

Old Customs – The Vernacular Word *siðr* and Its Cognates in the Study of (Lived) Religion in Viking and Medieval Scandinavia

ANDREAS NORDBERG

Stockholm University

Abstract

Although they highlight the Norse (religious) term *siðr* ‘custom’ and its cognates, some researchers of pre-Christian Scandinavia suggest that the concept of *religion* involves a Christocentric discourse and should be used cautiously, or even only for Christianity. Some scholars therefore recommend a categorical distinction between pre-Christian (religious) *siðr* and Christian *religion*. This paper contributes to this ongoing discussion. I argue that while it is meaningful to highlight the term *siðr* and its cognates, the distinction between pre-Christian *siðr* and medieval Christian *religion* is problematic. 1) While *siðr* had various meanings in vernacular language, the current debate emphasises only its religious aspect, thus turning the indigenous term into an implicit etic concept. 2) The word *siðr* and its cognates were also used in medieval Scandinavian languages as designations for Christianity, and hence, the categorisation of pre-Christian *siðr* and medieval Christian *religion* is misleading. 3) The distinction between popular *siðr* and formal *religion* is fundamentally based on the two-tier model of *popular/folk religion–religion*. 4) The vernacular (religious) word *siðr* in the sense of ‘religious customs, the religious aspects of the conventional way of life’ and the heuristic category of *(lived) religion* are in fact complementary in the study of religion in both Viking and medieval Scandinavia.

Keywords: Viking and medieval Scandinavia, Old Norse religion, Christianisation, emic–etic, forn siðr (old customs), lived religion.

During¹ the Viking Age and early Middle Ages, roughly between AD 800 and 1200,² Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Iceland (hereinafter referred to collectively as Scandinavia) were transformed into medieval Christian

1 This work was sponsored by Riksbankens Jubileumsfond / The Swedish Foundation for Humanities and Social Sciences.

2 I use ‘Viking Age’ for the period spanning the late 8th to the mid-11th century, and the ‘Middle Ages’ or ‘medieval period’ for the period from the mid-11th century to the early 16th century.

states. One of the key agents of this change was the Catholic Church, both in building up the organisation of the state and in terms of religion, as Old Norse religion³ was abandoned and replaced by Roman Catholic Christianity. This is commonly referred to as a shift in religion. But is this concept appropriate? In recent years some researchers of Merovingian and Viking Age Scandinavia have stated that the concept of religion is Christocentric and thus inadequate for studies of pre-Christian Scandinavia. But what does this actually mean? Were the sacrifices to the gods for a good harvest on Viking Age farms and sanctuaries not expressions of religion? Were the Odin-worshipping warriors not religious? Did pre-Christian divination, magic, eschatology, and much else have nothing to do with religion?

This critique of the concept of *religion* is part of a general ongoing international discussion about the possibility of using such Western concepts and categories in the study of non-Western or pre-Christian European societies. In its modern form *religion* is a Western concept that originated from a Christocentric discourse. Thus, some scholars argue, *religion* presupposes, for example, a church-like institution and denotes a theological, essentialistic monolith separated from other dimensions of society (for an overview of this debate see King 1999, McCutcheon 2000, Saler 2000, Jensen 2003, J. Z. Smith 2004, Cox 2007). This has even led some researchers to suggest that *religion* should be abandoned as an academic concept (cf. Fitzgerald 1997).

It is this debate that some researchers have transferred to research into pre-Christian Scandinavia.⁴ However, these scholars do not argue that the concept of *religion* should be completely excluded from academic nomenclature, but rather that since *religion* involves a problematic Christocentric discourse, the concept should be used cautiously or even only regarding Christianity. Accordingly, scholars of the latter opinion recommend a categorical distinction between medieval Christian *religion* and pre-Christian *customs* corresponding to the Old Norse (= ON.) term *siðr*, the Old Swedish (= OSw.) *siþer*, 'custom', and their cognates.

3 The concept of *Old Norse religion* was originally based on the linguistic concept of *Old Norse languages*, referring to the Nordic-Germanic languages spoken in Scandinavia during the Viking Age and the early medieval period (evident in Norse literature from Iceland and Norway, and on Viking Age rune stones from Norway, Denmark, and Sweden). *Old Norse religion* thus referred to the pre-Christian religion practised by peoples speaking Old Norse languages during this era (Nordberg 2012: 122–130).

4 See, for example, Bredholt Christensen 1998, Jennbert 2000, Blomkvist 2002, 2009, Svanberg 2003, 143–149, Ersgård 2006, 27–30, Nordanskog 2006, 30f., Andrén & Jennbert & Raudvere 2006, 13f., Callmer 2006, 194, Shaw 2011, 9ff, Nordberg 2012, Price 2012, 15, 2013, 164ff., Gunnell 2013, 153f., Andersson 2015, 103. For a critical review of this discussion cf. Lindberg 2009.

The present paper is primarily a contribution to this ongoing discussion within the research into pre-Christian and medieval Scandinavia. Its main focus is on the academic usage of ON. *siðr*, OSw. *siþer*, and cognates, and the suggested categorical distinction between pre-Christian *siðr/siþer* and medieval Catholic Christian *religion*. However, since the paper indirectly touches on the extensive debate on the concept and category of *religion*, I should clarify that I use *religion* as a heuristic cultural-historical concept (cf. Saler 2000, Jensen 2003, J. Z. Smith 2004, Shilbrach 2010, 2012) and, as the reader will observe, I occasionally also use the variant *lived religion* throughout the paper.

Many students of religion have dealt with the relationship between the forms of religion upheld by official religious institutions such as the church and the day-to-day religion of common people which largely lacked official sanction, or so-called ethnic/vernacular/indigenous religions without explicit religious institutions (cf. Vrijhof & Waardenburg (eds) 1979, Badone (ed.) 1990, Anttonen 1992, 2004, Jolly 1996, Pysiäinen 2004, Rydving 2004). During the second half of the 20th century these forms were usually conceptualised as (*official*) *religion*, and *popular* or *folk religion*. Recognising that there are several problems involved in this dichotomy of *religion* – *popular* or *folk religion*, scholars such as David Hall (1997), Robert Orsi (2002), Meredith McGuire (2008), and others instead used *lived religion* as an inclusive category comprising all the religious aspects of life. Starting from the perspective of the interplay between personal agency and larger common structures, the study of *lived religion* is thus the study of religion both inside and outside formal religious institutions, among lay people and religious experts, in both the private and public spheres. It involves the religious aspects of everyday life and those of formal festivals and special events, and it includes both personal beliefs and official theology, as well as mundane routines and official ceremonial. In my view, therefore, the concept of *lived religion* is very useful even in studies of pre-Christian and medieval Scandinavia.

From Viking Age *siðr* to medieval Christian *religion*?

All the researchers who highlight the vernacular world *siðr* and the problems involved in using *religion* as a heuristic concept in studies of pre-Christian Scandinavia maintain that Christianisation represented the introduction of Catholic Christian religion. Some scholars maintain that it even represented the introduction of religion *per se*. For example, Gunnar Nordanskog argues

that Christianisation should not be regarded as ‘a shift in religion’ from ‘one religion to another’, but rather as ‘the introduction of a new element in society in the form of an institutionalised religion’ (Nordanskog 2006, 30f., my translation). A similar view is held by Lars Ersgård, who states that ‘the Christianisation process ... can no longer be regarded as a simple shift in religion. Paganism and Christianity are ... not equivalent and comparable units.’⁵ Neil Price claims that *religion* is ‘a concept that no longer seems to work at all for the Viking Age’ (Price 2002, 15) and suggests that the modern notion of pre-Christian Scandinavian *religion* may fundamentally be a strategic invention by Christian missionaries, who constructed the idea of a coherent non-Christian ‘religion’ from diverse vernacular customs (i.e. ON. *siðr*) as a counterpart to the medieval Christian religion (Price 2013, 165). Fredrik Svanberg states that *religion* is unsuitable ‘for use as a descriptive or analytical category when trying to understand lifeways in Scandinavia before the introduction of Christianity’ (Svanberg 2003, 143f.). And in his series of studies of the Christianisation of the Swedish island of Gotland Torsten Blomkvist applies the concept of *religion* only to ‘the period spanning the Christianisation period ... and the Middle Ages’ (2002, 2009, quotation 2002, 194), since the vernacular languages in pre-Christian Scandinavia lacked a word directly corresponding to *religion*, and Blomkvist considers it ‘impossible to have notions specifying a certain concept if the concept does not exist’ (2009, 196).

Regarding the latter argument, it is of course true that people in pre-Christian Scandinavia lacked many words and concepts signifying certain phenomena that have only been conceptualised in Western discourses. Even the concepts of *gender*, *economy*, *politics*, and *intersectionality*, for example, are Western constructs, just as *religion* is. As such, however, they refer to phenomena that exist or are supposed to exist in some form. This is what makes the concepts relevant. If applicable, they make the objects of our studies more intelligible (cf. Jensen 2001, Schilbrach 2010). It is, I argue, in this context that the issue of *siðr* and *religion* should be viewed. As mentioned, some scholars who conceptualise medieval Christianity as *religion* also argue that the same concept is problematic or even completely inapplicable in studies of pre-Christian Scandinavia, since the vernacular languages lacked any equivalent word. Nevertheless, if we were to adhere fully to this line of reasoning, we should not even apply the concept of *religion* in studies of medieval Christian Scandinavia, since no such equivalent is found in the vernacular languages of this period either.

5 Ersgård 2006, 29f., from Swedish ‘[ett] perspektiv på kristnandeprocessen under vikingatid/tidig medeltid där denna inte längre kan betraktas som ett enkelt skifte av religioner: Hedendom resp. kristendom är i detta perspektiv inte några likvärdiga och jämförbara enheter’.

The common people in medieval Scandinavia certainly did not use the loan word *religion*. The word *religion*, from the Latin *religio*, originated in Roman culture, where it had several parallel meanings, though it was often associated with ceremonial and cultic activities. From there *religio* was adopted by some early church apologists before it gradually fell out of use.⁶ Today's meanings of *religion* in Christian discourse emerged during the 16th century, when the concept was adopted by reformers such as Zwingli and Calvin, with the meanings 'feeling of piety' and '(personal) devotion'. During the 17th century it was also used in the sense of 'a religious system': first among Protestants, above all as philosophically cohesive systems; and later among Catholics as systematised external patterns of religious life (W. C. Smith 1978, 19–50, J. Z. Smith 2004). Thus, although Christianity was gradually introduced to Scandinavia between the 9th and 11th centuries, the term *religion* was not used as a common denotation for Christianity in Latin or in the vernacular languages before the Protestant Reformation.⁷ Indeed, the vernacular words used to encompass the Catholic *traditio*, i.e. theology, liturgy, ceremonial, and popular traditions, etc., in medieval Scandinavia were precisely the same as those previously denoting the pre-Christian religious traditions: ON. *siðr*, OSw. *sīper* ('custom'), medieval Swedish (= MSw.) *sedh*, and ON. *siðvenja*, MSw. *sedhvenia* ('ingrained custom').

From pagan to Christian *siðr* in Old Norse literature

Many students of Viking Age Scandinavia stress that people of this period viewed their religious traditions as part of their *siðr*, their 'custom'. Occasionally, some researchers add that *siðr* also denotes Christianity in some Norse sources. In my view this rather parenthetical reference to the latter meaning is somewhat misleading, since the number of references to medieval Catholic traditions is about the same as the number of occurrences of *siðr* referring to pre-Christian religious customs.

6 From the 5th century *religion* was sporadically used to denote the ceremonial way of life in monasteries or ritual and ritualistic behaviour in general. It is in this sense that the word *religion* is used in the Gothic historian Jordanes' description of the way in which the pagan Germanic Goths worshipped Mars (Wotan) in the 41st chapter of *De origine actibusque Getarum*, (or *Getica*), written at some point shortly after AD 551. cf. Jordanes, *Getica* ch. 41, 1997, 48f.

7 Consequently, the word *religion* is not found in *Ordbok over det norrøne prosasprog* ['Dictionary of Old Norse Prose']. The oldest evidence in Swedish sources dates from 1539, cf. *Konung Gustaf den förstes registratur*, 12: 256, '[Att ni] skole ware wår konungzlige budt hörige och lydöge, både vtij the Werdzlige saker, så och vtij religionen'. See SAOB entry: 'religion'.

The earliest evidence of *siðr* is found in medieval manuscripts from the 13th century, but it is commonly agreed that these texts are also relevant to our understanding of vernacular language and words in the Viking Age. During this period and in the medieval era *siðr* (or its cognates) was used very broadly to mean a ‘way of life, cultural/social/judicial/religious custom’, etc. (cf. Sundqvist 2005 for a semantic overview). When the text emphasises the religious aspects of *siðr*, the term is often preceded by a modifier to indicate whether it refers to old pre-Christian or new Christian religious customs. Instances of the former include, for example, *hæiðin sið* (acc. sing. ‘pagan custom’), *hæiðinna manna sið* (acc. sing. ‘pagan men’s custom’), *forn siðr* (nom. sing. ‘old custom’), *norænvom siþ* (acc. sing. ‘Norse custom’), *fornvum siðvum* (dat. pl. ‘old customs’), *fornra manna sið* (acc. sing. ‘ancient men’s custom’), etc. Occasionally even the alternative compound *siðvenja* ‘ingrained custom’ was used in similar contexts (Fritzner 1896 entry ‘*siðr*’, ONPS entry ‘*siðr*’, ‘*siðvenja*’).

The earliest evidence of *siðr* signifying ‘religion’ or ‘religious practice’ is from the latter part of the 10th century in a *Lausavísa* (no. 10) by skald Hallfrøðr Óttarsson. Here *siðr* refers to Christianity, which had just been introduced (Skj, B1, 159, my translation following Finnur Jónsson):

*Sá 's með Sygna ræsi
siðr, at blót eru kviðjuð;
verðum flest at forðask
fornhaldin skop norna;
láta allir ýtar
Óðins ætt fyr róða;
verðk ok neyddr frá Njarðar
niðjum Krist at biðja.*

The current custom [*siðr*] with the ruler of the Sogn people that sacrifices are forbidden, that we must refrain from all the rules of the Norns that we previously believed in; all people are now abandoning the lineage of Óðinn, even I am forced away from the descendant of Njorðr to worship Christ.

There are some additional examples of *siðr* signifying pre-Christian and Christian religion in 12th-century skaldic poetry. For example, in the anonymous Ólafs *drápa Tryggvasonar* (stanza 10), which relates the actions taken by the Norwegian king Ólafr Tryggvason to convert Norway, the skald states (Skj. B1. 569, my translation):

[...]
*lýð gat lofðungr ráða,
landherr frá sið vöndum
þá hvarf allr ok illum,
ólitt, goðum nitti.*

Forcefully, the lord ruled over the people, then the entire population turned its back on the terrible custom [*siðr*] and renounced the evil gods.

At approximately the same time the skald Einnarr Skúlason called Christianity (gen. sing.) *siðar heilags* ('the holy custom'), in stanza 3 of the poem *Geisli* from 1153 (Skj. B1. 427). Similar expressions also appear in some Scandinavian provincial laws. For example, the Norwegian medieval law of the Eidsiva thing (Chapter 24), stipulates: 'No man shall keep in his house an image of a pagan god [*staf*] or an altar [*stalli*], magic or sacrifices [*vit eða blot*], or that which belongs to pagan custom [*til hæiðins siðar*].' (*Eiðsifabingslög: Kristinn réttir hinn forni*, Chapter 24. In *NGL* 1, 383). This law is preserved in manuscripts dating from the early 14th century.

Expressions such as 'new custom' and 'Christian custom' occur in prose manuscripts dating back as far as the early 13th century, while 'old custom', 'pagan custom', etc. first occur in 14th-century manuscripts. The reason for this seemingly reverse order may be that the oldest manuscripts include homilies and other Christian literature. But this may also indicate something about the modifiers assigned to *siðr*. It is plausible that expressions such as *forni siðr* gained extra authority even in pre-Christian times because *forni* referred to the customs of previous generations. However, it is equally possible that modifiers such as 'old' and 'pagan' were first added during the Middle Ages when the need arose to distinguish between the old pagan and new Christian customs.

The use of ON. *siðr* in the sense of 'Christian religion' is extremely well documented in Old Norse texts from the early 13th century to the 14th century. Much evidence has been chronologically compiled in *Ordbog over det norrøne prosasprog* ('Dictionary of Old Norse Prose' = OPNS). Some examples are: *goða siþo* (acc. pl. 'good customs'); *helgom siþom* (dat. pl. 'holy customs'); *crístins siþar* (gen. sing. 'Christian custom'); *goþom siþom* (dat. pl. 'good customs'); *crístnir siðir* (nom. pl. 'Christian customs'); *sið crístinna manna* (acc. sing. 'Christian men's custom'); *kristni ok þllum góþom siþom* (dat. pl. 'all good Christian customs'); *nýian siþ* (acc. sing. 'new custom'); *retta tru ok goða siðu* (acc. pl. 'correct faith and good customs'); *hann var prestur oc föllcominn i goþom siðom* (dat. pl. 'he was a priest and he was impeccable in good customs'); *þeim retta siðu* (acc. pl. 'the correct customs'); *heilög trúa ok réttir siðir* (nom. pl. 'holy faith and correct customs'); *kristni ok réttra siða* (gen. pl. 'Christian and correct customs'); *með nýium sið ok boðorðum* (acc. sing. 'with new custom and new laws'); etc. (ONPS entry 'siðr'). Johan Fritzner gives further examples: *einn sið at trúa á guð föður* (acc. sing. 'a custom, to believe in God the Father'); *góðum siðum prestsins* (dat. pl. 'the priest's good customs'); *æztu trúar kristins siðar* (gen. sing. 'the best belief in Christian custom'); *hins nýja siðar, er goðin hafa reiðzt* (gen. sing. 'his new customs,

which has made the gods angry’); *nýjan sið at bjóða mönnum aðra trú* (acc. sing. ‘a new custom to impose on people a different faith’); and *í kristnum sið* (dat. sing. ‘in Christian custom [in Christendom]’ (Fritzner 1896, 229).

The shift in religion as *siðaskipti* a ‘shift in custom’ in Old Norse literature

The lived religion was spoken of as ‘custom’ in the Scandinavian vernacular languages both in pre-Christian times and during the Catholic Middle Ages. It is therefore logical that the actual shift in religion was described in Old Norse literature as a shift in custom.

There are many examples: in *Laxdæla saga* Chapter 33 ‘my mind forebodes me, that by that time a shift in custom [*siðaskipti*] will have come about, and your husband will have adopted this custom [*þeim sið*], that we will think is much more exalted’ (ÍF 5, 1984, 90), and in Chapter 40, ‘King Óláfr ordered a shift in custom [*bauð siðaskipti*] in Norway’ (ÍF 5, 1984, 116); in *Færeyinga saga* Chapter 30 ‘Then Sigmundur said: “I also want to inform you that I have changed custom [*at ek hefir tekít siðaskipti*] and that I am a Christian man [*maðr kristinn*] and that I have undertaken Óláfr’s task and message to convert all the people on the [Faroe] Islands to the true faith [*til réttar trúar*]”’ (ÍF 25, 2006, 71) and Chapter 36 ““You have often brought shame upon me,” said Þrandr. “And that you forced me to change custom [*til siðaskiptis*] is what vexes me the most that I allowed myself to be suppressed into doing”’ (ÍF 25, 2006, 79); in *Brennu-Njáls saga* Chapter 100, ‘It was also said that there had been a shift in custom [*siðaskipti*] in Norway and that they had rejected the former superstition [*forma átrúnaði*], and that the King had converted Vestlandet [south-western Norway], Shetland, Orkney and the Faroe Islands to Christianity’ (ÍF 12, 1954, 255); in the sixth chapter of *Þorsteins þáttur uxafóts*, ‘You probably must also adopt a shift in custom [*taka siðaskifti*] and that custom [*sá siðr*] is much better for those who adopt it’ (ÍF 13, 1991, 354); in *Þiðranda þáttur ok Þórhalls*, ‘It seems to me that a shift in custom [*siða skipti*] will come to pass in the future and that a better custom [*siðr betri*] may come to this country’ (Þiðranda þáttur ok Þórhalls 1961, 149). Additional examples are found in the *ONPS* entry ‘*siða-skifti*’.

The formula ‘good old Christian ingrained customs’ in medieval Swedish sources

There is no Swedish equivalent to the rich Old Norse skaldic and saga corpus from Iceland and Norway, but the terms OSw. *siþer*, MSw. *sedh* (‘custom’),

and *sedhvenia* ('ingrained custom', hereinafter translated as 'custom') do occur in other types of Swedish document in the sense of 'Christian religion'. As far as I know, the earliest mention is in the provincial law of the island of Gotland, *Gutalagen*, which states that fines are stipulated for a person who is caught making an invocation or sacrifice *sum ai fylgir cristnum sibi*, 'that does not follow Christian custom' (*Gutalagen* I:4, 1852, 14). The *Gutalagen* is thought to have been written down in the early 13th century, although its oldest surviving manuscript dates from the mid-14th century. There are additional Swedish examples in Christian texts from the 15th century, such as *thæssa høghtidhs sidher* 'these holiday customs' in The Old Swedish Legendary (cf. *Fornsvenska legendariet*, #10, 775), and *helga sidher* 'holy customs' in The Legend of St Catherine (cf. *Aff helga fru kadrin sancte birgitte dotter*, #538). Some examples are also found in the Gustav Vasa Bible, such as *theras fädhers sedher, hwilke monga gudhar hadhe* 'their fathers' customs, which had many gods' (Judith 5:8).

Another interesting expression that often occurs in the Swedish corpus is 'good old ingrained customs', which, like the ON. term *siðr*, was used in both secular and religious contexts. (Several examples are given in Pahlmblad 2001, 367ff. and Berntson 2003, 283–9, with notes). For example, a treaty between Sweden and Denmark from 1438 established that 'each kingdom will retain its name, law, rights, privileges, freedom and good old ingrained customs, both spiritual and secular [*godhe gamble sedhwane, badhe andelighe ok werildzlighe*]' (*STFM* 3, 1895, 181). The phrase 'good old ingrained customs' does not in these cases refer to customs and ways in general; instead, it has the fundamental meaning of 'customary law'. The use of *sedhvenia* ('ingrained custom', from now on translated as 'custom') in the sense of 'religion, religious tradition' was salient to the conflict between the Protestant reformers and the representatives of the old order during the first half of the 16th century in Sweden. The expression 'good old customs' comprised church life as a whole, as regulated by both inherited popular customary law and official practice (Pahlmblad 2001, 368f.), and, to further stress this religious aspect, a modifier, 'Christian', as in 'good old Christian customs', could also be added to the phrase (Berntson 2003, 283–9).

There are many examples. In a letter of protest from the mayor and council in the town of Jönköping to the people in Västergötland Province, dated 4 April 1529, King Gustav Vasa was accused of having 'degraded and disrespected the sacraments and the good old Christian customs [*Sacramenthen och then gode gamble cristelige Sedwänie*] that have been used for the benefit of every Christian person and for the blessing of our poor souls'

(KGR 2, 1864, 357). To avoid rebellion, King Gustav repeatedly promised to respect the old Christian customs. In a letter replying to the people of Västergötland he assured them 'that all good old Christian customs [*goda gambla cristeliga Seduenior*] will be strengthened and maintained and that no heresy or heretical sermons will penetrate the kingdom' (KGR 6, 1875, 83). Gustav wrote to the commoners in Småland Province that he intended to respect the country's 'good old Christian customs' (*gode gamble christelige sedwenior*) and that 'every man may believe and preach what he feels is right and good and that as regards monasteries, monks and nuns, too, all the old customs [*gamle sedwenione*] will be retained which the common man considers good' (KGR 4, 1868, 88). Nonetheless, Gustav Vasa implemented the Reformation, but not until he had consulted some Swedish theologians as to 'whether one may disregard those aspects of holy men's teachings and the churches' ways and customs [*kyrkiones brukningar och sidhwenior*] that are not supported by the Word of God' (OPSS 1, 1914, 228). While the theologian Peder Galle defended the preservation of the old traditions that had been respected for generations 'and have long been the churches' adequate and godly ways and customs [*och lenge haffuer warit kyrkiones skälige och gudheliga brukningar och sedhwänior*]' (OPSS 1, 1914, 230), the reformer Olaus Petri claimed that one had to distinguish between the Word of God and 'the external ways and ceremonies of the churches [*kyrkiones vtwartes brukningar eller ceremonier*]' (OPSS 1, 1914, 237), and that one should be able to disregard 'the churches' ways and customs that are not supported by the true Word of God [*kyrkiones brukningar eller seduenior som jcke haffuer retzliga gudz ordh for sich*]' (OPSS 1, 1914, 230).

Siðr from emic term to etic concept

It is generally acknowledged that the use of emic terms in academic research does not in itself eliminate ethnocentric biases and misunderstandings. The researcher and the people who are the subject of the study usually do not share the same cultural and contextual pre-understanding. The latter do not analyse, systematise, structure, and categorise themselves and the world in which they live as the researcher does. The informants assign different semantic content and values to the terms than the researcher, and while different informants use their terms in various ways, the researcher usually assigns one variant a higher priority than the others. In other words, the researcher is interested in an intercultural understanding, which is why all the terminology he or she uses will be modified to suit this purpose, regardless

of whether the terms have been taken from the native vocabulary or from a Western academic nomenclature (cf. McCutcheon 2000, Paden 2000, Jensen 2001, 2003, 108–12). In his discussion on emic terms and etic concepts Russell T. McCutcheon exemplifies this with the Hindu concepts *bhakti* (approx. ‘devotion to one’s deity’) and *pūjā* (approx. ‘daily orthopraxy’):

Simply put, as soon as *bhakti* and *puja* come from our mouths and pens, they become something entirely different than what they once might have been – for they are now part of an analytic, comparative vocabulary – whether used to understand or explain – rather than a way of life. (McCutcheon 2000, 301).

What McCutcheon demonstrates with *bhakti* and *puja* is also relevant to the academic usage of *siðr* and its cognates. Admittedly, most researchers who emphasise *siðr* are not really using the word as an actual academic concept (but see below), but rather as an instrument to problematise – or even as an argument to abandon – the concept of *religion* in studies of pre-Christian Scandinavia. However, in this negative context the word *siðr* is usually stressed only in a very circumscribed sense, which is implicitly adapted to the academic critique of the concept of *religion*.

To clarify this, let me recapitulate. The words ON. *siðr*, *siðvenja*, OSw. *Siper*, and MSw. *sedh*, *sedhvenia* were used in Scandinavian vernacular languages in both the Viking and Middle Ages. The words had broad and various meanings in both periods. There was no vernacular equivalent to the modern use of the word *religion* in either era. The word *siðr* and its cognates were used partly in the sense of ‘ingrained religious behaviour, religious tradition(s), religious custom’ in both periods. Hence, sources mention both *forn* or *hæiðinn siðr* (‘old, heathen custom’) in the Viking Age, and *ný* or *kristinn siðr* (‘new, Christian custom’) in the medieval Catholic period.

Since the prerequisites are fundamentally the same in both periods, it would be inconsistent to treat the words *siðr* and *religion* differently in studies of the Viking Age and the Middle Ages. However, this is exactly what has often been done. While medieval Catholic Christianity is always conceptualised as *religion*, the word *siðr* is usually emphasised in the very limited sense of pre-Christian ritual and spiritual behaviour (although cf. Blomkvist 2016).

Clearly, the emic-etic problem is relevant here. In a very broad sense the emic terms *siðr* and its cognates encompassed the common ingrained custom, the conventional way of life. Thus, the þing assembly and its judicial activities took place in accordance with the *siðr*. Inheritance and

partition of land were regulated in accordance with the *siðr*, and so on (cf. Sundqvist 2005). Why then are all these dimensions of the pre-Christian *siðr* not juxtaposed with medieval Christian *religion*? Why do pre-Christian myths, conceptions, and depictions of the gods, sacrificial practices, burial customs, and the veneration of the dead represent the particular dimension of the pre-Christian *siðr* that is contrasted with medieval Christian *religion*? The answer, of course, is that this limited selection of comparisons is implicitly justified through analogies and through family resemblance to similar forms of cultural element from other parts of the world, which, from a general religious history perspective are commonly recognised as aspects of religion in the first place.

Popular *siðr* and church *religion* in the Middle Ages?

Of those who have experimented with the possibility of replacing the general concept of *religion* with *siðr*, few have problematised the difficulties that may arise when emic terms are transformed into etic concepts. As far as I know, the only researcher who has discussed this theoretical problem is the historian of religion Torsten Blomkvist (2002, 2009, 2016). In a study on the Christianisation of the Swedish island of Gotland during the Viking and medieval periods Blomkvist initially proposed that the emic term *siðr* could form the basis of a more analytical concept, *ritualised tradition*, the use of which he, for analytical reasons, delimited to the study of pre-Christian times (Blomkvist 2002). In a subsequent study he instead uses the term *siðr* itself as an analytical concept and category, defined as ‘ritualised traditions’ (Blomkvist 2009).⁸ He then contrasts this analytical concept and category of *siðr* ‘ritualised traditions’ with the concept and category of *religion*, which he defines ‘in the usual way as the relation between man and God/gods’ (Blomkvist 2009, 196 (quotation), 207, similar 2002, 17, 196). He also suggests that the relationship between man and God/gods must be institutionalised, which he states was not the case on Gotland prior to the introduction of the Christian Church. He therefore only uses *religion* for (institutionalised)

8 Later, Blomkvist (2016, 149–158) instead defines this analytical concept and category of *siðr* as Sw. ‘*ordningsskapande*’, roughly ‘[way to] create order’. As a means for analysis, he stresses that *siðr* can be applied without ‘any claims to cover every way [the word] *siðr* might have been used during the Viking age. The analytical category is, in this sense, separated from an empirical level’ (quotation, 152, translated from Swedish: ‘*Eftersom begreppet används som analytisk kategori gör definitionen inget anspråk på att täcka in alla de sätt siðr kan ha använts under vikingatiden. Den analytiska kategorin är i den meningen åtskild från en empirisk nivå.*’

medieval Christianity (Blomkvist 2002, 16–22, 195f., 2009, 194ff.).⁹ However, as this narrow definition of *religion* excludes originally pre-Christian religious customs that lived on in the Middle Ages without being sanctioned and institutionalised by the church, Blomkvist proposes that researchers studying medieval Catholic religious traditions in Scandinavia are in fact analysing both *siðr* and *religion*.¹⁰

Although Blomkvist generally argues against the use of *religion* as a universal concept, the model that he proposes appears largely to be a contextually formed variant of the old dichotomy of *religion* and *popular* or *folk religion*. In this opposition *religion* usually refers to an officially institutionalised (and often text-based) religious system such as the Christian Church with its theologically established interpretations of correct doctrine and practice, while *popular* or *folk religion* refers to a type of religion that is more practically adapted to the world in which people live. Popular/folk religion in this sense can refer either to what is known as an indigenous religion (such as Old Norse religion) or to a more syncretistic variant comprising both indigenous traditions and localised elements of a dominant religion (such as medieval popular religious traditions not formally sanctioned by the church) (cf. Vrijhof & Waardenburg (eds) 1979, Badone (ed.) 1990, Anttonen 1992, 2004, Jolly 1996). However, as the two analytical opposites *religion* and *popular/folk religion* cannot be separated in practice, this model has rightly been criticised (cf. e.g. Hall 1997, vii–ix, Saler 2000: 33–50, Rydving 2004; McGuire 2008, 45ff.).

The critique of the categorical distinction between religion and popular/folk religion is in my view also relevant to the suggested division between institutionalised medieval *religion* and pre-Christian and popular medieval *siðr*. As Christianity gradually spread across Scandinavia, and its kingdoms successively became parts of the Christian world, indigenous beliefs and practices intermingled with Christian ideas and customs brought to Scandinavia by missionaries, priests, and monks, as well as by travellers, traders, and craftsmen. Parts of this Christian religion subsequently constituted the formal *traditio* of the medieval Catholic Church. Parts found their place in popular Catholic religiosity. For today's researchers all these customs might seem of diverse origin, springing from Christian, Graeco-Roman, Celtic, and Germanic traditions. However, the people of medieval Scandinavia did not recognise them in this way. They probably experienced the complex of

9 This analytical model has been criticised at length by Lindberg (2009).

10 Blomkvist & Sundqvist 2006, 35. I assume that this is Blomkvist's suggestion, since Sundqvist uses *religion* as a general heuristic concept throughout the rest of his research.

Christian ideas and practices holistically, as a naturally integrated part of their world. Regardless of their background, the traditions were conceived of as Christian because they were accompanied by Christian words and ideas that sanctified and validated them (cf. Hultgård 1992, compare Jolly 1996). Accordingly, the formal *traditio* of the church and the popular traditions in people's daily life formed a lived religious continuum, a connected whole, which was designated in medieval Scandinavian vernacular languages as the Catholic Christian *siðr*, *sedh*, or *sedhvenia*. It was not until the 16th century that Lutheran reformers generally introduced the word *religion* into vernacular Scandinavian languages. It was generally held by this first generation of Scandinavian Protestants that many Catholic 'customs' were not proper Christian religion.

The concepts of *siðr* and *religion* as an implicitly two-tier model

Medieval Catholic Christianity was a heterogeneous phenomenon. There were major differences between ethnic groups and geographical regions, between monastic orders, priests, and laypeople, between theology and lived religion, between how Christianity was practised in rural and urban areas, between professions and between livelihoods. At no point during the Middle Ages did Christianity constitute its own sphere separate from other aspects of people's lives, be it in the fields of politics, the military, the economy and trade, farming, health and remedies, rules of life and penance, etc. The institution of the church and its formal Catholic theology, liturgy, ceremonial, and dogma formed an essential part of medieval Catholicism, yet medieval Christianity was much more than this. To most people the popular Catholic customs of everyday life, which had been passed down from one generation to the next, were often no less significant than attending the Latin mass or the religious professionals' theology and ceremonial.

This, then, gives rise to an essential question: who's aspects of medieval religiosity do we allow to represent medieval Catholicism if we conceptually or even categorically separate the medieval institutionalised *religion* of the Catholic church from medieval popular (religious) *siðr*? I have touched on this issue above. A theoretical framework that postulates that the concept of *religion* only comprises a form of institutionalised church organisation, theology, dogma, liturgy, and ceremonial excludes essential parts of medieval popular Catholicism (cf. Vrijhof & Waardenburg 1979, Badone 1990, Dupré & Saliers 2000). As the historian of religion Anders Hultgård puts it, 'popular religion in medieval and later Scandinavia ... has the same right

to be called Christianity as the official and normative religion'.¹¹ Hultgård discusses certain pre-Christian traditions which, through processes of syncretism and acculturation, were adapted by the medieval church and came to constitute essential elements of popular Christianity.

Were these pre-Christian customs not expressions of *religion* until they were assigned a Christian frame of reference? This rhetorical question of course indirectly touches on a famously longstanding problem of principle within the study of religion. For example, as early as the 1920s, Paul Radin (1927) emphasised that Western evolutionist anthropologists used to compare non-comparable groups with each other to demonstrate how allegedly primitive the colonised indigenous peoples were. Colloquial cultural expressions and trains of thought among the indigenous peoples in the colonies were compared to the lifestyles and philosophical discussions of the intellectual elite in the West. The everyday religious expressions of the indigenous peoples were compared to the institutionalised religious practices and theology of the church. Radin quite rightly pointed to the imbalance of such comparisons. First, most religions lacked precisely the degree of institutionalisation and theological canonisation that characterised the Christian church, so naturally the indigenous peoples lost out in such a comparison. Second, it was misleading to compare the theology and ceremonial of the Christian elite with the everyday religious practices of colonised peoples. As Radin observed, the outcome would undoubtedly have been different if the anthropologists had instead either focused on the existential speculations of religious specialists within each community or compared the studied peoples' religions with phenomenologically more equivalent expressions of the European population's everyday religion, of their popular faith, lore, and customs.

That said, I certainly do not imply that scholars who emphasise the vernacular term *siðr* while criticising the use of the concept of *religion* in studies of pre-Christian Scandinavia are biased in evolutionistic terms. However, the basic problem to which Radin pointed is actually similar to the issue discussed here. Apart from the fact that the conceptual distinction between popular *siðr* and institutionalised church *religion* is highly misleading, since the words ON. *siðr*, *siðvenja*, OSw. *Sīper*, and MSw. *sedh*, *sedhvenia* denoted both popular and formal Christianity in vernacular languages in medieval Scandinavia, there is a problematic imbalance involved in the categorical distinction between medieval Christian popular religious *siðr* and formal

11 Hultgård 1992, 76, quotation from Sw. "Medeltidens och senare perioders folkliga religion i Norden ... har lika stor rätt att kallas kristendom som den officiella och normativa religionen."

religion, as well as in the chronological juxtaposition of pre-Christian (religious) *siðr* with institutionalised medieval church *religion*. In both cases the divisions are based on an implicitly two-tier model, in which popular lived religion risks being placed on one side of the scale, and the institutionalised religion of the medieval Christian clerical elite on the other.

***Siðr* as lived religion**

In conclusion, let me briefly return to my introduction. As mentioned, some researchers of pre-Christian Scandinavia are of the opinion that the general concept of *religion* is problematic – allegedly unlike the ‘emic’ concept of (religious) *siðr*, which is almost never problematised – because it implies some sort of institutionalised Christocentric monolith. This principal difference between *siðr* and *religion* has been even further emphasised by those who suggest a categorical distinction between pre-Christian (religious) *siðr* and medieval Christian *religion*. However, I argue above that this dichotomy between *siðr* and *religion* is fundamentally misleading for two reasons. First, the separation of popular (religious) *siðr* and formal *religion* presupposes an implicitly or explicitly two-tier model which does not represent the lived religion among commoners or the elite in Viking and medieval Scandinavia. Second, the conceptualisation of pre-Christian (religious) *siðr* and medieval Christian *religion* is highly asynchronistic, since the Scandinavian vernacular words *siðr*, *sedhvenia*, and their cognates denoted both popular and formal Christianity in the Catholic Middle Ages.

As also stated in the introduction, I use (*lived*) *religion* throughout the paper heuristically as an inclusive cultural-historical concept comprising all the religious aspects of life. To use the words of my introduction, the study of lived religion is the study of religion both inside and outside the formal religious institutions, among lay people and religious experts, in both the private and public spheres. It involves the religious aspects of everyday life and those of formal festivals and special events, and it includes both personal beliefs and official theology, as well as mundane routines and official ceremonial.

The open and inclusive concept and category of *lived religion* thus comprises everything that can be construed as the religious aspects of ON. *siðr*, OSw. *siþer*, and MSw. *sedh*, *sedvoenia* in both Viking and medieval Scandinavia. For most people pre-Christian indigenous religion, as well as medieval popular and official Christianity, constituted natural, ingrained elements of traditional life, passed down through generations. The vernacular words

siðr, *sedhvenia*, and their cognates are linguistic manifestations of this. In my view, therefore, the heuristic concept of (*lived*) religion and the vernacular term *siðr* and its cognates are best used complementarily in the study of both Viking and medieval Scandinavia.

* * *

ANDREAS NORDBERG, PhD, is Associate Professor at the Department of Ethnology, History of Religions and Gender Studies, Stockholm University, Sweden. E-mail: andreas.nordberg@rel.su.se

Bibliography

Sources

Aff helga fru kadrin sancte birgitte dotter

Codex Holm. A 58 (Jöns Buddes bok), 1480–1491. <http://project2.sol.lu.se/fornsvenska/01_Bitar/B.RL.Legender/B.RL94.A-KatSv.html>, accessed March 1, 2018.

Fornsvenska legendariet

Codex Bildstenianus, Ups. C 528, 1400–1450. <http://project2.sol.lu.se/fornsvenska/01_Bitar/A.R1.B-LegBil.html>, accessed March 1, 2018.

ÍF 5

1984 Laxdæla saga. Íslensk fornrit 5. – Einar Ól. Sveinsson (ed.). Reykjavík: Hið ísländzka fornritafélag.

ÍF 12

1954 Brennu-Njáls saga. Íslensk fornrit 12. – Einar Ól. Sveinsson (ed.). Reykjavík: Hið ísländzka fornritafélag.

ÍF 13

1991 Þorsteins þáttur uxafóts, Harðar saga. Íslensk fornrit 13. – Einar Ól. Sveinsson (ed.). Reykjavík: Hið ísländzka fornritafélag.

ÍF 25

2006 Føreyinga saga. Íslensk fornrit 25. – Ólafur Halldórsson (ed.). Reykjavík: Hið ísländzka fornritafélag.

Gutalagen

1830–1877 *Samling af Sweriges gamla lagar. 7:e bandet. Gotlandslagen*. – D. C. J. Schlyter (ed.). Lund: Berlingska boktryckeriet.

Jordanes, *Getica*

1997 Jordanes. *Getica: Om goternas ursprung och bedrifter*. [Med latinsk parallelltext]. Översättning av Andreas Nordin. Stockholm: Atlantis.

KGR 2

1864 Bref ifrån borgmästare och råd i Jönköping samt menige man I Jönköping, Tveta, Wista, Östbo, Sunnerbo, Westbo, Norra och Södra Wedbo samt Westra härad till Innebyggarna i Västergötland emot konung Gustaf', Svenarum, 4 April 1529. – In: *Konung Gustaf den förstes registratur. 2, 1525*. (Riksarkivet). Stockholm.

KGR 4

1868 Till menige allmogen i Småland om vestgötaherrarnes beskyllningar mot honom, 8 May 1529. – In: *Konung Gustaf den förstes registratur. 4, 1527*. (Riksarkivet). Stockholm.

KGR 6

1875 Dagtingan med de upproriske Westgötar och Smälänningar, Stockholm, 6 May 1529. – In: *Konung Gustaf den förstes registratur. 6, 1529*. (Riksarkivet). Stockholm.

NGL 1

1846 *Norges gamle love indtil 1387. Band 1*. – R. Keyser og P. A. Munch (eds). Christiania.

OPSS 1

1914 *Olaus Petri: Samlade skrifter 1*. – B. Hasselman (ed.). (Sveriges kristna studentrörelse). Uppsala.

Skj, B1

1973 *Den norsk-islandske Skjaldedigtning*. Finnur Jónsson (ed.). B. Rettet text. Første bind. København: Rosenkilde & Bagger.

STFM 3

1895 Fördrag mellan fullmäktige af Svenska och Danska rådet om konung Eriks återintagande, Kalmar, 9 June 1438. – In: *Sverges traktater med främmande magter: jemte andra dit hörande handlingar. D. 3, 1409–1520*. – O.S. Rydberg (ed.). Stockholm: Norstedt.

Piðranda þátr ok Þórhalls

1961 Piðranda þátr ok Þórhalls. – In: *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta*, band 2. – Ólafur Halldórsson (ed.). Kjöbenhavn: Ejnar Munksgaard.

Literature

Andersson, Gunnar

2015 Mehr als Götterverehrung. – *Wikinger!* (The Swedish History Museum/Museums Partner), 101–9. Schallaburg.

Andrén, Anders & Kristina Jennbert & Catharina Raudvere

2006 Old Norse Religion: Some Problems and Prospects. – A. Andrén, K. Jennbert & C. Raudvere (eds), *Old Norse Religion in Long-Term Perspectives. Origins, Changes, and Interactions, an International Conference in Lund, Sweden, June 3–7, 2004*, 11–4. Lund: Nordic Academic Press.

Anttonen, Veikko

1992 The Concept of Folk Religion in Religious Studies. – *Ethnographica et folkloristica Carpathica* 7–8, 253–68.

2004 Theory and Method in the Study of Folk Religion. – *Temenos* 39–40, 2003–2004, 73–80.

Badone, Ellen (Ed.)

1990 *Religious Orthodoxy & Popular Faith in European Society*. – E. Badone (ed.). Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Berntson, Martin

2003 *Klostren och reformationen. Upplösningen av kloster och convent i Sverige 1523–1596*. Skellefteå: Norma.

Blomkvist, Torsten

2002 *Från ritualiserad tradition till institutionaliserad religion: strategier för maktlegitimering på Gotland under järnålder och medeltid*. (Diss. Teologiska institutionen, Uppsala universitet, Uppsala.

2009 The Coming of Religion: Legitimation of Power on Gotland during the Iron Age and Middle Ages. – J. Staecker (ed.), *The Reception of Medieval Europe in the Baltic Sea Region*, 193–213. (Acta Visbyensia 12). Visby: Gotland University Press.

2016 *Att hasla völl* inför fältslag. En analys utifrån kategorin *siðr*. – H. Rydving, S. Olsson (eds), *Krig och fred i vendel- och vikingatida traditioner*, 144–66. (Stockholm Studies in Comparative Religion, 37). Stockholm: Stockholm University Press.

Blomkvist, Torsten & Olof Sundqvist

2006 Religionsbegreppets tillämpning i handböcker om forskandinavisk och germansk religion. – B. Lindgren Ödén, P. Thalén (eds), *Nya mål? Religionsdidaktik i en tid av förändring*, 20–7. (Religionsvetenskapliga studier från Gävle 2). Uppsala: Swedish Science Press.

Bredholt Christensen, Lisbeth

1998 Archaeology and concepts of Religion. – A.-C. Andersson et al. (eds), *The Kaleidoscopic Past: Proceedings of the 5th Nordis TAG Conference*,

Göteborg, 2–5 April 1997, 435–42. (Gotarc series C, 16). Göteborg: Göteborgs universitet.

Callmer, Johan

2006 Ornaments, Ornamentation, and Female Gender: Women in Eastern Central Sweden in the Eighth and Early Ninth Centuries. – A. André, K. Jennbert, C. Raudvere (eds), *Old Norse Religion in Long-Term Perspectives. Origins, Changes, and Interactions, an International Conference in Lund, Sweden, June 3–7, 2004*, 89–94. Lund: Nordic Academic Press.

Cox, James L.

2007 *From Primitive to Indigenous. The Academic Study of Indigenous Religions*. Hampshire: Ashgate.

Dupré, Louis & Saliers, Don E. (eds)

2000 *Christian Spirituality: Post-Reformation and Modern*. New York: Crossroads.

Ersgård, Lars

2006 Dödens berg och Guds hus – förfäderskult, kristnande och klostret i Alvastra i den tidiga medeltidens Östergötland. – L. Ersgård (ed.), *Helgonets boning: Studier från forskningsprojektet "Det medeltida Alvastra"*, 23–140. (Lund Studies in Historical Archaeology 5). Lund.

Fitzgerald, Timothy

1997 A Critique of "Religion" as a Cross-Cultural Category. – *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 9, 91–110.

Fritzner, Johan

1896 *Ordbog over det gamle norske sprog. 3:e Bind, R–Ö*. Kristiania.

Gunnell, Terry

2013 From one High-One to Another: The Acceptance of Óðinn as Preparation for the Acceptance of God. – R. Simek (ed.), *Conversions: Looking for Ideological Changes in the Early Middle Ages*, 153–78. (Studia Mediaevalia Septentrionalia, 23). Vienna: Fassbender.

Hall, David,

2007 *Lived Religion in America: Toward a History of Practice*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Hultgård, Anders

1992 Religiös förändring, kontinuitet och ackulturation/synkretism i vikingatidens och medeltidens skandinaviska religion. – B. Nilsson (ed.), *Kontinuitet i kult och tro från vikingatid till medeltid*, 49–103. (Projektet Sveriges kristnande. Publikationer 1). Uppsala: Lunne böcker.

Jennbert, Kristina

2000 Archaeology and pre-Christian Religion in Scandinavia. – *Current Swedish Archaeology* 8, 127–41.

Jensen, Jeppe Sinding

- 2001 Universals, General Terms and the Comparative Study of Religion. – *Numen* 48, 238–66.
 2003 *The Study of Religion in a New Key. Theoretical and Philosophical Soundings in the Comparative and General Study of Religion*. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press.

Jolly, Karen Louise

- 1996 *Popular Religion in Late Saxon England*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.

King, Richard

- 1999 *Orientalism and Religion. Postcolonial Theory, India and 'The Mystic East'*. London: Routledge.

Lindberg, Anette

- 2009 The Concept of Religion in Current Studies of Scandinavian pre-Christian Religions. – *Temenos* 45(1), 85–119.

McCutcheon, Russell T.

- 2000 Taming Ethnocentrism and Trans-Cultural Understandings. – *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 12, 294–305.

McGuire, Meredith B.

- 2008 *Lived Religion: Faith and Practice in Everyday Life*. Oxford University Press.

Nordanskog, Gunnar

- 2006 *Föreställd hedendom. Tidigmedeltida skandinaviska kyrkportaler i forskning och historia*. (Väger till Midgård 9). Lund: Nordic Academic Press.

Nordberg, Andreas

- 2012 Continuity, Change and Regional Variation in Old Norse Religion. – C. Raudvere, J. P. Schjødt (eds), *More than Mythology. Narratives, Ritual Practices and Regional Distribution in pre-Christian Scandinavian Religions*, 119–152. Lund: Nordic Academic Press.

ONPS

- 1983- *Ordbog over det norrøne prosasprog*. København: Den arnamagnæanske kommission.

Orsi, Robert

- 2002 *The Madonna of 115th Street: Faith and Community in Italian Harlem, 1880–1950*. Yale University Press.

Paden, William E.

- 2000 Prototypes: Western or Cross-Cultural? – *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 12, 307–13.

Pahlmblad, Christer

- 2001 Predikan i Sverige under reformationstiden. – *Luthersk påskpredikan i Norden. 1. Från reformation till nutid*, 356–99. København: Nordisk Ministerråd.

Price, Neil

- 2012 Mythic Acts. Material Narratives of the Dead in Viking Age Scandinavia. – C. Raudvere, J. P. Schjødt (eds), *More than Mythology. Narratives, Ritual Practices and Regional Distribution in pre-Christian Scandinavian Religions*, 13–46. Lund: Nordic Academic Press.
- 2013 Tro og ritual. – G. Williams, P. Pentz, M. Wemhoff (eds), *Viking*, 162–5. København: Nationalmuseet.

Pyysiäinen, Ilkka

- 2004 Folk Religion and Theological Correctness. – *Temenos* 39–40 (2003–2004), 151–65.

Radin, Paul

- 1927 *Primitive Man as Philosopher*. New York: Appleton.

Rydving, Håkan

- 2004 Saami Religion and Saami Folk Religion. What is the Difference? – *Temenos* 39–40 (2003–2004), 143–9.

Saler, Benson

- 2000 *Conceptualizing Religion: Immanent Anthropologists, Transcendent Natives, and Unbounded Categories*. New York: Berghahn.

SAOB

- Svenska akademiens ordbok*. <<http://saob.se>, accessed March 1, 2018.

Shaw, Philip A.

- 2011 *Pagan Goddesses in the Early Germanic World. Eostre, Hreda and the Cult of Matrons*. Studies in Early Medieval History. London: Duckworth.

Schilbrack, Kevin

- 2010 Religions: are there any? – *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 78, 1112–38.
- 2012 The Social Construction of “Religion” and its Limits: a Critical Reading of Timothy Fitzgerald. – *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 24, 97–117.

Smith, Jonathan Z.

- 2004 Religion, Religions, Religious. – J. Z. Smith, *Relating Religion: Essays in the Study of Religion*, 179–96. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Smith, Wilfred Cantwell

- 1978 *The Meaning and End of Religion*. London: SPCK.

Sundqvist, Olof

2005 *Siðr. – Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde*. 28, 273–6. Berlin-New York: de Gruyter.

Svanberg, Fredrik

2003 *Decolonizing the Viking Age* 1. (Acta archaeologica Lundensia. Series in 8o, 43). Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International.

Vrijhof, Pieter Henrik & Jacques Waardenburg (eds)

1979 *Official and Popular Religion: Analysis of a Theme for Religious Studies*. – P. H. Vrijhof & J. Waardenburg (eds). The Hague-Paris-New York: Mouton Publishers.

