Heathendom's Return: The Cultural and Romanticized Revival of Norse Paganism in the Norwegian Black Metal Church Arsons

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Introduction

Ever since Varg Vikernes, sole composer of the one-man Norwegian black metal band Burzum, burned down Fantoft stave church in Bergen, Norway, on June 6, 1992, members and fans of the Norwegian black metal scene started a series of church arsons across the Norwegian frontier between 1992 and 1995. Local newspapers linked the church arsons with Satanism since the satanic rhetoric of many black metal bands was fueled by anti-Christian sentiment. While many of the Norwegian bands advocated Satanism, many others did not. This even applied to Varg Vikernes who associates himself with Norse paganism, specifically of the Odalism branch.[1] A fragment of the Norwegian black metal scene was fascinated with Viking culture and Germanic paganism and embraced those ideas in their war against Christianity instead of Satanism. These artists followed the narrative of Christians violently imposing their religion upon their pagan ancestors during the tenth and eleventh centuries of Norway through the actions of Norwegian kings Olaf Trygvason I and his son St. Olaf Haraldson.

While these invasions did occur, the church arsons of the early Norwegian black metal scene expand into more than just anger towards history. Romanticism is a huge element of black metal lyrics and imagery and the use of pagan imagery in the scene represented the national romanticism embedded in the music. With hatred towards the violence behind the Christianization during the medieval period, the church arsons of the early Norwegian black metal scene represented a synthesis of the fascination of Norse mythology and Norwegian romantic nationalism.

Background of Church Arsons

Black metal is a subgenre of heavy metal music, under the umbrella term labeled extreme metal. Black metal had a "first wave" in Europe and some parts of South America during the 1980s. Bands such as Venom, Bathory, Hellhammer, Celtic Frost, and Sarcofago were part of this first wave sharing multiple qualities including lo-fi production, guttural or shrieked vocals, barbaric drumming, primitive guitar riffs, and a fascination for morbid and occult imagery. Scholars such as K. Granholm suggest that black metal's "first wave" during the 1980s was overtly satanic to where it was the foundation of the scene as many of these bands featured imagery and lyrics dealing with topics such as Satanism and occultism.[2]

Many cite Scandinavia, especially Norway, as the home of the second wave of black metal. Bands such as Mayhem, Burzum, Darkthrone, Immortal, and Emperor, took the sound of the first wave bands and refurbished it into something sonically darker in response to the death metal scenes in the United States and Sweden.[3] As opposed to the first wave bands, the early Norwegian black metal scene had an ideology: bands were militantly opposed to Christianity and displayed their disdain by embracing anti-Christian ethos such as Satanism and participating in criminal activities such as church arson and grave desecration. Mayhem's guitarist Øystein Aarseth, also known as Euronymous, is accredited for encouraging these activities but Varg Vikernes is accredited for participating in the arsons of churches namely Fantoft stave church in Bergen, Holmenkollen Chapel in Oslo, Skjold Church in Vindajford, and Asane Church in Bergen, all burned during 1992.[4]

It is no question that the Norwegian black metal scene was fiercely against Christianity, but experts question the impact Satanism had on the church arsons. Satanism was an important theme for the Norwegian black metal scene. The scene derived from the first wave of black

metal which was explicitly Satanic, but experts find that apart from bands such as Mayhem and Gorgoroth who espoused Theistic Satanic beliefs, the Norwegian black metal scene was not explicitly Satanic compared to the first wave. Many of the second-wave bands had brief references to Satanism.[5] Experts suggest that the use of Satanism in black metal has been sensationalized by the media in the form of a moral panic as they linked the anti-Christian stance of these artists with Satanism.[6]

Newspaper articles featured sensationalist reports on the church arsons, suggesting that these were crimes motivated by Satanism. One example is a report concerning the arson of Fantoft stave church in *Bergens Tidende.* A seventeen-year-old boy proclaimed that Satanists were behind the arson since the structure was burned on Saturday, June 6. This was symbolism to 666, the Number of the Beast, as the church was burned on the sixth day of June, the sixth month of the year, and Saturday was the sixth day of the week.[7] Another example includes a report from *Verdens Gang* describing the burning of Revheim church, a church built in Stavanger 127 years before it burned down. Investigators suggested that the church was burned by local Satanists as they found burned hymn books suggesting a satanic ritual may have occurred and also identified drawings of pentagrams in a nearby bunker.[8] However not all these reports added up with the moral panic. Another report from *Verdens Gang* looked at the findings of the same church burned at Stavanger and found that the church was burned not out of advocacy for Satanism but for revenge against Christians who allegedly destroyed drawings in the perpetrators' cave.[9] It is unknown whether the suspected perpetrators had any affiliation with Satanism or not. An article from *Bergensavisen* reporting on the burning of Holmenkollen church attempted to connect this arson with the one at Fantoft; however, they could not find any connection between the Holmenkollen arson and Satanism.[10]

The use of Satan in the Norwegian black metal scene was used in a heathen concept instead. Satan represented the adversary of Christendom as many of these artists longed for a pre-Christian past.[11] While Varg Vikernes still denies many of the church arson he committed back in the 1990s, he does justify the wave of arsons. Around 1994, Metallion from *Slayer Mag* interviewed Vikernes during his stay in prison where he discusses the importance of Germanic paganism in his band's ideology. In this interview, Varg does make some nods to Satanism despite being a pagan. He states that with the murder of Euronymous in 1993, 1994 would have him mobilize support from multiple heathens in Norway to have him fight against his opponents, claiming that "The victory of Vikings is at hand. Odin lives on forever, the one eyed [sic] Satan."[12] At the same time, Vikernes claims to reject the use of the word Satanism to avoid misinterpretation but asserts that regardless of what title is used, the ideology of Burzum is based on "The total destruction of Christendom in Scandinavia."[13] While Vikernes' plan of pagan mobilization did not follow through due to his prison sentence, his supposed allegiance to paganism symbolized his opposition to Christianity.

The irony behind the church burnings is that many of the Norwegian black metal scene were not even pagan. Other black metal bands, notably those with pagan themes and imagery, supported the idea of returning Norway to Heathendom as they assert that the Catholic Church imposed Christianity on their heathen ancestors. Tomas "Samoth" Haugen of the black metal band Emperor explains that he had been fascinated with Viking culture to connect with his Norwegian heritage rather than religious purposes similar to modern Asatru. To Samoth, Norway was a heathen land corrupted by Christian values and the church burnings, including the arson of Skjold church, expressed a call for Norway to return to what was seen as its legitimate heritage.[14]

Another artist, Jorn Inge Tunsberg of the band Hades, also justifies his actions of burning Asane Church in Norway during the early 1990s. He claims to be aware of Norway's history and criticized organized religion in favor of a Viking-inspired Norway and these views are reflected in his music.[15] From the testimonies of artists that were convicted of these church arsons, one can understand that many of these church burnings represented a cultural war against Christianity. The fascination with paganism was not for religious purposes, but rather a sense of national romanticism. Norse mythology was considered the true heritage of Norway and restoration of paganism symbolize what these bands considered the authentic culture of Norway.

Christianization of Norway

Many describe the 1990s Norwegian church arsons as a continuation of the power struggle between Christendom and Heathendom that occurred between the reigns of Haakon the Good and St. Olaf during the tenth and early eleventh centuries. Haakon the Good was the first Christian king of Norway in 936 and attempted to impose Christianity on his subjects. Haakon's attempts in converting the pagan population were a struggle as they were formal small-scale conversions among local communities with some of them either adopting Christian values only because of the king's popularity or burning churches and killing priests in opposition to Christianity.[16] Many argue that Haakon's Christianity was pragmatic due to his failure of satisfying both pagans and Christians at the *jól* festival at Trondheim in 936 where he intended to end sacrificing there to gain more converts to Christianity but was told to preserve the ancient law of Trondheim.[17] Haakon later lost focus to the conversion programs and died in 960.[18]

Paganism would regain traction in Norway once Haakon the Jarl, also known as Haakon Sigurdsson, became the next king. As a staunch pagan, Haakon Sigurdsson sought to preserve Heathendom in Norway. His 986 victory against the Christian Danes under the rule of King Harald in the Battle of Hjórungavág gained him more supporters of conservative pagans in Norway.[19] In the *Heimskringla,* Snorre describes Haakon's reign as one with "good season in the land and good peace between the bonders within. The jarl was befriended by the bonders for the greater part of his life."[20] Haakon the Jarl's legacy, however, would not be painted in a positive light by Icelandic historians later on. Sturluson's portrayal of Haakon the Jarl may have acknowledged the era of peace he maintained in Norway, but he does assert that the king had many affairs with his subjects' daughters, making him unpopular amongst warriors in Trondheim.[21] The sexual affairs Haakon had with his warriors' daughters would eventually lead to his demise once he and his son Erlend fought against Olaf I for the throne of Norway. During this battle in 995, Olaf I killed Ereland, and Haakon was killed by his ally Tormod Kark, who was then betrayed and beheaded by Olaf I. The Norwegian people, now under the command of Olaf I, burned Haakon's body and demonized him even though they still acknowledged his abilities as a military tactician and leadership as the former king of Norway.[22]

Olaf Trygvason's five-year reign in Norway marked the beginning of Heathendon's collapse in Norway. Olaf's conversion to Christianity was done out of political goals for he would be able to control the Norwegian population under his rule through military might and mass conversion of Norwegian pagans.[23] In his quest to convert Norway, Olaf did not hesitate to use brutality to convert the pagan population of Norway. The *Heimskringla* explains that during his stay in the Vik, Olaf threatened to take the lives of those who refused Christianity. Those east of the Vik easily converted to Christianity unlike those in the North of the Vik. Snorri explains that "those who spoke against it he dealt with hard; some he slew, some he maimed and some he

drove away from the land."[24] Olaf also garnered a reputation for demanding battles against those who refused to convert and destroying pagan temples. The attendants at the thing in Dragseid converted to Christianity out of fear of Olaf's formidable military might.[25] The Mörings were one of the groups who attended the thing that Olaf attended; after they converted, Olaf traveled to North More to convert the rest of the population there and destroyed the pagan temple there.[26] Scholars did suggest that Olaf's obsession with establishing Christendom in Norway was forceful because Olaf was not familiar with Norway as he lived outside of the nation for most of his life. He did not realize that many of the villages he tried converting were conservative Heathen bastions, with some of these said villages retaining pagan beliefs once Olaf left.[27] At the same time, the *Heimskringla* did not always present Olaf's imposition of Christianity as brutal and forceful. When he first arrived at the Vik, he welcomed the inhabitants with open arms and "with the greatest warmth he put before them a matter which they should take up with him and afterward help on with all their skill, namely, that he intended to have Christianity throughout the whole of his kingdom."[28] Even if he threatened them to convert to Christianity, Snorri explains that Olaf trusted them as many of them were his friends and kin to him and he promised that if they converted, they will be made "'great and mighty men'".[29]

There is much difficulty regarding the accuracy of the *Heimskringla* according to modern historians such as Robert Ferguson. He explains that the Christian-era historians such as Snorre Strulason sensationalized the story of Olaf I by painting him in a more positive image compared to the previous king Haakon Sigurdsson who was demonized for borrowing the wives of his subjects.[30] Strulason sensationalized the life of Olaf I. Modern historians often compared Struluson's story of his childhood to that of Christ as opposed to other accounts such as the *Historia Norwegie* which gives more accurate descriptions of his childhood.[31] Again, the legitimacy of the *Heimskringla* is often questioned because it should be taken to account that Snorre is a thirteenth-century Icelandic historian; by this time, Iceland was already a Christian nation. It does make sense to paint the Christian kings in a good light, but it should also be acknowledged that Strulason was one of the only Icelandic historians that featured the element of the vanishing Norwegian culture in historical accounts, even though this was not always painted as noble.[32] Sturlason did paint Haakon Sigurdsson in a negative light, but still acknowledged the king's brilliant leadership of the Norwegians.

The Christianization of Norway was then put to a halt once Olaf I died in the Battle of Svold in 1000 AD. The following monarchs, Erik and Sven Haakonson, were Christian monarchs as they were baptized and "took the true faith but as long as they ruled over Norway they let every man do as he would about holding Christianity but they kept well the old laws and the old land customs."[33] The Christianity of both monarchs can be considered just as pragmatic as Haakon the Good for they were not staunch pagans like their father Haakon the Jarl. Their leniency in Christianity led to a revival of paganism in Norway up until the reign of Saint Olaf Harladson from 1015 to 1030. St. Olaf's conversion methods finished what Haakon the Good has started by using the methods his father used during his reign. The *Heimskringla* provides many examples of his strict attempt to convert the rest of Norway to Christianity. During his reign, he fought against the bonders at Voss as they were not fully Christian and when he won, he "did not part from them until they were fully Christianized."[34] He has done the same to the heathen population at Valders where he sent his men to destroy and raid the district until the bonders begged for mercy. Those who converted were given back their loot and were left alone after they were baptized while those who refused Christianity were taken as hostages.[35]

However, St. Olaf's most successful tactic in Christianization was the establishment of Christian laws. Most of this was done at ease because according to the *Heimskringla,* some Norwegians, notably those in the Vik, accustomed themselves to Christian laws easier compared to those north of the Vik since they had a better knowledge of Christianity.[36] Ferguson suggests that Norway permanently transformed into a modern Christian kingdom, replacing the older conservative traditions of Heathenism. To modernize the nation, Olaf's legislation changed the daily aspects of Norwegians to ensure Christianity controlled the daily lives of Norwegians. For example, St Olaf and the Church introduced a calendar to give Norwegians a better sense of time to celebrate feast and fast days. This was different from the conservative pagan idea of a year which was loosely based on the four seasons.[37] St. Olaf's transformation of Norway was permanent. By the time of his death in 1030, Norway was Christianized and modernized by Olaf, now hailed as a saint. Through the imposition of Christian customs in Norwegian law, paganism lost its impact in Norway only to survive in Strulason's works two hundred years later with his concerns about preserving Old Norse poetry, most having references to Old Norse mythology.[38]

Norse Paganism and National Romanticism

According to Knut Ljødogt, the rediscovery of saga history and Norse mythology during the eighteenth century led to the insurgence of nationalism in Scandinavian nations starting with Denmark. The Danish spearheaded this movement by introducing these themes in literature and poetry as they were interested in reinventing a narrative of the past based on the sagas and Norse mythology.[39] Norway continued this fascination, only to be bolstered by the nineteenth century when they drafted a new constitution in 1814 after gaining independence from Denmark, albeit going to a union with Sweden. Ljødugt introduces the common elements of Norwegian national romanticism which was a synchronization of Norse mythology, saga history, and a fascination with nature and folklore. In both prose and poetry, writer Johan Sebastian Welhaven used elements of both saga history and Norse mythology in their works while poet Henrik Wergeland encourage the use of Norse themes.[40]

This newfound fascination with Norse mythology led to many nineteenth-century historians questioning the role Christianity played in the Norwegian romanticism movement. Historians began to assess Christianity's influence on Norway from its spread during the eleventh century and its consolidation in Norwegian life in the following centuries. They do give credit to St. Olaf for consolidating the medieval Norwegian culture in Norway through his conversion programs as Christianity was introduced to Norway through Northmen. At the same time, they also condemned Christianity for supposedly attempting to erase the Old Norse language with Latin. During the twelfth century, Norwegians condemned clerics who could not speak their native language. Nineteenth-century historians saw this resistance by Norwegians as one attempt for Norwegians to preserve Norse heritage.[41] These historians then continue to condemn Christianity as a Roman construct, contributing to the decay of Norwegian culture. As Christianity consolidated the laws of Norway, it meddled into the culture of the nation to where the sagas nearly faded from memory by the fourteenth century.[42] While Christianity remained the center religion of Norway and still dominated the daily lives of Norwegians, these patriotic historians sought to establish the sagas and Norse mythology as the national identity of Norway.

What many scholars do not assess is the importance of national romanticism present in black metal. Scholars and journalists associated with the black metal scene explain that black metal's fascination with paganism and Norwegian nationalism linked with the genre's ideology

of rebellion. Granholm suggests that black metal's fascination with adversarial figures such as Satan fits with black metal's rebellious ethos hence its predominant use throughout the first wave.[43] Despite media fears of Satanism, using occult imagery lost its effect by the time of the second wave and bands embraced Heathenism for their battle against Christianity as Germanic neopaganism, now revived by German and Scandinavia Romanticism, represented knowledge rejected by the larger society. Granholm described the romanticization of paganism within black metal as Radical Traditionalism. This movement represents a rejection of dominant Western culture in favor of an authentic culture.[44]

Black metal follows the framework of Radical Traditional in the same way the nineteenth-century historians rejected Christianity in favor of a "legitimate" Norwegian culture. Heathen influence in extreme metal can be traced back to the Swedish black metal band Bathory. The band originally used Satanic and occult themes up until 1988 when they started to use Viking imagery in the album *Blood Fire Death.* 1990's *Hammerheart* and 1991's *Twilight of the Gods* continued the Viking and heathen aesthetic in Bathory's music.[45] The band's sole member, Quorthon, used Satanism to provoke Christians at first but then became fascinated with pre-Christian Scandinavian spirituality and the heroism in the sagas, prompting him to use heathen themes as a different way to attack Christianity.[46]

The 1990s Norwegian black metal scene likewise continues this framework established by nineteenth-century Norwegian romanticists and Bathory. Pagan-themed black metal bands are aware of the national romanticism in their music and lyrics. A 1994 interview with the pagan band Enslaved shows their romanticization of pre-Christian Scandinavia. According to guitarist Ivar Bjørnson, album and EP titles such as *Yggdrasil, Hordanes Land,* and *Vikingligr Veldi* refer to Norse mythology and Viking mythology, representing "an idealization of Norwegian nature, ways and history."[47] Another pagan band, In the Woods…, even go as far as rejecting the black metal label due to its connection with Satanism and instead embraced paganism as the only reality. In a 1994 *Slayer Mag* interview, band member Overlord Svithjod asserted how the band's focus on Norse mysticism in their lyrics connected to their ancestors' life code, which consisted of allegiance to nature and heroic qualities such as "honour, strength, pride, wisdom, knowledge and faith."[48]

The Norwegian black metal scene thus justifies Granholm's assessment of Radical Traditionalism within the genre. Saint Olaf's legacy of modernizing Norway through Christianity was questioned by Norwegian historians during the nineteenth century as the religion almost erased the knowledge of the sagas and Norse mythology. These historians can also be considered Radical Traditionalists as they rejected Christianity for being a Roman construct and proclaimed that the customs of pre-Christian Norway should be celebrated as the national history of Norway. The nineteenth-century national romanticism movement of Norway represented a rejection of a dominant Western culture by embracing pre-Christian Norway.

The church burnings of the Norwegian black metal scene did not represent a religious war for artists that have committed arson were not aligned with Satanism or Paganism in a religious context. The church arsons symbolized a cultural war fought over a millennium ago. Conservative pagans resisted the coming of Christendom up until St. Olaf modernized the nation. The Norwegian black metal scene's rejection of Christianity represented a form of Radical Traditionalism felt by the nineteenth-century national romanticism movement in Norway as both movements romanticized the pre-Christian history and culture of Norway.

NOTES

[1] Odinism, also known as Odalism, Wotanism, and Wodenism, refers to the white nationalist branch of Germanic neopaganism, also known as Heathenry. Heathenry has a history of being misappropriated by far-right politics. Dayal Patterson describes Vikernes' beliefs as a non-religious paganism intertwined with far-right, ultraconservative political ideologies. See Dayal Patterson, *Black Metal: Evolution of the Cult,* (Port Townsend, WA: Feral House, 2013), 214.

[2] Kennet Granholm, "'Sons of Northern Darkness: Heathen Influences in Black Metal and Neofolk Music," *Numen* 58, no. 4, 2011, 527-528. https://www.jstor.org/stable/23045867.

[3] Musical qualities of the second wave of black metal includes tremolo picked guitars, fast-paced drumming, screamed or shrieked vocals, and an emphasis on atmosphere. These qualities distinguished second wave black metal from the death metal scene which consisted of low growls and an emphasis of brutality and technicality in instrumentation. Patterson, *Black Metal: Evolution of the Cult,* 151.

[4] Euronymous' involvement with the church arsons is highly debated by Varg Vikernes. Ibid, 160-160.

[5] The Norwegian black metal scene embraced Theistic Satanism rather than LaVeyan Satanism, which was an atheistic branch of Satanism established in the 1960s by Church of Satan founder Anton LaVey. The Norwegian black metal scene frowned upon LaVeyan Satanism for having an ideology based on secular humanism. The humanism in LaVeyan Satanism contradicted the scenes ethos of misanthrophy and nihilism. Granholm, "'Sons of Northern Darkness: Heathen Influences in Black Metal and Neofolk Music," 527-528.

[6] Ibid, 529-530.

[7] "Stavkirke-brannen I dyrets ttegn," *Bergens Tidende,* August 7, 1992, in *Black Metal Media: 1992-1994,* ed. Hermann C., (Lohengrin Productions, 2021), 9.

[8] "Satan-dyrkere jages," *Verdens Gang,* August 2, 1992, in *Black Metal Media: 1992-1994,* ed. Hermann C., (Lohengrin Productions, 2021), 8.

[9] "Hevn bak kirkebrann," *Verdens Gang,* August 12, 1992, in *Black Metal Media: 1992-1994,* ed. Hermann C., (Lohengrin Productions, 2021), 10.

[10] "Holmenkollen kapell totalskadd," *Bergensavisen,* August 25, 1992, in *Black Metal Media: 1992-1994,* ed. Hermann C., (Lohengrin Productions, 2021), 11.

[11] Granholm, "'Sons of Northern Darkness: Heathen Influences in Black Metal and Neofolk Music," 528.

[12] Varg Vikernes, "Det Som Engang Varg", interviewed by Metallion, c. 1994, *Slayer Mag* 10, 24.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ásatrú refers to the revival of Norse paganism. Patterson, *Black Metal: Evolution of the Cult,* 162.

[15] Hades is another Norwegian black metal band with predominantly Viking themes, featured in albums such as *…Again Shall Be* and *Dawn of a Dying Sun.* Ibid, 135-136.

[16] Robert Ferguson, *The Vikings: A History* (New York: Penguin Publishing, 2009), 263-264

[17] During the *jól* festival incident, Haakon the Good used a hand gesture that could either be interpreted as Thor's *mjolnir* or Christ's cross to appease both pagans and Christians explaining the syncretism of Norse paganism and Christianity during the final decades of pre-Christian Norway. Ibid, 266-267.

[18] Between 955 and 960, Haakon the Good became increasingly occupied with battling the sons of former Norwegian king Erik Bloodaxe with the help of Danish king Harald Bluetooth. Ibid, 268.

[19] Haakon the Jarl was the son of Sigurd the Jarl, the ruler of the Trøndelag. By the time Haakon the Good died, the sons of Erik Bloodaxe ruled Norway and killed Sigurd the Jarl. Haakon the Jarl became the next rule of Trøndelag but was chased out of Norway by the rulers. He settled in Denmark and by the time the sons of Erik Bloodaxe were killed, Haakon regained control of the Trøndelag under the hegemony of the Danish king Harald Bluetooth. When Haakon refused to convert to Christianity under the command of Harald Bluetooth, he left Denmark and Bluetooth then sent the Jomsvikings and Danes to Hjórungavág to suppress Haakon's rebellion but ultimatelty failed. Ibid, 272.

[20] Snorre Sturlason, "The History of Olav Ásatrú," in *Heimskrlinga: or The Lives of the Norse Kings,* (New York: Dover, 1990), 152.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid, 155-157.

[23] Ferguson, *The Vikings: A History*, 277.

[24] Sturlason, "The History of Olav Trygvason," 159.

[25] Ibid, 163.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ferguson, *The Vikings: A History*, 279

[28] It should be considered that during this meeting, the people Olaf I met were related to him. Many were related to his mother and step-father. Olaf's brothers-in-law also visited him during their stay. Sturlason, "The History of Olav Trygvason," 159.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ferguson, *The Vikings: A History*, 277.

[31] Robert Ferguson, *The Vikings: A History* (New York: Penguin Publishing, 2009), 273-274.

[32] Ibid, 349.

[33] Sturlason, "The History of Olav Trygvason," 215-217.

[34] Snorre Strulason, "The History of St. Olav," in *Heimskrlinga: or The Lives of the Norse Kings,* (New York: Dover, 1990), 345-346.

[35] Ibid, 347.

[36] Ibid, 263.

[37] Ferguson, *The Vikings: A History*, 356-357.

[38] Ibid, 20-21.

[39] Knut Ljødogt, "'Northern Gods in Marble': The Romantic Rediscovery of Norse Mythology," *Journals for the Study of Romanticisms: Romantik* 1, no. 1, 2012, 142, https://tidsskrift.dk/rom/article/view/15854/13723.

[40] Ibid, 145

[41] Oscar J. Falnes *National Romanticism in Norway,* (New York: AMS Press, 1968), 178-179.

[42] Ibid, 180.

[43] Granholm, "'Sons of Northern Darkness: Heathen Influences in Black Metal and Neofolk Music," 535-536.

[44] Ibid, 537.

[45] Fans in the heavy metal subculture label the albums of "Viking era" Bathory as "Viking metal". Stefanie von Schnurbein, "Germanic Neopaganism – A Nordic Art-Religion?" in *Norse Revivial: Transformations of Germanic Neopaganism,* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 337, https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1163/j.ctt1w76v8x.17.

[46] Patterson, *Black Metal: Evolution of the Cult,* 34-35.

[47] Ivar Bjørnson "Enslaved," interview, 1994, *Skogen Zine,* no. 1, December 1994, in *Skogen Zine Anthology: 1993-1996,* edited by Sasa Borovcanin and Dayal Patterson, (London: Cult Never Dies and Crypt Productions, 2019), 65.

[48] Interestingly enough, In the Woods… opposed the church arsons by members of the Norwegian black metal scene. They argued that Fantoft stave church was still a cultural mark in Norway because the church was allegedly built during the medieval period by men who were likely still pagans even though they were forced to convert to Christianity. Overlord Svithjod, "In the Woods", interviewed by Metallion, c. 1994, *Slayer Mag* 10, 28.