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A page from the Swedish vicar Jonas A. Nensén's (1791–1881)
notations of Sami words in northern Sweden (Uppsala University
Library, R 649, p. 34).

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the flight attendant and the children. Having arrived in Iceland, they go to Reykjavik to their maternal grandmother and grandfather's house, they visit a café among other things, they are "á Þingvöllum," they go to Akureyri, they go "með rútu til Borgarness," they come back to Reykjavik, and then they return home. What I find especially praiseworthy in the textbook are the dialogues that recur systematically in the different lessons. It is also valuable to acquaint oneself with life and institutions and information about language use, and this is given in a special section for each lesson. In the first lesson, one is told, for example, how to go from Germany to Iceland and how first names and patronymics are used in Iceland, and one is taught ten "nützliche Wendungen." In later lessons, we are told what greetings are used, what special Icelandic holidays there are, and we learn a little about Icelandic places and get practical information about emergency numbers in case of illness, etcetera. It is obvious that the readers of the book will get a picture of modern Iceland and how it functions. A survey of Icelandic grammar is given at the end of the book as well as solutions to the exercises and a word list. The progression in the book seems to be well thought out, which is hardly surprising considering the authors' previous work. *Isländisch. Ein Lehrbuch für Anfänger und Fortgeschrittene* is actually based on earlier textbooks that the authors have compiled and tried out in practice.

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Sara E. Ellis Nilsson, *Creating Holy People and Places on the Periphery. A Study of the Emergence of Cults of Native Saints in the Ecclesiastical Provinces of Lund and Uppsala from the Eleventh to the Thirteenth Centuries*, Gothenburg: University of Gothenburg 2015, ISBN 9789162892746, 372 pp.

In her dissertation Sara Ellis Nilsson studies how the cults of native saints affected the development of ecclesiastical administration and the creation of dioceses in the provinces of Lund and Uppsala in the early phases of Scandinavian Christianization. Her doctoral project is very ambitious, not least because the topic chosen by the author is anything but easy for several reasons.

Firstly, the period under investigation—the three centuries of Scandinavian Christianization—is demanding because the available sources

are so few, fragmentary and heterogeneous. Studying the period from the eleventh to the thirteen centuries is very much like putting together a puzzle, of which the majority of the pieces are missing. At the same time study of this topic requires not only knowledge of history, but also of the latest research in at least archaeology and theology in order to be able to form a full picture of what happened during these centuries.

Secondly, the geographical area chosen for investigation is very large including, as it does, the territories of present-day Denmark, Sweden and Finland. This means that full understanding of the topic would require knowledge of the latest research in three different countries. I personally greatly appreciated the inclusion of Finland in this study because, due to linguistic difficulties, Scandinavian scholars often tend to exclude Finland from Nordic comparisons even though the diocese of Turku was an integral part of the medieval Swedish Kingdom and the province of Uppsala.

In addition to the normal introduction discussing the topic, methods, terminology and sources, Sara Ellis Nilsson's dissertation comprises three large research chapters, each concentrating into one specific topic. The first discusses the native saints and the spread of their cults in the Lund and Uppsala provinces (pp. 67–101). The second presents the early history of all the Danish and Swedish dioceses and observes how the cult of native saints developed in each (pp. 103–205). The last chapter takes a comparative view and tries to answer the question of what the role of native saints and the respective *loca sanctorum* was in a possible competition between different ecclesiastical centres and finally in the development of these centres into official dioceses (pp. 207–255). There is no separate concluding section, the conclusions being drawn at the end of the third chapter (pp. 250–255). The book also includes a Swedish *Sammanfattning* ['Summary'] (pp. 257–266), large appendices (pp. 269–342) and a bibliography (pp. 343–371). The division of the book seems descriptive and perhaps even unsurprising, but is intentionally chosen to support the argumentation of the dissertation.

In general, the author has mastered her large and manifold topic well. Special mention must be made of her use of the large, medieval fragment material in Denmark, Sweden and Finland, which has not so far been much exploited by scholars and which makes Ellis Nilsson's dissertation a pioneering work in the field. The fragments form the work's main source material and the author shows that she masters this difficult material. Unfortunately the same cannot be said of how she uses her secondary source material. The work includes errors in interpretation of the Latin sources, either at the level of reading or of understanding the

phraseology in the sources. Similarly there are some minor mistakes in her text, such as dating the moving of the Finnish episcopal see from Nousis (not Röntämäki!) to Korois “in about 1220” (citation p. 197, same year given also on p. 16), when it is well-known from the sources that it took place a decade later. Obviously this and other similar mistakes are insignificant in the whole content of the book but they demonstrate that it is not easy to master the history of the whole of Scandinavia over three different centuries and with only a limited source material.

All in all, Sara Ellis Nilsson’s dissertation opens the way for new interpretations of the history of the Christianization period and the use of fragment material especially makes her book an important reference work for others interested of this important but still far too little studied field of research.

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Peter Fjågesund, *The Dream of the North. A Cultural History to 1920* (Studia Imagologica 23), Amsterdam & New York: Rodopi 2014, ISBN 9789042038370; e-ISBN 9789401210829, 573 pp.

This comprehensive book deals with the cultural history of the North, from Antiquity to the end of the First World War and is centered around three themes: *The Arctic*, as an essential part of northern identity; *The Northern Cultural Revival*, including the rediscovery of Nordic mythology and the Icelandic Sagas; and *The Changing View of Nature*, with an aesthetic of the sublime rather than of the cultivated landscape.

This “North,” a part of Western civilization, is defined as “northern or Protestant Europe, Russia and North America, together with the enormous, largely empty (that is, unpopulated) expanse to their north, i.e. the Arctic” (p. 17). Fjågesund treats this vast region as a unit and defines his approach as “macro-historical” and “macro-cultural” (p. 17).

An important assumption is a dialectical relationship between the cultural history of the North and “the South,” here defined broadly as the Mediterranean region (p. 17). A tension between north and south is found, for example, in a comparison between the Mediterranean Re-