

EDITORIAL NOTE

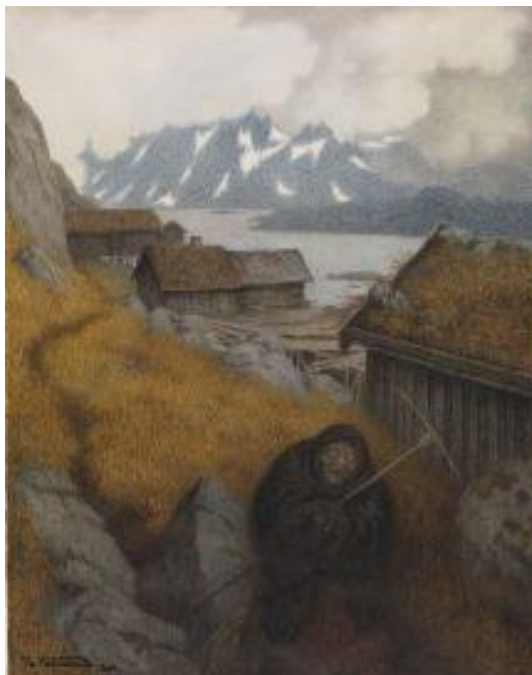


Fig. 1. Teodor Kittelsen, *Pesta farer landet rundt*, 1904, pencil and watercolor on paper, 650 x 520 mm, Nasjonalmuseet for kunst, arkitektur og design (Oslo, Norway), public domain: <https://www.nasjonalmuseet.no/samlingen/objekt/NG.K.H.B.00061>

*Johnni Langer*<sup>1</sup>

Editor in Chief

For over a hundred years the famous illustrator Teodor Kittelsen carried out several works with the theme of the black plague which wiped out many people in Scandinavia and Europe during the Middle Ages. Also known as “The Great Death of Men” in Norway (1349), personified as *Pesta*, an old ugly woman wearing a red skirt who would bring the disease to

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all the farms and corners of the country. *Pesta* was a true demonization of the disease and the people who transmitted it, in addition to an artistic attempt to embody the timeless fear of death (Holmøy, 2008, p. 75). Teodor Kittelsen's melancholic illustrations reflect the encounter with tragedy, but also advocate the reconstruction and resumption of the daily life. In this way, Scandinavian art and folklore are up-to-date and provide psychological and symbolic encouragement for our own time, as during this 2020's pandemic.

With this short introduction, we reinforce the importance of ancient and medieval Scandinavian studies. They also provide a link between the past and the present. Thus, *Scandia Journal of Medieval Norse Studies* comes to contribute both to the advancement and to dissemination of such research. Furthermore, the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 has provided new societal configurations, especially in our relationship with others and also with ourselves. In the same way, we noticed how essential science, art and culture are to human condition.

The third edition of the journal approved twelve articles in English, one in French, two in Spanish, three in Italian and two in Portuguese.

A variety of themes is represented in these articles, in which the Icelandic sagas constitute the field with the largest quantity. Professor Reinhard Hennig (University of Agder) presents an analysis of natural resources as a promoter of norms, values and behavior in literary narratives (*Sagas for sustainability? Commons, conflict and cooperation in the sagas of icelanders*). Professor Mariano González Campo discusses the historical relations between the Spanish and Norwegian courts during the 12th century (*En er hon kom í Spaniam... Some historical aspects of the relations between the Castilian and Norwegian courts in the Middle Ages according to the Icelandic Blómstrvalla saga*), while Nicola Martellozzo analyzes the representations of magic and shamanism about the Finnar (*At the border of the saga: Finnar, prophecies and visions in the Vatnsdæla saga*). Professor Ármann Jakobsson and Yoav Tirosh (University of Iceland) review the traditional division of the sagas of Icelanders into early, classical and post-classical sagas, and discuss some of the foundational principles of this tripartite categorisation (*The 'decline of realism' and inefficacious Old Norse literary genres and sub-genres*). Dan Laurin analyzes the lives of saints and compares them with *draugar* narratives

*(The everlasting dead: similarities between the holy saint and the horrifying draugr)*. Fiorella Di Fonte analyzes the theme of magic and curses in Icelandic society (*Cursing words in the Stjúpmæðrasögur*).

Two contributions aimed at Norse mythology: Professor Ugnius Mikučionis (University of Bergen) discuss that the *dvergar* in Old Norse sources hardly are an all-male race deprived of family life and of the possibility to have children (*Dwarfs' family relations and female dwarfs in some medieval nordic sources*); Virginie Adam discusses the structure of compilation and transmission of the eddic poem *Reginismál* (*Form, speech and discourse in Reginismál*).

Medieval Scandinavia is the subject of research in works such as Grzegorz Bartusik's (University of Silesia in Katowice), who analyses the civilizing process of Christianization of medieval Iceland on a mental and linguistic micro-scale in the theoretical perspective of historical cognitive linguistics (*Himna smiðr – the ancient Hebrew conceptual metaphor God is the maker of heaven in Old Icelandic language and literature as a marker of christianization in Iceland*). Antonius Gerardus Maria Poppelaars debates the influences of Old Norse in the formation of the English language during the Middle Ages (*Husbands, Outlaws and Kids: the influence of Old Norse on the English language*). Thiago Natário discusses the idea of a Norman ethnic identity (*The construction of an identity in early Normandy: ethnogenesis of the gens normannorum*). Matheus Brum Domingues Dettmann analyzes two specific moments in the life of Rouen's third Norman sovereign, Richard, the fearless (*From Bayeux to Laon: Richard, the fearless and the building of political aliances with Scandinavians and Franks*). Francesco Palma investigates the reasons for the collapse of the Nordic presence in medieval Greenland (*Ideological bases and historiographic constructions about migrationist hypotheses regarding the end of Norse Greenland*). Caio de Amorim Féo analyzes Nordic raids within the new concept of global history (*Viking raids in a new light: towards a Global Viking Age*). Denis Sukhino-Khomenko investigates themes of Nordic legalism in runes and in Old English texts (*Twelve angry thegns: some possible Old Norse legalisms in Old English texts*)

Reception studies are the focus of three articles: Professor Francesco Sangriso (University of Genoa) analyses Wagner's draft drama and the Old Norse sources in order to highlight the problematic relationship between Wieland and the ancient Germanic mythology (*The work that does not exist: Richard Wagner and the legendary blacksmith*). Alberto Robles Delgado investigates

films that had Nordic adventurers as their theme (*Projecting the history: a journey through viking cinematography*). Alexander Saenko analyses the evolution of Russian-speaking Scandinavia studies in the post-Marxist period, as well as its current state (*The early Swedish state in the late Soviet and post-Soviet works of Russian-speaking historians*).

Archeology was also present in the third edition, with two works: Selene Mazza writes a contextual analysis of Viking-Age graves with animal remains from Scotland, investigating human-animal relationships in a funerary context within this region (*New land, old customs? Viking-Age graves with animal remains from Scotland*) and Are Skarstein Kolberg discusses the possibilities of localizing courtyard sites in the landscape and of determining its functions by looking at factors such as toponyms (place names) and topography (*Between Toponymy, Topography and Temporality. Towards a Predicative Model for Localising Courtyard Sites*).

The interview section (*Myth and folklore in the circum-Baltic area*) presents a special dialogue with Professor Etunimetön Frog, from the University of Helsinki, Finland. Mythology, ancient religion, folklore and language are some of the themes that were discussed, deeply enriching knowledge about Scandinavia and folklore.

This edition features nine translations into Spanish and Portuguese. In the free translation section, Professor Luis Lerate translated the medieval poem *Sólarljóð* (*The Song of the Sun*), which has Christian visionary content, while maintaining the traditional metric style of the Norse Mythology.

Eight translations are part of the special dossier *Vikings and Norse Myths in the Western literary reception*, with works produced between the 18th and 20th centuries. This is an unprecedented dossier in Romance languages within the area of Norse studies, contributing even more to the research on reception. Susan Tsugami and José Reinaldo Lopes translated Thomas Gray's *Descent of Odin* (1778), one of the most important mythology writings after the *Nordic Renaissance*. Álvaro Bragança Júnior presents a translation of the poem *An die nordische Dichtkunst* (1789) by Friedrich David Gräter, and the beginning of interest in Scandinavia by Germany. Vitor Menini and Johnni Langer feature the translation and analysis of Swedish poem *Vikingen* (1811) by Erik Gustaf Geijer, one of the most important literary works for the diffusion of the modern Viking's image. Enrique Santos Marinas offers the reader his translation of *The Song of Oleg the Prescient* (1822) by Aleksandr S. Pushkin, an important work

produced in Russia. With regard to Romantic France, Luciana de Campos contributed with the poem *L'Épée d'Angantyr* (1862) by the writer Leconte de Lisle, influenced by the eddic poem *Hervararkviða*. The United States was represented by the writer Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and his poem *The Challenge of Thor* (1863), translated to Portuguese and analyzed by Victor Hugo Sampaio and Guilherme Mazzafera. The last two poems in this dossier come from Victorian England and the beginning of the 20th century: *The Story of Sigurd* (1890), by Andrew Lang (translation by Eduardo Boheme Kumamoto) and *The Folk of the Mountain Door* (1914), written by William Morris (translation by Rafael Silva Fouto). Certainly, this dossier will be a great contribution to the study of the literary reception of Nordic themes in modern Europe, in both Portuguese and Spanish languages.

The reviews section includes an analysis of two books and a film. Pablo Gomes de Miranda presents the review of the book *Influences of Pre-Christian Mythology and Christianity on Old Norse Poetry* (2018) by Andrew McGillivray; and Alberto Robles Delgado discusses the book *Germanic Myths in the Audiovisual Culture* (2020), organized by Paloma Ortiz-de-Urbina. Finally, Leandro Vilar analyzes the film *Valhalla* (2019).

We are very grateful for all contributions to this edition, in particular to all professors and researchers who wrote peer reviews (and who are listed at the end of this editorial). We wish you all a great reading and also would like to invite interested parties to contribute in the thematic dossier of Scandia's next edition, scheduled for 2021: *Norse myths in the artistic reception*.

### **Bibliographical references**

HOLMØY, Trygve. Commentary (Pesta on the Stairs By Theodor Kittelsen), *Academic Medicine*, Vol. 83, No. 1, January 2008, p. 75.

KITTELSEN, Teodor. *Svartedauen*. Khristiania: L. E. Tvedtes Forlag, 1901.

***List of reviewers – Scandia 3, 2020:***

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