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# The Teachers and the Listeners? The Encounter of Oral and Literary Cultures in the Peripheral Parishes of Eastern Finland in Seventeenth-Century Sweden

*Miia Kuha*

It was one of the central aims of the Reformation that people should be taught to read the Catechism and understand the basic doctrines of Christianity.<sup>1</sup> Increasing literacy was in the interests both of the centralising states in their need for educated officials, and of churches of different confessions as they tried to define their doctrine more precisely and make it clear to their followers.<sup>2</sup> The educational role of the church was emphasised in seventeenth-century Lutheran Sweden, where the clergy and the parishioners were often referred to as *lärare och åhörare*, the teachers and the listeners, in different kinds of documents.<sup>3</sup> However, in the peripheral parishes of eastern Finland, a part of the Swedish kingdom at the time, a considerable portion of the peasant population was only starting to learn the very basics of Christianity. Book ownership was rare in this poor and rural area. Regardless of the spread of printing in Europe, it was difficult even for the church and schools to obtain enough books for their needs in the diocese of Vyborg, not to mention the peasant

- 1 This chapter has been finalized as part of the Research Council of Finland project 'Women of the clerical estate: Clergymen's wives and widows in Lutheran local communities (1650–1710)' (project number 338706).
- 2 Karen E. Carter, *Creating Catholics. Catechism and Primary Education in Early Modern France* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011); Ian Green, *The Christian's ABC. Catechisms and Catechizing in England c.1530–1740* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996); Rab Houston, *Literacy in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Routledge, 2002, repr. 2013).
- 3 Göran Malmstedt, *Bondetro och kyrkoro. Religiös mentalitet i stormaktstidens Sverige* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2002); Daniel Lindmark, *Uppfostran, undervisning, upplysning. Linjer i svensk folkundervisning före folkskolan* (Umeå: Umeå universitet, 1995); Esko M. Laine and Tuija Laine, 'Kirkollinen kansanopetus', in Jussi Hanska and Kirsi Vainio-Korhonen (eds.), *Huoneentaulun maailma. Kasvatus ja koulutus Suomessa keskiajalta 1860-luvulle* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2010), pp. 258–306. Examples of the use of the term 'lärare och åhörare': Kansallisarkisto (KA, The National Archives of Finland), Mikkeli (hereafter: KA Mikkeli), Joroinen, church archive, 11 Cd: 1 Visitation record (1693); Kangasniemi, church archive, 11 Cd: 1 Visitation record (1680); Kangasniemi, church archive, 11 Ce Visitation record (1704); Kansallisarkisto, Joensuu (hereafter: KA Joensuu), Kuopio, church archive, 11 Cd: 1 Visitation record (1678).

population, who had very limited access to any printed products.<sup>4</sup> Thus, in practice, the church was the only place where the peasants had a chance to listen to the reading of written religious texts and learn about the Lutheran doctrine – which they were also obliged to do, since regular church attendance was enforced by law.<sup>5</sup>

Printed books and various cheap printed materials have been highlighted as important mediators of Reformation ideas. However, the printed book was not the only way to convey the message of the Reformers: there were many traditional ways of communication available, such as preaching, singing and catechetical teaching.<sup>6</sup> In this chapter, I examine the reception of Lutheran teaching among the people in the province of Savo in eastern Finland by analysing an exceptional court case that survives from the parish of Sulkava. In the summer of 1668, the secular lower court session in the village of Sulkava handled a case of suspected blasphemy, after a group of peasants and soldiers from peasant families had parodied the Christmas Day service in a household feast on the evening of the following day.<sup>7</sup> The case analysis explores the encounter of oral and literary cultures in the north-eastern periphery of post-Reformation Europe, an area where the ecclesiastical culture was relatively young and book ownership was rare. The events of Sulkava related to local power relations and the relationship between the clergy and the

4 Tuija Laine, 'Vanhan Viipurin hiippakunnan alueen kirjahistorian lähteet', in Ilkka Huhta and Juha Meriläinen (eds.), *Kirkkohistorian alueilla: juhla-kirja professori Hannu Mustakallion täyttäessä 60 vuotta* (Helsinki: Suomen kirkkohistoriallinen seura etc., 2011), pp. 217–25; Miia Kuha, *Pyhäpäivien vietto varhaismodernin ajan Savossa (vuoteen 1710)* (Jyväskylä: Jyväskylän yliopisto 2016). There were great regional differences in the book markets and infrastructure of printing in early-modern Europe. See Andrew Pettegree and Matthew Hall, 'The Reformation and the Book: A Reconsideration', *The Historical Journal*, 47, 4 (2004), pp. 785–808.

5 The punishment for absence was a large fine that usually resulted from a recurrent absence from the church. Miia Kuha, 'Popular Religion in the Periphery. Church Attendance in seventeenth Century Eastern Finland', *Perichoresis* 13: 2 (2015), pp. 17–33.

6 Andrew Pettegree, *Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Robert W. Scribner, 'Oral Culture and the Diffusion of Reformation Ideas', *History of European Ideas* 5 (1984), pp. 237–56. See also Arnold Snyder, 'Orality, literacy and the study of anabaptism', *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 65 (1991), pp. 371–92.

7 Kansallisarkisto, Helsinki (hereafter: KA), Renovoidut tuomiokirjat, Pien-Savon kihlakunta, KO 2:1, Sulkava, 6–7 May 1668, pp. 113–19. The record of the case is available in a digitalised form in the Digital Archive, <https://astia.narc.fi/uusiastia/viewer/?fileId=6533365663&aineistoid=642405597>. The case has been discussed earlier with a methodological point of view in Miia Kuha, 'A Parody of the Church Service in Seventeenth-Century Finland. Reconstructing Popular Religion on the Basis of Court Records', *Frühneuzeit-Info* 23: 1–2 (2012), pp. 99–104, and in the context of the popular observance of holy days in Kuha, *Pyhäpäivien vietto*, pp. 119–27.

parishioners, but the surviving record also offers a glimpse at the reception of Lutheran teaching among the populace.

In Sweden and Finland, an integral part of the Swedish realm in the early-modern era, the lower court records that survive in great abundance provide excellent source material for investigation of the religious life of the peasantry. In late-seventeenth-century Sweden, religion had a major effect on legislation, and matters related to religion were handled in the secular lower courts.<sup>8</sup> For example, the breach of the Sabbath, with more severe consequences after the ordinances of the years 1665 and 1687, brought to the courts accusations of absence from the church service, communion and catechetical teaching.<sup>9</sup> Parish life is also described in cases where the accusation concerned violent behaviour or drunkenness during the church service or disturbance of the service. In addition, religious concepts were discussed in hearings related to suspected blasphemy, magic and witchcraft.<sup>10</sup>

I will analyse the case of Sulkava in the context of the ecclesiastical life and development of the knowledge of the Catechism in the parishes of the province of Savo, using visitation records from the period 1659–1710 as source material. In the visitation records that survive from the period, the visiting bishops and deans noted down a general evaluation of the religious understanding acquired in each parish. Even though this information is fragmentary, it is possible to gain a general picture of the development of the catechetical and literary skills in particular areas.<sup>11</sup> Catechisms, other ecclesiastical literature and

8 The lower court records have survived as transcriptions that were sent to the Court of Appeal for inspection. For discussion of using lower court records as source material in the study of thought and religious conceptions of commoners, see for example Raisa Maria Toivo, *Faith and Magic in Early Modern Finland* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 16–20; Riikka Miettinen, *Suicide in Seventeenth-Century Sweden. The Crime and Legal Praxis in the Lower Courts* (Tampere: Tampereen yliopisto, 2015), pp. 46–58; Kuha, *Pyhäpäivien vietto*, pp. 30–2; Jari Eilola, *Rajapinnoilla. Sallitun ja kielletyn määritteleminen 1600-luvun jälkipuoliskon noituus- ja taikuustapauksissa* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2003), pp. 41–5.

9 Johan Schmedeman, *Kongl. stadgar, förordningar, bref och resolutioner ifrån år 1528 in til 1701* (Stockholm: Johan Henric Werner, 1706), pp. 453–63; Lahja-Irene Hellemaa, Anja Jussila, and Matti Parvio (eds.), *Kirko-Laki ja Ordningi 1686. Näköispainos ja uudelleen ladottu laitos vuoden 1686 kirkkolain suomenoksesta* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 1986), pp. 157–70, ‘Sabbatin Ricoxesta’.

10 Kuha, *Pyhäpäivien vietto*, pp. 26–9.

11 From the province of Savo, forty-one visitation records from six parishes (Hirvensalmi, Iisalmi, Joroinen, Kangasniemi, Kuopio and Mikkeli) survive from the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The earliest record is from the parish of Kangasniemi in 1659. The records have survived fragmentarily from each parish and most are available from the 1690s and the first decade of the eighteenth century. Church archives: KA Joensuu,

visitation records have been commonly used to gain information about the religious education of the populace in various parts of Europe. In this chapter, I will also utilise lower court records to gain a new perspective on the reception of religious education among the peasantry.<sup>12</sup>

## 1 The Encounter of Oral and Written Cultures in Eastern Finland

In eastern Finland, large distances and difficult conditions acted as challenges to catechetical teaching. The province of Savo, together with Northern Karelia, formed the most peripheral part of the diocese of Vyborg. Savo was a large, agrarian area, with slash-and-burn farming as the main means of the inhabitants' livelihood. People lived in single households situated in loose groups or at greater distances from each other.<sup>13</sup> Distances between churches were long. People living near the church probably attended church services at least almost every week, but others might only have travelled there on the greatest holy days of the year. Thus, it was difficult to organise catechetical teaching separately from the church service.<sup>14</sup>

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Kuopio church archive, II Cd: 1 Visitation records, 1670–1804; KA Joensuu, Leppävirta church archive, II Cd: 1 Visitation records, 1662–1841; KA Mikkeli, Joroinen church archive, II Cd: 1 Visitation records, 1693–1748; KA Mikkeli, Kangasniemi church archive, II Cd: 1 Visitation records, 1660–1794, and II Ce Visitation records, 1659–1840; KA Mikkeli, Mikkeli church archive, II Cd: 1 Visitation records, 1700–1848. In 1710, Russian troops invaded the town of Vyborg and soon after occupied the whole area of Finland, after which the normal functions of most institutions ceased and most clergymen fled to Sweden proper. See Petri Karonen, *Pohjoinen suurvalta. Ruotsi ja Suomi 1521–1809* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2014; 4th rev. edn), pp. 313–18. In both visitation and court records, there is a gap of at least a decade after 1710 or 1712, depending on the locality.

12 On reading culture among early-modern commoners, see Tuija Laine, *Aapisen ja katekismuksen tavaamisesta itsenäiseen lukemiseen. Rahvaan lukukulttuurin kehitys varhaismodernina aikana* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2017).

13 The Savo region was connected to the Swedish realm in the treaty of Nöteborg in 1323 with Novgorod. It was an area of new settlement until the late sixteenth century. First, the whole area made up only one parish. Gradually, new parishes with their respective churches were founded, and in the late seventeenth century, there were in total fifteen parishes in the province. Kuha, *Pyhäpäivien vietto*, p. 45; Kauko Pirinen, 'Savon keskiaika', in Pirkko-Liisa Lehtosalo-Hilander and Kauko Pirinen, *Savon historia, 1: Esihistorian vuosituhatnet ja keskiaika* (Kuopio: Kustannuskiila, 1988), pp. 289–95; Kauko Pirinen, *Savon historia 11.1: Rajamaakunta asutusliikkeen aikakautena 1534–1617* (Pieksämäki: Kustannuskiila, 1982), 535–54; Veijo Saloheimo, *Savon historia, 11.2: Savo suurvallan valjaissa 1617–1721* (Kuopio: Kustannuskiila Oy, 1990), pp. 460–5.

14 Kuha, *Pyhäpäivien vietto*, pp. 104–8.

Local clergymen were the main representatives of literary culture in the rural parishes of Savo. There was usually a pastor and one or sometimes two chaplains working in a parish. Most of the clergymen in the Savo region conducted their studies in Vyborg, the capital of the diocese and also an important commercial and administrative centre. In the seventeenth century, two of the dioceses in the Swedish realm were situated in the area of present-day Finland. The diocese of Turku covered the whole of Finland from the medieval era until the eastern diocese of Vyborg was founded in 1555. However, this region, situated next to the Russian border, suffered from the many wars between Russia and Sweden, and the function of the diocese of Vyborg was only properly established after the peace of Stolbovo (1617) and the appointment of Bishop Olaus Elimaeus in 1618.<sup>15</sup>

The Reformation changed the ideal of the clergymen, who became teachers and officials of the state as servants of the Lutheran state church. In practice, most of the changes made after the Reformation took place very slowly, especially in the peripheral, rural areas of the realm. After the Reformation, and still during the late sixteenth century, clerical education was poor. Important educational reforms were made under Gustav II Adolf, especially after the year 1620. *Gymnasiums* were founded in the cathedral towns of each diocese to replace the former cathedral schools. In the first half of the seventeenth century, Swedish clergymen mainly studied in gymnasiums. Two years of studies, either in a gymnasium or at the university, were required before ordination. The gymnasium of Vyborg, founded in 1641, had high standards and the content of the teaching was similar to that of the Swedish universities of the time.<sup>16</sup> It has been estimated that the teaching in the cathedral school was based on Lutheran ideas from the 1530s onwards.<sup>17</sup> In the last decades of the seventeenth century, it became more common for the clergymen of the diocese of Vyborg to conduct studies also in the universities of the Swedish realm, most commonly in Turku, but also in Tartu and Uppsala. Even so, the clerics working in the Savo area who had conducted studies at a university

- 15 The function of the diocese ceased with the occupation of Vyborg in 1710 in the Great Northern War (1700–21), and the town was lost to Russia in the treaty of Nystad in 1721. Simo Heininen, 'Vanha Viipurin hiippakunta 1554–1711', in Simo Heininen et al., *Viipurin – Porvoon – Tampereen hiippakunnan historia 1554–2004* (Helsinki: Edita, 2005), pp. 13–64; Karonen, *Pohjoinen suurvalta*, pp. 307–26.
- 16 Malmstedt, *Bondetro och kyrkoro*, pp. 74–5, 123–6; Ragnar Askmark, *Svensk prästutbildning fram till år 1700* (Stockholm: Svenska kyrkans diakonistyrelse, 1943), pp. 108–16; Matti Klinge etc., *Helsingin yliopisto 1640–1990, 1: Kuninkaallinen Turun Akatemia 1640–1808* (Helsinki: Otava, 1987), pp. 20–48.
- 17 Anu Lahtinen and Jussi Hanska, 'Keskiäjalta 1500-luvun lopulle', in Jussi Hanska and Kirsi Vainio-Korhonen (eds.), *Huoneentaulun maailma. Kasvatus ja koulutus Suomessa keskiäjalta 1860-luvulle*. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2010), pp. 17–111, at p. 87.

still constituted a minority during the latter half of seventeenth century.<sup>18</sup> In comparison, in Germany, non-academics became a clear minority in about 1600, and in Denmark, it was required in the early seventeenth century for all would-be clergymen to conduct at least two years of studies at a university.<sup>19</sup> In Sweden, clergymen were also obliged to participate in further training in synodal meetings led by the bishop. Bishops also monitored the work of the clergy during regular visitations to the parishes. The bishops of the Finnish dioceses usually studied at Swedish and German universities, and brought influences from important Lutheran centres, such as Wittenberg.<sup>20</sup>

In Savo, peasant culture was essentially oral, and people who were dependent on agricultural work for their subsistence were not eager to learn to read or take their children to the lessons of the parish clerk (*klockare*, *kläckare* in Swedish). The population of the province of Savo consisted mostly of freeholding peasants and other commoners who did not own land, such as servants. The leading clergymen often lamented the ignorance and superstition of the inhabitants, and there is information in the sources on the kind of popular religious practice that was officially considered as superstitious. For example, saints' day celebrations that also contained pre-Christian elements were still a lively part of local religious culture. However, the clergy did not usually report these practices for prosecution in court.<sup>21</sup> The relationship between local clergymen and parishioners was generally good and trusting, and it is mostly occasional quarrels over unpaid taxes and peasants' negligence in building or repairing the church or the parsonage that come up in the sources.

## 2 The Peasants of Telataipale and the Re-enactment of the Christmas Service

'For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given', a peasant-born soldier intoned in a farmhouse of a remote village of Telataipale in the parish of

18 Of the pastors and chaplains working in the parishes of Savo during the period 1650–1710, about 42 per cent conducted studies in a university. See Miia Kuha, 'Prästkarriären, prästernas rörlighet och förhållande till lokalsamhällen i Viborgs stift 1650–1710.' *Historisk Tidskrift för Finland* 106: 2 (2021), pp. 282–283.

19 Thomas Kaufmann, 'The Clergy and the Theological Culture of the Age: The Education of Lutheran Pastors in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', in C. Scott Dixon and Luise Schorn-Schütte (eds.), *The Protestant Clergy of Early Modern Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp. 120–36, at p. 128; Malmstedt, *Bondetro och kyrkoro*, p. 74.

20 Kimmo Katajala etc., *Viipurin läänin historia, 111: Suomenlahdelta Laatokalle* (Lappeenranta: Karjalan kirjapaino, 2010), pp. 358–63; Malmstedt, *Bondetro och kyrkoro*, p. 75.

21 Kuha, *Pyhäpäivien vietto*; Toivo, *Faith and Magic*.

Sulkava in eastern Finland on St Stephen's Day, 26 December 1667.<sup>22</sup> The soldier had heard the text of the Bible that the pastor had read from the pulpit the day before in the Christmas Day service at the church. The next evening, as the neighbours gathered in a peasant household to spend St Stephen's Day, a popular feast day among the peasantry, a group of men re-enacted the Christmas Day church service in a humorous, parodic manner. It did not take long before rumours of the events started to spread. The neighbouring community was clearly interested in the evening's events and the participants were not afraid to reveal the actors and their roles. Local peasants talked and joked about 'the congregation of Telataipale'<sup>23</sup> as opposed to the parish of Sulkava, which the participants of the feast did not seem to mind. After the rumours reached the local authorities, the case was first handled in an episcopal visitation carried out by Bishop Petrus Brommius in the winter or early spring in 1668. The visitation record has not survived, but the bishop referred the case to the secular court, and an examination of suspected blasphemy followed when the district court of the Pien-Savo jurisdiction gathered in the village of Sulkava in the summer 1668.

At the trial, there were many people present: the judge of the judicial district of Pien-Savo, a jury consisting of nine peasant farmers, the bailiff, the scribe and the rural constable, the local pastor and chaplain, the witnesses and the defendants, and an audience consisting of local inhabitants. The lower court session that was organised two or three times a year in each hundred was an important event that always gathered many people to handle their affairs and follow other hearings. The court audience was often consulted in matters regarding the local community. The scribe recorded the course of court sessions, translated into Swedish, the official language of the realm, but Finnish was usually spoken in the courtroom, and most eastern Finnish peasants could not understand Swedish.<sup>24</sup>

In the case of the parody, four participants and at least four other witnesses were questioned. The judge tried to untangle the course of events, focusing mainly on finding out if actual communion bread had been used, and if the participants had disgraced the sacrament of the eucharist. Degrading the sacrament was considered as blasphemy, which was a serious crime and could lead

22 'ett barn är oss födt, een son ähr oss gifuin' (KA, Pien-Savo, KO a:1, Sulkava, 6–7 May 1668, p. 118). See note 6 for information on the source used in this chapter. See below for an analysis of the paragraph of the Bible mentioned.

23 'Telataipall församblingh' (KA, Pien-Savo, KO a:1, Sulkava, 6–7 May 1668, p. 114).

24 In some court cases in eastern Finland, peasant witnesses were not able to testify about conversations between people from higher estates, because they did not understand if only Swedish had been spoken. See Kuha, *Pyhäpäivien vietto*, p. 116.

to the death penalty.<sup>25</sup> The peasants had shared regular bread, but the problem was that one of them had proclaimed that they would share the bread as if it was the Host. After the hearing, the judge discussed the case with the jury and local clergymen, and the outcome was that the participants of the feast had not distributed the sacrament, but that they had, in their drunkenness, ridiculed God's word and talked about the Host. The judge chose to refer the case back to the ecclesiastical forum, to be examined by the chapter in Vyborg. The records of the chapter have been destroyed, but a year later, in the summer 1669, we can find the two main characters of the re-enactment as prisoners in the castle of Vyborg. After four months of imprisonment, whilst their case was probably being examined in the chapter, they were finally discharged.<sup>26</sup>

In the trial, the events were gradually exposed by the testimonies of second-hand witnesses, who had talked about the evening later with the participants, and finally the reluctant participants confessing their share in events. There were at least ten people present at the celebration, both invited guests and members of the household. The record mentions only one woman, the mistress of the house. During the feast, fish and bread were served to eat and plenty of beer to drink, and it is mentioned that the participants were drunk. The evening's host passed out soon after the beginning of the parody. In the course of the evening, two of the participants, both cavalry soldiers recruited from peasant families, acted as the pastor and the chaplain in a parody of the church service. The farmhand took on the role of the parish clerk, while others performed as churchgoers. It seems that the three men playing the main parts were young and unmarried.

The re-enactment of the service included the following parts: ringing the bell, confession and absolution, communion, the 'pastor' quoting the Bible, singing hymns and saying 'things he had heard from the pastor'.<sup>27</sup> Ringing the bell, or a fish trap hanging in the ceiling, was the job of the clerk, just like in the actual service.<sup>28</sup> To make it feel real and tangible, different kinds of material items from the peasant household were used: bread and beer to imitate the communion and a mantle that the fake pastor put on to resemble the cassock of the clergyman. Rituals of the service were imitated with bodily gestures: for example, the churchgoers fell on their knees when the fake pastor gave

25 Soili-Maria Olli, *Visioner av världen. Händelse och djävulspakt i justitierevisionen 1680–1780* (Umeå: Umeå universitet, 2007), pp. 1–2.

26 Kuha, *Pyhäpäivien vietto*, p. 123.

27 'hwadd han aff Presten hördt hadhe' (KA, Pien-Savo, KO a:1, Sulkava, 6–7 May 1668, p. 117).

28 The Swedish word *klockare* (parish clerk) comes from the word *klocka* (bell), referring to the original task of the clerk as the bell-ringer. 'Klockare', in *Svenska Akademiens Ordbok* (1936), <https://www.saob.se/>, accessed 21 March 2019.

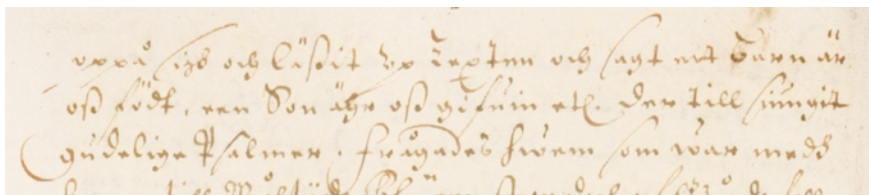


FIGURE 10.1 An extract from the lower court protocol from the investigation of the case of suspected blasphemy in Telataipale  
NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF FINLAND

them absolution. There were different kinds of jokes and mockery included in the parody, for example, during the re-enactment of communion, one of the guests asked for more to drink because he claimed to be a greater sinner than the others.<sup>29</sup>

The passage of the Bible mentioned earlier is the only reference to a religious text that was recorded. Otherwise, the men acting as clergymen clearly tried to imitate the church liturgy, hymns and probably the sermon. In the trial, the soldier who had played the part of the chaplain confessed that the mistress of the house had only allowed him to sing godly hymns and say things he had heard from the clergy, which is an interesting detail. It might imply that he had tried to sing or say something that would have been considered as superstitious or blasphemous in the eyes of the judge. There is another mention in the court records from a St Stephen's Day celebration in the same region, where one of the participants insisted the others sing godly hymns instead of other songs, probably of older, non-Christian origin.<sup>30</sup>

Many non-Lutheran popular rituals were a part of the celebration of St Stephen's Day. In northern Europe, St Stephen was especially known as a protector of horses, and the rituals of the day were connected to horses: for example, bringing a horse inside the house, making it drink ale and finally riding out on the ice. St Stephen's Day was essentially a feast of men and the rituals strengthened the mythical connection between men and horses.<sup>31</sup> The house that hosted the events in Telataipale was a household that equipped a cavalryman and a horse in the military in exchange for tax reliefs from the state. Almost all of the participants either came from a similar household or

29 For an analysis of the humorous and carnivalesque elements in the parody, see Kuha, 'A Parody of the Church Service'.

30 KA, Savo, KO a:2, Sääminki, Sulkava and Kerimäki, 16 February 1648, pp. 713–13<sup>v</sup>.

31 Kati Kallio etc., *Laulut ja kirjoitukset. Suullinen ja kirjallinen kulttuuri uuden ajan alun Suomessa* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2017), pp. 148–84, <https://doi.org/10.21435/skst.1427>.

were cavalry soldiers themselves. Thus, it was especially important for them to ensure the success of horses. Horses were valuable and only wealthier households could afford to keep them.<sup>32</sup>

Even though the participants of the parody were men, it seems that the mistress had some control over them, demanding that they sing godly hymns and imitate the pastor in what they spoke. The mistress did not seem to think that it would be dangerous to replicate the church service at home as long as it was done correctly, following to the pattern used by the clergymen at the church. After all, the parishioners were told that they should pray, sing hymns and recite the Catechism at home especially on holy days in order to teach their children and servants and live like proper Christians.

### 3 The Parishioners of Savo as 'Listeners'

It seems that the men who took part in the parody in Sulkava were somewhat wealthier and more educated than the majority of the local parishioners, which means that they were able to recite the main articles of the Small Catechism and were probably familiar with some of their explanations as well. We can assume that many others would not have been able to perform this kind of parody with all its references to the church, Bible and liturgy. The campaign for teaching the subjects of the Swedish realm, the overwhelming majority of whom were peasants, to read, had started in the early seventeenth century. Learning the basics of the Catechism was obligatory if one wished to take communion or marry. Thus, being able to recite the most important articles of the Catechism became an important prerequisite of social life. The parish clergy regularly examined all parishioners, but they paid special attention to the education of the youth.<sup>33</sup> In Finland, bishops Isaacus Rothovius (1627–52) and Johannes Gezelius (1664–90) in the diocese of Turku, and Petrus Bjugg (1642–55) and Petrus Bång (1681–96) in Vyborg, strove to improve the Christian education of the populace. However, there were considerable regional differences, especially between the densely inhabited areas of south-western Finland and the large parishes in the east. Books were particularly rare in the eastern Finnish countryside.<sup>34</sup>

32 Kuha, *Pyhäpäivien vietto*, p. 142.

33 KA Joensuu, Kuopio church archive, 11 Cd: 1, Visitation record (1670); Laine and Laine, 'Kirkollinen kansanopetus', p. 266; Laine, *Aapisen ja katekismuksen tavaamisesta*, p. 10.

34 Laine and Laine 2010, 'Kirkollinen kansanopetus', pp. 282–3.

There were no schools in the province of Savo, but the church law of 1686 required every parish to have a literate clerk who would be able to teach the children.<sup>35</sup> Parents were urged to send their children to be taught by the clerk, but for many, that was not possible because of the long distances and the need for a workforce at the farm. In addition, it was not a given that every parish even had a literate clerk. In the parishes of Savo, the visitation records usually mention that the parish had a literate clerk, but the earliest mention can be found only in the year 1683. Furthermore, in a record from the parish of Joroinen from 1700, it is mentioned that the clerk was not literate, and the local clergymen were urged to ensure that this should not become an obstacle to the children's advancement in learning. It is also mentioned that the parishioners were otherwise satisfied with their clerk.<sup>36</sup> Thus, even in 1700, it was still possible that the religious teaching of the parish lay in the hands of the pastor and the chaplain, and a non-literate clerk was not replaced with a literate one.

The parishioners' happiness with the non-literate clerk reflects their opinions on the importance of teaching. The peasants, who did not need literary skills in order to be able to perform their everyday work, were not particularly eager to learn, and the conditions of the church service made learning difficult even for those who had an interest in improving their skills. The churches in Savo were made of wood, they were small and modest and they were often in need of repair. The conditions inside were particularly inconvenient in the winter. The church service took hours and it seems to have been difficult for the parishioners just to sit still and listen, only being allowed to stand up and kneel as the liturgy required. In practice, many of the parishioners came to church late, and when they were there, chatted with their neighbours and often walked outside to the churchyard and back again while the service went on. In the churchyard, beer and spirits were sold and consumed, which made it even more difficult for many to stay in their seats. One pastor complained that there was such a noise at the church that it was not even possible to hear the sermon.<sup>37</sup>

35 *Kirko-Laki ja Ordningi 1686*, p. 124, c.XXIV, § XXXI. The visitation records usually mention the name of the clerk and that he is literate and able to teach the children of the parish. For example, KA Mikkeli, Kangasniemi church archive, II Cd: 1 Visitation record (1704). It is probable that this kind of activity was sporadic in the late seventeenth century, and proper clerks' schools were organised in the countryside only gradually during the eighteenth century. See Laine and Laine, 'Kirkollinen kansanopetus', pp. 262 and 278–9.

36 KA Mikkeli, Joroinen church archive, II Cd: 1 Visitation record (1704).

37 Kuha, *Pyhäpäivien vietto*, pp. 52–4, 109. After the publication of an ordinance on church disturbances in 1686, those who were disturbing the service ended up in the courtroom more easily. For example: KA, Pien-Savo, KO a:4, Sulkava, 1–2 June 1693, pp. 292–3;

The clergymen were supposed to preach the Small Catechism regularly in a simple manner, so that the parishioners could easily become familiar with the content. It is likely that in the 1660s, the clergymen in Sulkava used *Wähä Catechismus* by Bishop Ericus Eri Sorolainen (1629).<sup>38</sup> In the examination of the Catechism, the minimum requirement was to be able to recite the main articles: the Commandments, Creed, Lord's Prayer, the preparatory words for baptism and communion, and confession. Prayers for morning, evening and mealtime were also the subject of questions. The next level was to learn the explanations of the main articles, and even more advanced students would be able to answer questions on the contents of the Catechism. Learning to read printed texts in the vernacular, mainly the Catechism, also belonged to the more advanced skills, acquired mainly by the youth in the 1690s and 1700s.<sup>39</sup> However, learning to read by heart was considered to be more important than reading the text inwardly. It was thought that if someone recited the text many times, they would also learn to understand the content.<sup>40</sup>

The visitation records from Savo show that before the 1690s, the parishioners were able to recite the main articles, often somewhat inadequately.<sup>41</sup> In the parish of Kuopio in 1670, most of the parishioners were not able to recite even one of these articles correctly, to the astonishment of the visiting dean, Johan (Johannes) Cajanus. In his evaluation, the parishioners did not show any improvement during the frequent visitations of the decade. Before the 1690s, it

'Cuning. Majj:tin Asetus ja Kieldö. Tappeluxista / Capinoista ja Pahennuxista Kircoisa' in *Kirko-Laki ja Ordningi* 1686, pp. 171–2.

38 Ericus Eri Sorolainen, *Wähä Catechismus* (Stockholm: Ignatius Meurer, 1629), USTC 251831. Ericus Eri also published a more extensive edition of the Catechism for clerical use in 1614. See Tuija Laine, 'Ericus Eri Sorolainen: Catechismus, 1614' and 'Ericus Eri Sorolaisen Wähä catechismus ja vuoden 1657 katekismuspainoksen synty', in Tuija Laine (ed.), *Vanhimman suomalaisen kirjallisuuden käsikirja* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura), pp. 84–5 and 86–8. Simplicity in preaching was emphasised already in late medieval preaching manuals from the turn of the sixteenth century. See Beth Kreitzer, 'The Lutheran Sermon', in Larissa Taylor (ed.), *Preachers and People in the Reformations and Early Modern Period* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), pp. 35–63.

39 Learning requirements were stated in some of the visitation records, for example: KA Mikkeli, Kangasniemi church archive, 11 Ce Visitation records (1659 and 1662). See also Laine, *Aapisen ja katekismuksen tavaamisesta*, p. 38; Martti Parvio, *Isaacus Rothovius. Turun piispa* (Helsinki: Suomen kirkkohistoriallinen seura, 1959), pp. 236–8.

40 Charlotte Appel, 'Printed in Books, Imprinted on Minds. Catechisms and Religious Reading in Denmark during the Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries' in Charlotte Appel and Morten Fink-Jensen (eds.), *Religious Reading in the Lutheran North. Studies in Early Modern Scandinavian Book Culture* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011), pp. 70–87.

41 This subchapter elaborates some of the results published in my dissertation. Kuha, *Pyhäpäivien vietto*, pp. 105–7. For the visitation records used, see reference 10.

seems to have been rare for parishioners in Savo to have been able to remember the explanations, and reading the text is not mentioned before 1693. However, in most parishes, focusing on teaching the children led to an improvement in the knowledge of the articles of faith and to growing literacy by the early 1700s. In the parish of Kuopio, where education seems to have started from scratch in the 1670s, the diligent bishop David Lund found an impressive number of readers; in addition, the young in particular were also able to explain the contents of the Catechism.<sup>42</sup>

In some cases, the visitation records give a contradictory testimony on the parishioners' skills. In Kangasniemi, the parishioners were mentioned as knowing the explanations quite well in deans' visitations up to the year 1683, when the visiting bishop Petrus Bång found that they were not at all used to reciting explanations or answering questions. Thus, there might have been notable differences in the requirements depending on how rigorously the examiner performed his task. On the other hand, deans as intermediate-level clergymen might have wanted to give a favourable picture of themselves and their work in checking the parishes of their deanery. It is also possible that being questioned by the bishop himself was such a frightening experience that the parishioners performed worse than they would have done otherwise.<sup>43</sup> However, the generally good performance in the episcopal visitations of the first decade of the eighteenth century does not give support to this supposition.

In the development of the knowledge of the Catechism and literary skills, Savo was about half a century behind the more central areas of south-western Finland.<sup>44</sup> If we compare other rural areas in the diocese of Vyborg during the episcopate of Petrus Bång, it seems that the results were not remarkably better in parishes situated at closer proximity to the episcopal seat. For example, in the parish of Savitaipale in 1687, as visiting bishop Bång found that the parishioners were able to recite the main articles but had no understanding of them.<sup>45</sup> There were great differences between the towns and countryside both in the availability of books and the advancement of literacy. In the town of Helsinki in 1684, Bishop Bång was satisfied to see how the children and the youth all came with their books in their hands to the examination. However,

42 KA Joensuu, Kuopio church archive, II Cd: 1 Visitation records, 1670–1710.

43 KA Mikkeli, Kangasniemi church archive, II Cd: 1 and II Ce, Visitation records 1659–83. See also Laine and Laine, 'Huoneentaulun maailma', p. 264.

44 Kuha, *Pyhäpäivien vietto*, p. 106.

45 Visitation in Savitaipale 1687, in Esko Häkli, *Biskops- och prostvisitationsprotokoll från det äldre Wiborgska stiftet: på basis av Albin Simolins samling kompletterade och utgivna av Esko Häkli* (Helsinki: Suomen kirkkohistoriallinen seura, 2015), p. 333.

even here, the bishop judged that only some of the students also had a good understanding of what they had read.<sup>46</sup>

#### 4 The Relationship of Clergymen and Parishioners in Sulkava

There are no surviving visitation records from Sulkava, and it is not known if the clerk working in the parish in the 1660s was literate or not.<sup>47</sup> However, we have some information on the clergymen who were active in the parish at the time of the parody. The parody indicates some kind of juxtaposition between the inhabitants of Telataipale and local authorities, especially the clergy. From this perspective, it is interesting that neither of the clergymen working in Sulkava had been born in the parish.

Claes (Claudius Samuelis) Molander, a clergyman of about fifty years of age, was appointed the pastor of Sulkava in 1663. Molander was born in Muolaa, a parish on the Karelian isthmus, an area that is a part of present-day Russia. Molander had conducted his studies in the gymnasium of Vyborg, and probably rehearsed his pastoral duties in his home parish. In 1648, he became the chaplain of Muolaa, a post he held for the following fifteen years. Having lost the contest to become the pastor of his parish in 1662, Molander was appointed the pastor of Sulkava the following year, and moved north to southern Savo with his family.<sup>48</sup> Thus, Pastor Molander was a newcomer in the area, which means that the events of Telataipale may imply a difficult relationship between the new pastor and some of his parishioners, but no other evidence has been preserved to support this assumption. It was common for the pastor to have come to his parish from outside, at least in the parishes of eastern Finland.<sup>49</sup> When the former pastor died, there were usually local candidates, such as the

46 Helsinki, Visitation record 1684, in *Biskops- och prostvisitationsprotokoll*, p. 94. On understanding, see also Pettegree, 'Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion', pp. 6–7.

47 A schoolmaster was taken in the parish in the 1690s, which shows quite a strong commitment to teaching at that point. Paavo Seppänen, *Sulkavan historia, 1: Sulkava vuoteen 1860* (Sulkava: Sulkavan kunta, 1999), pp. 360–1.

48 KA, Pien-Savo, KO a:3, Sulkava, 9–10 February 1685, p. 101; Seppänen, *Sulkavan historia*, p. 336; Yrjö Kotivuori, 'Anders Molander' (24 September 2010), in Yrjö Kotivuori (ed.), *Ylioppilasmatrikkeli 1640–1852* (Helsinki: Helsingin yliopisto, 2005) <https://ylioppilasmatrikkelihelsinki.fi/henkilö.php?id=2122>, accessed 15 February 2018; Matthias Akiander and Iikka B. Voipio (ed.), *Östra Finlands herdaminne. Herdaminne för förda Wiborgs och nuvarande Borgå stift intill år 1868. 2 Delen, Lampis – Östersundholm* (Helsingfors: Finska vetenskaps-societeten 2008), pp. 78, 320.

49 Of the pastors and chaplains working in the parishes of Savo during the period 1650–1710, about 42 per cent worked in two or more parishes during their careers. Kuha,

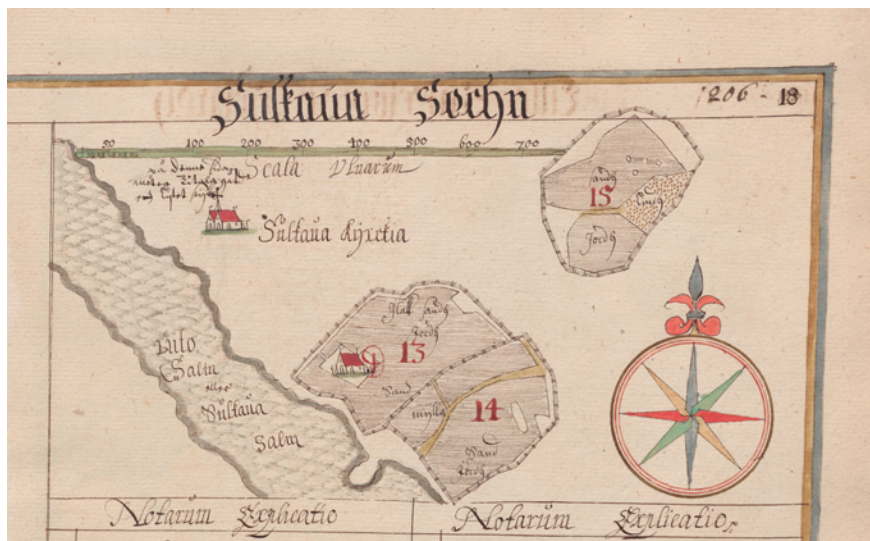


FIGURE 10.2 A drawing of the church of Sulkava (upper building on the left) and parsonage marked with the letter D in the land taxation map from the 1640s. Both buildings were located by the Sulkava strait. It is likely that rather than resembling the actual buildings, they were drawn according to a conventional model

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF FINLAND

chaplain or the son of the former pastor, who would already have been helping his father some years before his death. However, it was the responsibility of the chapter to nominate the most worthy applicant for the post, although it was also an advantage if the candidate had local support or was willing to marry the widow or the daughter of his predecessor, thus securing the subsistence of the pastoral family.<sup>50</sup>

However, there was some friction between the parishioners and the chaplain, Johan Martini Borgoensis or Borgensis (later Allenius), who was also a newcomer, appointed to his post only a couple of years before the parody, after marrying the daughter of his predecessor.<sup>51</sup> It seems that he had some problems with the parishioners being unwilling to pay for his dues at the turn of the 1670s. Three years after the events in Telataipale, he ended up in court

'Prästkarriären', pp. 287–288. See also Gunnar Suolahti, *Suomen papisto 1600- ja 1700-luvuilla* (Porvoo: Werner Söderström Osakeyhtiö, 1919), p. 42.

50 Peter Lindström, *Prästval och politisk kultur 1650–1800* (Umeå: Umeå universitet, Institutionen för historiska studier, 2003), pp. 31, 48.

51 Yrjö Kotivuori, 'Mårten Allenius' (18 September 2010) in Yrjö Kotivuori (ed.), *Ylioppilasmatrikkeli 1640–1852* (Helsinki: Helsingin yliopisto, 2005) <https://ylioppilasmatrikkeli.helsinki.fi/henkilo.php?id=3540>, accessed 29 March 2019.

again with the central figure in Telataipale, Olli Holopainen, who had sworn that the chaplain would be attacked by 'a thousand devils' after demanding Holopainen pay his dues.<sup>52</sup> Later, at the turn of the 1680s, the chaplain made several attempts to get the parishioners' support for the post of pastor in Sulkava both before and after the death of Claes Molander. To his disappointment, the parishioners favoured the former pastor's son, Andreas Molander, who was appointed in 1682, even though they did say that they were also satisfied with their chaplain.<sup>53</sup>

In the feast of Telataipale, it seems that the laughter and mockery was targeted at the local clergymen and probably also secular authorities. Behind the events, there seems to have been a local power struggle, where this particular group of peasants felt that they had been pushed aside from their previous more powerful position in the community. When the parish of Sulkava was founded in 1630 and the civil parish established by 1660, a new centre was established in the village of Sulkava, after which the rural constables (*länsman*) were also recruited from the houses near the village. Before this, the constables of this area, forming a part of the large late-medieval parish of Sääminki, used to be recruited from Telataipale and neighbouring villages. One of the last of these was the father of the host of the evening, Tuomas Holopainen, who was already an old man living in his son's household, and also present at the feast. The rural constable was a member of the local elite in the countryside, and it is likely that Olli Holopainen would have wished to step into his father's shoes. The clergymen and secular authorities worked in close collaboration, and the authority of the state and the church intermingled both in practice and in the eyes of the peasantry.<sup>54</sup> Performing scornful poems or songs have been interpreted as a means of active resistance, and in the early-modern world, turning social roles upside down could have been a way of making flaws inside the community visible.<sup>55</sup> By means of the parody, it is likely that the men gathered at the celebration were commenting on the power relations in the parish.

52 ' [...] 1000 dieflar skulle fara uthj Presten ...' KA, Pien-Savo, KO a:2, Sulkava, 18–19 August 1671 [no pagination]; Kuha, *Pyhäpäivien vietto*, pp. 123–4.

53 KA, Pien-Savo, KO a:2, Sulkava, 29 October 1681, pp. 79–80; KA, Pien-Savo, KO a:2, Sulkava, 16–17 January 1682, pp. 25–7; Seppänen, *Sulkavan historia*, pp. 335–41.

54 Kuha, *Pyhäpäivien vietto*, pp. 123–4. On authority and resistance, see also Miia Kuha, 'Rörelse i periferin. Kyrkobesöket i 1600-talets Savolax', in Mats Hallenberg and Magnus Linnarsson (eds.), *Politiska rum. Kontroll, konflikt och rörelse i det förmoderna Sverige 1300–1850* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press 2014, 159–73).

55 Kati Mikkola, *Tulevaisuutta vastaan. Uutuuksien vastustus, kansantiedon keruu ja kansakunnan rakentaminen* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2009), pp. 298–301; Kustaa H. J. Vilkkunen, *Katse menneisyyden ihmiseen* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2011), pp. 103–4, 128–51.

## 5 The Christmas Day Liturgy in Sulkava and the Diocese of Vyborg

In the trial described above, one of the participants of the feast testified that the fake pastor had sung and cited the Gospel ‘as he should’, which probably means that he had remembered the hymns and paragraphs of the Bible correctly according to the judgement of other peasants.<sup>56</sup> One paragraph of the Bible that the soldier performing as the pastor recited is mentioned in the text. He remembered it from the Christmas service that they had attended the day before. When the judge pushed him to confess, after several witnesses’ statements, he finally admitted and explained that ‘he had had the mantle on and recited the text and said that a child is born to us, a son is to us given etc. and then sung godly hymns’.<sup>57</sup> The text mentioned in the record can be identified as a prophecy from the book of Isaiah (9:6) from the Old Testament:

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.<sup>58</sup>

The English translation of the paragraph from the King James Bible (1611) resembles the Finnish translation of *Coco Pyhä Raamattu* (1642) very closely. The repetitive structure and the different names and qualities of God make the passage cited by the soldier resemble the traditional parallelistic language of songs and incantations that the peasants were still familiar with in the seventeenth century.<sup>59</sup> This kind of a structure might have made this particular paragraph easier to understand and remember for the peasants of Telataipale.

The recited paragraph was marked in the court record with an ‘etc.’ sign that refers to that the soldier was able to remember more of the paragraph than

56 ‘som sigh borde’ (KA, Pien-Savo, KO a:1, Sulkava, 6–7 May 1668, p. 117).

57 ‘han haffuer ... hafft mantelen oppå sigh och läsit up texten och sagt ett barn är oss födt, een son ähr oss gifuin etc. der till siungit gudelige Psalmer’ (KA, Pien-Savo, KO a:1, Sulkava, 6–7 May 1668, pp. 117–18).

58 King James Bible 1611. In Finnish: ‘Sillä meille on lapsi syndynyt/ ja poica on meille annettu/ jonga hartioilla Herraus on/ ja hänen nimens cudzutan/ Ihmelinen/ Neuwo/ Wäkewä/ Jumala/ Ijancaickinen Isä/ Rauhan päämies.’ *Biblia, Se On: Coco Pyhä Ramattu, Suomexi. Pääramattu[de]n, Hebrean ia Grekan jälcken: Esipuhetten, Marginaliaîn, Concordantiaîn, Selitösten ia Register[e]in cansa* (Stockholm: Henric Keyser, 1642), USTC 2178828, p. 350.

59 Kati Kallio, *Laulamisen tapoja. Esitysareena, rekisteri ja paikallinen laji länsi-inkeriläisessä kalevalamittaisessa runossa* (Helsinki: Helsingin yliopisto, 2013), p. 127; Anna-Leena Siikala, *Suomalainen samanismi – mielikuvien historiaa* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 1992), pp. 64–83.

what was written in the record. A longer section was also read in the service at the church. The prophecy of Isaiah 9: 1–6 was officially added to the Christmas Day liturgy in the diocese of Vyborg in 1618, when the newly appointed bishop, Olaus Elimaeus, published his book *Evangeliumit ja epistolat*, a book of Gospels and epistles, which was a liturgical handbook that directed the use of texts of the Bible in the church services throughout the year.<sup>60</sup> The book was based on the first Finnish-language mass book *Se pyhä messu* that the bishop of both Turku and Vyborg, Paulus Juusten, had published in 1575.<sup>61</sup> In his book, Elimaeus aimed at renewing and developing the liturgy in the eastern diocese. Elimaeus made some changes to the liturgy, mostly based on the Swedish church manual of 1614, but also independently. One of the changes he made independently concerned the Christmas day liturgy, where Elimaeus added a prophecy from the book of Isaiah.<sup>62</sup> Interestingly, this was exactly the same text that the soldier in Telataipale recited in the fake service. *Evangeliumit ja epistolat* was published in several later editions during the seventeenth century as a part of church manual collections, for example the *Manuale Finnicum* that also included a hymnal, a Catechism and other religious texts.<sup>63</sup> It is likely that one of these editions was also in use in Sulkava at the time of the events of Telataipale.

In seventeenth-century Sweden, the centralising government aimed to unify the religious practice as well as the religious literature of the whole state. However, the dioceses had relative independence in many areas, and the bishops were able to influence the liturgical choices, organisation of education

60 *Evangeliumit ja Epistolat, iotca seuracunnas ymbäris aiastaian luetan eli weisatan, Sunnuntaina ja muina Pyhäpäivinä* (Stockholm: Christopher Reusner, 1618; 2nd edn, 1622), USTC 251861, 251862. See also Martti Parvio, 'Karjalaisväritteinen kirkollinen kirjallisuus Viipurin hiippakunnassa 1600-luvun alkupuolella', in Kyösti Pulliainen and Hannes Sihvo (eds.), *Carelia rediviva. Juhlakirja professori Heikki Kirkselle 22.9.1987* (Joensuu: Joensuun yliopisto, 1987) pp. 135–58; Jyrki Knuutila, 'Evangeliumit ja epistolat, 1618 ja 1622', in *Vanhimman suomalaisen kirjallisuuden käsikirja*, pp. 117–22; Tuija Laine, 'Viipurin kirjallinen kulttuuri vuoteen 1710', in Petri Karonen (ed.), *Arki, kirkko, artefakti. Viipurin kulttuurihistoriaa Ruotsin ajalla (n. 1300–1710)* (Helsinki: Viipurin suomalainen kirjallisuusseura, 2017), pp. 124–48, at p. 127.

61 Paulus Juusten, *Se pyhä messu* (Stockholm: Amund Laurentsson, 1575), USTC 300449. Juusten's Mass book was a compilation that also included the texts of Gospels and epistles, whereas Olaus Elimaeus published the Gospels and epistles separately. Laine, 'Viipurin kirjallinen kulttuuri', pp. 127–8.

62 Knuutila, 'Evangeliumit ja epistolat, 1618 ja 1622'; Parvio, 'Karjalaisväritteinen kirkollinen kirjallisuus', pp. 140–1.

63 The first editions of *Manuale Finnicum* were published in 1646, 1653 and 1664 (USTC 6910970, 261922, 261924), see Tuija Laine, 'Manuale Finnicum 1600-luvulla', in *Vanhimman suomalaisen kirjallisuuden käsikirja*, pp. 140–3.

and even church legislation in their own dioceses.<sup>64</sup> Before coming to Vyborg, Olaus Elimaeus (in office 1618–29) had studied in Turku, Stockholm, Uppsala, Rostock and Wittenberg, and held the highest ecclesiastical post in Stockholm as *pastor primarius*. When he arrived in his new post as the bishop of Vyborg, Elimaeus translated, edited and published books in Finnish for the needs of his diocese. His publications included a Finnish-language hymnbook, which included mainly the same hymns as had been published in earlier hymnbooks, but adapted to linguistic forms of eastern Finnish dialects; the composition of the book was influenced by Swedish hymnbooks.<sup>65</sup> He also translated the first Lutheran church manual (first published 1614, in Finnish 1629) that was to be followed in the whole realm of Sweden.<sup>66</sup> There was great need for books in the parishes of the diocese and also in the schools of Vyborg since the town did not have a printing press before 1689.<sup>67</sup> The church of Asikkala in Häme did not even have a Finnish Bible until a local officer donated a copy in 1672.<sup>68</sup> This problem was even more urgent in the early seventeenth century, but Bishop Elimaeus did his best to improve the situation. Born in Elimäki in south-eastern Finland, he also wanted to make the language of the books easily accessible to people living outside south-western Finland that dominated the development of the written language, as he proclaimed in one of his publications.<sup>69</sup> Elimaeus' publications have been seen both as a part of the unification process of the liturgy in the Swedish realm as well as an endeavour to develop ecclesiastical life in the diocese of Vyborg independently.<sup>70</sup>

64 Askmark, *Svensk prästutbildning*, pp. 108–10.

65 Olov Elimaeus, *Soomenkielinen Virsikiria ...* (Stockholm: Christopher Reusner, 1621), USTC 252786; Onni Kurvinen, *Vanha virsikirja. Vuoden 1701 suomalaisen virsikirjan synty ja sisällys*. Diss. (Helsingin yliopisto) (Rauma: [Onni Kurvinen], 1941), pp. 39–43. On exceptions in the hymnbook in comparison to predecessors, see also Kallio etc., *Laulut ja kirjoitukset*, pp. 499–500; P. J. I. Kurvinen, *Suomen virsirunouden alkuvaiheet v:een 1640* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 1929), pp. 359–60.

66 Olaus Elimaeus, *Käsikiria, jossa on käsitetty, millätavalla jumalan pabwelus, christilisten ceremoniain ia kirconmenoin cansa, somen seuracunnis pidhettämän pitä* (Stockholm: Ignatius Meurer, 1629), USTC 252278. Pentti Laasonen, 'Elimaeus, Olaus' (18 July 2000), in *Kansallisbiografia-verkkojulkaisu*. Helsinki: *Studia Biographica*: 4, (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 1997–), <http://urn.fi/urn:nbn:fi:sk:skb-000475>, accessed 26 March 2019; Katajala etc., *Viipurin läänin historia*, p. 358; Knuutila, 'Evangeliumit ja epistolat, 1618 ja 1622', p. 122; Parvio, 'Karjalaisväritteinen kirkollinen kirjallisuus', pp. 142–3.

67 Laine, 'Viipurin kirjallinen kulttuuri', pp. 132–3.

68 Visitation in Asikkala 1672, in *Biskops- och prostvisitationsprotokoll*, p. 59.

69 O. Kurvinen, *Vanha virsikirja*, pp. 40–1.

70 Parvio, 'Karjalaisväritteinen kirkollinen kirjallisuus', *passim*; Jyrki Knuutila and Markus Hiekkanen, 'Viipurin kirkollinen elämä ja sen vaikutus kirkolliseen kulttuuriin 1200-luvun lopusta vuoteen 1710', in Petri Karonen (ed.), *Arki, kirkko, artefakti. Viipurin kulttuurihistoriaa*

## 6 Learning and Appropriating the Literary Culture

In German areas, the centre of the Lutheran Reformation, Reformation ideas spread with books and pamphlets. Even the illiterate were able to look at woodcuts and many had a chance to hear the text read aloud by someone else. On the north-eastern periphery of post-Reformation Europe, the eastern Finnish countryside, the peasants had practically no access to any printed products.<sup>71</sup> As the churches were poor and did not have much artwork, the visual means for educating the populace were scant. Here, the Lutheran message was communicated mainly through liturgy, hymn singing, sermons and catechetical teaching.

In this chapter, I have analysed a unique case from the secular lower court records from Sulkava in eastern Finland. At a farmhouse in the small village of three peasant households in Telataipale, a group of men from the neighbourhood performed a humorous re-enactment of the Christmas Day divine service on St Stephen's Day evening 1667. The analysis of the case shows that these men were able to remember and reconstruct the course of the church service, imitate the most important parts of the liturgy, sing hymns, recite paragraphs from the Bible and copy some of the content and the manner in which the pastor spoke in the pulpit. These men, who found themselves in a position with considerably less authority than before the founding of the new administrative unit of Sulkava, used this knowledge to comment on the power relations in the parish and question the authority of their pastors coming from outside the parish.

In general, on the eastern rural periphery of the Swedish kingdom, it seems that parishioners were not very interested in learning the Catechism, even though the church considered catechetical teaching one of the most important tasks of the local clergy. To the commoners, going to church was both a religious and a social event, where it was important to come close to the sacred as a community and meet relatives and other acquaintances. It was important for the peasants that the pastor delivered the sermon, but they did not seem to

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*Ruotsin ajalla* (n. 1300–1710) (Helsinki: Viipurin suomalainen kirjallisuusseura, 2017), pp. 26–84, at pp. 64–5. On the unification of liturgy in Finland after the Reformation, see Jyrki Knuutila, 'Liturgisen yhdenmukaistamisen toteutuminen Suomessa reformaatikaudella 1537–1614', *Suomen kirkkohistoriallisen seuran vuosikirja* 77 (1987), pp. 9–40.

<sup>71</sup> Hymn folios, leaflets containing only a few Christian hymns, were published especially in the late seventeenth century, and it is possible that they had a wider distribution because they were cheaper to print than larger books. However, there is no evidence on their use on the local level in my research area. See O. Kurvinen, *Vanha virsikirja*, pp. 77–9.

think that it would be necessary to listen carefully, at least every time. Difficult conditions also might have made some people lose their focus on what they were listening to.<sup>72</sup>

However, the peasants who re-enacted the Christmas service in Sulkava had clearly absorbed a lot of information from the church service, from the course of liturgy to the text of the Bible. This is an interesting contradiction that can probably be explained by the different physical, social and economic conditions of the inhabitants of eastern Finland. For wealthier peasants, performing well in examinations might have been an important part of representing their social status. In general, the inhabitants of the area identified themselves as Christians, and Lutheran religious practice was an integral part of their lives, even if they were not interested in learning the Catechism or eager to attend examinations. The influence of the church can also be seen in popular culture. The most important prayers were used for different purposes, which is one example of the intermingling of the oral and written cultures.<sup>73</sup> Prayers heard in church services could be adapted into incantations used in popular healing.<sup>74</sup> By the seventeenth century, singing Christian hymns had also become a common part of the celebration of popular feasts.<sup>75</sup> These examples together with the case from Sulkava show how texts were commonly adopted from church services for popular use.

The example from Sulkava shows that the holy day service as a whole had an important role as a tool of Christian education. It seems that the peasants did not learn only by reciting the Catechism, but also by participating.<sup>76</sup> When they were present at the church service as 'listeners', the parishioners sang the hymns they knew, recited prayers, stood up and knelt down in certain parts of the liturgy, tasted the wine and bread of the eucharist, and sometimes even walked up to the altar to bring their offerings.<sup>77</sup> According to Göran Malmstedt, Swedish clergymen complained about their parishioners who would repeat

72 Kuha, *Pyhäpäivien vietto*, p. 109; Malmstedt, *Bondetro och kyrkoro*, pp. 159–62.

73 For example, in Häme in western Finland, when a group of peasants drank a ceremonial toast in honour of a mythological deity called Ukko, asking him to give rain for their crops, they recited Lord's Prayer three times both before and after drinking the toast. (KA, Porvoo ja Hollola, KO a:2, Hauho, Tuulos and Lammi, 19–21 November 1662, pp. 90<sup>v</sup>–91<sup>r</sup>).

74 Eg. 'Pistos / Kristuksen ruumis' (KA, Pohjanmaa, KO a:10, Isokyrö and Vähäkyrö, 5–10 July 1658) and other examples in Kati Kallio, etc. (eds.), *Uuden ajan alun loitsut* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura; forthcoming).

75 Toivo, *Faith and magic*, p. 93.

76 Raisa Toivo has emphasised the participatory nature of religious practice in *Faith and Magic*, pp. 97–8.

77 See Kuha, *Pyhäpäivien vietto*; Monica Weikert 2004, *I sjukdom och nöd. Offerkyrkoseden i Sverige från 1600-tal till 1800-tal* (Göteborg: Göteborgs universitet, 2004).

the cleric's words in a quiet murmur in certain parts of the service. Malmstedt interprets this behaviour as an expression of popular piety and veneration of the holy word.<sup>78</sup>

In this chapter, I have also aimed to show some examples of how influences spread from the centre to the periphery, travelling along with people and books around the Baltic Sea. The bishops of Vyborg studied in German universities and the local clerics in Uppsala, Tartu, Turku and Vyborg, and influences spread with them to the parishes mainly through church services. Liturgical literature published in the vernacular was also an important way of spreading the message of the church. The work of Bishop Elimaeus shows that individuals were also interested in developing their local church with some independence. The peasants, on the other hand, were able to integrate literate influences from the church as a part of their own oral culture, like the celebration of traditional feast days in a carnivalesque manner, turning the world and social roles upside down. The re-enactment of the Lutheran church service on the traditional feast day of St Stephen, with rituals centred on the success of cavalry households, is a concrete example of the ways in which the oral and literary cultures met on the periphery. The young cavalry soldier dressing himself in the 'cassock' and reciting the Bible both represented the traditional meaning of the feast and displayed the skills he had learned in the parish church.

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78 Malmstedt, *Bondetro och kyrkoro*, pp. 133–4. This kind of behaviour is also known from eastern Finland. See Pentti Laasonen, *Pohjois-Karjalan luterilainen kirkollinen kansankulttuuri Ruotsin vallan aikana* (Helsinki: The Suomen kirkkohistoriallinen seura, 1967), p. 233.