Lars was struck that the old narrators did not separate their beliefs in *noaidit* or *saivo* spirits from their spiritual views as Læstadians. Lars noted that they were all, like him, Læstadian Christians whom he had seen regularly at prayer meetings since his childhood.

The openness with which these elders bridged the religious gulf between what Lars had regarded as a long-past belief system and their own present identities as Christians caused him to take a new interest in the old traditions of his people. On reflection, he began to recognize ways that his parents and other adults of the community had imbued their children with a respect for the old religion and its sacred sites without ever speaking of the topic directly. Places that had been *sieidi* sites were left undisturbed, even when they clearly contained rich deposits of coins and other objects from the past (Broadbent 2010, 175; Svestad 2013). When passing certain places that were ancient burial grounds, either on foot or by boat, one learned to keep silent. These norms were not expressed in words but, rather, in actions that children learned to emulate without ever articulating them aloud.

Lars's growing realization of an unspoken respect for the old religion led him in turn to begin to read published accounts of the pre-Christian religious traditions of the Sámi people. It is then when his sense of uncovered continuity changed to a process of conscious recovery. He read works by Ernst Manker (1938; 1947; 1950), as well as others—such as Tore Ahlbäck (1987) and Jan Bergman (Ahlbäck and Bergman 1991)—and began to take a more detailed interest in the old stories and passing references that old Sámi mentioned to him in their conversations. The scholarly works that Lars came to read rely principally on the writings of Lutheran missionaries, who of course were bent on destroying the religious traditions they documented (Mebius 2003, 30–36). Some of these, like the seventeenth-century Samuel Rheen or the eighteenth-century Thomas von Westen, Hans Skanke, Jens Kildal, Isaac Olsen, and others, showed great interest in the details of the pre-Christian Sámi belief system. Occasionally, as in the case of Nicolaus Lundius, the accounts were written by

ministers who had Sámi backgrounds themselves. In any case, however, they tended to see the pre-Christian religious traditions as “superstitions” or demonic delusions, appraising the beliefs not from a vantage point supportive of the Sámi worldview but from one that saw the old beliefs as impediments to salvation. This legacy, when coupled with Lars’s personal identity as a practicing Christian, made this process of reading both complex and at times painful.

As he listened to the stories of the older Læstadian men in his workshop, Lars contemplated recording these using a tape recorder that he purchased for the purpose, but soon he realized that the presence of a microphone would impede most such communication. A hidden microphone was, in Lars’s view, wholly unethical. Perhaps partly in response to this abundance of new learning that he could not otherwise record, as well as his personal desire to somehow incorporate this knowledge into his own identity, Lars began to create images in his art of the supernatural beings and phenomena of the Sámi past. According to Ulf Boström (1998, 77), a crucial turning point came when the young artist, now well known for his more conventional *duodji* products, tore his order book to pieces and threw it in the fire. Boström notes that years’ worth of orders and commissions went up in smoke and ash in a matter of minutes but that Lars never regretted his decision.

In his overview of contemporary Sámi *duodji*, Kurt Kihlberg (2003, 71–75) examines the views of *duodji* artist Per-Ola Utsi of Porjus from the 1970s. Utsi contrasted the views and practices of his parents’ generation with those of his own. Whereas his parents’ work reflected, in Utsi’s view, a clear and unbroken continuity with the past, his own work reflected a mass of competing artistic and technical influences and a resulting self-consciousness about the artistic choices that he made. Utsi viewed artists of his own generation as possessing not only the *right* but also the *responsibility* to adapt the old forms to new uses and to transform *duodji* from a purely utilitarian art to one that could serve as an emblem of Sámi culture and heritage.

It was in this context of openness to artistic experimentation that Lars began to explore *duodji* that incorporated pre-Christian themes and forms, including *noaidi* drums and, eventually, sculptural assemblages. It is important to understand the magnitude of these artistic turns in a Læstadian context. Shamanic drums, such as the one featured on the cover of this study, a drum Lars produced in response to his growing fascination with Sámi pre-Christian beliefs, stood as quintessential symbols of the “Drum Time,” the era before the definitive establishment of Christianity among Sámi. Eighteenth-century missionaries decried drums as implements of the devil and castigated *noaidit* as deluded and dangerous pagan backsliders. Criminalized by state authorities, drums became emblems of Sámi idolatry, ignorance, and obstinacy. To openly produce such an artifact in the twentieth century, and to

celebrate the artistry and interest of shamanic drums as artworks and as cultural products, was seemingly to reopen the wounds of missionization and reinforce the long-standing stigmas that attended Sámi as “bad Christians.”

While delving into these new artistic experiments, Lars prepared for criticism from two different quarters. On the one hand, he worried that his parents would take offense at his production of works that hearkened back to a pre-Christian religiosity so strongly vilified and rejected by many in the Læstadian community over the past century. On the other hand, particularly as his work moved toward more narrative installations of figurines, he worried that *duodji* practitioners would regard his art as too great a departure from the ensconced values of functionality and traditionality within the *duodji* enterprise.

According to Lars, his worries on the first front proved unnecessary, while those on the second were well founded. Lars recounted discussing the growing pre-Christian elements of his art with his mother. She was looking out the window as they talked and at last said words that both emboldened and reassured her son: “*Válde dat dego dat lea ja don boadát oaidni*” (“take it as it is and see what happens”). Lars began to make sculptures inspired by images from the books of Manker. He recalls that his parents were not enthusiastic about this turn in his art, yet they did not forbid it in any way.

In contrast, and despite the enlightened views of Lars’s contemporary, Per-Ola Utsi, quoted above, Lars experienced strong censure from other *duodji* artists, who often felt that his work—particularly the sculptural pieces discussed below—no longer represented a true continuity with the handicraft tradition they drew upon for form and technique. Since Lars’s work lacked the functionality integral to handicraft work, they were no longer viewed as proper exemplars of the tradition. Lars can chuckle now at these pronouncements, but their criticisms were biting and discouraging at the time. Nevertheless, in the fashion of a true artistic innovator, Lars continued his explorations, producing works that are now lauded as significant statements of Sámi identity and as landmarks in the gradual diminution of the once significant barrier between the categories of “craft” and “art” in elite Nordic art circles.

DECORATING AN ORGAN

In 1997 Lars collaborated with Grönlunds Orgelbyggeri of Gammelstad, Sweden, to create a distinctively Sámi façade and key decorations for an organ to be housed in the parish church at Jukkasjärvi (Čohkkiras), of the Kiruna municipality, where Lars serves as a pastoral associate. Here, an instrument emblematic of the social,

musical, and iconographic norms of state Christianity becomes a vehicle for a markedly assertive and confident expression of Sámi identity. As Lars sees it, he cannot leave his cultural heritage or identity at the door when he enters a church: he must come before God in his totality and be accepted as such (U. Boström 1998, 81).

In an article that appeared at the time of the organ's first installation, Ulf Boström (1998, 76) suggests that Lars's iconography is designed as a counterpoint to Bror Hjort's (1894–1968) celebrated altarpiece, which dominates the entire eastern wall of the Jukkasjärvi church. Carved in 1958 of imported teak wood overlaid with bold colors reminiscent of Sámi traditional dress, Hjort's altar triptych reminds the viewer of the main points and figures in the development of the Læstadian movement and its importance for Sámi people.

As Boström (1998, 76) points out, the portion of the church organ visible from the congregation's pews picks up on the rayless sun of Hjort's depiction and transforms it into a blazing sun, reminiscent of shamanic drum depictions (figure 4.4). The sun not only figured as a decoration of *noaidi* drumheads, however, but was also viewed as an important deity among pre-Christian Sámi, as Lundmark has discussed (1982; 1985; Bergman, Östlund, et al. 2004). Thus, this image carries profound weight for a Sámi viewer, particularly when placed above the congregation and facing the church's altar. In Lars's rendering, the blazing sun is engulfed in a birch mandala suggestive of a *noaidi* drum and ornamented in its center with a raised antler medallion, etched with a cross. The figure thus unites a variety of potent symbols from both the pre-Christian and Christian iconographic traditions, creating an amalgamation that is both clearly Christian and yet also strikingly Sámi in every respect.

This composite symbol is mounted above the center of the three ranges of organ pipes, each section of which is surrounded by wooden posts suggestive of mountain peaks. The posts are ornamented with inlaid antler intarsia in the shape of long braids and stars, typical of *duodji* ornamentation of long handles or staffs. The organ exterior's use of native pine, birch, reindeer leather, and antler provides a markedly indigenous response to the foreign artwork behind the altar, compelling the celebrant of church services to look out upon an emphatically local and specifically Sámi artistic milieu as he faces his congregation in the pews.

Above the congregation, in the organ loft itself, the virtuoso *duodji* skills of Lars become even more evident (figure 4.5). The organ console's yellow-pine exterior is accented with birch trim below the keyboard and antler along its edges. Birch is also used for the keyboard's black keys, while the white keys are carved of reindeer antler, the edge of each etched with a rhomboid sun motif. The stop buttons of the console's effects register are also made of birch burls, topped by oblong medallions of antler, etched to evoke small *noaidi* drums. Each medallion is marked with a drawing that



Figure 4.4. Organ pipes, Jukkasjärvi Church. Sunna has ornamented the pipes of the church's organ with birch wood, reindeer leather, and reindeer antler inlays that depict a shamanic drum, a sun, and a communion host. Lars Levi Sunna (Sámi from Sweden, 1944–). *Organ* (1997). Birch wood, reindeer antler, reindeer leather, metal; 240 × 30 × 114 cm. Grönlunds Orgelbyggeri and Jukkasjärvi Church, Sweden.

reflects the character or nature of the effect: the stop for the organ's tinkling *Zymbelstern*, for instance, is marked with a star, while the stop for the delicate, melodious effect known as *Vox virginea* (*Jungfernregel*) is decorated with a drumhead depiction of Sáráhká, the pre-Christian goddess of hearth and uterus.

Sitting at this console, the organist thus presses keys made of traditional Sámi materials and manipulates sound by means of stops that recall the *noaidi* drums confiscated and burned by church authorities centuries earlier. The stand that holds the organist's music is shaped to recall a Sámi *njuikon* (heddle), suggesting that playing is a type of musical weaving, producing bands of beautiful melody in the air above the congregation (U. Boström 1998, 79).

In the context of a church décor, Lars's work produces a beautiful yet defiant assertion of cultural continuity, deployed in response to the dominant discourse of



Figure 4.5. Organ, Jukkasjärvi Church. Sunna's ornamentations of the church's organ allude to Sámi shamanic and weaving traditions. Lars Levi Sunna (Sámi from Sweden, 1944–). *Organ* (1997). Birch wood, reindeer antler, reindeer leather, metal; 140 × 60 × 66 cm. Grönlunds Orgelbyggeri and Jukkasjärvi Church, Sweden.

rupture inherent in Christian portrayals of conversion. His images suggest a syncretism or union of religious outlooks that his own Læstadian community would consciously reject. Yet, noted Lars, the community did not openly criticize his work. Instead, they accepted it as an expression of their cultural heritage and ancient worldview. Lars's decoration of the organ asserts a nonnegotiable Sámi heritage, one that must be simply acknowledged as part of the cultural and spiritual background brought to the pews by the church's faithful.

NOAIDDILATNJA: NÅJDENS SAL (THE *NOAIDI*'S HALL)

In 2005 a commission for the decoration of a secular space allowed Lars to further explore his culture's pre-Christian past. He was asked to ornament the doorway and interior of the large auditorium space in Folkets Hus in downtown Kiruna.

The result was *Noaiddilátnja: Nâjdens Sal* (*The Noaidi's Hall*), a permanent installation that makes entering the imaginative world of the theater space akin to a journey through a *noaidi's* drum (figure 4.6). On the outside of the auditorium's main door, Lars created a conceptual drumhead of reindeer leather and wood. On it, he affixed various renderings of pre-Christian Sámi gods, depicted much as they tend to appear on the seventy-odd shamanic drums that survive from earlier centuries. Here, on the outside of the hall, Lars has placed the male deities of importance to pre-Christian Sámi: Lars's Čoarve-olmmái, for instance, the deity typically depicted holding a reindeer antler, is featured holding an appropriately large piece of actual antler. The deity's face and hairline are also created out of a piece of antler, taken from close to its base where the antler's smoothness gives way to hard stubble. The wooden portions, as in Lars's earlier works, are made out of birch, carefully polished and merged with the antler pieces in techniques typical of *duodji*.

When one enters the hall, however, the installation's art becomes more intimate. Here, in the interior space, Lars has placed symbols of the spirits and beings closest to Sámi in their pre-Christian domestic spirituality. There are images of the household goddesses Sáráhká, Uksáhká, and Juoksáhká, each in her own conceptual *goahhti* hut, placed on top of an antler-inlaid birch staff. Another panel depicts the spirit helpers the *noaidi* was said to rely on for spirit travel: reindeer bulls, fish, and birds. The moon figures as well as a sacred being. On another pole, Lars depicts a *saivo* lake with its double bottom, allowing the fish to disappear periodically and providing an opening to underworlds for the *noaidi* to enter. And again there is the sun, lovingly rendered, spreading its warming rays to make the earth inhabitable and to warm its descendants, the Sámi. On the stage of the auditorium, to the right of the audience's main focus of attention, Lars has placed a *sieidi* idol and drum. Coming to *Nâjdens Sal* for cultural or entertainment fare becomes, in Lars's installation, parallel to the central and cherished spiritual ceremonies of pre-Christian Sámi: a time for communal sharing and union in the contemplation of the divine.

DOLOŽIN AGÁLAČČI: FRÂN FORNTID TILL EVIGHET
(FROM ANTIQUITY TO ETERNITY)

The experience of creating this installation prepared Lars for an even more challenging undertaking: an art installation that would chronicle the meeting of the pre-Christian and Christian faiths in Sámi history, Lars's 2005 *Doložin Agálačči: Frân Forntid till Evighet* (*From Antiquity to Eternity*). The installation, described at the outset of this chapter, seeks to depict this religious meeting in a respectful and evocative manner. An accompanying CD features an interview with Lars, in which



he describes this work as an artistic journey to the world of the senses. Lars states that he wished to depict the confrontation of the old religion with Christianity and lead viewers to contemplate the ways in which the two worldviews could be harmonized (Sunna 2005). The fifteen-minute CD narration explains the symbolism of the figures included in the assemblage and clarifies their meaning in Lars's own words. He has also taken the installation to various places in Sweden and Norway to display and explain it, including, of course, his home church at Jukkasjärvi as well as other churches and public halls throughout the region.

In contrast to many of his past commissions, Lars conceived of this installation and its theme before securing any funding for it. In an interview with Patrik Boström (2008), Lars recounted the vicissitudes of his hunt for the material resources to undertake this ambitious project. He applied to a wide array of art institutions but as he recalled it in my interview with him, he usually received the same negative reply: everyone seemed to view the project as well thought-out but lying outside of their funding criteria. Its openly religious theme and potentially provocative juxtaposition of pre-Christian and Christian Sámi religiosity perhaps rendered the proposed work too daring for the highly secularized art world of contemporary Sweden. Likewise, the project could not be viewed in any way as *duodji*, since it promised to continue on Lars's path toward the visual arts. Lars had nearly abandoned the project as unrealizable when, as a last attempt, he sent a description to Bishop Rune Backlund, bishop of Luleå. Backlund had a long history of support for Sámi endeavors, including the production of a fresh translation of the New Testament into Lule Sámi, which appeared in 2004 during his time as chairman of the Swedish Bible Society. He also had missionary experience in Ethiopia and intimate knowledge of the Swedish church's missionary efforts more broadly in East Africa and the Middle East. Backlund responded favorably to Lars's letter and offered to finance the project's materials. In all, Lars estimated that the project cost some six hundred thousand Swedish crowns, the bulk of which was financed through a grant from the Church of Sweden.

Figure 4.6. (Facing) Entrance to *The Noaidi's (Shaman's) Hall*. Sunna's ornamentation of the entry door into a theater imitates a shamanic drum. Figures representing various pre-Christian Sámi gods are fashioned of curly-grained birch and reindeer antler, as in traditional Sámi *duodji* (handicraft). The figures recall two-dimensional drawings on surviving Sámi shamanic drums from the eighteenth century. Lars Levi Sunna (Sámi from Sweden, 1944–). *Noaid-dilatnja: Nájdens Sal (The Noaidi's Hall)*; 2005). Birch wood, reindeer antler, reindeer leather, metal; 200 × 6 × 255 cm. Folkets Hus, Kiruna, Sweden.

The logic of Lars's juxtaposition is clearer to a speaker of Sámi, as the pre-Christian era symbolized in the installation by the shamanic drum recalls the Sámi term for the era as the "drum time," as illustrated by the title of Håkan Rydving's important study (1995). Likewise, the prominent cross depicted on the right-hand portion of the installation reminds the Sámi viewer of the homology of one of the common words for the cross, *rista*, and the standard word for Christian, (*k*)*risttalaš*.

In depicting the span from olden times to eternity, Lars stated that a journey requires a vehicle, and the vehicle in the left-hand portion of his work is a Sámi sledge, packed with a *noaidi* drum and its attendant spirits and deities. At the top, beneath the northern lights, he placed the three female deities, Maddaráhkká, Juoksáhkká, and Sáráhkká (see fig. 4.2). Elsewhere in the work he also included Uksáhkká, the guardian of the doorway, as she welcomes the Christian Eucharist to the *goahti*. Below these figures, Lars placed two male deities: Biegg-olmmái, the deity of wind and weather, whom Lars portrayed as both sometimes fierce and at other times warm and greeting, and Leaib-olmmái, a deity of hunting luck, portrayed holding an elm bough. This drum, Lars recounted, was handled by the *noaidi*, who could use it to travel the cosmos. Lars retold a legend of the meeting of an old *noaidi* with Lars Levi Læstadius, in which the minister challenged his counterpart to use his ability to journey by spirit to retrieve Læstadius's cooking pot from back on the coast. According to the legend, when Læstadius rises the next morning to perform his morning prayer, the pot has appeared before him with no further comment. In this legend, the time between the era of *noaidit* and the advent of Læstadius is tunneled into a single moment, as Læstadius becomes the interrogator and observer of the religious system his movement will replace.

To the right of the installation's drum sculpture, Lars has created a large mountain, containing a *sieidi* offering site high on a slope above and a more detailed offering site below, where Biegg-olmmái recurs, here depicted receiving offerings made to him at the site. Lars recounts how as a child he was taught never to take from a *sieidi* objects that had been left as offerings. He noted that his parents instilled this respect of such places despite the fact that they were Læstadian Christians.

A key image in the overall work is the depiction of the inside of a *goahti*, in which the goddesses Uksáhkká and the hearth goddess Sáráhkká are shown greeting the hosts and chalice of a Christian Eucharist. As Lars recounted, the Eucharist is a guest—that is, treated with respect and care. The amicable meeting of the two religions here can be seen as the ideal for which Lars strives in his work, a conscious coming together that does not compromise the essence or significance of either.

From here, Lars depicted further elements of travel. As noted above, reindeer herds are depicted abstractly via ear-marking diagrams, while a boat symbolizes

the oarless path of the individual on the waters of life. On the Christian side of the installation, Lars included a rendering of the two gates of Christian theology. One, the narrow gate, is marked with Jesus's words, "I am the gate, Whoever goes in through me, he shall be freed" (John 10:9). The other, the uncaptioned wider gate, is filled with the trappings of the secular world—cars, television, cell phones. Finally, at the right of the installation, Lars depicted a *noaidi* drum, its head violently split by an enormous cross that has grown up through it. Around the cross Lars depicted a Sámi lasso, symbolizing the many snares of the world, and a string of leaves, symbolizing the imperfect souls of human beings tied to the Cross by the thread of life. In Lars's recounting, the new religion threw the old into complete chaos. We can never come back to that old nature religion, he asserts, but, rather, must lift up our gaze to the light of life. The installation thus presents a narrative of the triumph of Christianity, but not without a certain nostalgia, and a good deal of respect, for the old religion it displaced.

In his lyrical autobiography *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, Kiowa author N. Scott Momaday (1969) portrays his people's Christianization as a painful and culturally devastating tragedy. Recalling his grandmother's testimony of the last attempted performance of the Sun Dance, a once-central element of Kiowa ritual life, Momaday writes:

She was ten when the Kiowas came together for the last time as a living Sun Dance culture. They could find no buffalo; they had to hang an old hide from the sacred tree. Before the dance could begin, a company of soldiers rode out from Fort Sill under orders to disperse the tribe. Forbidden without cause the essential act of their faith, having seen the wild herds slaughtered and left to rot upon the ground, the Kiowas backed away from the medicine tree. That was July 20, 1890, at the great bend of the Washita. My grandmother was there. Without bitterness, and for as long as she lived, she bore a vision of decide. (10)

This same sense of tragedy—of regret—at the destruction of one coherent and satisfying worldview to make way for another is palpable in many of Lars's depictions of Sámi pre-Christian religion. He presents its beliefs, sacred spaces, and prime deities with a sense of affection as well as respect, despite his clear and fervent embrace of Christianity in his own faith life. When asked about the violent image of the sundered drum in his installation, Lars claims objective neutrality, stating that he makes no value judgments but simply aims to describe the history as it happened (U. Boström 2008). Yet he also holds up the old religion as a valuable cultural memory and resource that can be a source of inspiration for people today.

Lars is also clear in assessing blame for the misdeeds of past missionaries and church authorities. Because the church stood as the primary organ of the Swedish state in Sámi communities for much of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, its activities became synonymous with the repressive assimilative policies directed at the Sámi from the government. Church leaders were also sometimes virulent in their attempts to suppress the old religion and compel the Sámi to fully embrace Christianity, going so far as to have dissenters arrested and even executed. This harsh approach finds reflection, Krister Stoor (2004) argues, in Sámi legends in which a church becomes a site of attempted genocide, a place where the authorities once purportedly trapped the Sámi population and attempted to burn them alive. Stoor posits that legends about such atrocities reflect a legacy of distrust and lingering resentment among Sámi, despite the passage of time and the broader secularization of state policies toward the Sámi community. By incorporating shamanic drum imagery into the ornamentation of the Jukkasjärvi church, Lars pointedly reminds his knowledgeable viewers of the past injustice that led to the confiscation and destruction of Sámi drums, a destruction that, in small measure, he helped to reverse through the creation of modern drums during his earlier *duodji* career. Ulf Boström (1998, 81) recorded an interview with the artist at the time of the organ's completion that clearly encapsulates this pronouncement of culpability: Lars called for the Church of Sweden to make a formal apology for the way it treated the Sámi, a call that was heeded by the Swedish Church several years later. In discussing Bishop Rune Backlund's generous funding that made his installation possible, Lars further noted that in some ways the gesture can be seen as an act of restitution, the concrete addressing of the damage of wrongdoing as a precondition to true forgiveness.

Acknowledging the injustices and psychological distress of the missionization process or the church's former collusion with state authorities in the work of suppressing Sámi culture and expressions does not mean, however, that Lars seeks a return to the pre-Christian belief system he so warmly and skillfully depicts. Lars states as much clearly, albeit with a certain sense of nostalgia: in his view, the Sámi of today have only fragments left of their old nature religion and cannot resurrect from these an adequate belief system for use in modern life (U. Boström 2008). Rather, Lars seems to call for a simple acknowledgement of the former effectiveness and meaningfulness of the old religion and its practitioners, much as Sergei Kan (1991) notes in his examination of contemporary Christian Tlingit memories of past shamans and shamanism in modern Alaska. Kan's informants, all active Christians, generally refused to castigate past shamans, stressing instead the social and spiritual value of the old religion and often seeking to draw parallels between the workings of

the old belief system and that of modern Christianity or psychotherapy. In the narratives offered by Kan's informants, past shamans were not evil or misguided: rather, they were effective advocates for their communities in the spirit world, essential sources of spiritual guidance and healing before the arrival of Christianity. The fact that Christianity eventually replaced them does not lessen the importance or value of this past role.

In its rejection of the old religion as a viable modern alternative to Christianity, Lars's work differs markedly from the kinds of religious syncretism chronicled in Rydving's 1995 study of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century religious change among Lule Sámi. As described above, Rydving depicts an era in which Sámi consciously sought to maintain both the old religion and the new alongside each other, resisting clerical efforts to do away with the old deities or practices through a strategy of underreporting and avoidance. Parallel rituals allowed Sámi to maintain both outwardly Christian and covertly pre-Christian identities in a context in which the latter was harshly proscribed. In examining pre-Christian ritual continuities among newly converted Santal Catholics in India, Selva J. Raj (2007) notes similar strategies of covert maintenance, motivated by the continued social importance of non-Christian puberty rituals among the Santal community. Although converted Santal willingly undergo a Christian confirmation ceremony as a replacement of their culture's earlier rituals at village sacred groves, they nonetheless also participate in the non-Christian ceremony as well, thereby acquiring the adult status and social mobility that would otherwise be lost to them within the larger Santal society. They are able to do so in part by claiming to Christian clergy that the pre-Christian rituals are merely customary practices that do not represent their religious convictions. Chibueze Udeani (2007) points to similar phenomena and discourse among African convert communities, especially in connection with coming-of-age rituals. Stressing the largely unstated conflicts behind such twinned rituals, particularly as related to the Santal sacred grove, Raj writes, "Indeed, the history of many religious traditions amply shows that sacred sites are not merely sites of religious rituals and devotion. More often than not, they are also sites of conflicting discourses, contested identities, and competing rivalry for leadership and power" (2007). By bringing pre-Christian images into Christian worship spaces, as well as into public places important to the Sámi community of his locale, Lars seeks to acknowledge this past conflict as a historical fact and enduring cultural memory, although not as an attempt to displace Christianity as his community's faith.

On another level, however, Lars's artistic interventions can also be regarded as instances of inculturation, the infusion of culture-specific expressions into the workings and material culture of a community's Christian worship (Holmes 1999;

Magesa 2004; Udeani 2007; Olson 2009). Inculturation is conceived as a balanced interfertilization, rather than the one-sided loss and replacement of cultural traits implied in the process of acculturation. It can be unconscious and inevitable—as is evident in any examination of the European cultural traits that have come to shape modern European Christianities as well as colonial transplantations (Olson 2009). But it can also be potentially intentional, as when modern liturgists or artists endeavor to insert elements of a community's previous religious system into their Christian worship. At its most idealized in contemporary Christian theology, this cross-fertilization can be viewed as a celebration of cultural diversity as an essential gift of God: in other words, rather than seeing differences in culture and language as a post-Babel mark of human folly and ambition, the specificities of human cultures become riches to be valorized and incorporated into Christian liturgy. Inculturation has been strongly embraced in liberal Lutheran circles, particularly in connection with missionary activities that many secular Swedes view as negative holdovers from the colonial past. From this perspective, it is understandable that church authorities would welcome the expressions of Sámi tradition and culture that Lars's work makes palpable in the churches of northern Sweden.

Inculturation is, however, a potentially divisive process, one that may pit more estranged members of a church community against those who strongly identify with the official church's received norms and practices. Culturally accented rituals and adaptations, regardless of whether they have gained clerical support, may sometimes find harsh rejection among rank-and-file church members. Issues often arise when the elements of culture to be incorporated are seen to directly contradict elements of official dogma or strictures regarding liturgy or worship space. When explicitly pre-Christian rituals are brought into the church, for instance—as in the case of smudge ceremonies introduced into a Catholic mass in the context of the Kateri Tekakwitha Conference (*New York Times* 1992; Holmes 1999)—the act may prove as likely to spawn conflict and discord as unity. Lars downplays any such conflicts resulting from his own works, although acknowledging that the installations can be challenging both for Christian and non-Christian viewers. In a Sámi context that seeks to prevent outright conflict through indirection and avoidance, silence does not necessarily imply consent, nor is it certain that the more strident elements of Lars's critiques are uniformly embraced by the community. Whatever the case, however, Lars's works are today a part of the Sámi community's overt discourse concerning Christianity and its place in Sámi culture.

On November 7, 2007, the League of Swedish Church Congregations (Svenska Kyrkans Församlingsförbund) presented Lars Levi Sunna with an award in recognition of having made significant contributions in the areas of Sámi culture and church

art (Engvall 2007). Clearly, the Swedish state church has valued his dual message of restitution and inculturation: of acknowledging the past traumas of the Sámi missionization and intentionally importing elements of past Sámi religiosity into contemporary Sámi Christian worship space. At the same time, as with Native American instantiations of acknowledgment and inculturation, such attempts can spur contradictions and conflicts. As Marie-Therese Archambault, a Hunkpapa Lakota woman and Franciscan nun, stated in describing her own views of her Catholic faith, “As a Native Catholic, the very faith you embrace is one that used to destroy you, that collaborated with the government in cultural genocide” (*New York Times* 1992). Finding a way to both acknowledge this fact—this historical rupture in the fabric of an ancient belief system—and the beauty or value of the new belief system requires more than history, or theology, or altered church regulations: in Lars Levi Sunna’s view, it requires art. And that is what Lars has attempted to provide in his various contributions to the cultural life of contemporary Sápmi.

We began this chapter with an examination of the boat depicted at the center of Lars Levi Sunna’s visual chronicling of the passage of his people from one religious outlook to another. I close this discussion by returning to that boat and recalling a familiar Sámi proverb: *Ii ovttain áiruin njuolga suga* (with one oar one does not row straight; Gaski and Solbakk 2003, 59). To followers of the syncretic shamanic-Christian religiosity of the drum times—when Sámi addressed prayers to Christ and Sáráhkka alike—the two oars of the proverb may have suggested the two core belief systems of Sámi life at the time and their complementarity in a religious tradition that integrated old and new. But in Lars’s depiction, no oars of personal or cultural choice are provided. Salvation history, as Luther assured his followers, and as Læstadius reaffirmed, has already guaranteed the salvation of the Christian faithful—their only duty lies in accepting this reality and rejoicing in its implications: an eternity of paradise after life’s woeful journey through this vale of tears. God will guide his flock; the Christian need only go with the flow and steer clear of the rocks and snares of sin. In moving forward in this way, the Sámi Christian can look back at the past not as a source of shame, a legacy to be shunned and rejected, but as a once meaningful and nurturing heritage, a set of insights into life and the cosmos that a Sámi person can justly celebrate as a historical mooring, a place of launching. By recovering this notion of continuity, the Sámi viewer reunites the shards of a fragmented identity to become unified, integrated, and whole. Lars’s simultaneous suggestion of this proverb and undoing of its potential as a justification for renewing old beliefs illustrates his complex project, one that centers on a recovery of Sámi tradition, continuity, for the purposes of progress in the present and future.

Algimantas Sakalauskas

Tikeimas (Belief) < *Tik Ėjėmas* (Just Walking)
and Continuity Discovered

WHEN I first visited him in late July 2008, Algimantas Sakalauskas pointed out to me a simple pole shrine, *koplystulpis*, standing in a wooded area behind the artists' collective that he works at in Prienai, Lithuania. Algimantas had erected the pole there soon after the collective's establishment in 1990. It is simple in its design and structure, consisting of two stacked triangles that seem to mimic the towering trees around it. It would be easy to read the shrine simply as an expression of Catholic religiosity, particularly given the historical moment in which it was erected: immediately following Lithuania's successful extrication from the Soviet Union, a state that barred most forms of religious expression. As we shall see in this chapter, artifacts of Catholic religiosity proved potent devices for protest during the final decade of the country's Soviet era, as Glasnost and Perestroika allowed a freedom of expression that had previously been harshly suppressed. But then Algimantas explained a further aspect of the pole's function: it was erected during a point in which the newly founded collective looked like it might founder. The artists had trouble agreeing with each other, and the administrative system of the collective had not yet been properly sorted out. The Soviet Union was an immensely bureaucratic society, and ordinary people did not have much experience with creating or maintaining organizations of their own. In Algimantas's view, the new collective suffered from a lack of familiarity in how to make the economics and interpersonal dimensions of the organization work. In examining the conflict further, however, Algimantas became aware of another factor: an underground aquifer that lay beneath the grounds. Such bodies of water, Algimantas had heard, can create

a sense of turbulence in people living above them, leading to emotional anxiety and lack of sleep. The *koplystulpis* was installed at precisely the spot where it now stands as a tool for diverting these unsettling energies out of the ground and upward into the sky. The energies follow the point of the triangles upward and are dissipated in the sky rather than lingering on the ground, where they can plague the workers of the collective. The *koplystulpis* is thus not only a religious monument, as I had originally assumed, but also a natural device, aimed at harnessing and redirecting natural forces.

In our examination of the work of Eva Ryyänen in chapter 1 at the beginning of this study, I noted how Eva uncovered a sense of spirituality linking humans and other creations into a profound cosmic unity. I denoted the continuity she described as “uncovered” since it was, she believed, always present among Finns like herself, even if it had become camouflaged or in some ways obscured by the Christianity that came after. By uncovering the sense of sacrality imbued in nature, Eva sought to remind her viewers of a continuity that they had always sensed, at least unconsciously.

In the chapters that followed, I looked at how artists Phillip Odden and Else Bigton (chapter 2), Sister Lydia Mariadotter (chapter 3), and Lars Levi Sunna (chapter 4) each seek to reestablish a sense of continuity with a belief system of the past, be it through covering the art of the early Christian stave churches, rediscovering the art of the Catholic Middle Ages, or recovering the suppressed religious heritage of the Sámi pre-Christian past. In this chapter, I examine how Algimantas Sakalauskas seeks to *discover* the meaning and mechanics of past Lithuanian religious art, finding in the form and content of avowedly Christian monuments the workings of a complex system of managing hidden energies of the earth and sky. Where the process of uncovering, exemplified by the work of Eva Ryyänen, entails the notion of a common understanding revealed through the artist’s intervention, the act of discovery, exemplified by the work of Algimantas Sakalauskas, emphasizes the artist’s empirical investigation and finding of knowledge or insights either unknown by people of the past or understood in some other way. Past Lithuanians, Algimantas suggests, did sense these energies and balances to some extent, as evidenced in the form of *koplystulpis* shrines as well as in the etymologies of Lithuanian words. Yet what Algimantas also aims to achieve is a translation of ancient Lithuanian understandings from a mythological system into a framework comprehensible to modern secular Lithuanians, through the metalanguage of science. In so doing, he aims to discover and in part build a continuity that confers new meaning and relevance on the iconic religious shrines that mark the landscape of Lithuania of the past and present. We can glimpse the complexities of the understandings Algimantas

has discovered and seeks to promote in his art through a closer look at two of his works: a rendering of the god Perkūnas in a work entitled *Dainų Karalius* (*King of Songs*) and a sculpture of a Sorrowing Christ, *Rūpintojėlis*, figure created as a funerary monument.

In order to understand Algimantas's artistic project, one must recognize the shaping influence of at least four historical events: the late Christianization of Lithuania; the return to Catholic practices in the Counter-Reformation; the enforced state atheism of the Soviet era; and the uses of Christian sculpture as a tool of protest in the final years of Soviet occupation. Each of these has profoundly affected the religious wood-carving tradition in the country. Each of these will be discussed below.

LITHUANIA'S PAGAN PAST

The Christianization of Lithuania and the wider eastern Baltic occurred slowly, as a product of missionization, military conquest, and political maneuvering. The earliest grand duke of Lithuania known by name, the thirteenth-century Mindaugas, both converted to Christianity and later renounced it, as he vied with the powerful orders of German-speaking monastic knights that initiated the Northern Crusades. The fortunes of the Swordbrothers of Livonia and of the Teutonic Knights are chronicled in highly biased heroic works that recount their origins in the early thirteenth century and follow their exploits into the fifteenth. These include the thirteenth-century *Chronicle of Henry of Livonia* (Brundage 1961), the somewhat later Livonian Rhymed Chronicle, the fourteenth-century *Chronicle of Prussia* of Petrus von Dusburg dated to 1326 (Dusburg 1984), the Polish *Annals of Jan Długosz* dated 1460 (Michael 1997), and the *Prussian Chronicle* by Simon Grunau of about 1520 (Biezais 1954; Christiansen 1980; Dundulienė 1990; Mugurēvičs 2000; Kala 2001). They recount a brutal history of Christianization by the sword, in which the pagan populations of what is today Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia were subjugated, nominally Christianized, and transformed into serfs. Formidable castles throughout the region attest to this military history. They served as headquarters and places of defense for the monk-rulers of Livonia and also as bulwarks of defense against potential invasions of royal forces from Denmark, Sweden, or Russia. Historian Christopher Tyerman writes, "The Baltic Crusades acted as one element in a cruel process of Christianization and Germanization, providing a religious gloss to ethnic cleansing and territorial aggrandizement more blatant and, in places, more successful than anywhere else" (2004, 72). The Teutonic Order's end came in the sixteenth century, when the order's Grand Master Albert of Brandenburg heeded Martin Luther's

urgings, converted to Lutheranism, and took up the secular title of King of Prussia, creating the first Lutheran kingdom of the Reformation.

In contrast to this militarized conversion to the north and west, the region that became known as the Grand Duchy of Lithuania long preserved an atmosphere of comparative religious tolerance, in which Christians, Jews, and other non-Christians lived alongside one another, and pre-Christian customs and worship practices survived well (Vaitkusienė 1995; Varnas 1998; Michelbertas 2000; Tebelškis 2006). Pole-shaped cult objects with parallels among Finns (Pentikäinen 1995, 153), as well as Slavs of the Baltic region (Fuglesang 2004, 20–22), were actively worshipped along with sacred groves, and Marija Gimbutas (1958) sees the roots of later Christian pole shrines in rural Lithuania in such world tree effigies. Worship of male and female deities, associated with snakes, livestock, fire, celestial bodies like the sun and moon, sacred groves, seasons, and other elements of the natural world, described in passing in medieval chronicles, often figure prominently in archaeological finds and in Latvian folk songs collected in the modern era. Many of the details of modern characterizations of Baltic myth and religion rest on postmedieval sources, including antiquarian works of the sixteenth century and after (see Dundulienė 1990, 6–7, for a useful listing of these sources and Vėlius 1995 for an excellent compilation of original texts). The chronicler Jan Długosz presents considerable detail concerning the things that the pagan Lithuanians worshipped before their definitive Christianization in the early fifteenth century—when, the chronicler tells us, King Władysław II Jagiełło called a general council of the Samogitians in 1413, instructing them to abandon their pagan ways. He destroyed their pagan altars and sacred groves and extinguished their sacred fires, particularly one housed in a high tower by the River Niewieża. The Samogitians were aghast to see their familial groves destroyed, where they had customarily cremated their dead along with their saddles, finest garments, and choice foods. The king also preached against worship of pagan gods and prevented the people's planned rekindling of the extinguished sacred fires (Michael 1997, 414–15). Władysław vied continually with Vytautas the Great (ca. 1350–1430) for control of Lithuania, each invoking Christianity as needed, forming alliances with the Teutonic Knights for a time and then rejecting them.

THE COUNTER-REFORMATION

The conversions of Lithuanian rulers in the later fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries occurred only about a century before the Prussian Albert of Brandenburg's conversion to Lutheranism in 1521. Thus Christianization and the Reformation were largely simultaneous in the area of the Lithuanian Grand Duchy, with Poland and

Lithuania first adopting the Lutheran Reformation strongly before being pulled back into Catholic allegiance through the Counter-Reformation. With the Council of Trent (1545–1563), the Catholic Church aimed at addressing some of the issues raised by Protestant reformers, with the goal of reasserting Catholic dominance on the continent. Although Protestants predominated in the Polish parliament until the mid-1570s, the Counter-Reformation found support among the royal houses of Poland and Lithuania, and the realms eventually readopted Catholicism under their influence (Nyman 1997, 170).

Through royal marriage, the realms of Poland and Lithuania became associated with that of Sweden when King Gustav Vasa's son Johan (1537–1592) married the Catholic princess Katarzyna Jagiellonka (Kotryna Jogailaitė, or Katarina Jagellonica, 1526–1583), daughter of King Zygmunt I of Poland, Grand Duke Žygimantas of Lithuania (1467–1548). The move greatly displeased King Eric XIV (1533–1577), Johan's brother (Nyman 1997, 83). In 1568, after Eric was deposed and Johan ascended to the throne, Johan worked quietly to effect a rapprochement between Lutheran and Catholic practice in Sweden. He was assisted by his Polish Protestant-turned-Jesuit advisor, Stanislas Warszewicki, who arrived in the Swedish court in 1574, and the Norwegian Jesuit Laurentius Nicolai Norvegus, who arrived in 1576 (Kolb 2008). The monastery at Vadstena was again permitted to take novices in 1577 (Nyman 1997, 147), the same year that Laurentius sent his first six students to Rome for further training as Catholic priests (145). Swedish and Finnish students became welcome members at the Jesuit college in Vilnius, founded in 1579, which drew students from Germany, Poland, and Lithuania. A revised liturgy of 1575, *Liturgia Svecanae Ecclesiae Catholicae et Orthodoxae Conformis* (commonly called the Red Book due to its binding) sought to reconcile Lutheran and Catholic versions of the mass and restore much of the Latinity of the liturgy (Senn 2004, 71). These developments were not welcomed by Sweden's Lutheran clergy, who remained deeply suspicious of the king and his efforts. In their meeting of 1593, they note that “the useless altars in the churches are to be pulled down and thrown out,” that “useless images which take up space in the churches are to be abolished,” and that “many altars are to be abolished and the discarded effigies burnt” (Thordemann 1964, 14). Nonetheless, in practice, the clerics reinstated Laurentius's moderate Order of 1571, preferring to leave the harsher clearances of the Calvinist Reformation to their continental and English counterparts. After the death of Katarina Jagellonica in 1583, Johan's new wife, Gunilla Bielke (1568–ca. 1592), also worked persistently to reverse her husband's Catholic tendencies and restore the realm's Lutheran allegiance.

Johan and Katarina's son Sigismund III Vasa (1566–1632) became king of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1587 and king of Sweden at the death of his

father in 1592. His strong support of the Counter-Reformation was successful in Poland-Lithuania but failed in Sweden, where his uncle and regent Karl IX (1550–1611) forced him to abdicate in 1599. The Swedish royalty's Catholic sympathies found a final flamboyant expression in the figure of Queen Christina (1626–1689), who converted and abdicated in 1654 to live the rest of her life on the continent.

The success of the Counter-Reformation in Poland and Lithuania led to a very different experience of sacred sculpture in the countries of the southeast Baltic. Often, mendicant orders such as the Dominicans, so strictly limited in Reformation Sweden and Denmark, played a key role in restoring Catholic practices. They were joined now by the Jesuits, founded in 1534, and by Carmelites, whose order had undergone substantive reforms as a result of the Counter-Reformation. In practice, devotion to sacred images in the region was often tied in one way or another to one of these orders. Under their guidance, the kinds of reverence accorded statues—and sacred images, more broadly—in medieval Christianity continued into the present. Respect for, and prayers to, particular images of Christ, Mary, or the saints remain important parts of life for many Catholic faithful in the eastern Baltic.

In both Lithuania and Latvia, contiguity with the Russian Orthodox tradition meant that the images so revered were often painted icons rather than sculptures. Such is the case, for instance, with the celebrated icon known as *Trakų Dievo Motinos Paveikslas* (the Madonna of Trakai), apparently donated in 1409 to the Švč. Mergelės Marijos Apsilankymo Bažnyčia (Church of the Visitation) of Trakai by the church's patron and builder, Vytautas the Great. In the early 1600s, Jesuits from Vilnius began to organize processions in connection with the icon, and in 1624, these were celebrated in the Latin odes of the Jesuit poet Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski (1595–1640). In 1645 the Trakai parish priest Simonas Mankevičius published a compendium of twenty-three miracles associated with the icon. As was earlier common throughout Northern Europe, news of miraculous assistance spread from one person in need to the next, and Mankevičius's publication drew new pilgrims from across Lithuania, Prussia, Poland, and White Russia (Klimka 2010). At the beginning of the eighteenth century, a stylistically related icon was brought by the Dominicans from Vilnius to the city of Aglona, some forty kilometers outside of Daugavpils, Latvia, where it also became known for its miracles. The icon and its basilica remain one of the chief focuses of prayer and devotion for Latvian Catholics today, drawing thousands of pilgrims each year on the Feast of the Assumption, August 15 (Travel Latvia 2014).

The icon known as Švč. Mergelės Marijos Paveikslas (Virgin Mary Mother of Mercy), housed within the Aušros Vartai (Gates of Dawn) chapel beside the Carmelite Church of Saint Theresa in the city of Vilnius, is a further example of Counter-

Reformation devotionism. Although no precise records exist of the icon's origins or creator, the painting probably dates from the sixteenth century and is of Italian origin. It has enjoyed widespread devotion in Lithuania since at least the seventeenth century. The icon's miracles were recorded in a compendium authored by the Carmelite Grigalius Hilarion (Petras Rosciszewski) in 1761 (called the *Reliacija*) and the devotion was supported by Pope Clement XVI (1705–1774) by a papal bull (Račiūnaitė 2004).

These Counter-Reformation cults reflect also the development of reproduction and of printed images as important vehicles for sacred worship. As Tojana Račiūnaitė (2004) demonstrates, artistic reproductions of sacred images, and their wider distribution through print, could greatly extend the popularity and recognition of miraculous cults. The Jesuit Jan Drews authored a Mariological work in 1684 that described pilgrimages to different Marian images within the area of Lithuania and Poland. The work not only serves as a valuable record of the sacred images known at the time, but also acted as a means of extending their fame more broadly. Particularly important, Račiūnaitė shows, was the designation *vera effigies imaginis* (true likeness) by which copies gained credibility as potent imitations of the original, a process explored as well by James France (1992). Drews's images bore such designation, making the book itself a significant potential source of intercession. In Counter-Reformation Catholicism, true likenesses of miraculous images could demonstrate their fidelity to the original by also producing miracles of their own. An image associated with verified miracles could be formally recognized by a crowning—literally the placing of an ornate metal crown on top of the image—authorized by the Vatican.

Regimanta Stankevičienė (2009) explores the stylistic origins of the miraculous image of the Madonna of Šiluva, crowned in 1786, which she regards as a copy of the Roman icon *Salus Populi Romani*. The Synod of Cracow of 1621 declared that in Poland and Lithuania, the Virgin Mary should be represented in the manner of the icon of Our Lady of Czestochowa, housed at the Pauline monastery of Jasna Góra (26), and/or by the image of *Salus Populi Romani*, housed in the church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome. Stankevičienė suggests that the *Salus Populi Romani* may have appealed to the refurbishers of the church at Šiluva because the icon was celebrated as an attestation of the intercessory help of the Virgin in combating non-Christian adversaries. The church at Šiluva had been founded in 1457 but had lapsed in use when its owner espoused Calvinism in 1532. The reconstruction of the church in the 1620s–40s represented a local victory over the Reformation and may have made the choice of icons natural. According to the legend reported to the Vatican in the appeal for the official crowning of the icon, the church's restoration had been

called for through a Marian apparition, and the icon had been recovered from a chest in which it had been hidden and buried to protect it from the Calvinists (23). An inventory of sacred images in Vilnius-area churches in 1674 indicates that the churches contained eighteen copies of the icon of Our Lady of Czestochowa, six copies of Our Lady of Loreto, five of Our Lady of Trakai, and one of Salus Populi Romani (26).

This Counter-Reformation attention to paintings was not solely a product of Orthodox traditions in the region. In fact, in Lutheran remodelings as well, sculptures often were replaced by paintings, particularly of biblical events. Nonetheless, sculptures could sometimes also become the focus of such attention. Šv. Apaštalų Petro ir Povilo Bažnyčia (the Church of Saints Peter and Paul) in the Antakalnis district of Vilnius houses one such statue, an *ecce homo* depiction of Christ crowned and robed at his trial before the Roman authorities just prior to the Crucifixion (Matt 27:28–29; Mark 15:17–19; John 19:2–3). The statue had been produced in southern Europe at the turn of the eighteenth century and had been imported by the Trinitarian Order, which preserved it in their Vilnius monastery. After it became known as a source of miracles, it was readily copied, both in sculptures and in paintings, and when the order's monastery closed in 1864, the original was moved to its current site to the left of the prominent church's high altar. It is clothed in a scarlet robe (Stankevičienė 2010). This strong tradition of reverence for sacred images and recognized agency of such works in effecting miraculous assistance for the faithful makes the production of religious art in Catholic Lithuania a serious and powerful undertaking. A picture or a sculpture can do more than simply suggest or inspire: it can serve as an active implement for supernatural forces.

ROADSIDE CROSSES AND SHRINES

In the bitter theological debates and devastating military conflicts of the seventeenth century, marked most significantly by the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648), the question of allegiance to Rome or to Luther became central to social life, political fortunes, and religious practice. The Nordic-Baltic region was by no means peripheral to this religious conflict: in fact, from the first establishment of a Lutheran state church in Prussia in 1521, through the ceaseless efforts of Swedish King Gustav II Adolf (1594–1632) as leader of the Protestant side of the Thirty Years' War, Nordic and Baltic realms played central roles in the rise and consolidation of a Protestant Northern Europe. In this context, sacred images, so stigmatized by Reformation writers and clerics, could unmistakably express partisan identity—their removal

demonstrating an embrace of the Reformation, their preservation or restoration demonstrating a return to communion with the Church of Rome.

The custom of producing roadside crosses and shrines was once common throughout the Nordic-Baltic region, as it remains today in areas of Catholic Europe. In rural and urban Italy, for instance, roadside shrines are still common and can mark familial events, personal devotions, or communal relations with particular saints. The rise of print culture, and the eventual development of Catholic devotional handbooks and prayer books, created vehicles by which local artists could gain access to images that they could copy and produce for local shrines, in continental Europe as well as farther north (Richardson 1998, 25). Because roadside shrines are exposed to the elements and decay at a relatively rapid rate, they require regular replacement, creating a market niche for local craftsmen. The devotional lives of community members also led to requests for new sculptures that would commemorate important events in people's personal lives, such as the birth of a new child, the death of an elder, or the granting of a particular prayer (23). Whether housed in small structures at ground level, attached to the trunks of trees, or raised high overhead on tall poles (figure 5.1), such shrines and sculptures became a prime genre for the public celebration of personal piety (Šešelgis and Armalas 1990). In the context of the Counter-Reformation, the custom of producing roadside crosses and shrines received further encouragement as a means of demarcating the villages and farms that had returned to a Catholic orientation (Richardson 1998, 25): roadside monuments became characteristic features of the local landscape of Lithuania, demarcating Catholic villages from Protestant counterparts in Prussia, Lithuania, and Latvia and from the numerous rural Jewish villages within the region. Their features combined seamlessly pre-Christian symbolism, the hagiography of the Counter-Reformation era, and the local and national identity of Lithuanian Catholics (Gimbutas [Gimbutienė] 1958).

By the era of Lithuania's first period of independence, such markers had become so common in certain parts of Lithuania—particularly the districts of Žemaitija and Aukštaitija—that antiquarians described them as occurring at least once every hundred feet (Končius 1965; Armalas and Bernotienė 1993, 18; Saliklis 1998, 14). As Šešelgis and Armalas show (1990), the statues of roadside shrines cannot be separated from the architectural structures in which they were housed. The poles or small buildings in which statues were placed possessed their own stylistic and symbolic histories, which may extend far back into the pre-Christian era. Metal or wooden trim work, geometric patterns, and figurative vine scroll added interest and supernatural significance to the installations. In such settings, the sculptures of saints or



Christ often appear dwarfed and nearly overlooked, reflecting the fact that they are just part of an artistic whole that encompasses sculpture, shrine, trim, and pole.

One example of an international devotional motif that acquired a powerful oicotype (local variation) in Lithuania is the *Rūpintojėlis*, known in Polish as *Chrystus Frasobliwy* and in medieval Western Europe as the Sorrowing Christ or Man of Sorrows. Perhaps no other subject is as iconic of the Lithuanian religious carving tradition as this pensive figure (Richardson 1998, 25). Before the Reformation, the Man of Sorrows had abundant counterparts in other parts of the Nordic-Baltic region. In Lithuania and Poland, this representation of Christ, capturing a moment of pained contemplation that seems to elide the Agony in the Garden and the events leading up to the Crucifixion, took on a quieter, more contemplative tone. Jesus is typically shown, as in Algimantas's rendering of the motif in Figure 5.2, with his head resting in his right hand, the crown of thorns upon his head, and sometimes chains around his waist (Surdokaitė 2004; Matušakaitė 2007, 185–90). The sculptural motif reflects the Catholic spirituality of the medieval era and Counter-Reformation, in which traditions of devotion, sometimes without direct biblical referents but embraced within popular piety, could become highly influential in the faith life and practices of ordinary people. It is also noteworthy that because the sculpture was usually displayed in a raised pole shrine, as is the case with Algimantas's rendition, viewers tended to see the figure from below, making Christ's downward stare meet the eyes of viewers and implicating the viewer directly in the sorrow or resignation depicted on the Savior's face. Such placement of sacred sculptures in Lithuanian roadside shrines continue a display convention that was once common in medieval churches, where sculptures were often located atop high pedestals or on raised altars.

THE SOVIET ERA

The abundant roadside shrines of Catholic Lithuania, expressive of a popular religiosity as well as a Lithuanian national identity, came to be regarded as a major nuisance for the ideologues of Soviet Lithuania (Poškus 1998; Richardson 1998; Malaskaitė 2004; Surdokaitė 2004; Valinčiūtė 2004; Matušakaitė 2007). Particularly in the

Figure 5.1. (*Facing*) Modern *koplystulpis*. Pole shrines like this one, once commonplace in Lithuania before the Soviet occupation, have reappeared in the era of regained independence. Algimantas Sakalauskas (Lithuanian, 1958–) and others. *Koplystulpis* (ca. 1995). Wood, metal; 100 × 60 × 300 cm. Prienai Artists' Collective, Prienai, Lithuania.



nineteenth century and the first period of Lithuanian independence (1918–1940), these shrines had become transformed into potent national symbols, celebrated in works such as the paintings of M. K. Čiurlionis (1875–1911), who had also included them in the first national exhibitions of Lithuanian folk art in 1908 (Saliklis 1998, 14). Soviet officials aimed at destroying roadside shrines and most other public displays of religious adherence and national identity as a means of distancing occupied Lithuania from its Christian past and removing from view the objects that had served as focal points of national sentiment. Both older and newer sculptures were confiscated and systematically destroyed, with only a relatively small percentage escaping incineration through the clandestine efforts of Lithuanians charged with destroying them or occasionally through relegation to museum collections. Church buildings were torn down or repurposed: the Bernardine Church of Saint Francis of Assisi in Vilnius became a warehouse, while the grand cathedral in the center of Vilnius became a Museum of Atheism (Saliklis 1998, 14). Despite this wholesale destruction, the sheer number of shrines that had existed before the Soviet era ensured that some ten thousand such objects survived to the second period of independence, 1991 (Richardson 1998, 25).

Although religious culture was suppressed during the Soviet era, folk art, like other expressions of folk culture in general, was valued, at least in name (Šmidchens 1996, 114). As Richardson shows (1998), wooden sculptures became influenced and controlled by two organizations. On the one hand, proletarian Houses of Culture encouraged amateur artists to replace previous religious themes with more ideologically suitable content (e.g., images of peasant laborers). Carvers who had learned their art during the period of independence continued to carve, simply altering their themes slightly so as to avoid censure. By 1952 there were more than eleven thousand amateur art groups in Lithuania, with a membership of more than two hundred thousand (Richardson 1998, 26). On the other hand, a later institution, the Folk Art Society, founded in 1966, aimed at refining folk art genres into a new form of Soviet high art. More selective in its membership, this organization promoted its members

Figure 5.2. (*Facing*) *Rūpintojėlis* (Sorrowing Christ) figures like this one are a traditional motif in Lithuanian religious sculpture. Sakalauskas carved this one in relief, with a pointed arch backing. Cracks due to drying are considered a natural and valued part of such sculptures today. Algimantas Sakalauskas (Lithuanian, 1958–). *Rūpintojėlis* (ca. 1993). Wood, metal; 20 × 15 × 40 cm. Prienai Artists' Collective, Prienai, Lithuania.

as master craftsmen worthy of state support and created agreements in which artist members shared profits with Soviet authorities (26).

In 1970 the Folk Art Society decided to revive the roadside shrine tradition, adapting its content so as to make it acceptable to Soviet ideology. In the former village of Ablinga in 1972, a gathering of Folk Art Society artists resulted in a new form of production: a group installation of some thirty massive sculptures meant to commemorate the 1941 Nazi invasion of the village and the massacre of its residents (Richardson 1998, 26). The sculptures recalled the outward form and sometimes even the content of pre-Soviet religious shrines, but no longer featured the dual elements of architectural structures and separate statues. Instead, sculptures were carved out of massive logs and raised as monuments above the landscape. Similar group installations appeared regularly thereafter in various parts of the country, addressing other themes deemed appropriate by authorities, including commemorations of the visionary work of M. K. Čiurlionis at Senoji Varėna (Saliklis 1998, 14) and celebrations of folkloric or pre-Christian themes, like the fanciful witches and demons of Raganų Kalnas (the Hill of Witches) in Juodkrantė (Počiulpaitė 1998, 19). New motifs became commonplace in such works, including depictions of the pre-Christian god Perkūnas (Richardson 1998, 24) or an emblematic Duke Vaidila (Saliklis 1998, 16).

PROTEST SCULPTURES

Whereas the work of the Folk Art Society fell squarely within the acceptable bounds of the Soviet art system, other artists and individuals used the sculptural tradition as a tool for political resistance, as in Kryžių Kalnas (the Hill of Crosses) outside of the city of Šiauliai (see Figure I.7 in the introduction). Lithuanians repeatedly erected monumental crosses or left small crucifixes or rosaries on the hill in honor of their dead (Saliklis 1998, 15). The custom had emerged after popular uprisings against Russian authorities in 1831 and 1864 during the era of czarist control of Lithuania. Already by the end of the nineteenth century, the site had become known as a hill of crosses and contained thousands of monuments. In the aftermath of the Second World War and the spate of deportations associated with the Soviet takeover, Lithuanians continued to add new crosses on the site, despite Soviet prohibitions. Authorities bulldozed the crosses and posted armed guards on at least three occasions, but the surreptitious placement of crosses continued. A Soviet tourist publication about Šiauliai from 1979 makes no mention of the hill or its crosses, although it includes depictions of a nearby memorial to the 1236 Battle of Saule, in which the invading Livonian Swordbrothers were defeated by Samogitian warriors (Šidlauskas

and Gedminas 1979, plates 172–74). The depicted monument's carvings mimic the roadside shrine tradition and reflect the Folk Art Society style that had developed in Ablinga. The dogged persistence of cross erection on Kryžių Kalnas eventually forced Soviet toleration, after which artists began to erect larger, more emphatically Christian statues, a trend that has continued into the era of regained independence that began in 1991. Today, visitors to the site can purchase from local vendors both mass-produced and handmade crosses and *Rūpintojėlis* figures to add to the hill's deposits, which now number above one hundred thousand.

During the 1980s, under the thawing influence of Glasnost and Perestroika, Lithuanian artists began to reappropriate Christian content for artistic as well as political purposes in areas beyond Kryžių Kalnas. Exemplary of this trend was the 1988 installation of protest sculptures on the bank of the Nemunas River outside of the town of Birštonas, which Algimantas brought me to during my visit to Prienai. At Birštonas, in a quiet wooded area, artists erected massive sculptures of the Ablinga style but using Christian genres, adapted as political commentary on the failings and injustices of the Soviet Union, particularly the Siberian deportations. Images of Christ, Mary, saints, and other staples of Christian iconography were used to call attention to human rights violations in the Soviet Union's past. An image of Saint George and the Dragon, traditionally used to express the triumph of good over evil, was used to suggest the pointlessness of war. An image of the Virgin Mary carrying sheafs of rye was used to comment on the deportation of women to Siberia. In an act of defiance that signaled the extent to which Lithuanians had become determined to extract their country from the grasp of the Soviet Union, the artists signed their works. The installation was a bold testing of the limits of freedom of speech in late-Soviet Lithuania, two years before the declaration of the reestablishment of Lithuanian independence in 1990.

ALGIMANTAS IN CONTEXT

In my discussions with him in 2008, Algimantas emphasized the importance of all of these historical factors in understanding his work as an artist and activist. Algimantas takes great pride in exploring and reproducing age-old Lithuanian motifs like the geometric ornaments found on *koplystulpis* monuments. He also employs with eagerness images like the *Rūpintojėlis* as seen in Figure 5.2. By populating the landscape of rural Lithuania with Catholic images, Counter-Reformation Lithuanians—under the guidance of the preaching orders (e.g., Dominicans, Franciscans, Bernardines, and Jesuits) tasked with reinstating Catholicism—visually asserted that Lithuania was a Catholic country, despite its markedly late Christianization and

its long-standing and important Jewish populace. The revived tradition allowed for a continuation of notions of sacrality connected with images and statues that had long been part of medieval Christianity but that had been strongly rejected during the Reformation. In the early independence era, scholarly interpretation of these statues as syncretic holdovers of the pagan era allowed Lithuanians to view the roadside shrine as an emblem of national heritage, connected with Lithuania's distinct historical status as one of the last places in Europe to accept Christianity. In the Soviet era the roadside shrine tradition, at first virulently suppressed, became revived so as to deemphasize its explicitly religious character in favor of its status as a genre of secular folk art. Monumentalized depictions of peasants, workers, pagan figures, and jocular themes allowed for the recuperation of the genre in a manner permissible within the framework of Soviet ideology. As we shall see below, Algimantas, like other artists of his generation, has come to embrace the *Ablinga* style as an important innovation in the Lithuanian sculptural tradition, even while adapting its content away from Soviet-approved themes. Finally, in the late-Soviet thaw of *Perestroika* and *Glasnost*, artists could begin again to approach religious topics, depicting once more Christ or Mary or the saints as ostensible symbols of wider political themes, thereby recasting their works not as religious expressions but as enactments of free speech.

Algimantas Sakalauskas participated in this complex and thriving evolution of the roadside shrine tradition in late-Soviet Lithuania and went on to a successful career as an artist following independence. His works can seem on the surface identical to those of many another local artist of post-Soviet Lithuania. Yet in discussing the meanings of his art, Algimantas reveals a strikingly personal understanding of the content and symbolism of his roadside shrines, in which they become transfigured from seemingly overt enunciations of Catholic religiosity to reflections or instantiations of more naturalized concepts of the cosmos and its powers. In their placement and symbolism, such shrines serve, in Algimantas's view, as powerful implements for capturing and redirecting the energies of sky, earth, and water in ways that long predate the arrival of Christianity in Lithuania.

I visited Algimantas Sakalauskas on July 29, 2008, at his artists' collective studio in Prienai, Lithuania. Algimantas was generous in devoting the entire day to our visit and had planned a set of excursions to see the various installations of his (and other artists') works around Prienai and nearby Birštonas. His sons Ignas and Vytenis took turns translating, since my Lithuanian was not adequate to the task of understanding the fine points of Algimantas's views on his art and beliefs. Algimantas combines a love of traditional wood-carving with a fervent commit-

ment to his country's independence and heritage. He finds many insights into the ancient belief system of his people in etymologies he suggests for various words, as noted below. Algimantas's views on the supernatural encompass both Christian and pre-Christian understandings and integrate these into a sense of the cosmos uniquely expressed through the symbols and deployment of wooden art.

Algimantas Sakalauskas was born in 1958 in Dailučiai, Vilkaviškis, near the modern-day border between Lithuania and Kaliningrad. Algimantas notes that his last name derives from *sakalas* (falcon), a bird of aristocratic importance and one able to bring divine messages to people, since its name derives from the same root as the verb *sakyti* (to tell). Regional identity is important in Lithuania, with each region possessing its own distinctive populace, culture, and dialect. The part of Lithuania where Algimantas grew up is not as well known for its roadside shrines, which are more characteristic of other parts of the country.

Algimantas grew up without any training in woodworking and eventually became a worker in a glider factory. During this time, some thirty years before our meeting, he took an interest in traditional carving and acquired books showing old carvings of various types. Books of this sort were rare and valued, almost clandestine, artifacts in 1970s Lithuania, since they celebrated a Lithuanian national identity and heritage that Soviet authorities were bent on obliterating. Algimantas studied these books, made draftsman drawings of the spoons, and began to carve spoons of his own showing different styles and wood types. He also visited numerous museums and collected exemplars of spoons from practicing artists. Eventually, he attempted to gain acceptance into the Lithuanian art academy, but since he had no letters of reference, the officials took the work sample he had submitted as items purchased from established artists and refused him admission. Nonetheless, Algimantas persisted in his carving, eventually producing hundreds of distinct spoons, which today grace a wall of his home.

In 1986, in the context of Perestroika and Glasnost, Algimantas mounted his own exhibition of sculptures commenting on the deportations to Siberia. As in other Baltic countries, the deportations of the Stalin era were widespread, painful, tragic experiences that tore families apart and caused tremendous personal and cultural trauma. Algimantas sought to express the sadness and injustice of the event. Like other protests eventually mounted by the Sąjūdis movement, Algimantas's installation made use of Lithuanian folk genres, underscoring at once both Lithuanian national heritage and a distinctly Lithuanian take on Soviet affairs. The topic of deportations was politically charged and, despite the avowed openness to freedom of discussion in the late-Soviet era, the authorities looked with disfavor on the

exhibition. As a result, Algimantas was forbidden to enter the Folk Art Society or exhibit any works of sculpture for a period of five years. Algimantas reflects that he was ahead of his time, in that such exhibits and expressions eventually became widespread during the push for the reestablishment of Lithuanian independence four years later.

In 1990 Algimantas traveled to Siberia to install a cross in a memorial chapel commemorating Lithuanian, Latvian, and Estonian officers who had been deported to Siberia. His act was covered in a television documentary, and when he got back, the leaders of the Lithuanian Folk Art Society, a successor of the Soviet-era Folk Art Society, approached him to join. The society has some five thousand members today, who work in all media including textile, metal, and ceramics, while the professional Lithuanian Artists Association has some one thousand members.

As his trip to Siberia indicates, Algimantas was highly engaged politically in the final years of Soviet rule, bringing the protests that were going on in the urban center of Kaunas into the comparative tranquility of small-town Prienai. Like countless others of the era, he was observed by the KGB, which threatened him in 1987, saying that they had a file on him and that he would be arrested and sent to Siberia if he did not watch out. As they put it, “If you’re not with us, you’re against us.” The KGB also offered to help Algimantas, saying that if he cooperated with them, he would receive benefits. Algimantas refused to do so, but he knows of others who did collaborate and who received support. Although politically engaged and passionate about the injustices Lithuanians had experienced under Soviet occupation, Algimantas was not interested in pursuing political office, which he describes as a dirty business, no matter what side you are on.

In 1990, the same year that Lithuania officially declared its independence from the Soviet Union, Algimantas and a number of associates opened a workshop in Prienai. After a shaky start (as noted above), the organization began to thrive. Currently, since 1999, it operates on a piece of land leased to the group for ninety-nine years by the government. The collective has received United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization funding in the past and has organized workshops for teenagers as well as installation projects that bring together different artists—sometimes exclusively Lithuanian, sometimes international—to produce art related to particular themes. At the time of our interview, Algimantas and the collective were aiming at gaining further European Union funding, which would depend on their accomplishing certain things, such as enlarging their parking lot, making an interpretive sign for the entrance to the grounds, building a conference hall and teaching facility, and building residence facilities for guest artists. The members of the collective each produce their own works, using the shared facilities,

but also occasionally collaborate on larger joint projects. For income, they undertake projects that can generate revenue, such as home remodels and embellishments, working on these in the winter months. They also run programs for schoolchildren as a way of building competence in the tradition in the next generation of Lithuanians. The *koplystulpis* depicted in Figure 5.1 is an example of a project produced collectively: as Algimantas noted, children who take part in creating such a work never forget the experience. They become part of the tradition, and that feeling of participation, of access, can become the start of a more extensive engagement with the art in the future.

In the summer of 1991, Algimantas lived in Germany for two and a half months. There he learned about effective ways of running artist symposia and camps. He remembers presenting the local priest as well as *bürgermeister* with small sculptures to thank them for their prayers and material help to Lithuania. Wooden sculptures were a symbol of cultural, political, and religious identity, deployed effectively against the might of the atheist Soviet state. Algimantas was still in Germany during the July disputes between Lithuanian border guards and Soviet troops that represented an important Soviet attempt to undermine the infrastructure of the newly independent republic. In an interview with a German journalist, Algimantas told me, he said that if things turned out badly, he would still return to Lithuania to help fight for his country. The news reporter thought him very odd. When Algimantas reached the border on his way back home to Lithuania, he found it entirely unmanned by anyone from Lithuania, Poland, or Russia, and he was able to return home without difficulty. By September 1991, Lithuanian independence had been sufficiently recognized that the republic could join the United Nations, definitively ending its association with the Soviet Union or with the newly revamped union of former republics that had come to replace it in March 1991. The era of Soviet rule was over, and the rebuilding of an independent Lithuania could begin in earnest.

Already during the final years of Soviet rule, Lithuanians began to replace the destroyed roadside shrines and crosses of the Lithuanian landscape. Algimantas and his associates found ready employment in these activities, accepting commissions from local municipalities and farms for new monuments. Some of these were religious in nature, while others were secular commemorations of Lithuanian partisans who had died in resisting Soviet rule. Algimantas remembers doing one such monument in 1989, when the site had to be kept secret so as to avoid Soviet suppression. At the same time, Algimantas and his associates were not just out to make a profit: at times, they made crosses without pay simply as gifts to particular communities or individuals.

In 1993, in the context of a newly independent nation, Algimantas participated in the first Lithuanian wood-carvers' symposium, held at Babtai, some twenty kilometers from Kaunas. Although organized by the new post-Soviet state, the symposium was run very much along the Soviet model, and Algimantas protested the conditions and accommodations of the symposium, leading to better facilities and remuneration for pieces produced. With his knowledge of effective symposia and events in Germany and later in the Czech Republic, Algimantas has been active in creating both national and international events in his locale, including the one that led to the sculpture *Dainų Karalius*, discussed below.

The 1972 Ablinga commemoration of Nazi atrocities was illustrative of a strong tendency in Soviet arts toward collective undertakings and projects. Artists came together around a theme and influenced each other. They created joint installations that remained after the event and that helped shape the thinking of all the artists involved. The Babtai symposium of 1993 made it clear that such collective events would remain a part of the artistic life of independent Lithuania. In the town of Birštonas, near Prienai, Algimantas organized a symposium of his own, one that drew participants from various parts of Lithuania and abroad. The topic chosen for the symposium was music, and the resulting sculptures are today permanently displayed in the town's central park. Algimantas's own contribution to the ensemble is entitled *Dainų Karalius (Lord of Songs)*, which depicts the god Perkūnas, arms uplifted with a bird on each hand (figure 5.3), surrounded by various geometric decorations reminiscent of traditional *koplystulpis* shrines.

While depictions of Perkūnas became common in the Soviet revival of the roadside shrine tradition, Algimantas's rendition has strongly personal elements. These relate to his understandings of energies in the earth and sky and the ways in which sculptures can help channel or redirect them as noted at the outset of this chapter. Algimantas's views of natural energies can be contextualized by examining an essay by Joan Price that appeared in Frederic Lehrman's *The Sacred Landscape* of 1988. According to Price, "Studies of electromagnetic force fields in the atmosphere and underground water caves reveal a meaningful pattern that links critical points on the map with the health of all life on earth." Lightning, solar radiation, rushing water, and radioactive minerals all constitute sources of negative ions (*neg-ions*) and their

Figure 5.3. (Facing) Sakalauskas's *Lord of Songs*. Sakalauskas carved this monumental depiction of the god Perkūnas as his contribution to a carvers' symposium organized on the theme of music. Algimantas Sakalauskas (Lithuanian, 1958–). *Dainų Karalius (Lord of Songs)*; ca. 1998). Wood, metal; 120 × 60 × 330 cm. *Dainų Kalnelis* ensemble, Birštonas, Lithuania.



opposites, *pos-ions*. Ideally, pos-ions dominate in an atmosphere in a ratio of five pos-ions to every four neg-ions. Too many pos-ions can result, Price maintains, in an overproduction of serotonin, leading to “respiratory ailments, stress, traffic accidents, and even suicide.” Lightning represents an important source of neg-ions and can thus be seen as a health-inducing component of the atmosphere. According to Price, “A high concentration of neg-ions is a significant factor in healing, facilitating proper oxygen metabolism and a sense of well-being.” From this perspective, Algimantas’s *koplystulpis* discussed at the outset of this chapter can be seen as a device for funneling pos-ions upward and away from the collective’s grounds, while other sculptures, as detailed below, can be understood as devices for attracting lightning-generated neg-ions down to where they can benefit human dwellers. Understandings like Price’s were widespread not only in North America but also in late-Soviet society, which castigated overtly spiritual viewpoints but embraced ideas built upon scientific models. Algimantas, like many people who grew up in the Soviet Union, seems to have become aware of such theories through the popular culture of the time, and while Algimantas does not draw his ideas directly from the writings of Price, the model of the cosmos described in her writings accords well with that which Algimantas explained to me. Geometric figures, particularly triangles, represent prominent features of his works and act to focus, disperse, or redirect energies of the subterranean or upper-atmospheric worlds.

In the sculpture *Dainų Karalius*, Algimantas makes abundant use of such geometric figures. At the ends of the god’s hands are two birds, symbols in Algimantas’s personal iconography of divine messengers between the supernatural and mankind. They are connected, as noted above, with the etymology of Algimantas’s surname Sakalauskas, which refers to falcons and which Algimantas interprets as deriving etymologically from the verb *sakyti* (to tell). A triangle facing upward above the crowned head of Perkūnas, as well as two upwardly oriented triangles above it, symbolize the flow of messages and energy upward to the sun, which is depicted as a circle with rays emanating outward (figure 5.4). Below the ribs of the figure of Perkūnas, a series of downwardly oriented triangles signal the transfer of healthy energies from the sky to the earth in the form of lightning. Perkūnas becomes the place where upward and downward flows of energy meet, a controller of these forces. In the sculpture he becomes associated not simply with nature but also with the singing tradition of the Baltic countries, the *daina* genre, crucial in shedding light on the past mythology and national character of Latvians and Lithuanians. Energy ultimately emanates from the sun, but Perkūnas plays a key role in conveying and focusing it. And a central genre of folk culture—song—like wooden sculptures, becomes part of this highly consequential and healthy transaction of energies. Folk



Figure 5.4. Detail of Sakalauskas's *Dainų Karalius*. The birds, sun symbol, and arrow-shaped lines pointing up and down in the sculpture hold particular symbolic and practical purposes. They help reveal the god Perkūnas as a mediator between sky and earth energies. Algimantas Sakalauskas (Lithuanian, 1958–). *Dainų Karalius* (*Lord of Songs*; ca. 1998). Wood, metal; 120 × 60 × 330 cm. *Dainų Kalnelis* ensemble, Birštonas, Lithuania.

traditions, Algimantas seems to suggest, mask or express a deeper natural management of energies that is crucial for effective life.

This mediating role of Perkūnas is further elaborated in a diagram that Algimantas developed to illustrate his understanding of cosmic forces. The diagram reproduced here as Figure 5.5 shows a pyramid with five levels, each containing more subdivisions than the level above it. Algimantas suggests that this pyramid underlies the ancient Egyptian understandings of the cosmos, as well as structures like

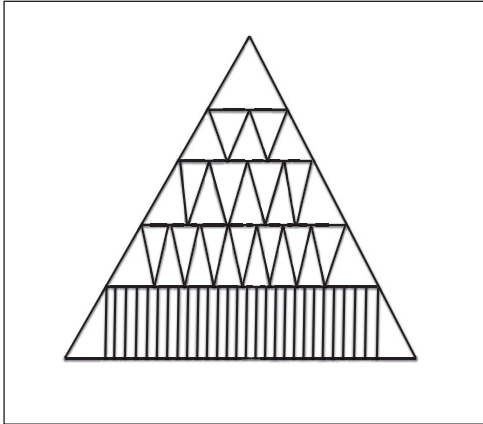


Figure 5.5.

Diagram of cosmic organization. Sakalauskas understands the place of humans as occupying a low but foundational level in a pyramidal hierarchy that culminates in Per Amžius, the eternal godhead of the entire cosmos. (Reproduction of diagram by Algimantas Sakalauskas.)

Japanese pagodas. And it is closely tied to Lithuanian pre-Christian cosmology and word symbolism.

At the uppermost level, Algimantas sees a supreme life force, Per Amžius (meaning “through the centuries”), the Eternal One for all ages. The term is a traditional part of the closing of many Lithuanian Christian prayers, corresponding to the Latin *in aeternum*, and immediately preceding Amen. The second level is occupied by three beings whose names are known from medieval accounts of Baltic pre-Christian mythology: Patrimpas (Potrimpo), Perkūnas, and Prikulis. Algimantas provides etymologies for these names as meaning “stepping forward,” “through the body,” and “going under,” respectively. The etymology of Perkūnas as referring to life force passing through the deity’s body makes further sense of the iconography of Algimantas’s *Dainų Karalius* sculpture, in which the sun’s rays can be seen being gathered and directed downward through the god’s body. The third level of the pyramid is inhabited by gods and goddesses of lesser status, beings that control the ground, water, and the resources of nature. The fourth level is made up of various animals, including birds, which function as messengers between the heavens and humankind, as again illustrated by the birds in Algimantas’s *Dainų Karalius*. And on the lowest level stand human beings. In this way, humanity is at the bottom in terms of status, but also constitutes the foundation upon which all other elements of creation rely. Without this foundation, Algimantas explains, there could be no crowning Per Amžius. Human beings create the basis for all creation by simply walking through life, as signaled by the etymology Algimantas supplies for the word *tikeimas* (belief), as derived from *tik ėjėmas* (just walking). “Man creates,” Algimantas told

me; “that is what is important.” For Algimantas, human creativity not only reflects but also helps constitute the divine.

In artistic representations, the artist expresses these cosmic relations, helping facilitate communication between levels of the cosmos and helping instruct viewers on the hierarchies at work. Algimantas notes this educational and potentially therapeutic use of art in cemetery monuments in particular. In the return to independence, many Lithuanians have commissioned wayside shrine monuments as cemetery decorations, and Algimantas has produced a number of sculptures that are situated today in cemeteries. Typical is the monument Algimantas brought me to see in a local cemetery.

Amid an array of stone tombstones and bright flowers in a well-kept cemetery plot stands an enlarged *Rūpintojėlis* figure that one can easily recognize as an exemplar of the monumental sculptural tradition initiated at Ablinga. The seated sorrowing Jesus is typical of depictions of the figure in other contexts in Lithuanian folk art and can easily be interpreted as an unambiguous rendition of a favorite theme of Catholic devotionism. But the sculpture also contains further elements (figure 5.6), as Algimantas explained to me. Above a trunk that bears the deceased’s name, Algimantas has included an embedded round stone—a symbol of the earth. The sorrowing Christ is depicted seated atop this globe, with a large halo behind and above his head, and a top roof section that recalls the house structures of traditional roadside shrines. The whole is crowned by a cross flanked by two wavy pointed columns. Along the sides of the *Rūpintojėlis* figure, Algimantas included two further massive wavy columns. As the above discussion suggests, the overtly Christian imagery of the sculpture is modified in Algimantas’s rendering to allow for a wider cosmic interpretation. The Christ figure, like the Perkūnas of Algimantas’s *Dainų Karalius*, appears to act as a conduit for forces upward and downward. The placement of the Savior’s hands, although traditional of *Rūpintojėlis* figures, can be seen to encompass a gesture downward (the figure’s left hand) and a gesture upward (the figure’s right). A series of downwardly oriented triangles on the figure’s robe accentuate the downward orientation of the left hand and signify the passage of energy from the sky to the earth. The seeming halo behind Christ’s head holds multiple rays and is noticeably oversized. It represents not merely a halo, but also the sun, the source of all power. And the upward orientation of the roof triangle, as well as the two flanking pillars composed of stacks of upward-facing triangles, signify the passage of energies and prayers upward into heaven. As Algimantas explained the monument to me, it is designed to bring divine energy down to the dead and to convey earth energies, as well as human prayers, up into the heavens.



Algimantas related that his customers do not generally realize that the monuments he constructs for them have such cosmological features and functions, but he notes that they probably appreciate them on a subconscious level. When they comprehend the symbols and see how they fit together in the piece of art, they experience the work as beautiful, enjoyable. If they cannot understand the symbolism, they cannot appreciate the art fully. For Algimantas, these symbolic meanings are part of the ancient heritage of Lithuanians from various regions of the country, discovered and redeployed in Algimantas's adaptations of traditional forms and motifs. They are an underlying part of what makes the art of interest to Lithuanians today. The funerary monument is intended to help viewers regard death more positively, to take comfort in it as a natural part of the workings of the universe. The cemetery becomes a place not for mourning but for efficacious communication between the earth and the heavens.

This seeming insertion of a non-Christian significance into what would at first appear an unambiguously Christian sculpture can be viewed as a bold and personal interpretation of the roadside shrine tradition, but it largely replicates the kinds of interpretations that earlier scholars made of roadside shrines during the era of first independence as well as the Soviet period. Scholars of these periods nearly always maintained that the roadside shrines symbolized more than their surface Christian content. Depictions of Saint Anna or Saint Peter holding a book, scholars maintained, were covert protests regarding Russian bans on Lithuanian publishing (Saliklis 1998, 14). Beverly Gordon puts it this way, summarizing this scholarly consensus:

The sculptures carried many levels of meaning. They were religious icons, representing Christian saints and holy figures, and evoking associations with the church and its role in personal and communal life. This religious iconography and symbolism had itself been overlaid on a pagan past and still reverberated with its echoes; the fact that the figures had been brought out into the countryside, standing as transformed or embellished

Figure 5.6. (*Facing*) Funerary monument. Sakalauskas creates many sculptural grave markers, such as this one. The sculpture combines a traditional Sorrowing Christ (*Rūpintojėlis*) figure with various symbols and geometric patterns deployed to exchange energies upward and downward between sky and earth. Algimantas Sakalauskas (Lithuanian, 1958–). *Rūpintojėlis* (2003). Wood, stone, metal; 100 × 50 × 285 cm. Birštonas Cemetery, Lithuania.

trees, reminds us that they were in a sense still functioning like sacred groves. The figures were protective, helping in effect to ward off misfortune and unhappiness. (1990, 9)

In this light, Algimantas can be seen not so much as injecting a novel and personal interpretation into the works he creates but, rather, as embodying the symbolism that academic scholars have attributed to such sculptures in their studies. Having read the scholarly literature of the independence era and after, Algimantas finds the incorporation of pre-Christian or non-Christian themes an expectable and normative aspect of the Lithuanian religious sculptural tradition, and he seeks to update such underlying symbolism with ideas drawn from popular science. Thus, when Algimantas depicts a Saint Peter holding a book or key, as he has done in a number of works produced for towns and families in his vicinity, he does not intend to comment on past publication bans or Russian oppression. Rather, for Algimantas, Saint Peter's key symbolizes the fact that human beings hold the instructions and the key to personal fulfillment through standing poised between the earth beneath and the sun and sky above. Like the Perkūnas of Algimantas's *Dainų Karalius*, or the *Rūpintojėlis* of his Birštonas cemetery monument, human beings can act as funnels between the opposing energies of the cosmos. They can manage and deploy the world's energies in healthful, meaningful ways.

In viewing the world from these wider perspectives, it should be noted that Algimantas harbors not a little criticism for the Christianity his sculptures seem outwardly to invoke. For Algimantas, for instance, the sorrowing Christ of the *Rūpintojėlis* is not lamenting the sins of a fallen humanity, as a Christian interpretation of the motif might suggest. Nor does his *Rūpintojėlis* represent Soviet oppression, as protesters of the late-Soviet era liked to maintain. Rather, for Algimantas, the sorrowing Christ is bemoaning his effective castration under the strictures and bodily denial of Christian dogma. The pre-Christian figure that the *Rūpintojėlis* replaces, Algimantas maintains, was cheerful, holding a baby on his shoulder and sporting a massive phallus, now lost beneath the monastic robes of the Christ figure. It is Christianity's fanaticism that has so wearied and depressed the Savior. In Algimantas's view, all the negative injunctions of the Ten Commandments (all the repetitions of "thou shalt not . . .") help create a culture of confinement and limitation, in which the person feels hemmed in by social and cosmic expectations. For Algimantas, it is fanaticism that is the true evil of human existence, and God, Per Amžius, wants a humanity that interacts with openness and curiosity, exploring existence and the world through thought and through art. As he puts it, "God wants free, creative people, artists, who can help bring people to an understanding of the world that is

positive.” When people have choices about what and how to believe, Algimantas maintains, they can achieve positive views of life and the cosmos. When, in contrast, they are compelled to believe certain things—as during the era of Christianization, the dim years of czarist control, or the dark period of the Soviet occupation—people become oppressed and suffer. Although critical of the official Church, Algimantas notes that Pope John Paul II said similar things during his life, calling for a Christianity that was joyful rather than repressive, a message echoed with fervor in the teachings of the later Pope Francis. With an eclecticism that he sees as characteristic of the modern era, Algimantas Sakalauskas seeks as an artist to bridge the seeming divide between pre-Christian and Christian outlooks and between religious and scientific understandings of the world. His discovery of the Lithuanian sculptural tradition’s cosmic workings creates a continuity that reveals the inherent wisdom of ancient Lithuanians as well as the enduring usefulness of their artistic traditions in the twenty-first century.

Conclusion

As varied and distinctive as the viewpoints and styles of the artists described in this study may seem, we can recognize in them certain commonalities that I hope to point out in this conclusion. I have organized my study through ways of relating to notions of continuity—uncovering, covering, rediscovering, recovering, and discovering—and I will touch on these again here. At the same time, I wish to look at the cases presented in this study in terms of what they say about the artists themselves as persons and as professionals. In response to trends in the interdisciplinary study of material culture, I also touch on what a focus on these artists' products can teach us when we look at them not just as extensions of their creators' visions but as participants in and shapers of the cultures in which they have been deployed. Finally, I hope to examine a little of what these people and products together can tell us about touch, time, place, nation, and belief as concrete dimensions of human experience in Northern Europe and elsewhere.

MAKING AND MODERNITY

In his erudite and insightful study *Making*, Tim Ingold (2013) explores the learning that comes in anthropology, archaeology, art, and architecture through acts of making. Making engages the body and the intellect in powerful ways. As Phillip Odden (chapter 2) wryly put it, "You have a lot of time to think when you stand here carving." Carving is a task that requires the artist to cooperate with a material that has will of its own and that has been used continuously by human artists for millennia. And although power tools may seem to offer a very different experience of wood-working from that offered by hand tools, it is clear that on some levels, working in wood always involves certain issues, regardless of the tools one has available. A piece

of art emerges from its source material only gradually, through a series of repeated small acts of chipping, whittling, or sanding. Wood grain—a product of the tree’s species and environment during life—can work for or against one’s vision, forcing decisions that were unforeseen but necessary as a result of the wood’s own characteristics or personality. A tendency toward cracking undermines the permanence of the artwork, reminding artist and viewer alike that nothing in this world lasts forever. And woodworking holds the constant potential of a tool slipping into one’s own flesh, necessitating a rapid trip to the first-aid kit or blood stancher. Every single one of the artists surveyed in this study have literally shed blood for their art.

Perhaps because of these universal tendencies of working with wood, or the antiquity of the material in human art, the artists I have surveyed here developed elaborate notions of continuity and its achievement in their works. Eva Ryyänen (chapter 1) saw wood as a partner in her artistic explorations as she sought to uncover a process of praising the Creator shared by trees and people alike. She used no plans in making her artworks, and she sought always to allow the identity and specificity of the trees involved in her works to shine through. Phillip Odden and Else Bigton (chapter 2) learned to cover past artists’ works, imitating them until they could create their own unique works within the same aesthetic tradition. That process can involve reproducing similar objects over and over again, as Figure C.1 shows: a small piece of ornament that Else Bigton was reproducing on the day that I visited. Like musicians learning a work of the past through reading a score or listening to a recording, the artists’ acts of copying permit them to gain active command of artistic skills that they can then use in new ways on their own. Sister Lydia Mariadotter (chapter 3) found herself cooperating with wood as she worked to rediscover continuities between the ways in which artists and religious of the Catholic past related to the divine and the ways in which she and her fellow sisters of her order related to the divine in a Lutheran present. Lars Levi Sunna (chapter 4) worked hard to recover for his community a continuity that had been shattered, not so much by Christianity as by the colonial forces that used Christianity as a tool to bludgeon and disenfranchise Sámi people. Through careful study of historical accounts and a meshing of these with the handcraft traditions that he had learned in his family, Lars was able to recover a Sámi pre-Christian legacy for his Christian community. Algimantas Sakalauskas (chapter 5) also pored over published studies and past artifacts, but he did so as a process of discovery, making careful plans to execute in wood and finding evidence for an ancient system of underlying cosmic forces at work in Lithuanian folk art as in other ancient artistic and scientific traditions of the world.

Whether they uncover, cover, rediscover, recover, or discover continuity with the past, the artists surveyed in this study reject a museum-like passivity or detachment



Figure C.1. Art pieces in the making. Else Bigton makes a series of matched ornaments for use in the various cabinets, shelves, and chests she produces. Else Bigton (Norwegian-American, 1956–). Untitled (2014). Wood; 20 × 8 × 14 cm. Norsk Wood Works, Barronett, Wisconsin

toward the traditions they contemplate. Their fidelity to the project of reestablishing artistic and spiritual continuity entails an a priori rejection of the modernist belief in the utter separation of the present from the past. They envision a past, embodied in tradition, that has not ended but that speaks once again in their artworks and becomes once again available to us all.

In an art world that favors the secular and the worldly, religious art is often viewed as inferior or, at best, naïve. Whether it be in Greenberg’s condescending avant-garde or kitsch framework (1939) or Olalquiaga’s more tempered explorations of the “kitsch experience” (1998), art that engages with the past and with the sacral violates norms of the art industry and its interpreters, and artists who depict religious themes—particularly if they do so in traditional media such as wooden sculpture—are seen as throwbacks to an earlier era rather than as innovators in the here and now. Yet the artists discussed in this study, while fully embracing the idea of continuity and a

seeming immersion in the past, in fact operate or operated at the forefront of their society's artistic frontiers. They are countercultural artists who embrace past religious forms and ideas and make these relevant to viewers in the present. They help their societies take stock of a modernity built atop ancient traditions and beliefs, some so occluded by successive layers of understandings or practices that they escape notice of people altogether. Like archaeologists, the artists discussed in these pages seek to unearth past understandings, making them present for their communities through new instantiations. This is true regardless of what these specific understandings are, be they the subtle flows of ions and energies between heaven and earth, the conscious witnessing of the unity and benevolence of a Creator's work, the strategic protective acts of individuals in a Viking world always poised on the threshold of disaster and chaos, the early medieval syncretic meshing of native and imported beliefs, the vibrant high-medieval commerce of ideas and industry that culminates in artistic products, the sometimes fierce suppressions and reversals that attend religious change and reformation, the co-option of religious ideals for goals of exploitation and oppression, or the quiet musings of a person open to inspiration while carefully chipping at a piece of wood.

THINGS AND THEIR MESSAGES

While much of my attention in this study has been focused on accounting for the ideas and practices of the artists whom I studied, their artworks are also powerful and worthy of contemplation in and of themselves. I recall Sister Lydia's delight in describing her sculptures as "*brukskonst*" (utilitarian art) in the sense that they perform important work for the people who own and use them. So, too, I recall Lars's striving to save his works from judgments conditioned by narrow concepts of craft utility. The autonomy of material objects as actors in their own right is implicit in everything the artists told me about their products, works that they were happy to see stand on their own and speak for themselves.

Material-culture studies offer many perspectives for attending to the testimony of things. Like many folklorists, my understandings of material culture have been shaped by classic scholars like folklorist Henry Glassie (1968; 1999), archaeologist James Deetz (1977), and art historian Jules D. Prown (1982). Their groundbreaking perspectives have been supplemented over the years by intriguing studies by scholars like Arjun Appadurai (1982), Bill Brown (2003), and Ian Hodder (2012).

What can such studies teach us about attending to the significance of things? We can of course, at a very basic level, see things as records of the artist's work and engagement with materials and motifs. As Ian Hodder puts it, things allow us to

reconstruct “the phenomenological experiences of past actors” (2012, 12). This is what makes covering so exciting for artists like Phillip and Else—in copying, one comes upon the same craft challenges as the original artist and gets to see and appreciate close up the original artist’s decisions. Of course, to focus on the artworks in this study as solely records of their makers’ work reduces them to their moment of creation alone, leaving the events before and after that time of production unexplored. The artists I interviewed would disagree strongly with such a narrowing of focus. They often spoke to me in detail of the materials they selected and prepared before starting to make an artwork. Eva and Algimantas and Lars and Phillip all had elaborate narratives of how they acquired the pieces of wood they used. Sister Lydia spoke of the wood making itself available or insisting on certain forms. She told me of a hand that appeared in one carving despite all her efforts to ignore or avoid it. Finally, she incorporated the image as the hand of the Holy Spirit, assenting at last to a design decision that had not been her own. As Eva put it, forms exist inside pieces of wood, waiting to be unlocked. And if such processes predate the process of creation, a completed work begins a journey of its own, one in which its maker may play little role at all, a topic to which I will return below in discussing the artworks in relation to touch and place.

Both Ian Hodder (2012, 8–14) and Tim Ingold (2013, 85–6) draw on the writings of Martin Heidegger to warn against reducing things to mere records of their own creation. In Heidegger’s terms, things are meant to be interacted with, (re)interpreted, reacted to. Yet as material goods, they always run the risk of becoming relegated to the status of *objects*, closed and fixed in meaning. Whereas the close examination of these artworks as objects would serve to document their makers’ artistry, allowing the artworks to strike us as ideas accords them the dignity of things, the agency to change our minds or influence our perceptions, the ability—in Hodder’s terms—to become entangled in our lives.

What, then, is the work that these artworks perform on the level of ideas or by their very existence in the world? Sometimes, as in the works of Eva Ryyänen and Algimantas Sakalauskas, the artworks are understood to perform tasks on a cosmic level completely independent of human beings. Eva’s church allows trees to witness and praise their Creator regardless of whether or not humans take note. Her church stands empty of humans for much of the year, yet it continues to offer or encapsulate praise nonetheless. So, too, Algimantas’s sculptures transact energy flows regardless of whether or not human onlookers understand or appreciate the process. Perhaps this is the kind of autonomy that Phillip’s dying client expected of the dragon bed she commissioned: its images would protect her, or at least accompany her, in her difficult final struggle with cancer.

More often, however, the artists whom I interviewed spoke of their artworks performing tasks on a rhetorical level—making an argument on a visual plane for a particular understanding of the divine and seeking to convince viewers of the validity of that understanding. Sister Lydia described her art as a form of preaching, and Lars said much the same thing about the installation he designed to tour Swedish churches. Sister Lydia's *Mary Magdalen* makes an argument for the saint as an empowered and joyful Apostle, just as her Virgin Mary makes the case for Mary as a dignified and authoritative disciple. Lars's depiction of an amicable meeting between the Sámi goddesses and the Christian Eucharist makes an argument for the validity of both Sámi and Christian imaginings of the divine.

Such preaching, of course, runs its risks. In many ways, the artists I survey here are creative and unconventional thinkers. Yet their access to commissions and approval by customers often depend on their ability to appear conventional, that is, to meet the standards and expectations that the marketing and sale of religious objects requires. As Colleen McDannell suggests, religious leaders do not like irony, and they seek to fill their worship spaces with artwork that is “aesthetically pure and theologically proper” (1995, 167). Yet to judge from the artists surveyed in this study, religious artists often show no such aversion toward irony: they find ways to build in ambiguity or ambivalence or duality right and left, simultaneously meeting and subverting their clients' expectations at every turn.

It may be tempting to imagine such tendencies as a characteristic of our post-modern era, but time and time again, religious art from earlier eras shows similar tendencies, as my brief surveys of past artistic traditions here have shown. Just consider the ambiguities, the ironies, of depicting Sigurðr the dragon slayer on a stave-church portal (see Figure I.5 in the introduction), of a Christ emaciated and in pain (see Figure I.2), or of a Saint Anna handing the baby Jesus an apple (see Figure I.6). Understanding a propensity toward irony and ambivalence in the artworks produced by artists today can help prepare us to recognize ironies or ambivalences in past works as well, as illustrated by Figure C.2, a small panel within a large altarpiece that once stood in the church of Törnevalle, in Östergötland, Sweden. The panel depicts the unhappy Day of Judgment for the sinful, who are being ushered in chains into the jaws of Hell. The idea of depicting the entrance of Hell as the jaws of a carnivorous beast was widespread in art of the fifteenth century (Schmidt 1995). From a vantage point distant from the altarpiece itself, it is easy to recognize some of the most prominent of the damned as wearing royal crowns, a bishop's mitre, and a papal tiara. The fact that the figures are wearing no other clothes seems only to underscore the intent of this depiction as a message of warning to the men who hold such stations of power. This is, like the jaws and the demons of the panel,



Figure C.2. Detail, late-fifteenth-century Törnevalla altarpiece, Östergötland, Sweden, now conserved at the Swedish Historical Museum. Demons usher the sinful into the jaws of Hell. While most of the royal and clerical figures face frontward, the back of a tonsured monk's head can be seen behind them, paralleling the stance of a cleric saying mass. Anonymous (Swedish, probably from Östergötland). *Hell Mouth* (second half of fifteenth century). Wood, paint, gilding; total altarpiece 173 × 204 cm. Stockholm, Sweden.

a standard part of the way this scene is presented in paintings as well as sculptures. But behind these sinners, a person standing close to the panel—as, for example, a priest saying mass—would be able to notice a further, more subtle clerical figure. A proximate viewer would notice the tonsured head of a monk facing away from the congregation, that is, facing in exactly the same direction as the priest while saying mass. Perhaps the monk's head is a warning or an inside joke for the amusement and edification of the cleric whose eyes are wandering when they should be focused on the sacred symbols of the sacrifice at his hands. Or perhaps the tonsured head is a sly reminder of the fact that both professions—image-maker and cleric—traffic at times in appearances and are involved in making a meaningful show for others'

benefit. Artistic representation always involves some fabrication and falsity, as every woodworker knows, and perhaps a cognizance of the hubris of trying to counterfeit the divine leads to such an ambivalence in any thinking artist.

But often the work accomplished by artworks—present or past—is less imposing, less dogmatic. Artworks can delight or intrigue their viewers, stimulating their senses, creating positive emotions that can then be associated with, or transferred to, a viewer's understandings of God or the cosmos or the nation or oneself. The serenity of Lars's Sámi deities, the reassuring smiles of Sister Lydia's Jesus or angels, the complex tension of movement and stasis, symmetry and disorder embodied in the undulating figures of Phillip's carvings all offer messages that a viewer can receive at a very primal level. Algimantas suggested that his artwork has its effects regardless of whether his viewers are conscious of them. And Eva savored the comment that her first show in Helsinki elicited when compared with the alienating modern art on display at another gallery, a comment that she later often quoted: "There you grow ill, here you can heal."

While operating on these subtle levels, the artworks described in this study, it is clear, often also carry out very concrete tasks of instruction or demarcation or acknowledgment. Algimantas's shrines help communities define their civic identities. In the days before the fall of the Soviet Union, his monuments bore witness to historical atrocities that had gone unacknowledged in Soviet society. Phillip's and Else's carvings help Norwegian Americans display their Norwegian heritage, be it in the Nordic-filled Upper Midwest or the culturally and religiously diverse West Coast. Commissioning and installing artworks can be a way that a community or congregation comes together, an instance of collective decision-making that can lead to a greater sense of ownership and belonging. Sometimes this process can take on powerful symbolic or philosophical dimensions, as when one Pentecostal congregation that hired Sister Lydia was confronted and challenged by her offer to make them a crucifix. The resulting image of a suffering Christ was powerfully effective for the community: whereas a Catholic viewer might think little of such a commonplace piece of iconography, Sister Lydia's clients, she reported, were moved by the intensity and the anguish that had brought them salvation, a point captured and expressed in the artwork. Eva, ever conscious of the effects of her works, preferred to offer her clients uplifting and reassuring images of angels and joy.

On still another level, the artworks accomplish tasks of expressing the taste and identities of those who choose to purchase or display them (Bourdieu 1979). In a world of mass-produced and often standardized commodities, the handmade artwork stands out not as humble and improvised (as perhaps in the past) but as authored, artisanal, and intentional. It conveys to a viewer the assertion that the owner or

commissioner of a work has refined and educated tastes, ones well informed about heritage and history and human experience. An owner is a connoisseur and has sufficient wealth to purchase such a work, or the discipline to use one's available income in ways that display and exercise that superior knowledge. And to the extent that religious art has become standardized—as McDannell describes in her exploration of *l'art de Saint-Sulpice*, or as Olalquiaga has described in her broader examination of kitsch—the works of this study provide a striking antidote, offering an interpretation of the sacred that is ethnically specific, historically situated, and artistically distinctive, even when employing motifs that are well known from the past. People who build a stave church in the semiarid landscape of Thousand Oaks, California, make a very different statement about their beliefs and identities than people who build a low-slung church of glass and concrete. As Phillip says, "You can have a lot of things in your living room, but if you've got a mantel that's been hand-carved with dragons or acanthus, that's what your guests are going to ask about." Artworks can be crafted and deployed to accomplish such work, to make statements about the tastes, as well as the outlooks, of their owners.

TOUCH

As is evident from the title of this study, sculptures do not communicate with their audiences via visual channels alone, however privileged those channels are in modern art and the digital world. Crucially, the sense of touch is of central importance. In their physicality and presence, sculptures reach out to those who come into contact with them, inviting tactile exploration: touching, probing, tracing, stroking. Touch helps reveal the artistry and the artificiality of the sculpture, informing or reassuring the toucher that the object is not flesh or fabric or marble or metal but actually wood. And touch works in two directions: not only does a person receive tactile or bodily messages from contact with a sculpture, but the sculpture, too, is affected by the encounter: changed by the warmth or oils of the person's skin, the saliva of the person's kiss, the brass buttons of the person's clothes, even the breath of the person's close scrutiny. Such touch-related responses to art are ancient and frequent, as anyone who has beheld the shining foot or nose of a much-rubbed brass sculpture will recognize. Humans rub things to convey appreciation, appeal for help, or communicate. Often, of course, such rubbing is simply an inevitable part of daily use, as one can see in the well-worn lintels of Norwegian farmhouses preserved alongside the Gol stave church in Norway's Norsk Folkemuseum.

At certain times in Nordic-Baltic history, of course, human contacts with religious sculptures have turned hostile, even violent: sculptures have been hacked to

pieces, fragments of gold foil have been chipped off for use as remedies, sculptural features deemed unsightly, outdated, or theologically unsuited have been filed down or carved off. It is understandable that many ancient wooden sculptures today are conserved in museum environments where the recourse to touch—the *resource* of touch—is firmly and vigorously thwarted.

In the art world of Sámi *duodji*, objects that once played humble roles—milk pans, belt knives, tools of wood, leather, and bone—sometimes become so valuable because of the workmanship and reputation of their makers that the people who come to own them may refrain from actually using them for the work for which they were created. Lars Levi Sunna's shamanic drums (see the cover illustration of this study), leather-clad portals (see Figure 4.6), and decorated organs (see Figure 4.5) reengage use and touch in powerful ways. A drum or an organ may be an art object, but it is also an implement for making music, and it can only be fully appreciated when handled or struck. Where many a modern Sámi knife sits unused in a glass display case, Lars Levi Sunna's organ receives weekly, even daily, use.

The replication of past sculptures that gave work and training to Phillip Odden and Else Bigton reflects at its core a desire to reinsert sculptures of the past into the wear and tear of the present. Where an ancient portal may be kept preserved under constant conditions of light, humidity, and temperature in a museum, a stave-church replica, a *kubbestol* (see Figure 2.5), a mantel, or a bed returns sculptures to the arena of the everyday, where people can experience them as intimate parts of their daily lives or as significant components of their experience of special moments, such as weddings, anniversaries, or even death. The portals and mantelpieces created by Phillip Odden, Else Bigton, and Lars Levi Sunna all presume and plan for touch, as a user grips a handle or brushes against a door while entering or leaving a church, a church replica, or a movie theater. And, as mentioned, even a momentary encounter will affect not only the user of the art but the artwork itself, changing its chemistry, its reactions to the elements, and the subsequent (im)permeability of its surfaces in the future.

In planning for users' tactile experience, Sister Lydia rubbed her works (see Figure 3.1) with a rich combination of beeswax and linseed oil that gave her figures a warm and friendly feel, that feel that one can sometimes sense in a well-used ("distressed") piece of furniture or a penny that's worn and smoothed by the fingers of countless handlers. At Storkyrka, church authorities have recognized the value of the tactile, placing Sister Lydia's Christ (see Figure 3.5), and often also her two angels (see Figure 3.4), in places beside aisles or entries where passersby can interact with them through touch in a fashion not permitted for most other sculptures in the cathedral. Touch is embraced as an authentic and advantageous response to art.

Algimantas Sakalauskas and Eva Ryyänen employed coatings on their wood surfaces to seal and preserve the wood and to allow its grain to show through. But use and weather gradually rub these away, and little by little, a well-sanded and glistening surface becomes grainy and rough, adding new dimensions to the tactile experience. The pews of Eva Ryyänen's church (see Figure 1.3) remind a viewer that they have been sat on over and over again in the years since their initial installation. Algimantas's outdoor *Dainų Karalius* (see Figure 5.4) displays a weathered, open grain that reminds its viewers that the sculpture has stood outside for years, enduring spring rains, summer sun and heat, and the cold and snow of fall and winter. One of the exciting aspects of art installations like the one in which this sculpture stands is that they represent a return to this once-obvious acceptance of natural decay, a reestablishment of wooden sculptures in environments that will eventually cause them to dwindle and disappear and to be eventually replaced by new sculptures and new artists' visions. Like the ancient sculpture discovered in the closing chapter of *Ragnars saga Loðbrókar*, quoted in chapter 2 on Phillip Odden and Else Bigton, or "Grimnismál's" sympathetic words concerning the gnawing of deer, serpents, and rot experienced by the world tree Yggdrasill, quoted in chapter 1 on Eva Ryyänen, the human viewer of decaying sculptures can take stock of the mortality of all things, the brevity of earthly existence, evidenced in the dry, rough, mossy, or slimy surfaces of weathered wood. In such embodiment of decay—of aging and frailty and inevitable distortion—the wooden sculptures of this study promise to remind their viewers eventually as much of mortality as of eternity. As such, they hold a powerful significance in any spiritual or religious contemplation.

TIME AND PLACE

As the above discussion indicates, the artworks described in this study are not merely ideas: they take up concrete space, permanently or temporarily, making their mark on their environs in the measurable dimensions of time and place. By reestablishing a relationship of continuity with the past, the artworks fold time back on itself, allowing past moments to become renewed in the here and now. Likewise, the artworks can help denote or achieve the sacrality of a space, be it a church or crossroads or museum. These are difficult and mystical feats, ones that have much to do with what Mircea Eliade (1957) described as the cultural differentiation of the sacred from the profane. The carvings presented here, and the act of carving or placing them, become understandable as ritual acts.

Religious sculptures tend to intervene in and refigure the spaces in which they are placed. Such is well illustrated by the celebrated altarpiece of the Oslo

Cathedral, a portion of which is depicted in Figure C.3. The cathedral was completed in 1697 as a self-consciously *national* cathedral, although a Dutch master was hired to undertake a suitably Protestant altarpiece, depicting the Last Supper. In the end, the master seems not to have brought his work to completion, and the present work appears the product of various artists, most notably the Norwegian carver Lars Sivertsen (Sandvik 1971; Stein 2001). The altarpiece calls attention to the sacrifice of the Eucharist reenacted in front of it, as Christ and his Apostles are shown feasting on the Passover lamb, a distracted Judas clutching his money bag and looking out conspiratorially at the congregation. The altarpiece calls attention to the sacred time enacted in the church service, during which the Last Supper is ritually relived in the presence of here-and-now witnesses. Aiding in the sacred task of depicting the sacred could be a meaningful act in itself: while the main corpus of the altarpiece depicts the biblical event, the carved vine scroll of its wings feature the coats of arms of the wealthy widow who paid for the piece, Kirsten Toller, acknowledging her munificence at every glance. And all such acts are always subject to later rejection or alteration: the original prominent noses of Christ and the Apostles, designed by a Dutch master perhaps to suggest Jewish physiognomy, were cosmetically altered after a clerical inspection of 1839 found them too unsightly and distracting (Stein 2001, 13). The process seems to have been repeated sometime between 1950 and 1971, to judge by archival photographs, as Christ and his Apostles became equipped with ever straighter and more elegant noses (Stein 2001, 15). At the same time, Christ's halo was removed (Stein 2001, 13). Falling victim to liturgical and theological shifts in perspectives, the altarpiece was consigned to the cathedral's choir loft in 1850 and was not placed on display again until it was included in the Norsk Folkemuseum's 1901 exhibit of church art, where it was reinscribed as historical evidence. In 1903 it was transferred to the Norwegian National Museum of Art, Architecture, and Design, where it remained until 1925. Between 1944 and 1950 it was displayed in two other churches of the Oslo and Oppland areas. Its return to the Oslo Cathedral in 1950 was a twentieth-century development, part of the spirit of antiquarian restoration that may or may not reflect the kinds of spiritual viewpoints attached to the modern sculptures discussed in this study. In its content as well as its various placements, then, the altarpiece engages with changing ideas of the sacred and the profane.

While the histories of the artworks described in this study are shorter than that of their medieval or Reformation-era predecessors, these pieces partake nonetheless of this same important refiguring of the spaces in which they are placed. When the site of a Lithuanian battle or Soviet injustice is marked by crosses, the ability of viewers to forget, willingly or unwillingly, is reduced. When images of Sámi god-



Figure C.3. Detail of Last Supper, main altarpiece, Oslo Cathedral. Depictions of the first Eucharist became prominent parts of altar iconography after the Reformation. Multiple anonymous artists (Dutch and Norwegian, late seventeenth century). *Altarpiece* (ca. 1700). Wood, metal, gilding, paint, rope; 557 × 150 × 823 cm. Oslo, Norway.

desses are brought into a Christian church, they problematize the exclusion that banished them in the past. When a set of sculptures lovingly present the narrative of the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus in a church full of historically significant but culturally remote artifacts, they reassert the essence of that church as a place of Christian worship.

Some places are more consequential than others, and place is both concrete and symbolic. A church is a physical assembly hall, but it is also a microcosm of heaven. A crossroads is the meeting of two thoroughfares, but it is also the nexus of a village

community. A museum is a warehouse with display cases, but it is also a visual essay on the history of a people or culture. A living room is a place where people “live,” but it is also a place of self-conscious display of identity and heritage and merit. Situating an artwork in such a place can often reshape that place, while the place itself may condition or affect the ways in which viewers regard the piece of art itself.

The art discussed in this book is often deployed in such potent symbolic places with the specific intent to convince or remind viewers of certain points. Sister Lydia’s Kalmar church altarpiece seeks to recapture the space of the altar for a religious experience that is both medieval and modern and fervently believing—banishing the museological tendencies that would keep this sacred space as wholly art historical rather than as simply holy. Phillip Odden’s stave-church portal seeks to transform Thousand Oaks, California, into the site of the first, and perhaps the only, stave church west of the Rocky Mountains, a goal of great importance to the leaders of the Scandinavian American Cultural and Historical Foundation. Likewise, Lars means his installation to enter and colonize the Christian worship space in a concerted and conscious response to the ways in which earlier proponents of Christianity invaded and colonized a Sámi worldview. Algimantas means his shrines to reenchant a Lithuanian landscape stripped of its ancient monuments by a rapacious atheist state intent on universal adherence to its philosophy of materialism. None of the artworks in my study have any real say in what happens to them, however: they are the pawns of the people and communities that control the places in which they are placed, and they are subjected to processes of decay or decline or obsolescence that attend all creations of the physical world.

NATION AND BELIEF

Scholars of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have become convinced of the validity of Benedict Anderson’s portrayal of nations as “imagined communities” (2006). The notion of nation, Anderson argues, develops late in history, as a product of social and technological innovations. For most of the artists in this study, however, nation is no mere abstraction. Just like their sculptures, and the dimensions of time and place, to them nation is concrete and tangible, constituted unmistakably in specific historical events, locales, and bodies. It is as plain and obvious as the *maa* that Eva invokes: a single word that designates both “earth” and “country.” Algimantas has no difficulty in identifying what it means to be Lithuanian, and Lars shows no hesitation in defining what it means to be Sámi. Sister Lydia belongs consciously to the nation of Sweden and to the broader polity of Christians, but her Christianity is emphatically articulated as Swedish in essence, even if her order found inspiration



Figure C.4. Stave-church replica. The 1893 “Norway Building” as displayed in Little Norway, Blue Mounds, Wisconsin, before its return to Norway in 2015. Peder O. Kvaale et al. (Norwegian, late nineteenth century). *Stave-church Replica* (1893). Wood, metal, glass, linoleum. Ordkal, Norway.

for its work in an icon in Trieste, Italy. When Phillip notes that schools like the one he attended in Norway aimed at teaching Norwegians how to be Norwegian, he does not mean, I think, that the schools simply confected a Norwegian identity out of nothing; rather, he describes a process of recognizing those aspects of traditional Norwegian life that are unique and emblematic, parts of an age-old Norwegian daily life that were so taken for granted that they were hardly noticed and thus were in danger of being forgotten or replaced.

The notion of confidence in the existence of the nation was evident to me as I talked in 2015 with Scott Winner, the last director of Little Norway, in Blue Mounds, Wisconsin, as he prepared to send the celebrated stave-church replica, the “Norway building” of the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair, back to Norway (figure C.4). For Scott, as for many of the artists of this study, the linkage between a country, its people, its

sense of the sacred, and its artistic expressions is clear. When the founder of Little Norway, Isak Dahle, passed away in 1937, his nephew Asher Hobson, a professor and chair of agricultural economics at the University of Wisconsin, took over and ran the museum as a hobby. Scott Winner, Hobson's grandson, took over as manager as a young man and ran the museum for some thirty-one years. The museum had its glory days, including visits from both King Olav V and King Harald V. Scott recalls that King Harald said the museum was "a lovely little piece of Norway in the middle of Wisconsin." Scott also remembers climbing up on the steep roof of the church in his childhood, tasked with painting its gable dragons.

The stave church has now returned to Norway, though as Scott notes, it is not so much as a Norwegian as a Norwegian American. In Orkdal, Norway, the place where it was originally created, it will be used to comment on the Norwegian migration to North America and Norwegians' enduring relationship with their Norwegian heritage. Nowhere in this story do we find indications of the nation as somehow imagined or confected. The existence of Norway, the connection of Norwegians to a Norwegian heritage, and even the ability of Norwegian Americans to create on a distant continent "a lovely little piece of Norway" is taken for granted.

In returning to my introduction to this book—both in terms of my description of Northern Europe as a place and in my use of Benedict Anderson's ideas in my formulation of "imagined continuities"—it seems to me that perhaps this very security of nationhood and of continuity is somehow a characteristic of Northern European cultures. It is found not only in long-standing and undisputed national groups of the region but also in communities whose nationhood has been periodically denied, as among Norwegians, Sámi, and Lithuanians. Such can be seen, perhaps, as an achievement of the nation-state ideology that transformed the map of Europe in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries or of the spread and acceptance of the late-eighteenth-century philosophy of national identity associated with Johann Gottfried von Herder and his followers, a philosophy that got its start, after all, on the eastern shores of the Baltic. Not only are these artists certain of their nationhood, they also view their art as directly related to or illustrative of that sense of nation. They consciously believe that part of the value of their artworks, and part of their personal interest in making such art, lies in the way the works express or demonstrate a sense of the national.

If nation is by and large clear to these artists, it is probably safe to say that belief is more nebulous to them. What one believes—consciously or unconsciously, fully or halfheartedly, overtly or covertly—is seldom perfectly consistent or clear-cut. People tend to adhere to differing beliefs in different segments of their lives, and

apart from formal religious, like Sister Lydia, it is probable that most of the people whom I interviewed are comfortable with some degree of multiplicity in their conscious beliefs.

But this variability does not mean that belief is somehow an abstraction for them, something beside the point or of little consequence. They do not view themselves as engaged in making frivolous or inconsequential items. Instead, they grapple with complex amalgamations of history and place and nation and meaning, distilling them into works at once deeply personal and outwardly oriented, communications about things sacred and important. Belief, scholars of religion tell us, is a matter of volition, of conscious choice. It is both personal and communal, intricately entwined with issues of politics, society, and culture.

I suggest that the artists of this study—like their predecessors whose works and ideas they uncover, cover, rediscover, recover, or discover—think about their beliefs not simply through abstract contemplation but, as Tim Ingold and Ian Hodder suggest in their studies, through the act of making their art. They gain their insights by crafting their sculptures, or, as Algimantas put it in explaining the etymology of belief, by *tik ejėmas* (just walking) through life. Their artworks thus come not only to reflect but also to constitute and shape their understandings of the cosmos and the place of human beings and trees in it. That they view the cosmos as profoundly meaningful is clear in their art, and that they wish to share it with others is evident in their production and promotion of the sculptures they make. They encode and encapsulate in their works an understanding of the seen and unseen, the known and the mysterious, the natural and the supernatural—rendered tangible and visible, and sacred to the touch.

Works Cited

- Abrahams, R. 1993. "Fantom of Romantic Nationalism in Folkloristics." *Journal of American Folklore* 106, no. 419, 3–37.
- Acerbi, Giuseppe. 1802. *Travels through Sweden, Finland, and Lapland, to the North Cape in the Years 1798 and 1799*. London: Printed for Joseph Mawman, in the Poultry.
- Ahlbäck, Tore. 1987. "Saami Religion." Based on papers read at the Symposium on Saami Religion, Åbo, Finland, August 16–18, 1984. Turku, Finland: The Donner Institute for Research in Religious and Cultural History.
- Ahlbäck, Tore, and Jan Bergman. 1991. "The Saami Shaman Drum." Based on papers read at the Symposium on the Saami Shaman Drum, Åbo, Finland, August 19–20, 1988. Turku, Finland: Donner Institute for Research in Religious and Cultural History.
- Anderson, Benedict. 2006. *Imagined Communities*. London: Verso.
- Andrén, Anders. 2014. *Tracing Old Norse Cosmology: The World Tree, Middle Earth, and the Sun in Archaeological Perspectives*. Lund, Sweden: Nordic Academic Press.
- Andreson, Krista. 2010. "Das Kruzifix in der Kirche von Klein St. Johannis/Kolga Jaani. Über Kontakte Livlands mit dem Rheinland in der ersten Hälfte des 14. Jahrhunderts." *Baltic Journal of Art History*, 139–70.
- "Annales Laurissenses maiores." 2014. In *Annales Regni Francorum*. The Latin Library. Medieval Latin retrieved July 3, 2014, from www.thelatinlibrary.com/annales-regnifrancorum.html.
- Anttonen, Veikko. 1996a. "Erä- ja Metsänluonnon Pyhyys." In *Metsä ja Metsänviljaa*, by P. Laaksonen and S.-L. Mettomäki, Kalevalaseuran Vuosikirja, 24–35. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura.
- . 1996b. *Ihmisen ja Maan Rajat: "Pyhä" Kulttuurisena Kategoriana*. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura.

- Appadurai, Arjan, ed. 1982. *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Armalas, Vilius, and Stasė Bernotienė. 1993. *Lietuvių Liaudies Menas I*. Vilnius, Lithuania: Vaga.
- Artek. 2009. Artek corporate website. Retrieved January 5, 2009, from www.artek.fi/en/index.html.
- Asad, Talal. 1993. *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Bäckman, Louise. 1975. *Sájva: Föreställningar om Hjälp-och Skyddsväsen i Heliga Fjäll Bland Samerna*. Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell.
- . 1984. "The Akkas: A Study of Four Goddesses in the Religion of the Saamis (Lapps)." In *Current Progress in the Methodology of the Science of Religions*, by W. Tyloch, 31–39. Warsaw: Polish Scientific Publishers.
- Balzer, Marjorie M. 1999. *The Tenacity of Ethnicity: A Siberian Saga in Global Perspective*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Bendix, Regina. 1997. *In Search of Authenticity: The Formation of Folklore Studies*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Bendix, Regina F., A. Eggert, and A. Peselmann. 2012. *Heritage Regimes and the State*. Göttingen, Germany: Universitätsverlag Göttingen.
- Benjamin, Walter. 1969. *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*. New York: Schocken Books.
- Bergman, Ingela, Lars Östlund, et al. 2004. "The Use of Plants as Regular Food in Ancient Subarctic Economies: A Case Study Based on Sami Use of Scots Pine Innerbark." *Arctic Anthropology* 41, no. 1, 1–13.
- Beskow, Per, and Annette Landen, eds. 2003. *Birgitta av Vadstena: Pilgrim och Profet 1303–1373*. Stockholm: Natur och Kultur.
- Bier, Justus. 1982. *Tilman Riemenschneider: His Life and Work*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky.
- Biezais, Haralds. 1954. *Die Religionsquellen der Baltischen Völker und die Ergebnisse der Bisherigen Forschungen*. Uppsala, Sweden: Arv.
- Billig, Michael. 1995. *Banal Nationalism*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Blain, Jenny. 2001. *Nine Worlds of Seid-Magic: Ecstasy and Neo-Shamanism in North European Paganism*. London: Routledge.
- Borovsky, Zoe, ed. 2017. *Ragnars saga Loðbrókar*. Netútgágan Snerpa. Retrieved March 14, 2017, from www.snerpa.is/net/forn/ragnar.htm.
- Boström, Patrik. 2008. "Från Tro till Renskötsel." *Norrländska Socialdemokraten*, December 3. Retrieved June 15, 2014, from www.nsd.se/NYHETER/ARTIKEL.ASPX?ArticleID=4225010.
- Boström, Ulf. 1998. "Lars Levi Sunna." In *Från Bygd til Vildmark 1997–98*, Luleå Stifts Årbok, 75–81. Luleå, Sweden: Luleå Stift.

- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1979. *La Distinction: Critique Sociale du Jugement*. Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit.
- Bremen, Adam O. 2002. *History of the Archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen*. Edited and translated by F. J. Tschan. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Brenneman, Walter. L., Stanley O. Yarian, and Alan M. Olson. 1982. *The Seeing Eye: Hermeneutical Phenomenology in the Study of Religion*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Bringingéus, Nils-A. 1981. *Bildlore: Studiet av Folkliga Bildbudskap*. Stockholm: Gidlunds.
- Broadbent, Noel D. 2010. *Lapps and Labyrinths: Saami Prehistory, Colonization and Cultural Resistance*. Washington, DC: Arctic Studies Center and Smithsonian Institution Scholarly Press.
- Bronner, Simon. 2002. *Folk Nation: Folklore in the Creation of American Tradition*. Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources.
- Brown, Bill. 2003. *A Sense of Things: The Object Matter of American Literature*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Brown, Peter. 1981. *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Brundage, James A. 1961. *The Chronicle of Henry of Livonia*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Bynum, Caroline W. 1982. *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- . 2007. *Wonderful Blood: Theology and Practice in Late Medieval Northern Germany and Beyond*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Camille, Michael. 1992. *Image on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Carruthers, Mary. 1990. *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chapel in the Hills. 2014. "Chapel in the Hills." Retrieved June 10, 2016, from www.chapel-in-the-hills.org.
- Christiansen, Eric. 1980. *The Northern Crusades: The Baltic and the Catholic Frontier 1100–1525*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Cocchiara, Giuseppe. 1981. *The History of Folklore in Europe*. Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues.
- Correll, Timothy Corrigan. 2014. "Productos Latinos: Latino Business Murals, Symbolism, and the Social Enactment of Identity in Greater Los Angeles." *Journal of American Folklore* 127, no. 505, 285–320.
- Deetz, James. 1977. *In Small Things Forgotten: An Archaeology of Early American Life*. New York: Random House.
- Derry, T. K. 2000. *History of Scandinavia: Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, and Iceland*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

- DuBois, Thomas A. 2005. "I'm a Lumberjack and I'm Okay . . .": Popular Film as Collective Therapy in Markku Pölönen's *Kuningasjätkä* (1998). In *Transnational Cinema in a Global North: Nordic Cinema in Transition*, by A. Nestingen and T. G. Elkington, 243–60. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.
- . 2008. "Saint Katarina in Her Own Light." In *Sanctity in the North: Saints, Lives, and Cults in Medieval Scandinavia*, by Thomas A. Dubois, 271–303. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- . 2012a. "Diet and Deities: Contrastive Livelihoods and Animal Symbolism in Nordic Pre-Christian Religions." In *More than Mythology: Narratives, Ritual Practices, and Regional Distribution in Pre-Christian Scandinavian Religions*, by C. Raudvere and J. P. Schjødt, 65–96. Lund, Sweden: Nordic Academic Press.
- . 2012b. "Lars Levi Sunna: Crafting a Sámi Presence in the Swedish State Church." *Temenos* 48, no. 2, 131–54.
- . 2013. "Ethnomemory: Ethnographic and Culture-Centered Approaches to the Study of Memory." *Scandinavian Studies* 85, no. 3, 306–31.
- . 2015. "Stave Church Fever." Paper presented at 33rd Nordic Ethnology and Folklore Conference, Copenhagen University, Denmark, August 18–21.
- Dundulienė, Pranė. 1990. *Senovės Lietuvių Mitologija ir Religija*. Vilnius, Lithuania: Mokslas.
- Dusburg, Petrus von. 1984. *Peter von Dusburg: Chronik des Preussenlandes (Chronicle of Prussia)*. Darmstadt, Germany: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.
- Eaton, Allen. 1932. *Folk Arts: Immigrant Gifts to American Life: Some Experiments in Appreciation of Our Foreign Born Citizens to American Culture*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Eimer, Gerhard. 1985. *Bernt Notke: Das Wirken eines Niederdeutschen Künstlers im Ostseeraum*. Bonn: Kulturstiftung der Deutschen Vertriebenen.
- Eliade, Mercea. 1957. *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*. New York: Harcourt.
- Elkins, James, and Davide Morgan. 2009. *Re-Enchantment*. London: Routledge.
- Engvall, Urban. 2007. "Kulturpris till Lars Levi Sunna." Retrieved November 30, 2007, from www.svenskakyrkan.se/default.aspx?di=65625.
- Forest.fi. 2009. "Forest Industry." Retrieved January 5, 2009, from www.forest.fi/.
- Forsyth, Ilene H. 1972. *The Theme of Wisdom: Wood Sculptures of the Madonna in Romanesque France*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- France, James. 1992. *The Cistercians in Scandinavia*. Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications.
- Frykman, Jonas, and Orvar Löfgren. 1987. *Culture Builders: A Historical Anthropology of Middle-Class Life*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Fuglesang, Signe Horn. 2004. "Christian Reliquaries and Pagan Idols." In *Images of*

- Cult and Devotion: Function and Reception of Christian Images in Medieval and Post-Medieval Europe*, by S. Kaspersen, 7–32. Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press.
- Gaski, Harald, and Aage Solbakk, eds. 2003. *Jodi Lea Buoret go Oru: Sátnevdájasat (Migrating Is Better than Dwelling: Proverbs)*. Karasjok, Norway: ČálliidLágádus.
- Gauchet, Marcel. 1997. *The Disenchantment of the World: A Political History of Religion*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Gaynor, Elizabeth. 1984. *Finland: Living Design*. New York: Rizzoli Ex Libris.
- Germundsson, Tomas. 2008. “The South of the North: Images of an (Un)Swedish Landscape.” In *Nordic Landscapes: Region and Belonging on the Northern Edge of Europe*, by M. Jones and K. R. Olwig, 157–91. Chicago: Center for American Places.
- Giddens, Anthony. 1991. *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- . 2007. *Europe in the Global Age*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Gilmore, Janet C., and James P. Leary. 1986. “Phillip ODDEN and Else BIGTON. Unpublished fieldwork and interview notes, shared by authors.
- Gimbutas (Gimbutienė), Marija. 1958. *Ancient Symbolism in Lithuanian Folk Art*. Philadelphia: American Folklore Society.
- Glassie, Henry. 1968. *Pattern in the Material Folk Culture of the Eastern United States*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- . 1999. *Material Culture*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- . 2014. “Text and Icon in Religious Art.” 2014 Don Yoder address to the Folk Belief and Religious Folklife Section of the American Folklore Society, Santa Fe, NM.
- Goertzen, Christopher. 1997. *Fiddling for Norway: Revival and Identity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Gordon, Beverly. 1990. “Layered and Coded Messages: The Power of Lithuanian Figurative Sculpture.” In *Sacred Wood: The Contemporary Lithuanian Woodcarving Revival*, by R. T. Saliklis, 8–12. Madison: Elvehjem Museum of Art, University of Wisconsin.
- Gradén, Lizette, and Peter Aronsson, eds. 2013. *Performing Nordic Heritage: Everyday Practices and Institutional Culture*. New York: Routledge.
- Greenberg, Clement. 1939. “Avant-Garde and Kitsch.” *Partisan Review* 6 (Fall): 34–49.
- Greenwold, Diana. 2014. “‘The Great Palace of American Civilization’: Allen Eaton’s *Arts and Crafts of the Homelands*, 1919–1932.” *Contemporaneity: Historical Presence in Visual Culture* 3, no. 1, 98–116.
- Gregory the Great. 1982. *S. Gregorii Magni Registrum Epistolarum*. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols.
- Gripenstad, Georg. 1990. *Kautokeino 1852: Några Tidsdokument (Kautokeino 1852: Some Historical Documents)*. Luleå, Sweden: Tornedalica.

- Hagberg, Johnny, ed. 2003. *Heliga Birgitta och Västergötland*. Skara, Sweden: Lidköpings Tryckeri AB.
- Hahn, Cynthia. 2001. *Narrative Effect in Pictorial Lives of Saints from the Tenth through the Thirteenth Century*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Härdelin, Alf, and Mereth Lindgren, eds. 1993. *Heliga Birgitta—Budskapet oc Förebilden: Föredrag vid Jubileumssymposiet in Vadstena 3–7 Oktober 1991*. Stockholm: Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien.
- Heikinheimo, I. 1934. "Savolais-tyttö Herättää Huomiota Kuvanveistäjänä." *Suomen Kuvalehti* 50: 1524–25.
- Henrysson, Sten. 1993. "Samernas Kristnande och Undervisning." In *Samer, Präster och Skolmästare*, by Sten Henrysson, Anita Alm, Tuuli Forsgren, and Egil Johansson, 1–30. Umeå, Sweden: Center for Arctic Cultural Research, Umeå University.
- Hiekkänen, Marcus. 2003. *Suomen Kivikirjot Keskiajalla*. Helsinki: Otava.
- Hobsbawm, Eric J. 2012. *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, and Reality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hobsbawm, Eric, and Terence Ranger. 1983. *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hodder, Ian. 2012. *Entangled: An Archaeology of the Relationships between Humans and Things*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Holloway, Jane Bolton. 1992. *Saint Bride and Her Book: Birgitta's Swedish Revelations*. Newburyport, MA: Focus Texts.
- Holmes, Paula Elizabeth. 1999. "‘We Are Native Catholics’: Inculturation and the Tekakwitha Conference." *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 28, no. 1, 153–74.
- Hultgård, Anders. 1997. "Från Ögonvitnesskildring till Retorik: Adam av Bremens Notiser on Uppsalakulten i Religionshistorisk Belysning." In *Uppsala och Adam av Bremen*, by Anders Hultgård, 9–50. Nora, Sweden: Bokförlaget Nya Doxa.
- Ingold, Tim. 2013. *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture*. London: Routledge.
- Iregren, Elisabeth. 1989. "Under Frösö Kyrka — Ben från en Vikingatida Offerlund?" In *Arkeologi och Religion: Rapport från Arkeologidagarna 16–18 Januari 1989*, by L. Larsson and B. Wyszomirska, 119–33. Lund, Sweden: Institute of Archaeology.
- . 1999. "Vi har Hittat Yggdrasil — med Ratatosk ock Eiktyrnir!" Retrieved July 17, 2010, from www.infoartefact.se/fastaknappar/artiklar/artiklar5.html.
- Jacobs, Lynn F. 1998. *Early Netherlandish Carved Altarpieces, 1380–1550: Medieval Tastes and Mass Marketing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jacobsson, Carina. 2002. *Beställare och Finansiärer: Träskulptur från 1300-talet i Gamla Årkestiftet*. Visby, Sweden: Ödins Forlag.
- Jones, Michael, and Kenneth R. Olwig. 2008. *Nordic Landscapes: Region and Belonging on the Northern Edge of Europe*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Kala, Tiina. 2001. "The Incorporation of the Northern Baltic Lands into the Western

- Christian World." In *Crusade and Conversion on the Baltic Frontier 1150–1500*, by A. V. Murray, 3–20. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate.
- Kälund, Kr. ed. 1889–91. *Laxdæla Saga*. Copenhagen: S. L. Møllers Bogtrykkeri.
- Kan, Sergei. 1991. "Shamanism and Christianity: Modern-Day Tlingit Elders Look at the Past." *Ethnohistory* 38, no. 4, 363–87.
- Kärkkäinen, Raimo, and Pirkko Kärkkäinen. 2006. Interviewed by the author at Paateri, Lieksa, Finland, February 10, 2006.
- Karlsson, Lennart. 2005. *Kretsen kring Haaken Gulleeson*. Stockholm: Carlsson Bokförlag, in association with Hälsinglands Museum.
- Karlström, Anna. 2013. "Spirits and the Ever-Changing Heritage." *Material Religion* 9, no. 3, 395–99.
- Kasekamp, Andres. 2010. *A History of the Baltic States*. New York: Palmgrave Macmillan.
- Keenan, William, and Elisabeth Arweck. 2006. *Materializing Religion: Expression, Performance and Ritual*. London: Routledge.
- Kenaan-Kedar, Nurith. 1995. *Marginal Sculpture in Medieval France: Towards the Deciphering of an Enigmatic Pictorial Language*. Brookfield, VT: Ashgate Publishing Co.
- Kihlberg, Kurt. 1999. *Giehta Dáidu: Den Stora Boken om Samernas Slöjd (The Great Book of Sami Handicraft)*. Rosvik, Norway: Rörlagshuset Nordkalotten.
- . 2003. *Duodji-slöjdens Mästare: En Bok om den Magiska Sameslöjden (Masters of Sami Handicraft: A Book about the Magic Sami Handicraft)*. Rosvik, Norway: Förlagshuset Nordkalotten.
- Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Barbara. 1998. *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Kivi, Aleksis. 1870. *Seitsemän Veljestä*. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura.
- Klein, Barbro. 2013. "Women and the Formation of Swedish Folklife Research." *Journal of American Folklore* 126, no. 500, 120–51.
- Klimka, Libertas. 2010. "Aušros Vartai: Paguoda Sielai ir Istorinė Atmintis." Retrieved June 18, 2014, from www.klaipeda.biz/naujienos/nuomones/ausros-vartai-paguoda-sielai-ir-istorine-atmintis-183483-.U6HoSordVQJ.
- Klockars, Birgit. 1976. *Birgittas Svenska Värld*. Stockholm: Natur och Kultur.
- Kolb, Robert. 2008. *Lutheran Ecclesiastical Culture, 1550–1675*. Boston: Brill.
- Končius, Ignas. 1965. *Žemaičių Kryžiai ir Koplītėlės*. Chicago: Tėviškėlė.
- Kruse, Anette. 2003. *Roskilde Domkirke*. Roskilde, Denmark: Roskilde Domkirkes Salgsfond.
- Kuhn, H. 1983. *Edda: Die Lieder des Codex Regius Nebst Verwandten Denkmälern*. Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag.
- Kuhn, Hans, and Gustav Neckel. 1983. *Edda: Die Lieder des Codex Regius Nebst Verwandten Denkmälern*. Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag.
- Kunz, Tobias. 2007. *Skulptur Kölner Atelier der Viklau-Madonna auf Gotland und der*

- Ästhetische Wandel in der 2. Hälfte des 12. Jahrhunderts*. Fulda, Germany: Michael Imhof Verlag.
- Kuutma, Kristin. 2012. "Between Arbitration and Engineering: Concepts and Contingencies in the Shaping of Heritage Regimes." In *Heritage Regimes and the State*, by Regina F. Bendix, A. Eggert, and A. Peselmann, 21–38. Göttingen, Germany: Universitätsverlag Göttingen.
- Kvist, Roger. 1992. "Swedish Saami Policy, 1550–1990." In *Readings in Saami History, Culture and Language III*, by Roger Kvist, 63–77. Umeå, Sweden: Center for Arctic Cultural Research, Umeå University.
- Laghé, Birgitta. 2004. *Den Evangeliska Mariavägen till Enhet: En Studie av Paulina Mariadotters Spiritualitet*. Skellefteå, Sweden: Artos.
- Laininen, Margit. 1992. *Karjalan Kukki Puu: Eva Rynnänen ja Hänen Taiteensa (The Flowering Tree of Karelia: Eva Rynnänen and Her Art)*. Jyväskylä, Finland: Kirjapaja.
- Leary, James P. 1997. "Leaving Skibbereen: Exile and Ethnicity in Wisconsin Folklore." In *Wisconsin Folk Art. A Sesquicentennial Celebration*, by R. T. E. Teske, 49–64. Cedarburg, WI: Cedarburg Cultural Center.
- . 2001. *So Ole Says to Lena: Folk Humor of the Upper Midwest*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Lehtinen, Ari Akusti. 2008. "Landscapes of Domination: Living in and off the Forests in Eastern Finland." In *Nordic Landscapes: Region and Belonging on the Northern Edge of Europe*, by M. Jones and K. R. Olwig, 458–82. Chicago: Center for American Places.
- Lidén, Anne. 1999. *Olav den Helige i Medeltida Bildkonst: Legendmotiv och Attribut*. Stockholm: Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien.
- Liepe, Lena. 1995. *Den Medeltida Träskulpturen i Skåne: Produktion och Förvärv*. Lund, Sweden: Lund University Press.
- Lindgren, Mereth. 1991. *Bilden av Birgitta*. Höganäs, Sweden: Förlags AB Wiken.
- Linnankoski, Johannes. 1905. *Laulu Tulipunaisesta Kukasta*. Porvoo, Finland: Werner Söderström Osakeyhtiö.
- Löfgren, Orvar. 2012. "Material Culture." In *A Companion to Folklore* by Regina F. Bendix and G. Hasan-Rokem, 169–83. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Lundmark, Bo. 1982. *Bæi'vi Männo Nástit: Sol-och Månkult Samt Astrala och Celesta Föreställningar Bland Samerna*. Umeå, Sweden: Västerbottens läns Hembygds-förening and Västerbottens Museum.
- . 1985. "'They Consider the Sun to Be a Mother to All Living Creatures': The Sun-Cult of the Saamis." *Arv: Scandinavian Yearbook of Folklore* 41:179–88.
- Lysaght, Patricia, Håkon Jönsson, and Anna Burstedt. 2013. *The Return of Traditional Food*. Lund, Sweden: Lund University Press.
- Magesa, L. 2004. *Anatomy of Inculturation: Transforming the Church in Africa*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.

- Magliocco, Sabina. 2004. *Witching Culture: Folklore and Neo-Paganism in America*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Magnusson, Magnus, and Hermann Pálsson, trans. 1969. *Laxdæla Saga*. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin.
- Malaskaitė, Sigita. 2004. "Šv. Kazimiero Atvaizdas: Pirmavaizdis ir Kartotės." *Acta Academiae Artium Vilnensis* 35:113–22.
- Mangrum, Bryan D., and Giuseppe Scavizzi. 1998. *A Reformation Debate: Three Treatises in Translation*. Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies.
- Manker, Ernst. 1938. *Die Lappische Zaubertrommel: Eine Ethnologische Monographie I*. Stockholm: Thule.
- . 1947. *Die Svenska Fjälllapparna*. Stockholm: Svenska Turistföreningens Förlag.
- . 1950. *Die Lappische Zaubertrommel*. Stockholm: Hugo Gebers Förlag.
- Mariadotter, Clara. 1990. *Paulina Mariadotter: Herrens Redskap*. Stockholm: Mariadötrarna och Verbum Förlag.
- Matuškaitė, Marija. 2007. *Lietuvos Skulptūra iki XVII a. Vidurio*. Vilnius, Lithuania: Leidykla Aidai.
- McDannell, Colleen. 1995. *Material Christianity: Religion and Popular Culture in America*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- McEachrane, Michael E. 2014. *Afro-Nordic Landscapes: Equality and Race in Northern Europe*. London: Routledge.
- McNamer, Sarah. 2010. *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Medieval Compassion*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- McTurk, Rory. 1991. *Studies in Ragnars Saga Lodbrokar and Its Major Scandinavian Analogues*. Oxford: Society for the Study of Mediæval Languages and Literature.
- Mead, W. R. 2008. "Reflections on the Historical Landscapes of Finland." In *Nordic Landscapes: Region and Belonging on the Northern Edge of Europe*, by M. Jones and K. R. Olwig, 421–39. Chicago: Center for American Places.
- Mebius, Hans. 2003. *Bissie: Studier i Samisk Religionshistoria*. Östersund, Sweden: Berndtssons Tryckeri.
- Mehtälä, Maila. 2003. *Temppeliaukio-kirkko Suursaaresta Länteen*. Porvoo, Finland: Werner Söderström Osakeyhtiö.
- Meyer, Birgit. 2008. "Media and the Senses in the Making of Religious Experience: An Introduction." *Material Religion* 4, no. 2, 124–34.
- Meyer, Birgit, and M. de Witte. 2015. "Heritage and the Sacred: Introduction." *Material Religion* 9, no. 3, 274–80.
- Meyer, Birgit, David Morgan, Crispin Paine, and S. Brent Plate. 2010. "The Origin and Mission of Material Religion." *Religion* 40:207–11.
- Michael, Maurice. 1997. *The Annals of Jan Długosz/Annales seu Cronicae Incliti Regni Poloniae*. Chichester, UK: IM Publications.
- Michelbertas, Mykolas. 2000. "Zu den Handels- und Kulturbeziehungen der

- Bewohner Litauens mit Skandinavien in der Römischen Kaiserzeit." *Archaeologia Baltica* 4:63–70.
- Mitchell, Audra. 2014. *International Intervention in a Secular Age: Re-Enchanting Humanity?* London: Routledge.
- Mitchell, Stephen. 2014. "Continuity: Folklore's Problem Child?" In *Folklore in Old Norse — Old Norse in Folklore*, by Daniel Sävborg and Karen Bek-Pedersen, 34–51. Nordistica Tartuensis 20. Tartu, Estonia: Tartu University Press.
- Momaday, N. Scott. 1969. *The Way to Rainy Mountain*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.
- Morgan, David. 1998. *Visual Piety: A History and Theory of Popular Religious Images*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- . 2012. *The Embodied Eye: Religious Visual Culture and the Social Life of Feeling*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Morris, Bridget. 1999. *Saint Birgitta of Sweden*. Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press.
- Mugurēvičs, Ēvalds. 2000. "Die Balten im Frühen Mittelalter nach Schriftlicher Quellen." *Archaeologia Baltica* 4:71–80.
- Nelson, Marion E. 1995. *Norwegian Folk Art: The Migration of a Tradition*. New York: Abbeville Press, in association with Museum of American Folk Art and Norwegian Folk Museum.
- New York Times*. 1992. "Catholic Indians Try to Reconcile Two Traditions." August 17.
- . 2009. "Finland." Retrieved January 9, 2009, from http://travel.nytimes.com/frommers/travel/guides/europe/finland/frm_finland_0261020997.html.
- Nilsson, Bertil. 2004. "Varför just Lund? Påvedömet och Norra Europa under 1000-talet." In *Lund — Medeltida Kyrkometropol (Lund — Medieval Metropolis)*, by P.-O. Åhrén and A. Jarlert, 9–26. Lund, Sweden: Diocesan Historical Association of the Diocese of Lund. Presented at Symposium in Connection with the 900th Anniversary of the Archdiocese of Lund, April 27–28, 2003.
- Nischan, Bodo. 2004. "Becoming Protestants: Lutheran Altars or Reformed Communion Tables?" In *Worship in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Change and Continuity in Religious Practice*, by K. Maag and J. D. Witvliet, 84–111. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Noble, Thomas F. X. 2009. *Images, Iconoclasm and the Carolingians*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Nordahl, Helge. 1997. *Den Hellige Birgitta: Beåndet Visjonær — Begavet Politiker*. Oslo: Aschehoug.
- Nordanskog, Gunnar. 2006. *Föreställd Hedendom: Tidigmedeltida Skandinaviska Kyrkportar i Forskning och Historia*. Lund, Sweden: Nordic Academic Press.
- Nordvik, Torgeir. 2015. *Læstadianerne og Kirken: De Førstefødtes og Lyngens retningens*

- Forhold til Den Norske Kirke ved Inngangen til 2000-tallet*. Tromsø, Norway: Universitetet i Tromsø.
- Nyberg, Tore, ed. 1991. *Birgitta, Hendes Værk og Hendes Klopstre i Norden*. Odense, Denmark: Odense University Press.
- Nyman, Magnus. 1997. *Förlorarnas Historia: Katolskt Liv i Sverige från Gustav Vasa till Drottning Kristina*. Uppsala, Sweden: Katolska Bokförlaget.
- Olalquiaga, Celeste. 1998. *The Artificial Kingdom: On the Kitsch Experience*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Olson, Joseph. 2009. *Jesuit Inculturation in the New World: Experiments in Missions of Sixteenth, Seventeenth, and Eighteenth Centuries*. Anchorage, AK: Outskirts Press.
- "On the Field and Work of a Journal of American Folk-Lore." 1888. *Journal of American Folklore* 1, no. 1, 3–7.
- Österlund-Pötzsch, Susanne. 2003. *American Plus—Etnisk Identitet hos Finlandssvenska ättlingar i Nordamerika*. Helsinki: Svenska Litteratursällskapet i Finland.
- Outakoski, Nilla. 1991. *Lars Levi Laestadiuksen Saarnojen Maabiskuvu: Verrattuna Kaareuvannon Nomadien Maabiskäcityksiin*. Oulu, Finland: Oulun Historiasseura.
- Pakkala, Teuvo. 1899. *Tukkijoella: Nelinnäytöksinen Laulunsekainen Huvinäytelmä*. Helsinki: Otava.
- Pallasmaa, Juhani. 1994. *The Language of Wood: Wood in Finnish Sculpture, Design and Architecture*. Helsinki: Suomen Rankennustaiteen Museo.
- Pallasmaa, Juhani, and Yukio Futagawa. 1985. *Villa Mairea, Noormarkku, Finland, 1937–39*. Tokyo: A. D. A. Editä.
- Park, S. H. 2014. "Gol Stave Church Museum." Retrieved March 14, 2017, from <http://scandinavianheritage.org/tour-the-park/gol-stave-church-museum/>.
- Pegelow, Ingallil. 2006. *Helgonlegender i Ord och Bild*. Stockholm: Carlssons Boförälag.
- Peltonen, Arvo. 2002. "The Population of Finland." Retrieved January 5, 2009, from <http://virtual.finland.fi/netcomm/news/showarticle.asp?intNWSAID=25785>.
- Pentcheva, Bissera. 2006. *Icons and Power: The Mother of God in Byzantium*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University.
- Pentikäinen, Juha. 1995. *Saamelaiset—Pohjoisen Kansan Mytologia*. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura.
- . 2002. "Introduction." In *Fragments of Lappish Mythology*, by Lars Levi Læstadius, 8–28. Beaverton, ON: Aspasia Books.
- Petrini, Carlo. 2003. *Slow Food: The Case for Taste*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- . 2013. *Slow Food Nation: Why Our Foods Should Be Good, Clean, and Fair*. New York: Rizzoli Ex Libris.

- Plahter, Unn. 1992. "Líkneskjusmíð: Fourteenth Century Instructions for Painting from Iceland." *Zeitschrift für Kunsttechnologie und Konservierung* 6, no. 1, 167–73.
- Plate, S. Brent, ed. 2002. *Religion, Art and Visual Culture: A Cross-Cultural Reader*. New York: Palgrave.
- Počiulpaitė, Alė. 1998. "Gnarled Branches." In *Sacred Wood: The Contemporary Lithuanian Woodcarving Revival*, by R. T. Saliklis, 19–22. Madison: Elvehjem Museum of Art, University of Wisconsin.
- Poškauskas, Kostas. 1998. *Lietuvių Liaudies Skulptūra Alytaus Kraštoto Muziejuje*. Kaunas, Lithuania: Alita.
- Price, Joan. 1988. "The Earth Is Alive and Is Running out of Breath." In *The Sacred Landscape*, by Frederic Lehrman, 120–22. Berkeley: Celestial Arts.
- Primiano, Leonard N. 2016. "Collecting Vernacular Religious Material Culture." *Material Religion* 12, no. 3, 381–83.
- Prown, Jules D. 1982. "Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method." *Winterthur Portfolio* 17 no. 1, 1–19.
- Račiūnaitė, Tojana. 2004. "Jausmų Kelionė ir Stebuklingųjų Atvaizdų Kopijos." *Acta Academiae Artium Vilnensis* 35:41–59.
- Raj, Selva J. 2007. "The Santal Sacred Grove and Catholic Inculturation." *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*. Retrieved June 15, 2014, from http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_hb3236/is_2_42/ai_n29368398.
- Reed, Peter E. 1998. *Alvar Aalto: Between Humanism and Materialism*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, distributed by H. N. Abrams.
- Richardson, Milda Bakšys. 1998. "Lithuanian Wayside Shrines." In *Sacred Wood: The Contemporary Lithuanian Woodcarving Revival*, by R. T. Saliklis, 23–30. Madison: Elvehjem Museum of Art, University of Wisconsin.
- Rosander, Göran. 1986. "The 'Nationalization' of Dalecarlia: How a Special Province Became a National Symbol for Sweden." *Arv: Scandinavian Yearbook of Folklore* 42:93–142.
- Ross, Leslie. 1994. *Text, Image, Message: Saints in Medieval Manuscript Illustrations*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Rowe, Elizabeth Ashton. 2012. *Vikings in the West: The Legend of Ragnarr Loðbrók and His Sons*. Vienna: Fassbaender.
- Roy, Carrie A. 2011. "Norse Binding Motifs and Techniques in Material Culture and Narrative Traditions." PhD diss., University of Wisconsin–Madison.
- Rue, Anna. 2014. *From Revival to Remix: Norwegian American Folk Music and Song*. Madison: University of Wisconsin–Madison.
- Runeberg, Johan L. 1848 [1883]. *Fänrik Ståhls Sägner*. Stockholm: F. and G. Beijer.
- Rydving, Håkan. 1995. *The End of the Drum-Time: Religious Change among the Lule Saami, 1670s–1740s*. Uppsala, Sweden: University of Uppsala.

- Sahlin, Claire L. 2001. *Birgitta of Sweden and the Voice of Prophecy*. Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press.
- Saliklis, Ruta T. 1998. "Sacred Woods." In *Sacred Wood: The Contemporary Lithuanian Woodcarving Revival*, by R. T. Saliklis, 13–18. Madison: Elvehjem Museum of Art, University of Wisconsin.
- Salmesvuori, Päivi. 2009. *Power and Authority. Birgitta of Sweden and Her Revelations*. Helsinki: Faculty of Theology, University of Helsinki.
- Sandvik, Johan. 1971. *A Guide to the Cathedral of Oslo*. Oslo: Thor Stenersen and Co. Press.
- Schmidt, Gary D. 1995. *The Iconography of the Mouth of Hell: Eighth-Century Britain to the Fifteenth Century*. Selingsgrove, PA: Susquehanna University Press.
- Schnürer, Gustav. 1956. *Church and Culture in the Middle Ages*. Paterson, NJ: St. Anthony Guild Press.
- Senn, Frank C. 2004. "The Mass in Sweden: From Swedish to Latin?" In *Worship in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Change and Continuity in Religious Practice*, by K. Maag and J. D. Witvliet, 63–83. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Šešelgis, Kazys, and Vilius Armalas. 1990. *Lietuvių Liaudies Menas: Mažoji Architektūra*. Vilnius, Lithuania: Vagos.
- Šidlauskas, Alfonsas, and Antanas Gedminas. 1979. *Šiauliai*. Vilnius, Lithuania: Leidkyla Mintis.
- Simola, Seppo, Virpi Tissari-Simola, and Sami Repo. 2004. *Paateri: Eva Rynnäsen Taitelijakoti*. Jyväskylä, Finland: Kirjapaja.
- Sloane, Eric. 1965. *A Reverence for Wood*. New York: Ballantine Books.
- Šmidchens, Guntis. 1996. *A Baltic Music: The Folklore Movement in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, 1968–1991*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- . 2013. *The Power of Song: Nonviolent National Culture in the Baltic Singing Revolution*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Smith, Laurajane. 2006. *Uses of Heritage*. London: Routledge.
- Stankevičienė, Regimanta. 2009. "The Image of the Blessed Virgin Mary with the Child of the Šiluva Basilica: The Problems of the Origin, Iconographic Context, and Dating." *Meno Istorija ir Kritika* 5:19–37.
- . 2010. *Jesus of Antakalnis: The Image, the Cult, Replicas*. Vilnius, Lithuania: Vilnius Academy of Arts.
- Stein, Mille. 2001. "Med Guld, Sølf, oc Farvæ." *Den Barokke Altertavlen i Oslo Domkirke som Kulturhistorisk Kilde*. Oslo: Norsk Institutt for Kulturminnesforskning.
- Stern, Stephen. 1977. "Ethnic Folklore and the Folklore of Ethnicity." *Western Folklore* 36, no. 1, 7–32.
- Stern, Stephen, and John Allan Cicala. 1991. *Creative Ethnicity: Symbols and Strategies of Contemporary Ethnic Life*. Logan: Utah State University Press.

- Stolpe, Sven. 1973. *Birgitta i Sverige*. Stockholm: Askild and Kärnekull.
- Stoor, Krister. 2004. "Bakhället vid Lapps-kottbacken: En Berättelse om 'de Främmande' i en Samisk Miljö." In *The Sámi and the Scandinavians: Aspects of 2000 Years of Contact*, by J. Kusmenko, 73–87. Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovac.
- Storaas, Randi. 1986. "Clothes as an Expression of Counter-Cultural Activity." *Ethnologia Scandinavica*, 145–158.
- Strmiska, Michael, ed. 2005. *Modern Paganism in World Cultures: Comparative Perspectives*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.
- Sturluson, Snorri. 1987. *Edda*. Edited and translated by A. Faulkes. London: Everyman.
- Sunna, Lars Levi. 2005. *Från Forntid till Evighet: Montering av Konstverket*. Interview accompanying exhibit. Kiruna, Sweden: Lars Levi Sunna. Compact disc.
- Surdokaitė, Gabija. 2004. "Rūpintojėlio Pirmavaizdžio Problema." *Acta Academiae Artium Vilnensis* 35:99–112.
- Svanberg, Jan. 2003. "De Älsta Bilderna av Birgitta och Hennes Vision av Jesu Födelse." In *Birgitta av Vadstena: Pilgrim och Profet 1303–1373*, by P. Beskow and A. Landen, 201–14. Stockholm: Natur och Kultur.
- Svanberg, Jan, and Anders Qvarnström. 1998. *Sankt Göran och Draken*. Stockholm: Rabén Prisma.
- Svestad, Asgeir. 2013. "Sámi Burials and Sacred Landscape: Aspects of the Impact of Materiality on Sámi Religious Conceptions and Practices." In *Sacred Sites and Holy Places: Exploring the Sacralization of Landscape through Time and Space*, by S. W. Nordeide and S. Brink, 111–39. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols.
- Tacitus. 1999. *Agricola and Germany*. Translated by Anthony R. Birley. Oxford: Oxford Paperbacks.
- Tängeberg, Peter. 1986. *Mittelalterliche Holzskulpturen und Alterschreine in Schweden. Studium zu Form, Material und Technik*. Stockholm: Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien, distributed by Almqvist and Wiksell.
- Tebelškis, Poviks. 2006. "The Late Neolithic Grave at Gyvakarai in Lithuania in the Context of Current Archaeological and Anthropological Knowledge." *Archaeologia Baltica* 6:8–21.
- Thordeman, Bengt. 1964. *Medieval Wooden Sculpture in Sweden: Volume 1. Attitudes to the Heritage*. Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell.
- Tjader Harris, Marguerite, ed. 1990. *Birgitta of Sweden: Life and Selected Revelations*. New York: Paulist Press.
- Toelken, Barre. 1979. *The Dynamics of Folklore*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Topelius, Zacharias. 1875. *Boken om Vårt Land*. Borgå, Finland: Werner Söderström.
- Travel Latvia. 2014. "Aglona Basilica." Retrieved June 18, 2014, from www.latvia.travel/en/aglona-basilica.
- Tyerman, Christopher. 2004. *Fighting for Christendom: Holy War and the Crusades*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Udeani, Chibueze. 2007. *Inculturation as Dialogue: Igbo Culture and the Message of Christ*. Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi.
- United Nations Common Database. 2009a. "Globalis Data Sheet: Finland." Retrieved January 5, 2009, from http://globalis.gvu.unu.edu/indicator_detail.cfm?country=FI&indicatorid=3.
- . 2009b. "Globalis Data Sheet: Sweden." Retrieved January 9, 2009, from http://globalis.gvu.unu.edu/indicator_detail.cfm?IndicatorID=30&Country=SE.
- Vaitkusienė, Laima. 1995. "The Formation of a Warrior Elite during the Middle Iron Age in Lithuania." *Archaeologia Baltica* 1:94–106.
- Valinčiūtė, Rima. 2004. "XVII–XVIII A. Jėzaus prie Stulpo Atvaizdai Lietuvoje." *Acta Academiae Artium Vilnensis* 35:89–98.
- Van der Sanden, Wijnand, and Torsten Capelle. 2002. *Götter, Götzen, Holzmenschen*. Oldenburg, Germany: Isensee Verlag.
- Van Dyke, Chris T., trans. 2013. *Ragnars saga Loðbrókar*. Denver, CO: Cascadian Publishing.
- Varnas, Algirdas. 1998. "Horse Burials in Lithuania." *Archaeologia Baltica* 3:291–94.
- Vėlius, Norbertas. 1995. *Lietuvių Mitologija*. Vilnius, Lithuania: Leidkyla Mintis.
- Verrips, Jojada. 2008. "Offending Art and the Sense of Touch." *Material Religion* 4, no. 2, 204–25.
- Villads Jensen, Kurt. 2013. "Crusading and Christian Penetration into the Landscape: The New Jerusalem in the Desert after c. 1100." In *Sacred Sites and Holy Places: Exploring the Sacralization of Landscape through Time and Space*, by S. W. Nordeide and S. Brink, 215–36. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols.
- Virtanen, Leea. 1994. "Suomen Kansa on Aina Vihannut Metsiään." In *Metsä ja Metsänviljää*, by P. Laaksonen and S.-L. Mettomäki, Kalevalaseuran Vuosikirja 73, 134–40. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura.
- von Schnurbein, Stephanie. 1992. *Religion also Kulturkritik. Neugermanisches Heidentum im 20. Jahrhundert*. Heidelberg: Winter.
- Wallis, Robert J. 2003. *Shamans/Neo-Shamans: Ecstasy, Alternative Archaeologies and Contemporary Pagans*. London: Routledge.
- Walsh, Kevin. 1992. *The Representation of the Past: Museums and Heritage in the Post-Modern World*. London: Routledge.
- Weber, Max. 1976. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. London: Allen and Unwin.
- Whitehouse, Harvey. 2004. *Modes of Religiosity: A Cognitive Theory of Religious Trans-mission*. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.
- Wixom, William D. 2001. *Medieval Sculpture at the Cloisters*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art.
- Wojcik, Daniel. 2008. "Outsider Art, Vernacular Traditions, Trauma and Creativity." *Western Folklore* 67, nos. 2–3, 179–98.

- Wolf, Kirsten. 2001. *Saga Heilagrar Önnu*. Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar á Ísandi.
- Ylikangas, Heikki. 1996. "Metsä Suomalaisen Mentaliteetin Kasvualustana." In *Olkaamme siis Suomalaisia*, by P. Laaksonen and S.-L. Mettomäki, Kalevalaseuran Vuosikirja 75–76, 35–42. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura.
- Yoder, Don. 2013. "Religion and Folk Art: Reflections on Key Concepts in Folklife Studies." 2013 Don Yoder address to the Folk Belief and Religious Folklife Section of the American Folklore Society, Providence, RI.
- Zimiles, Murray. 2007. "Gilded Lions and Jeweled Horses: The Synagogue to the Carousel." *Folk Art* 32, no. 3, 42–51.
- Zorgdrager, Nellejet. 1997. *De Rettferdiges Strid: Kautokeino 1852: Samisk Motstand mot Norsk Kolonialisme*. Nesbru, Oslo: Vett and Viten, Norsk Folkemuseum.

Index

- Aalto, Aino, 35
 Aalto, Alvar, 35
 Abbey Basilica of Saint Matthias (Trier), 89–90
 Ablinga (Lithuania), 142–43, 148
 Ablinga style, 142–44, 153
 acanthus, 58–59, 59*fig.*, 68–70, 69*fig.*, 161*fig.*, 167
 Acerbi, Giuseppe, 34
 Adam of Bremen, 37
 Ahlbäck, Tore, 113
 Albert of Brandenburg, 131–32
 Alcuin, 78
 alder, 41, 83
 altarpiece: of Botkyrka, 3–5, 4*fig.*; by Bror Hjort, 116; and carpentry, 83; and iconoclasm, 78–81, 87–88, 132–33; of Kalmar Church (Sister Lydia Maria-dotter), 75, 91, 99–102, 100*fig.*, 101*fig.*, 172; medieval, 24, 25*fig.*, 76; of Oslo Cathedral, 169–70, 171*fig.*; of Paateri Church (Eva Ryyänen), 46–48, 47*fig.*; of Storkyrkan, 94; of Törnevalla Church, 164–65, 165*fig.*
 Amos Andersson Art Museum, 42
 Anderson, Benedict, 6–7, 21, 172, 174
 angels, 42, 43, 49, 93, 96, 96*fig.*, 166, 168
 Anna, Saint, 25*fig.*, 80, 155, 164
Annals of Jan Długosz, 131, 132
 Antwerp, 3, 81
 apotropaic function, 66
 Appleton (Wisconsin), 62
 Aquinas. *See* Thomas Aquinas, Saint
 Arjeplog, 111
 Årosjokk, 112
 Artek, 35
 art history approaches, 13–18
 Åsele, 111
 ash, 39, 73, 88, 83
 Augustine, Saint, 77
 Aušros Vartai (Gates of Dawn), 134–35
 avant-garde, 14, 161
 Babtai (Lithuania), 148
 Backlund, Rune (bishop), 121, 124
 Baltic Crusades, 40, 131
 baptismal font, 48, 92
 Barlach, Ernst, 75, 94
 Barronett, Wisconsin, 51, 53, 57, 59
 Basil, Saint, 77
bassi, 107
 basswood, 66
 Bede, Saint, 77–78
 Benedict Biscop (abbot), 78
 Bergman, Jan, 113
 Bernardine order, 141, 143

- Bernard of Clairvaux, Saint, 78
 Bernhard of Angers, 79
Biblia pauperum (paupers' Bible), 77–78, 86
 Biegg-olmmái, 122
 Bielke, Gunilla, 133
 Bigton, Else, 23, 29, 51–71, 75, 109, 130, 160, 161*fig.*, 168, 169
 birch, 35, 38, 40, 66, 83, 108, 116, 117, 119
 Birger Gregersson (archbishop), 80
 Birgitta, Saint, 16, 80–81
 Birgittines order (Order of the Most Holy Savior), 80, 88
 Birštonas (Lithuania), 143, 144, 148, 156
bissie. See *sieidi*
 Blue Mounds, Wisconsin, 61–62, 173–74
 boats, 1, 59, 70, 103, 104, 105*fig.*, 113, 123, 127.
 See also ships
Boken om Vårt Land, 11, 35
 Boniface, Saint, 40
 Borgund stave church (Norway), 61–65
 Botkyrka (Sweden), 1–4, 2*fig.*, 4*fig.*, 80
 Botvid, Saint, 1–2, 4
 Breiðafjörður (Iceland), 55
 Buchman, Frank, 88
 Bugenhagen, Johannes, 87
 butternut, 66

 Cahill, Holger, 12–13
 California, 59. *See also* Thousand Oaks, California
 California Lutheran University, 62, 64
 Calvinism, 86, 133, 135, 136
 Cana, Wedding at, 101
 Canada, 44
 Carmelite order, 134, 135
 carving techniques, 52*fig.*, 81–84, 160, 161*fig.*
 See also composite production; cracks
 cedar, 44
 Charlemagne, 40, 78
 Chartres, France, 82
 Chicago, 60–62, 173
 Christian III (king), 87
 Christianization, 3, 40, 109–10, 123, 131–32, 143, 157. *See also* inculturation
 Christina, Queen, 134
 Christmas, 48, 110
Chronicle of Henry of Livonia, 131
Chronicle of Prussia, 131
 Chrystus Frasoibliwy, 131, 139. *See also* Rūpintojėlis
 Church of Saint Francis of Assisi (Vilnius), 141
 Church of Saints Peter and Paul (Šv. Apaštala Petro ir Povilo Bažnyčia) (Vilnius), 136
 Church of Saint Theresa, 134–35
 Church Ordinance of 1571, 88
 Čiurlionis, M. K., 141, 142
 Clement XVI (pope), 135
 Čoarve-olmmái, 119
 Čohkkiras (Jukkasjärvi) (Sweden), 115–18, 121, 124
 Colonial Williamsburg (Virginia), 61
 composite production, 45, 66, 83, 84
 confirmation, 48
 Constantine V (emperor), 78
 Council of Frankfurt, 78
 Council of Trent, 133
 Counter-Reformation, 26, 29, 85, 131–37, 139, 143
 cracks, 83–84, 97–98, 141, 160
 crowning (of icons), 135
 crucifix: of Botkyrka, 3, 4*fig.*, 5, 80; and iconoclasm, 78, 86; at Kryžiu Kalnas, 28*fig.*; in Paateri Church (Eva Rynnänen), 47*fig.*, 48; as protest sculpture, 142; by Sister Lydia Maria-dotter, 73, 74*fig.*, 90, 98, 101, 166
 Crucifixion, 3, 80, 86, 94–95, 97, 98, 101, 136, 139
 Crusades, Northern (Baltic), 40, 131
Curiositas, 78
 Czestochowa, Our Lady of, 135–36
 Dahl, Orville, 64
 Dahle, Isak, 61–62, 174

- Dailučiai (Lithuania), 145
daina song genre, 150
Dainų Karalius (*King of Songs*), 131, 148–53, 149fig., 151fig., 156, 169
 Daugavpils (Latvia), 134
 Decorah, Iowa, 17, 60
 Denmark, 5, 26, 39–40, 84, 87–89, 131, 134
 destruction of sculptures, 86–87. *See also* iconoclasm
 disenchantment, 20
 Długosz, Jan, 131, 132
Doložin Agālači: Från Forntid till Evighet (*From Antiquity to Eternity*), 103–9, 105fig., 108fig., 109fig., 119–23, 127
 Dominican order (Order of Preachers), 134, 143
 dragon style, 23, 75, 143, 174. *See also* Hylestad Portal; Odden, Phillip
 Drews, Jan, 135
 Drum Time, 114, 122, 127
duodji, 26, 112, 114–16, 119, 121, 124, 168

 Easter, 48, 73, 90, 93, 110
 Eaton, Allen, 12, 61–62
 elm, 92, 98
 Epcot Center (Florida), 62–63
 Erasmus, 85
 Eric XIV (king), 86, 133
 Estonia, 5, 6, 131, 146
 ethnicity, 6, 53, 54, 70
 Eucharist, 94, 122, 164, 170, 171
 European Union, 5, 146

 Fågelsång (Sweden), 88
Fänrik Ståhls Sägner, 34
 Finland, 11, 31–34, 36, 49
 “Fjölsvinnsmál,” 39
 folk art approaches, 9–13
 Folk Art Society (Lithuania), 141–42, 146
 font. *See* baptismal font
 Ford, Henry, 61
 Foreningen til Norske Fortidsminde-
 merkers Bevaring (Society for the
 Preservation of Ancient Norwegian
 Monuments), 57
 forests, 22, 32–35, 37–40, 54, 57, 125, 132, 156
 Foy, Saint, 79
 Francis (pope), 157
 Franciscan order, 98, 127, 143
 Frankfurt, Council of, 78
 Freyja, 51
 Frösö (Sweden), 38, 40
Frozen, 63

 George, Saint, 143
 Germany, 83, 89
 gesso, 42, 83, 84
 Glasir, 39
 Glasnost, 27, 129, 143–45
 goddess, 107, 117, 119, 122
 Gokstad (ship), 61
 Gol stave church (Norway), 10–11, 11fig., 56, 57, 62, 63, 65, 75, 167
 Good Shepherd, 48
 grain, 35, 83, 94, 108, 121, 160, 169
 graven images. *See* iconoclasm
 Greenberg, Clement, 13–14, 161
 Greenfield Village (Dearborn, Michigan), 61
 Gregersson, Birger (archbishop), 80
 Gregory of Tours, Saint, 77
 Gregory the Great (pope and saint), 77, 78, 86
 Grigalius Hilarion (Petras Rosciszewski), 135
 “Grimnismál,” 38–39, 169
 Grönlunds Orgelbyggeri, 115
 Grovel, Kjetil, 64
 groves. *See* forests
 Grunau, Simon, 131
 Gudbrandsdalen (Norway), 57
 Gulleon, Håkon, 17
 Gullichsen, Harry, 35
 Gullichsen, Maire, 35
 Guovdageaidnu (Kautokeino) (Norway), 111

- Gustav II Adolf (king), 136
 Gustav Vasa (king), 87, 133
- Håbo (Sweden), 75, 91, 99, 100*fig.*, 101*fig.*
 Hägerstad church (Sweden), 25*fig.*, 76, 80
 Hákon Sigurðsson (earl), 55
 Harald V (king), 174
 Heddle (*Njuikon*), 105*fig.*, 117
 Hell Mouth motif, 164, 165*fig.*
 Helsinki, 10, 15, 32, 35–36, 41, 42, 166
 Herder, Johann Gottfried, 9, 174
 heritage studies approaches, 3–4, 8, 10, 20
 Herten, Heikki von, 36
Historia Norwegiae, 110
 Historical Museum (Historiska museet) (Stockholm), 2, 3, 4, 25, 80, 165
 Hjaðarholt (Iceland), 55
 Hjerleids Skole (Norway), 57–58, 70
 Hjort, Bror, 116
 Holy Roman Empire, 81
 Hornö (Sweden), 88
 Hunkpapa Lakota, 127
 Houses of Culture (Lithuania), 141
 “Húsdrápa,” 55
 Hylestad portal, 24, 24*fig.*, 55–56, 75
- icon, 134, 173
 iconoclasm, 56, 76–79, 85–88
 IKEA, 35
 inculturation, 105, 126–27
 India, 125
 Innocent III (pope), 40
In Search of Knowledge, 53, 68–70, 69*fig.*
 Iowa, 17, 60
 Isidore of Seville, Saint, 77, 78
- Jasna Góra (monastery), 135
 Jesuit order, 133–35, 143
 Jesus: Algamantas Sakalauskas and, 139, 140*fig.*, 153, 154*fig.*; Lars Levi Sunna and, 103–4, 123; sculpture of, 25*fig.*, 48, 76, 79–80, 82; Sister Lydia Maria-dotter and, 91–92, 94–99, 97*fig.*, 100*fig.*, 101*fig.*, 166; Sister Paulina and, 89. *See also* crucifix; Crucifixion; Last Supper; Madonna; Rūpintojėlis
- Jews. *See* Judaism
 Johan III (king), 133
 John of Damascus, Saint, 78
 John Paul II (pope), 157
Joik, 111
 Judaism, 76–77, 84, 132, 137, 144, 170
 Jukkasjärvi church (Čohkkiras) (Sweden), 115–18, 121, 124
 Juodkrantė (Lithuania), 142
 Juoksáhkka, 107, 108*fig.*, 119, 122
- Kalevala*, 36
 Kalmar Church (Håbo, Sweden), 75, 91, 99, 100*fig.*, 101*fig.*
 Karesuando (Sweden), 113
 Karjalan Kuusi, 46
 Kärkkäinen, Pirkko, 40, 43, 49
 Kärkkäinen, Raimo, 40, 43, 49
 Karl IX (king), 134
 Karlstadt, Andreas, 85–86
Karsikot, 38
 Katarina, Saint, 80–81
 Katarzyna Jagiellonka (Kotryna Jogailaitė, Katarina Jagellonica) (queen), 133
 Kateri Tekakwitha Conference, 126
 Kautokeino (Guovdageaidnu) (Norway), 111
 KGB, 146
 Kildal, Jens, 113
 Kiowa, 123
 Kiruna (Sweden), 112–13, 115, 118
 kitsch, 13–14, 75, 161, 167
 Kivi, Aleksis, 34–35, 41
 Knox, John, 87
koplystulpis (pole shrine), 29, 30*fig.*, 129–30, 132, 137, 140*fig.*, 142*fig.*, 143, 148, 150
 Kryžiu Kalnas (Hill of Crosses), 29, 30*fig.*, 142–43

- kubbestol*, 53, 66–68, 67*fig.*, 168
Kvaale, Peder O., 61
- Lærað, 39
Læstadian movement, 26, 104, 106, 111–18,
122, 127
Læstadius, Lars Levi, 26, 104, 111, 122, 127
l'art sacré, 75, 94, 99, 102
l'art Saint-Sulpice, 94, 99, 167
Last Supper, 94, 171–72, 171*fig.*
Lateran Council, 78
Latvia, 5, 131, 132, 134, 137, 146, 150
Laulu tulipunaisesta kukasta, 35
Laurentius Nicolai Norvegus, 133
Laurentius Petri (bishop), 88
Laxdaela saga, 55
Leaib-olmmái, 122
League of Swedish Church Congrega-
tions (Svenska Kyrkans Församlings-
förbund), 126
Lent, 75, 83, 88, 90, 93, 99
Leo III (emperor), 78
Leo IV (pope), 78–79
Liekka (Finland), 31, 43, 48
Linnankoski, Johannes, 35
Lithuania, 26–27, 84–85, 129–57, 160, 170,
174
Lithuanian Artists Association, 146
Little Norway (Wisconsin), 61–62, 173–74
*Liturgia Svecanae Ecclesiae Catholicae et
Orthodoxae Conformis* (Red Book), 133
Livonian Rhymed Chronicle, 131
Longinus, Saint, 95
Lübeck, 81, 83
lumberjacks, 34–35
Lund, 40
Lundius, Nicolaus, 113
Luther, Martin, 84, 85, 87, 88, 110, 127, 131,
136
Lutheranism: Eva Ryyänen and, 22, 25,
31, 34, 48–49, 53; Lars Levi Sunna and,
26, 104, 111–13, 136; Phillip Odden and
Else Bigton and, 62–64; Sister Lydia
Mariadotter and, 24, 25, 29, 74–75,
88–90. *See also* iconoclasm; incultura-
tion; Reformation
- Maddaráhkká, 107, 108*fig.*, 122
Madonna, 43, 47, 77, 80, 84, 134, 135, 136
Madonna of Šiluva, 135
Madonna of Trakai (Trakų Dievo
Motinos Paveikslas, Our Lady of
Trakai), 134, 136
Malmö, 73
Manker, Ernst, 113, 115
Mankevičius, Simonas, 134
Mariadotter, Sister Lydia, 24–25, 29,
73–102, 160
Mariadotter, Sister Paulina, 73, 74, 88–92,
100
Mariadöttrarna av den Evangeliska
Mariavägen order (Daughters of
Mary), 73, 88–92
Martin, Saint, 77
Mary, Saint. *See* Virgin Mary
Mary Magdalen, Saint, 95–97, 95*fig.*, 98,
164
material-culture approaches, 162–63
Mímameiðr, 39
Minot, North Dakota, 62–64
missionization. *See* *Christianization*
Momaday, N. Scott, 123
Moral Re-Armament (MRA), 88
Mount Horeb, Wisconsin, 61, 62, 173
Museum of Atheism (Vilnius), 141
Museum of Modern Art (New York
City), 12
Mystic Seaport (Connecticut), 61
- Namatianus of Clermont (bishop), 77
national identity: in Finland, 34–36, 49;
in Lithuania, 27, 31, 137, 139, 141, 144,
145, 150; in Norway, 58
nationalism, 6, 9, 10, 170, 172–74
Nelson, Marion, 17, 58, 60
Nicaea. *See* Second Council of Nicaea

- Nissedahle. *See* Little Norway
njuikon (heddle), 105*fig.*, 117
Noaididilatnja: Nájens Sal (Noaidi's Hall),
 118–19, 121*fig.*
noaidi, 104, 107, 112–23
noaidi drum, 107–8, 108*fig.*, 109*fig.*, 114–24,
 118*fig.*, 121*fig.*, 168
 Nordic Heritage Museum (Seattle), 64
 Nordic Spirit Symposium (Thousand
 Oaks, California), 64
 Norman, Georg, 87
 Norrman, Gunvor. *See* Mariadotter, Sister
 Paulina
 Norsk Folkemuseum (Oslo), 10, 11, 56, 57,
 61, 167, 170
 Northern Crusades, 40, 131
 Northern Lights, 108, 108*fig.*
 Norway, 51, 53, 55, 57–58, 173–74. *See also*
 Little Norway, Norway Building
 Norway Building, 61, 173–74, 173*fig.*
 Norwegian America, 23, 35, 53, 58–61, 174.
See also Bigton, Else; Odden, Phillip
 Norwegian Museum of Cultural History
 (Oslo), 24, 56
 Norwegian National Museum of Art,
 Architecture, and Design (Oslo),
 170
 Notke, Berndt, 17
- oak, 37, 40, 83
 Odden, Phillip, 23, 51–71, 163–64, 167
 Óðinn, 39, 68, 70
 Ólafr (king and saint), 87
 Ólafr pái, 55
 Ólafur Halldórsson, 82
 Olaus Petri (bishop), 88
 Olav V (king), 174
 Old Sturbridge Village (Massachusetts),
 61
 Olsen, Isaac, 113
 Order of the Most Holy Savior (Birgit-
 tines), 80, 88
 organ, 115–18, 117*fig.*, 118*fig.*
- Orkanger (Norway), 61
 Orkdal (Norway), 61, 174
 Orlando, Florida, 62
 Oscar I (king), 57
 Oscar II (king), 10, 57
 Oseberg ship burial, 51–53
 Oslo, 169–70
 Oslo Cathedral, 169–72
 Our Lady of Czestochowa, 135–36
 Oxford Group, 88–89
- Paateri Museum (Finland) 40
 Pakkala, Teuvo, 35
Passion and Resurrection, 92–99, 93*fig.*,
 95*fig.*, 96*fig.*, 97*fig.*
 Patrimpas (Potrimpo), 152
 Paulina, Sister. *See* Mariadotter, Sister
 Paulina
 Per Amžius, 152, 156
 Perestroika, 27, 129, 143–45
 Perkūnas, 131, 142, 148–53, 149*fig.*, 151*fig.*,
 156
 Perth (Scotland), 87
 Peter, Saint, 155, 156
 Peterson, Myron, 63
 Peterson, Richard, 64
 Petrus von Dusborg, 131
 pilgrimage, 3, 4, 81, 87, 134, 135
 pine, 31, 35, 41, 43, 44, 45, 56, 66, 83, 110,
 116
 Pjätteryd (Sweden), 56–57
 place, 169–70
 Plimoth Plantation (Massachusetts), 61
 Poland, 85, 132–35, 139, 147
 pole shrine. *See* *koplystulpis*
 portal, 23, 53, 55, 56, 61–66, 62*fig.*, 65*fig.*,
 118–19, 120*fig.*, 164, 168. *See also*
 Hylestad portal; Thousand Oaks,
 California
 Prienai (Lithuania), 129, 144, 146, 148
 Prikulis, 152
Prose Edda, 51, 55
 Prussia, 84, 131, 132, 134, 136, 137

- Prussian Chronicle*, 131
 pulpit, 10, 46*fig.*, 47*fig.*, 48, 88
pyhä, 107
- Raganų Kalnas (Hill of Witches), 142
Ragnars saga Loðbrókar, 54–55, 169
 Rapid City, South Dakota, 62
 Red Book (*Liturgia Svecanae Ecclesiae Catholicae et Orthodoxae Conformis*), 133
 Reformation: iconoclasm of, 56, 136, 144; Sámi people and, 110–11; Sister Lydia Mariadotter and, 74–76, 81, 94, 99–100; spread of, 84–88. *See also* Counter-Reformation
 relics and reliquaries of saints, 2, 78–81, 87
 religious studies approaches, 18–20, 174–75
 repatriation, 105
 Riemenschneider, Tilman, 17, 83
 Rockstad, Howard, 63–64
 Rosciszewski, Petras (Grigalius Hilarion), 135
 Roskilde (Denmark), 87
 Rügen (Germany), 40
 Runeberg, Johan Ludvig, 34
Rūpintojēlis (Sorrowing Christ), 131, 139, 142*fig.*, 143, 153, 154*fig.*, 156
 Russia, 5, 6, 43, 129–57
 Russian Orthodoxy, 134
 Ryyönen, Eva, 22, 25, 27, 31–50, 52–53, 75, 160, 163, 169
- Saint Botvid's Church (Sweden), 1–4, 2*fig.*, 80
 Saint Olaf College, 64
saivo (*sáíva*), 113, 119
 Sakalauskas, Algimantas, 26, 29, 129–57, 160, 163, 169
 Salus Populi Romani (icon), 135, 136
 Sámi people: deities of, 164, 166, 170–71; identity and nationhood, 6, 10, 64, 160, 172, 174; missionization of, 26; religious traditions of, 29, 38, 39, 103–27, 168. *See also* *duodji*; Sunna, Lars Levi
- Samogitia (Lithuania), 132, 142
 Samsey (Denmark), 54, 55
 Santal, 125
 Santa Maria Maggiore (Rome), 135
 Sápmi. *See* Sámi people
 Sáráhká, 107, 108*fig.*, 117, 119, 122, 127
 Sarbiewski, Maciej Kazimierz, 134
 Scandinavian American Cultural and Historical Foundation (Thousand Oaks, California), 53, 64
 Scandinavian Heritage Park (Minot, North Dakota), 62
 Second Council of Nicaea, 78
Seitsemän Veljestä, 35–36, 41
 Senoji Varėna (Lithuania), 142
 Serenus of Marseilles, 77
 Seurasaari (Helsinki), 10
 shamanism. *See* *noaidi*
 ships, 51–54, 61, 68, 69, 69*fig.* *See also* boats
 Šiauliai (Lithuania), 142
sieidi, 104, 106–10, 113, 119, 122
 Sigismund III Vasa (king), 133
 Sigurðr, 24*fig.*, 56, 164
 “Skaldskaparmál,” 39
 Skanke, Hans, 113
 Skansen (Stockholm), 10
 Smith, Jay, 58–59
 Snorri Sturluson, 39, 51, 55
 Soviet Union. *See* Russia
 Spångberg, Eva, 93–94
 spruce, 46
 stave church, 1*fig.*, 23, 53, 56–66, 75, 130, 167–68. *See also* Gol stave church; Norway Building; Thousand Oaks, California
- Stephen, Saint (bishop), 79
 Stockholm, 1–2, 75, 87, 91, 93, 99
storkyrka. *See* *sieidi*
 Storkyrka (Stockholm), 75, 90, 92–94, 93*fig.*, 168

- Sun Dance, 123
 Sunna, Lars Levi, 26, 29, 103–27, 130, 160, 168
 Sunna, Tore, 112
 Suomalainen, Timo, 36, 50
 Suomalainen, Tuomo, 36, 50
Suomen kuvalehti, 41
 Suomen Taideyhdistys, 41–42
 Švc. Mergelės Marijos Paveikslas, 134
 Svenska Kyrkans Församlingsförbund (League of Swedish Church Congregations), 126
 Sweden, 1–3, 16, 38–39, 64, 133–34, 172.
See also Mariadotter, Sister Lydia; Sámi people; Skansen (Sweden); Sunna, Lars Levi; *and names of specific towns*
 Swedish National Museum (Stockholm), 112
 Swordbrothers order, 131, 142

 Tacitus, 37
 Tapiola (Finland), 35–36
Temppeliaukio-kirkko (Helsinki), 15, 15 *fig.*, 36
 Teutonic Knights order, 84, 131, 132
Taitelijan Temppeli (Paateri, Finland), 31, 33 *fig.*, 43–48, 44 *fig.*, 45 *fig.*, 46 *fig.*
 Tegnér, Esaias, 56–57
 Thirty Years' War, 136
 Thomas Aquinas, Saint, 78–79
 Thousand Oaks, California, 23, 53, 62–65, 68, 167, 172
 time, 169–70
 Topelius, Zacharias, 11, 35
 Törnevalla (Sweden), 164
 touch, 167–69
 Trakai (Lithuania), 134, 136
 Trent, Council of, 133
 Trier, 89
 Trinitarian order, 136
 Trondheim, 61, 87

 True Likeness (*Vera effigies imaginis*), 135
Tukkijoella, 35

 Uksáhká, 107, 119, 122
 United States, 6, 12–13, 20, 32, 75, 166. *See also* Norwegian America; *and names of individual states*
 University of Tromsø Museum, 106–8
 Uppsala, 37, 40, 111
 Utsi, Per-Ola, 114

 Vadstena (Sweden), 88, 133
 “Vafðrúðnismál,” 39
 Vaidila (duke), 142
 Vallby (Sweden), 73, 88, 90
 “Vårt Land,” 34
 Växjö (Sweden), 92
Vera effigies imaginis (True Likeness), 135
 Vesterheim Norwegian American Museum (Decorah, Iowa), 17, 59–60
 Vierimä (Finland), 40
 Vikings, 53, 65, 68–70, 110, 162
 Villa Mairea, 35
 Vilnius, 133–36, 141
 Virgin Mary, 24, 25 *fig.*, 48, 80, 84, 89, 99, 100, 100 *fig.*, 135, 143, 164
 Virgin Mary Mother of Mercy. *See* Švc. Mergelės Marijos Paveikslas
 “Völuspá,” 38, 39
Von Abtuhung der Bylder, 85–86
 Vytautas the Great (king), 132, 134

 Walt Disney World (Florida), 62–63
 Warszewicki, Stanislas, 133
 Washington Island, Wisconsin, 62
 Wedding at Cana, 101
 weddings, 48, 55, 68, 101, 168
 Westen, Thomas von, 113
 willow, 83

Winner, Scott, 173–74
 Wisconsin, 51–71, 161, 173–74
 Wittenberg, 99
 Władysław II Jagiełło (king), 132
 World Columbian Exposition (Chicago),
 60–62, 173
 world tree, 39, 169
 World's Fair. *See* World Columbian
 Exposition (Chicago)
 Yggdrasill, 38–39, 169
 Zygmunt I (Žygimantas) (king and
 grand duke), 133