

överraskande. Vetenskapsakademien såg som sin uppgift att upplysa landet, Tabellverket (Statistiska Centralbyrån) skapades för att ge landet översikt och ordning, lasarettsväsendet skulle i sin tur ge nationen en frisk och arbetsför befolkning.

Några hastiga kritiska synpunkter: för principens skull borde Mennanders avhandling ha behandlats mer ingående, den är visserligen bara på ett dussin sidor och knappast märkvärdig men tar upp Ammans metod. Om den lämnats åsido för att den är på latin borde väl någon ha kunnat översätta latinet åt författaren (Arosenius avhandling, som sedan länge är översatt, används däremot). Man kan invända mot att bidragsgivare till *Vetenskapsakademiens handlingar* kallas "forskare" – det är ett i sammanhanget anakronistiskt begrepp. Alldeles vän med vetenskapshistorien är inte författaren och de mer medicinhistoriska aspekterna är satta på undantag. Riktigt borrar sig inte författaren in i tid och dokument för att höra de stumma och se de blinda. Det hade till exempel varit intressant att få veta mer om teologen, naturalhistorikern och den evige sjuklingen Samuel Ödmanns dövsamma dotter Catharina. Hon gifte sig, fick tre barn och levde till 82 års ålder. Säkert kunde mer letas upp för att ge framställningen en större närhet. Religionen är förhållandevis åsidosatt men spelade naturligtvis en på många sätt avgörande roll för attityder hos den tidens människor. Kyrkan ägnas två sidor men då enbart som maktinstrument och inte som barmhärtighetsinriktning eller förståelseram. Med religionen inräknad kunde diskussionen om förhållandet mellan vetenskap och folkstro få en tredje part. Felfinnaren kunde också anmärka på en del onödiga tryckfel. Men läsaren är författaren tacksam för hans genomgång som utgår från personer, som därmed blir både synliga och verkliga. Och att han behandlar sjuttonhundratalsvetenskapen, så ofta beskriven som naiv eller cynisk, med rimlig respekt.

Gunnar Broberg

Osmo Pekonen, *La rencontre des religions autour du voyage de l'abbé Réginald Oubier en Suède en 1736–1737* (Rovaniemi: Lapland University Press, 2010). 363 pp.

The expedition of the mathematician and scientist Maupertuis in northern Sweden in the third decade of the eighteenth century remains less famous than the parallel French expedition, led by La Condamine, to South America. Both expeditions were part of the same project to make measurements that could conclude the ongoing debate about the shape of the earth. The goal of the expeditions was to give scientific evidence that could confirm or refute the theories of Newton which stated that the earth was slightly flattened at the poles. The conflict divided two branches of the French scientific community. The clan of the Cassini, defenders of the tradition from Descartes, was opposed to the new thoughts that came from England, represented, amongst others, by the then young and ambitious Maupertuis. The conflicting lines of interests, scientific, social, and political, and the use that Maupertuis himself made of these to build a scientific career and secure a position within the most elite circles of the Parisian salon culture of the time, has been brilliantly depicted by the French philosopher and historian Elisabeth Badinter in the fascinating account given in her book entitled *Les passions intellectuelles* (1999–2007), where she shows how Maupertuis used intellectual success to try to gain fame.

The expedition of Maupertuis to northern Sweden involved some of the most prominent political, scientific, and literary figures in Europe at the time. Some of the finest literary minds celebrated the expedition in prose and in verse, for example Voltaire, who commented upon it at length in his copious correspondence. Due to its importance both in the history of science and in literary and intellectual history, the expedition of Maupertuis has been

the subject of a number of excellent scholarly works in several fields.

There is a parallel, mostly Scandinavian, scholarly tradition where the expedition and the source material related to it is considered not in relation to the history of science or literature, but in relation to other accounts of the northern regions from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The aim in this tradition is either to study the history of travels to the north or to study the history of the northern regions themselves, using travel literature as source material. It goes without saying that the point of interest in this second scholarly tradition is radically different from, and often only remotely relevant to the first.

The recent book by the Finnish mathematician, writer, translator, and intellectual Osmo Pekonen, the result of a doctoral dissertation in the history of science, is no doubt an attempt to fill in some of the gap between these two traditions. Entitled *La Rencontre des religions autour du voyage de l'abbé Réginald Outhier en Suède en 1736–1737*, it is an ambitious attempt to combine detailed knowledge and insight on Swedish history with the considerable, and sometimes partly ignored French material related to the expedition of Maupertuis. Written in French, though published in Finland, the book is clearly not intended for the general Scandinavian reader interested in the history of the northern part of the Nordic countries. Since reading ability in French is not increasing in these countries, the book will find its readers among French scholars working in the field of the *histoire des idées*, which in French universities is viewed as a subdivision of literary history or philosophy.

When Pekonen, as his titles shows, writes about a journey to Sweden in 1736–1737, it is the expedition of Maupertuis he is investigating. He chooses not to focus on the expedition itself, but on one of the members of the expedition who was hired to write an account of the events, the abbé Réginald Outhier. The

idea is original and the subject is interesting. There is a considerable number of studies that comment on Outhier's account of the expedition. With *La rencontre des religions autour du voyage de l'abbé Réginald Outhier*, however, Pekonen gives the first book-length study on the matter. Although one might argue that Outhier really is a marginal figure within the history of the eighteenth century and one of the minor members of the expedition (despite Maupertuis on several occasions mentioning his participation as crucial for the scientific results), a thorough study on the subject must be regarded as highly welcome.

The general approach adopted by Pekonen merits attention. According to Pekonen, the book is not a historical study in the classical sense of the word, but rather an undertaking that goes beyond a purely historical examination to reach a further level of understanding. The introduction explains how the work is directed by two main orientations, history and semiotics. When it comes to the first, the overall ambition is the search for historical accuracy and authenticity. As Pekonen puts it, the quest for authenticity is his main concern regarding the historical aspect of the work. This traditional, if not old-fashioned declaration of scholarly intention, is combined with the use of approaches and vocabulary from semiotics. Pekonen points out that his work is a study situated within the field of *sémiosphère studies*, inspired by Yuri Lotman. The *sémiosphère* is the complete universe of signs that make up a culture, being the very condition for the development and sustainability of a cultural entity.

With this methodological basis, Pekonen examines the voyage of the abbé Réginald Outhier as an encounter between religions, between the Catholic priest and the Protestant universe of eighteenth-century Sweden, and between the same Catholic priest and the paganism of the Sami people. For Pekonen the focus on signs allows for the use of an

overwhelming iconographical material. The goal for Pekonen is to enable the reader to follow Outhier as closely as possible. The reader should undergo the same sort of experiences that Outhier himself went through. Pekonen has therefore systematically tried to find all the extant buildings, illustrations, and objects of art that were part of Outhier's life in order to, as he puts it, perpetuate into our time the *sémiosphère* in which he lived. This explains the large number of illustrations in Pekonen's book, a number uncommon in academic works of this kind. Many of the illustrations are amateur depictions of churches that Outhier saw, buildings he visited, and other such settings. The illustrations, which are not used as material for analysis, are rarely commented on in the text. As Pekonen clearly states, they are there to give the reader an impression of the time in which the events took place. Due to its layout and typographical presentation, the book does not give the appearance of being an academic study.

The first chapters sketch the scientific, political, and religious context of the time. Pekonen explains the fundamental questions that led to the expedition of Maupertuis. Basic summaries of eighteenth-century Swedish history, French history, and above all, the history of French-Swedish relations are given. The section includes reproductions of paintings of various intellectual and political dignitaries, such as Émilie du Châtelet, Cardinal de Fleury, and Louis XV.

A valuable account of the life of Abbé Outhier is given, as well as a description of his *Voyage*. Pekonen also gives a detailed account of the journey itself. Chapters 7 and 8 deal with the core of the subject, the encounter with Protestantism and the remains of paganism. The ninth chapter gives a long description of an incident that followed the expedition, not mentioned by Outhier himself, which involved two girls from northern Sweden who followed Maupertuis' expedition back to Paris.

In the last chapter, Pekonen develops a theme mentioned enthusiastically both in the preface and in the introduction: namely, the possible commercial exploitation of historical tourism in northern Sweden organized as guided odysseys following in the steps of the famous Maupertuis.

The academic reader will be somewhat puzzled by this book, in which a profusion of erudite details and numerous footnotes of considerable length and quality are mixed with sometimes extremely basic information about Swedish and French history well known even to the general reader, prospects for future tourism, and pictures of all kinds, including quite a few photos of Pekonen himself, in some cases dressed in eighteenth-century costume. Towards the end, the book also contains a series of snapshots from the viva examination, coffee get-togethers, and outdoor events, again with Pekonen dressed in historical garb, giving the conclusion of the book the impression of a family album.

Nevertheless, the book has several strengths, especially in the quest for authenticity and the aim for historical accuracy. Working on seventeenth and eighteenth-century travel literature on northern Scandinavia can often be a trying experience. The entire field is characterized by an innumerable amount of mistakes, misunderstandings, and erroneous quotations and testimonies, many of which can be traced back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This is partly due to language difficulties. French and English travelers to the northern regions had to deal with names pronounced in the various tongues in use in the areas they visited. Misunderstandings and spelling errors occur in almost all the sources from the period. Many of the French and Anglo-American scholars in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, writing for instance on Maupertuis or Voltaire, have not always helped to remedy the problem. At the same time, misleading information stemmed from many non-academic

Scandinavian writings on the matter. Pekonen, having mastered the languages of the source material, from Finnish and Swedish to Latin and French, clears things up on more than one occasion. Difficulties concerning spelling and historical facts are explained in detail in the footnotes. Pekonen gives ample space to differing interpretations on problematic points and clearly states his own opinion on every occasion. This clarity is unusual in the scholarship on the subject, and Pekonen's book on Outhier will prove to be a useful tool in the years to come for scholars working on historical sources concerning travels to the northern parts of Europe.

Pekonen also gives new information about the life of his author. Outhier is not as well known as some of the other northern travelers. Pekonen's book will stand as the major reference on Outhier, not only for scholars working on travelers to the north, but also for those concerned with the history of science and ideas in eighteenth-century France. *La rencontre des religions* will prove to be a major contribution concerning these matters.

The least convincing element of Pekonen's book is not the historical details in themselves, but the overall structure of the composition. It is a published thesis, and this aspect of the work is present on every page. The theme of the book, the encounter between cultures through religion, is hardly commented on until the seventh chapter, some 130 pages from the opening. The opening chapters appear to take the form of a long introduction, relating general information on matters one would expect to be familiar to the French reader who might be interested in the book: matters such as the general political background in France and Sweden, the religious background in Europe at the time, and so on.

The overall structure of the book makes it difficult to grasp the question that is announced as the main theme. This is partly due to the fact that it is the journey of Out-

hier, and not the question of the encounter of religions, which forms the real subject of Pekonen's study. As he admits himself, Outhier does not write primarily on religion, but rather on the expedition of Maupertuis, which was his task. Outhier's approach to the question of Protestantism, for example, is more descriptive than analytical. Pekonen's account of Outhier's work, in turn, does not go much beyond this descriptive layer. For instance, in the chapter on church manners and liturgy, very few comments are given by Pekonen, who for the most part is content to quote Outhier's text. When comments do occur, they are pure speculations. There is unfortunately not room here to mention more than one example. When Pekonen comments on Outhier's description of the Swedish clergy, one of his main concerns is whether Outhier did or did not meet a Swedish bishop. As he puts it, it is highly probably that the abbé did *not* meet any bishops. From this Pekonen draws the conclusion that Outhier must have had an order from French authorities not to engage with leading figures of the Swedish church in order to prevent any aggression from Protestant Sweden, which was an ally of Catholic France. This might very well be the case, but the question itself, as well as the answer given by Pekonen, does not rely on any sources.

Even though the descriptions given by Outhier on religious matters are sparse, there is material that is not fully exploited by Pekonen. Limiting himself most often to historical facts and iconographical material used for illustrational purposes, Pekonen avoids engaging with the academic fields of theology, philosophy, and intellectual history. These fields are nevertheless closely interwoven with the subject of his study, the encounter of religions. The substantial corpus of French theological writing from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is not used to explain the brief, yet sometimes interesting comments that Outhier gives about religious habits in Sweden. This

would have been a massive undertaking, but something one would expect from a doctoral work concerned with the encounter of eighteenth-century French Catholicism with other religions and other branches of Christianity.

*La rencontre des religions* is therefore less interesting as a contribution to the study of the encounter between religions, than as a book containing useful information on Abbé Outhier and on a number of names and anecdotal matters related to northern Sweden in the eighteenth century. As such it belongs, both in its form and content, entirely to the traditional genre of studies on *l'homme et son oeuvre*, the Man and his Work.

Martin Wåhlberg

Mona Rautelin, *En förutbestämd sanning: barnamord och delaktighet i 1700-talets Finland belysta genom kön, kropp och social kontroll* ([Helsingfors]: [Mona Rautelin], 2009). 592 s.

Mona Rautelin ägnar sin avhandling, nästan sex hundra sidor, åt en studie av barnamord. Med 1700-talet som undersökningsperiod och södra Finland som huvudsakligt undersökningsområde motiverar hon övertygande sin studie i relation till tidigare forskning som framför allt behandlat andra delar av det svenska riket och andra tidsperioder. Rautelin inbegriper dessutom utredningar om delaktighet i barnamordsbrott på ett sätt som inte tidigare skett i nordisk historieskrivning.

Frågan som står i centrum för hennes undersökning är *hur*: hur "kvinnor blev mörderskor inom en viss parrelation och i ett visst hushåll, samt *hur* de framställdes som mörderskor vid tingen och i de högre rättsinstanserna" (s. 16). Hon lägger stor vikt vid den lokala agrara miljön där brotten skedde och de kulturella föreställningar om havandeskap, sedlighet och heder som präglade den. Hennes

ambition är bland annat att "blottlägga de kulturbundna faktorerna som underbyggde och förebyggde" barnamordsbrottet (s. 17). Med begreppet barnamördande, i stället för barnamord, betonar hon att brottet bör ses som en process med flera personer inblandade samt att det i första hand är handlingar – det som de inblandade personerna gjorde – som intresserar henne. Med detta synsätt hamnar åtal för delaktighet och de sammanhang och situationer där det mördade barnets föräldrar befann sig i analysens centrum. Mötet mellan "barnamördandets rättsteori och sociala praktik" står i fokus, och hon vill därigenom problematisera "gränsen mellan dessa två dimensioner". Hon menar vidare att lagens definition av barnamord tenderade att osynliggöra barnamördandets sociala kontext samt att de samtida juridiska synsätten i hög grad övertagits av senare tiders forskare. Barnamörderskorna har i linje med det beskrivits som "offer för ett personrelaterat, kyrkligt och samhälleligt förtryck" (s. 21). I relation till ett sådant synsätt, där alla ogifta mödrar betraktas som en anomali, är det, som Rautelin gör, relevant att fråga sig varför det var *så få* ogifta mödrar som blev barnamörderskor.

Källorna är i första hand ett åttiotal detaljerade och i flera fall exceptionella barnamordsfall och ett fyrtiotal utredningar om delaktighet i barnamordsbrott. Detta material har kompletterats med ett antal mindre dokumenterade barnamordsfall, en del kyrkobokföringsmaterial, samtida juridisk och rättsmedicinsk litteratur, handlingar från fängelser samt skillingtryck och sägner. Rättsprotokollen spänner över hela den rättsliga hierarkin, från underrätternas konceptprotokoll till rådets protokoll i justitieärenden. Det är ett digert, komplext och väl sammansatt källmaterial men, trots författarens försök att presentera materialet både i brödtexten och i bilagor, är det ändå svårt för läsaren att få ett grepp över det och på vilket sätt Rautelin använder de olika typerna av texter. Jag hade gärna inledningsvis