

‘Underground Literature’

Archaeological Finds of Books and Book Elements from Finnish Churches*

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Introduction

In Europe, large numbers of finds related to literacy, dating from Antiquity to contemporary times have been uncovered in diverse archaeological contexts. Find categories include inscriptions on archaeological objects and structures, writing and reading implements, and components of books. Along with written sources, archaeological material is essential for studying and understanding literacy and its material aspects in different times, places and social and cultural contexts.¹ Some of the find contexts of artefacts related to literacy can be broadly categorized as ecclesiastical in contrast to secular contexts. The former category includes the interiors and exteriors of churches, convents, monasteries, parsonages (a secular space with ecclesiastical connections) as well as their broader surroundings. In this article, I focus on churches or their former locations in Finland. At these sites, the most frequent archaeological find group related to written culture

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¹ On recent studies on archaeology and literacy in Finland, see Janne Harjula, ‘Kirjoittamisen arkeologiaa – ketkä, mitä, miten, missä, milloin, miksi?’, *SKAS* 4 (2007), 10–19; Janne Harjula, ‘Arkeologia ja muuttuva keskiajan kirjallisen kulttuurin kuva’, *Kasvatus & Aika* 3 (2008), 7–25, http://www.kasvatus-jaaika.fi/site/?lan=1&page_id=138 (last consulted 14.3.2014); Janne Harjula, ‘Kirjoihin ja kirjoittamiseen liittyviä esineitä luostarista/ Klosterföremål anknutna till böcker och skrivande’, in Kari Uotila ed., *Naantalin luostarin rannassa - arkipäivä Naantalin luostarissa ja sen liepeillä/ Stranden vid Nädendals kloster – vardagen i klostret och dess omgivning* (Käkenhus-kirjat nro 3.), Muuritutkimus ky: Kaarina 2011, 239–251; Janne Harjula, ‘Alustavia ajatuksia Turun Tuomiokirkon tuohikirjeestä’, *SKAS* 1–2 (2012), 3–21; Janne Harjula, ‘Arkeologi kirjallistumisen jäljillä’, *Bibliophilos* 4 (2012), 4–11; Janne Harjula, ‘Glimpses of the writing and reading culture of the medieval Cathedral School of Turku based on archaeological observations and historical documents’, *Zeitschrift für Archäologie des Mittelalters* 40 (2012), 151–184; Janne Harjula, ‘Runic Inscriptions on 14th–15th Century Wooden Stave Vessels in Turku – Expressions of Language, Education and Domestic Religion’, in Ben Jervis, Lee G. Broderick & Idoia Grau Sologestoa (eds), *Objects, Environment, and Everyday Life in Medieval Europe* (Studies in the History of Daily Life, 800–1600, 3), Brepols (in press).

is books, usually found in more or less fragmentary condition and even more frequently as individual book components.

Most of the objects related to books have been found in cultural layers deposited inside churches beneath their floor level. This interior space was typically also used for burial during the period of use of the church. The finds have usually come to light when excavations of adequate accuracy including sieving have been carried out. Very few finds have been discovered in churchyards outside churches, which is at least partly due to the fact that most church excavations in Finland have focused on interiors.²

The most frequent elements of books found in ecclesiastical contexts in Finland are strap-and-pin type brass metal book fastenings of the Modern Period, dated broadly from the seventeenth century onwards. These were mass produced artefacts made in Central Europe and used as the main metal components in books of the period. Their chief function was to keep the book shut when not in use. Seventeenth- or eighteenth-century books with clasps were mostly of religious content as it was not common after the sixteenth century to have metal fastenings in other than religious books or some very precious editions. Since then, the main function of clasps has been decorative instead of purely functional.³ In addition, clasps had a symbolic function. To open and close a book has for a long time been a particular sensory- or even spiritual experience,⁴ which in the case of religious books can be regarded as devotional. In this article, the focus is on the strap-and-pin clasps of the aforementioned type, but also discussed are other clasp types (sixteenth-century or late medieval hook-clasps, medieval strap-and-pin clasps) and components related to books, such as mounts and organic components found in church contexts.

Questions concerning book components and their frequent occurrence among church finds have not remained completely unexplored in archaeological research and literature. In the Nordic countries, for example in Sweden, book components from church excavations have been given some attention, although they have usually been only briefly noted among

² Markus Hiekkanen, 'Hajamietteitä Suomen kirkkoarkeologian vuosien 1868–2006 saldosta, nykypäivästä ja huomisesta', *SKAS* 3 (2006a), 39–54, at 45; on the varying level of documentation in Finnish churches, *idem*, 41–43; Frida Ehrnsten, 'Kirkonlattian aarteet', *Muinaistutkija* 3 (2013), 28–44, at 37–39.

³ Georg Adler, *Handbuch Buchverschluss und Buchbeschlagn. Terminologie und Geschichte im deutschsprachigen Raum, in den Niederlanden und Italien vom frühen Mittelalter bis in die Gegenwart*, Reichert: Wiesbaden 2010, 141.

⁴ Franklin Mowery, 'Clasps, Schliessen, Clausuren. A Guide to the Manufacture and the Literature of Clasps', *Guild of Book Workers Journal* 2 (1991), 1–58, at 9–10; on books as sensory objects, Mark Cruse, 'Matter and Meaning in Medieval Books. The Roman Manuscript as Sensory Experience', *Senses & Society* 5:1 (2010), 45–56.

other find categories.⁵ Studies of assemblages from several churches or discussing the reasons for the occurrence of book components are mostly lacking. In Finland, book components from churches and their occurrence have been discussed by Markus Hiekkanen, Kirsti Paavola and Tove Riska.⁶ The interpretations, however, have mostly been based on finds and excavations of individual churches. A systematic survey categorizing book element finds from numerous churches on the Finnish mainland and the Åland Islands has been lacking so far.

The basic aim of this article is therefore to present and discuss the statistics of the total find material related to books from Finnish churches and to consider the formation processes which could have led to the accumulation of book remains in church soil. By comparing the earlier hypotheses with the more recent data compiled for this study, knowledge of the state of the present research situation and signposts for future research can be achieved. Moreover, guided by the depositional processes noticed, the article will focus on the use of books and related components as ritual objects in Finland during the post-medieval period, broadly from the seventeenth century to the nineteenth century according to the artefacts dated. Even if the phenomena discussed could have sixteenth century or even medieval roots on the basis of some artefact types, closer inspection and dating of this possible early phase cannot be done in the light of the present research material.

Research material

Surveying archives and museum collections⁷ it has been found out that the number of archaeological book elements⁸ from churches in Finland is

⁵ Wilhelm Holmqvist, 'Medeltida fynd från Gudmundrå gamla kyrka', *Fornvännen* (1939), 321–336, at 335, Fig. 10; <http://www.sormlandsmuseum.se/Sormlandsmuseum/kunskap-och-radgivning/Arkeologi/kulturmiljonytt/Ett-spanne-till-himlen/> (last consulted 19.3.2014); Kristina Jansson, *Gravplats en trappa ner. Tolv gravar och en guldgubbe påträffade i Brahekyrkans kor inför byggnation av en brandutrymningstrappa* (Jönköpings läns museum, Arkeologisk rapport 2005:41), Jönköpings läns museum: Jönköping 2006, 27, Fig. 28.

⁶ Markus Hiekkanen, *Polvesta polveen täällä. Espoon kirkon esiinkaivettua menneisyyttä*. Espoon seurakunnat: Espoo 1988, 64–65, Fig. 59; Tove Riska, *Lohjan kirkko. Rakennushistoria, maalaukset ja sisustus* (Lisiä Lohjan pitäjänkertomukseen LVIIIA), Lohjan seurakunta: Lohja 1990, 219; Kirsti Paavola, *Kepeät mullat. Kirjallisiin ja esineellisiin lähteisiin perustuva tutkimus Hailuodon kirkkohaudoista*, Unpublished licentiate thesis, University of Oulu 1995, 176–181, Fig. 19.

⁷ The research material of this article has been gathered by using the following main sources for acquiring information on sites investigated: register portal of cultural environments, National Board of Antiquities; reports and find catalogues in the Archives of the Department of Archaeology, Department of Monuments and Sites and Section for History, National Board of Antiquities; reports and find catalogues in the archives of the Åland Museum (Ålands museum); list of excavations carried out in Finnish churches during the period 1865–2006 in Hiekkanen 2006a, 51–54. The article covers objects found in connection

substantial.⁹ They have been found in 41 churches or their former locations excavated in Finnish mainland and Åland Islands (Tables 1 and 2). Finds have mostly been made in medieval churches in the provinces of Finland proper, Satakunta, Uusimaa, Häme and the Åland Islands, but to some extent also in churches built in the Modern Period like in Padasjoki in Häme, Sääminki in Savo and Hailuoto near Oulu in Northern Ostrobothnia. The frequency of small finds in particular, such as clasps, seems to correlate with excavation methods, the use of sieving in particular. The situation can be compared to the occurrence of other small finds from churches such as prehistoric artefacts, bracteates and beads.¹⁰ Hence, the share of book components in churches excavated is not evenly distributed, but depends instead on the extent, depth and methodology of the excavation. Besides, there are also churches with no finds related to books. Only churches with find categories discussed in this article are listed in tables 1 and 2.

The majority of book parts found in churches are components of fastenings, clasps. On the other hand, their corresponding counterparts – pegs belonging to strap-and-pin clasps, and catch-plates belonging to hook-clasps have very seldom been found. Besides fastenings, there is also book furniture, i.e. metal fittings from book covers. Their number, however, is small compared with the number of fastenings. The fittings include corner pieces, center pieces, edgings and anchor plates for straps. Organic remains from books i.e. book covers of leather and wood/cardboard or paper leaves, are even rarer but not completely unknown.

	Strap-and-pin clasps (total number / from burials)	Pegs	Hook-clasps	Catch plates	Book furniture (total number / from burials)	Organic components (total number / from burials)	Total	References to finds
Espoo	41	-	-	-	5	-	46	NM Hist. 84061; Hiekkanen 1988, 64–66; Alén 1998, 49 ¹¹ ;

with registered investigations carried out in churches up to the year 2010. Individual finds, for example, in find diaries of the National Board of Antiquities, have not been systematically surveyed.

⁸ The term ‘book element’ covers in this article all components related to books from nearly complete books with covers, leaves, fastenings and furnishings to single components.

⁹ Even the current survey probably only represents the approximate (minimum) number of finds. It is possible and even likely that part of the available finds have not been noticed by the author. In addition, some of the finds have been lost after excavations and therefore have not been available to be included in this study.

¹⁰ Markus Hiekkanen, ‘Archaeology of the medieval stone church of Lempäälä in Satakunta, Finland’, *Fennoscandia archaeologica* 3 (1986), 91–101, at 91, footnotes 1 & 2; Markus Hiekkanen, ‘Helminauhoja uuden ajan alkupuolen haudoissa’, *Muinaistutkija* 3 (2006b), 23–48, at 26–27; Ehrnsten 2013, 36–39.

¹¹ Vesa Alén, *Miekasta nuppineulaan. Kaivausmetodimuutosten yhteys esinelöytöihin kirkkokaivauksissa 1960–1980-luvulla*, unpublished MA thesis, University of Turku 1998.

								2001, Fig. 2. ¹²
Hailuoto	18 / 1	3	5	4	3	-	33	NM Hist. 85112, 86088, 87131; Paavola 1995, 176–182; Alén 1998, 65; 2001, Fig. 2.
Hiittinen, Kyrksundet	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	NM Hist. 26619; Edgren 1995, 62 ¹³ ; 1997, 17 ¹⁴ ; Asplund 2008, 133. ¹⁵
Kangasala	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	NM 3268 / manuscript H3286 ¹⁶
Kemiö	39	-	-	-	1	-	40	NM Hist. 60129
Korppoo	3	-	-	-	2 / 1	-	5	NM Hist. 52107
Laitila	63 / 3	-	5	-	10	-	78	NM Hist. 67100; Glasberg 1998, 71–79, 127–128, 132. ¹⁷
Lempäälä	26 / 6	-	-	-	1	-	27	NM Hist. 84060; Hiekkänen 1986, 94.
Lieto	3	-	-	-	-	-	3	NM Hist. 71102
Lohja	21	-	-	-	2	-	23	NM Hist. 66102; Riska 1990, 219.
Messukylä	11	-	-	-	-	-	11	NM Hist. 59144
Mynämäki	18 / 2	1	-	-	-	-	19	NM Hist. 59143
Naantali	3	-	-	-	-	-	3	NM Hist. 64048; Alén 1998, 23; 2001, Fig. 2.
Nauvo	1	1	-	-	9	-	11	NM Hist. 97071
Nousiainen	55 / 4	-	2	-	20	-	77	NM Hist. 67101
Padasjoki	-	-	-	-	-	3 / 3	3	NM Hist. 8287
Pernaja	1	-	-	-	-	4 / 1	5	NM Hist. 38143
Perniö	26	-	3	-	-	-	29	NM Hist. 62106
Porvoo	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	NM Hist. 97072
Pälkäne	3	-	-	-	-	-	3	NM Hist. 2004045
Raisio	50 / 3	-	1	-	7 / 1	-	58	NM Hist. 68051; Alén 1998, 34; 2001, Fig. 2.

¹² Vesa Alén, 'Från svärd till knappnålar. Relationen mellan nya grävningsmetoder och föremålsfynd i utgrävningen av några kyrkor på 1960–1980-talen', *META, medeltidsarkeologisk tidskrift* 1/2001, 13–23.

¹³ Torsten Edgren, 'Kyrksundet i Hitis. Ett arkeologiskt forskningsprojekt kring en av "det danska itinerariets" hamnar i det sydvästra Finlands skärgård'. *Budkavlen* 1995, 48–66.

¹⁴ Torsten Edgren, 'Arkeologi i Hitis utskär', *Skärgård* 3/1996, 15–21.

¹⁵ Henrik Asplund, *Kymittä. Sites, centrality and long-term settlement change in the Kemiönsaari region in SW Finland* (Turun yliopiston julkaisuja, Ser B, Humaniora 312), Turun yliopisto: Turku 2008.

¹⁶ On manuscript H3286 see the description by Jesse Keskiäho and Ville Walta, at <http://www.finlit.fi/sites/default/files/mediafiles/tutkimus/nationalmuseumh3286.pdf> (last consulted 9.6.2015).

¹⁷ Katja Glasberg, *Laitilan keskiaikaisen kirkon kaivauslöydöt*, unpublished MA thesis, University of Turku 1998.

Renko	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	NM Hist. 86041; Hiekkanen 1993, 79.
Sauvo	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	NM Hist. 70100
Sääminki	3	-	-	-	-	-	3	-
Tenhola	7	-	1	-	-	-	8	NM Hist. 85051
Turku Cathedral	1	-	-	-	-	1	2	-
Turku (Maaria) Koroinen	11 (medieval type)	-	-	-	6	-	17	NM Hist. 52100, NM Hist. 69053; Koivunen 2003, Figs. 9, 11. ¹⁸ ; Harjula & Immonen 2012, 189. ¹⁹
Tyrvää	42	-	1	-	-	1	44	NM Hist. 65078 ²⁰
Vehmaa	5	-	-	-	-	-	5	NM Hist. 96005
Vihti	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	NM Hist. 46036
Total	457 / 19	5	18	4	66 / 2	11 / 4	Total number of finds / from burials 561 / 25	

Table 1. Finds related to books from churches on the Finnish mainland. NM Hist. = National Museum, Section for History, Helsinki.

Of the book clasps found (n=803), 94.4% (758 examples) are cast brass metal strap-and-pin type fastenings of the Modern Period.²¹ Their plastic decoration covers Classic and Christian motifs executed in the Baroque and Rococo styles. The motifs include anthropomorphic figures (Fig. 1), symbolic animal figures (Fig. 2) and diverse foliage or other geometric and decorative symbols (Fig. 3). Some of the clasps are plain, but their shape can be more or less decorative (Fig. 4). It could be that the simplest clasps of this latter group represent home-made artefacts that replaced the original clasp. Basically the same motifs are repeated in finds occurring from church to church although there is variation in the frequency of different motifs among

¹⁸ Pentti Koivunen, 'Koroisten piispanistuimen ja asutuksen tutkimushistoriaa', *Koroinen eläväksi / Koroinen till liv* (Turun maakuntamuseo, raportteja 19.), Turun maakuntamuseo: Turku 2003, 35–86.

¹⁹ Janne Harjula & Visa Immonen, 'Reviving old archaeological material. A project analysing finds from the early medieval fortified site of Koroinen in Turku', *Castella Maris Baltici* 10, Society for Medieval Archaeology in Finland: Turku 2012, 183–190.

²⁰ Leather covers from a book (NM Hist. 65078:62) with an embossed text referring to 1642 Finnish Bible translation (2 Timothy 2:5), 'Ja jos joku kilwoittele, niin ei hän cruunata ellei hän toimellisest kilwoittele', <http://www.finbible.fi/Biblia1642/UT/2timoteus1.htm>, in English, 'And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.' <http://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/2-Timothy-2-5/> (last consulted 9.6.2015). The next Bible translation appeared in 1776 and thus the book find can be dated between 1642 and 1776.

²¹ Adler 2010, types BV.2.1.2 and BV.2.1.4. A previous estimation on the number of strap-and-pin clasps from Finnish churches ('altogether over four hundred found') in Hiekkanen 1988, 64, footnote 84.

the churches. The visual world and symbolism of clasps in question are beyond the scope of this paper, but they would definitely be worth a separate study from the perspectives of art history, the history of religion and cultural history.²²

	Strap-and-pin clasps	Pegs	Hook-clasps	Catch plates	Book furniture	Organic components (total number / from burials)	Total	References to finds
Eckerö	14	-	-	-	2	-	16	ÅM 221
Finström	57	2	5	1	18	1	84	ÅM 424, 436, 443
Föglö	38	1	-	-	3	1	43	ÅM 393, 403
Geta	11	-	-	-	4	-	15	ÅM 392
Hammarland	36	-	-	-	-	-	36	NM Hist. 6471
Jomala	94	3	3	1	10	6 / 1	117	ÅM 353; Hiekkänen 2006, 36.
Kumlinge	4	-	-	-	-	-	4	ÅM 354
Kökar	-	-	6	-	8	1	15	ÅM 471, 538, 553, 563, 579, 640, 656, 674, 681. ²³
Lemland	34	1	2	-	1	-	38	ÅM 305
Saltvik	23	-	-	-	2	-	25	ÅM 302
Sund	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	ÅM 691
Total	312	7	16	2	48	9 / 1	Total number of finds / from burials 394 / 1	

Table 2. Finds related to books from churches in the Åland Islands. NM Hist. = National Museum, Section for History, Helsinki. ÅM = Ålands museum, Mariehamn.

Aid for the artefactual dating of this clasp type is provided by preserved non-archaeological books. The earliest occurrences of the strap-and-pin clasp type in question can be dated to around the middle of the seventeenth century and they appear more frequently from the 1670s–1680s onwards.

²² On decorative motifs, see Hiekkänen 1988, 64–65, Fig. 59. To the author's knowledge, at least one MA level thesis on book clasps from an art historical viewpoint (*Uudenajan alun kirjansoljet kirkkokaivauksista Suomessa* by Sisko Maria Pajari) is currently being prepared at the University of Helsinki, <http://www.helsinki.fi/taidehistoria/tutkimus/aiheet/> (last consulted 10.4.2015).

²³ On a corner piece dated to the beginning of the 16th century, see Kenneth Gustavsson, 'Nya rön om Kökars kloster', *Sanct Olof* 1986, 116–138, at 129, Fig. 7; Kenneth Gustavsson, 'Grifflar från Kökars franciskanerkonvent', *Sanct Olof* 1992–1993, 106–117, at 20, Fig. on p. 21; Kenneth Gustavsson, *Hamnö. Keskiaikainen luostarimiljöön ulkosaaristossa*, Ålands landskapsstyrelse, Arkeologiska sektionen vid Museibyrån: Mariehamn, Fig. on p. 115.

These clasps occur throughout the eighteenth century.²⁴ There exists no systematic survey of how long they were made or at least were in use, but there are indications that they still occurred, although possibly reused, in religious books of the early nineteenth century or even in the late nineteenth century.²⁵ On the other hand, strap-and-pin type fastenings also occur in their medieval form²⁶ in the Finnish material, but the only sites with finds of this clasp type are the episcopal church in Koroinen, Turku (11 examples) (Fig. 5) and the Bridgettine monastery of Naantali (1 example).

Much less frequent than strap-and-pin type clasps, only four per cent (34 examples) of all clasps in the church material, are fastenings of the hook-clasp type (Fig. 6).²⁷ This type is usually dated from the beginning of the fifteenth century onwards and it was the prevailing clasp type during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In religious books this typologically old clasp still existed in a very old fashioned way until at least the first half of the nineteenth century.²⁸ Even the decoration does not offer much help for dating. Most of the clasps have simple, geometrical engraving with motifs remaining the same throughout the periods. The quality of these clasps ranges from elaborate, high-quality artefacts of professional manufacture (Fig. 6, top row) to very simple pieces that were probably home-made (Fig. 6, bottom row, cf. strap-and-pin clasps in Fig. 4).

²⁴ On the dating of this clasp type, William Karlson, 'Bokbandets konsthistoria illustrerad i Thomanderska biblioteket på Kulturen', *Kulturen* (1937), 170–189, at Figs. 14, 15, 16; Adler 2010, 141–150, particularly Abb. 8-25a–e and 8-27; Hiekkanen 1988, 65; Hiekkanen 2006b, 36; Riska 1990, 219; Mowery 1991, Figs. 72–75; Elke Barbara Dürrfeld, 'A tentative approach at reconstructing the chronology of different types of metal fastening mechanisms on German bindings of the late 15th, 16th and 17th centuries', *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* 71 (1996), 271–277, at Figs. 2.19, 2.23, 2.26; examples of strap-and-pin clasps dated to the early seventeenth century (Fig. 2.22) or even to the sixteenth century (Figs. 2.2, 2.3) in this publication simply seem to be (erroneously) too early compared to other finds of similar type; see also *Book Clasps and Book Furniture in the Baltic Department of the Academic Library of the Tallinn University*, <http://sulgurid.tlulib.ee/> (last consulted 19.3.2014).

²⁵ Paavola 1995, 180, footnote 725.

²⁶ Adler 2010, type BV.2.1.1, 'the long-strap fastening'.

²⁷ Adler 2010, type BV.3.1., 'the hook-clasp fastening' and its sub-types.

²⁸ On the dating of this clasp type, Karlson 1937, Figs. 1–3, 10–11; Mowery 1991, Figs. 23–26, 29–35, 48–7; Dürrfeld 1996, Figs. 1–2; Adler 2010, 20; J. A. Szirmai, *The Archaeology of Medieval Bookbinding*, Ashgate: Aldershot 1999, 251–262.



Fig. 1. Strap-and-pin fastenings from Finnish churches decorated with anthropomorphic motifs. Top row from left to right: Kemiö NM Hist. 60129:72, NM Hist. 60129:70; Messukylä NM Hist. 59144:40; Raisio NM Hist. 68051:114; Kemiö NM Hist. 60129:79. Middle row: Laitila NM Hist. 67100:61; Lempäälä NM Hist. 84060:80; Lohja NM Hist. 66102:75; Raisio NM Hist. 68051:162; Nousiainen NM Hist. 67100:170. Bottom row: Raisio NM Hist. 68051:163; Laitila NM Hist. 67100:68; Mynämäki NM Hist. 59143:83; Laitila NM Hist. 67100:48, NM Hist. 67100:89; Kemiö NM Hist. 60126:76. Lengths of artefacts between 20 and 30 mm, figures not to scale. Photo: Janne Harjula / National Board of Antiquities.



Fig. 2. Strap-and-pin fastenings from Finnish churches decorated with (religious) animal motifs. Left: lamb holding a banner (*Agnus Dei*, 'lamb of God'), Kemiö NM Hist. 60129:80. Right: reclining lion holding a ball between its paws, Laitila NM Hist. 67100:55. Lengths of artefacts between 20 and 25 mm, figures not to scale. Photo: Janne Harjula / National Board of Antiquities.

Fig. 3 (below). Strap-and-pin fastenings from Finnish churches with foliage and other decorative symbols. Top row from left to right: Raisio NM Hist. 68051:152; Kemiö NM Hist. 60129:33, NM Hist. 60129:95, NM Hist. 60129:101; Messukylä NM Hist. 59144:134a. Bottom row: Kemiö NM Hist. 60129:126, NM Hist. 60129:74; Laitila NM Hist. 67100:83; Nousiainen NM Hist. 67101:156; Perniö NM Hist. 62106:104. Photo: Janne Harjula / National Board of Antiquities.





Fig. 4. Strap-and-pin fastenings from Finnish churches with minimal (decorated by shape) or no decoration. Top row from left to right: Raisio NM Hist. 68051:128; Laitila NM Hist. 67100:36; Hammarland NM 6471:20; Laitila NM Hist. 67100:88. Bottom row: Lempäälä NM Hist. 84060:70; Raisio NM Hist. 68051:114, NM Hist. 68051:125; Laitila NM Hist. 67100:51. Lengths of artefacts between 20 and 30 mm, figures not to scale. Photo: Janne Harjula / National Board of Antiquities.

The extremely long use/manufacture period of this basic clasp type makes artefact dating more difficult than with strap-and-pin clasps, and especially in ecclesiastical contexts with mostly religious books even more challenging. Therefore the dating depends greatly on the find context. Unfortunately, not a single hook-clasp derives from a datable ecclesiastical context and therefore their dating must mostly be left open at the moment. It is possible, however, that a part of these clasps from churches reflect the activities of the sixteenth century or even the Pre-Reformation Period.²⁹

²⁹ cf. Paavola 1995, 178–179.



Fig. 5. Animal-headed strap-and-pin type book clasps from the episcopal see of Koroinen, Turku (NM Hist. 52100:783). Dating from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries. Lengths of artefacts from 29 to 43 mm, figures not to scale. Photo: Janne Harjula / National Board of Antiquities.

Fig. 6 (below). Hook-clasp fastenings from Finnish churches. Top row from left to right: Perniö NM Hist. 62106:111, NM Hist. 62106:113; Nousiainen NM Hist. 67101:218. Second row: Kökar ÅM 640:1123; Finström ÅM 424:515; Laitila NM Hist. 67100:50. Third row: Laitila NM Hist. 67100:34, NM Hist. 67100, 79; Jomala ÅM 353:14. Fourth row: Finström ÅM 436:161; Nousiainen NM Hist. 67101:171; Raisio NM Hist. 68051:145. Bottom row: Finström ÅM 436:175, ÅM 424:686; Tenhola NM Hist. 85051:39; Tyrvää NM Hist. 65078:120. Lengths of artefacts between 20 and 60 mm, figures not to scale. Photo: Janne Harjula / National Board of Antiquities / Ålands museum.



The dating of book furniture is also problematic. There seem to be late medieval and sixteenth-century types in the material, but as with hook-clasps, it is possible and even likely that some artefacts of medieval style were still used in the seventeenth century and even later (Fig. 7).³⁰ Similar dating problems concern organic components although in some cases these finds can be dated by their context (finds from burials) or possible textual content and its typographic character.³¹



Fig. 7. Book fittings (corner pieces and bosses) from Finnish churches. Top row from left right: Korppoo NM Hist. 52107:1; Kökar ÅM 656:388; Laitila NM Hist 67100:235. Second row: Nousiainen NM Hist. 67101:214; Raisio NM Hist. 68051:110, NM Hist. 68051:130, NM Hist 68051:163. Bottom row: Korppoo NM Hist. 52107:16; Kökar ÅM 681:51; Nousiainen NM Hist. 67101:145; Nauvo NM Hist. 97071:72. Lengths of rectangular sides between 20 and 45 mm, figures not to scale. Photo: Janne Harjula / National Board of Antiquities / Ålands museum.

³⁰ Compare, for example, the medieval book furnishings in Katalin Irás-Melis, 'Die Funde aus einer Buchbinderwerkstatt des 15. Jahrhunderts im königlichen Schloss zu Buda', *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* (1974), 303–310 or in Katalin Irás-Melis, 'Bronzene Buchbeschläge aus dem 14. und 15. Jahrhundert in Ungarn', *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* 55 (1980), 274–283 to Finnish church finds in Fig. 7 of this paper.

³¹ See e.g. Table 1, footnote 9.

Books and book components as grave goods

It can be asked how the archaeological book elements from churches should be interpreted. To achieve generally valid explanations, one must start at the grass-roots level and look at some individual cases more closely to discover the formation processes behind the accumulation of finds. To start with, some of the discovered book components could be interpreted as grave goods. As such, they could either be the only remains of otherwise decomposed books or they could have been detached from books as single, *pars pro toto* components, a part of an object representing the complete object, as Tove Riska, for example, has proposed.³²

Books in graves

There is a documented folk tradition in Scandinavia and Finland of books as grave goods. The book was usually a hymnal or other religious book. The reasons for this practice were magical. The book containing the words of God was understood as an apotropaic object. It could, for example, stop the deceased from coming back to haunt the living.³³ Alternatively, a religious book in a grave can be seen as a 'Christian passport' of the deceased to the other world.³⁴ Moreover, like tools or food, a religious book could also be an item which the deceased was thought to need in the hereafter.

Besides folklore, there are also archaeological examples of book remains found in burials. An excavation in Pernaja Church (excavation by Erkki Kartano 1938) revealed a combined church manual and prayer book in Swedish, printed in 1683, found in a burial (Fig. 8).³⁵ From another burial in the same church comes a combined epistle and prayer book in Swedish, printed approximately a hundred years later (1773) than the previous example (Fig. 9).³⁶ Besides these two dated examples an undated find of

³² Riska 1990, 219.

³³ Matti Waronen, *Vainajainpalvelus muinaisilla suomalaisilla* (Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seuran Toimituksia 87), Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura: Helsinki 1898, 60, 69–70; Louise Hagberg, *När döden gästar. Svenska folkseder och svensk folktrö i samband med död och begravning*, Wahlström & Widstrand: Stockholm 1937, 208; Pirjo Varjola, 'Vainajan matkavarusteista', *Kotiseutu* 4 (1980), 118–126, at 120; Gerd Grønder-Hansen, 'Penge til Færgemanden? Mønter i dødekulten', *Nationalmuseets Arbejdsmark* (1988), 115–126, at 123–124; Kaarina Koski, *Kuoleman voimat. Kirkonväki suomalaisessa uskomusperinteessä* (Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seuran Toimituksia 1313), Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura: Helsinki 2011, 236.

³⁴ Heikki Valk, 'Reflections of Folk-Religion and Beliefs in Estonian Burial Customs', in Ingmar Jansson ed., *Archaeology East and West of the Baltic. Papers from the Second Estonian-Swedish Archaeological Symposium Sigtuna, May 1991*, Department of Archaeology, Stockholm University: Stockholm (1995), 131–153, at 148.

³⁵ NM Hist. 38143:21 & 38143:85.

³⁶ NM Hist. 38143:47.

book covers from a burial was discovered.³⁷



Figs. 8 and 9. Complete, combined Swedish church manual and prayer book printed in 1683, from Pernaja Church (NM Hist. 38143:21 & 38143:85). A well preserved pocket-size (diam. 100 x 50 mm) binding of leather/wood covers and paper leaves from grave 2 /coffin 28. On the right, a combined Swedish epistle and prayer book printed in 1773, from Pernaja Church (NM Hist. 38143:47). A well preserved binding of paper leaves (diam. 140 x 80 mm) from grave 6/coffin 26. Both photos: Janne Harjula / National Board of Antiquities.

There are also finds of books in coffins from Padasjoki Church, which was built in 1668 and destroyed in a fire in 1924, with ensuing archaeological excavations (Iikka Kronqvist 1924–1925).³⁸ The remains of a book written in Swedish were found next to a male burial dated by a coin find from the bottom of the coffin to 1724 (Fig. 10).³⁹ In addition, the remains of a book, in this case in Latin, were found (Fig. 11). No date for this burial and find is presented in the excavation report.⁴⁰ Yet another example of book covers from a male grave is mentioned in the excavation report, but was not

³⁷ Well-preserved book covers of leather (diam. of 123 x 77 mm) from grave 11/coffin 27, NM Hist. 38143:70.

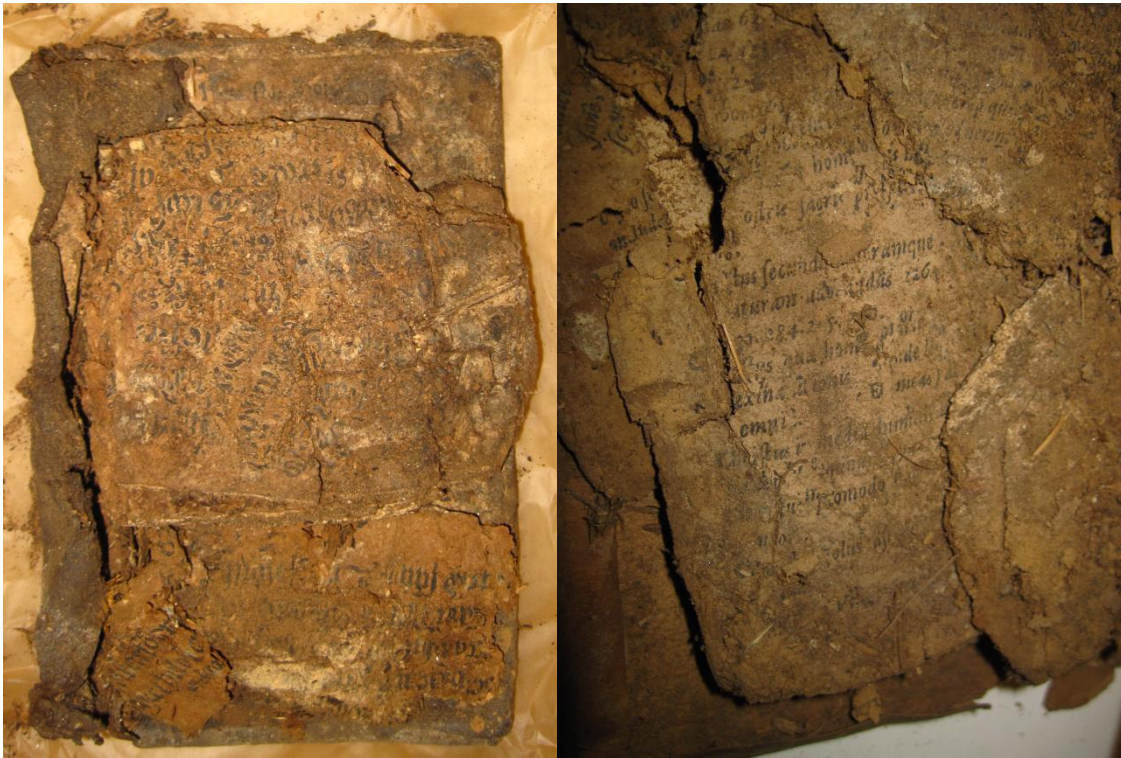
³⁸ Iikka Kronqvist, *Padasjoen palaneen kirkon jäännösten tutkimusselostus*, unpublished excavation report in the Archives of the National Board of Antiquities, 1924.

³⁹ NM Hist. 8287:28.

⁴⁰ NM Hist. 8287:29.

recovered.⁴¹ This find is said to have been located next to the middle of a male body and was composed of book covers of leather and sliced paper leaves containing text in German. No dating is given in the excavation report.

An excavation in Jomala Church (Mats Dreijer 1961) revealed several remains of books beneath the floor level inside the church. Most of the finds could not be connected to individual burials.⁴² Nevertheless, book covers next to the head of a child were found in a brick chamber with two coffins and a child's skeleton at their foot. On the basis of coin finds, the burials (and the book remains) probably date from the eighteenth century.⁴³



Figs. 10 and 11. Largely decomposed binding of leather covers and paper leaves (diam. 150 x 90 mm) of a book in Swedish (NM Hist. 8287:28). From chamber III, next to coffin no: 3. On the right, a largely decomposed binding of leather covers and paper leaves of a book in Latin (diam. 160 x 90 mm) from Padasjoki Church (NM Hist. 8287:29). From a coffin on the west side of chamber IV. Both photos: Janne Harjula / National Board of Antiquities.

⁴¹ From chamber III, coffin no: 2.

⁴² e.g. Ålands museum 353: 485, 617 and 1349 (book covers of leather), 1162 (book covers of leather, diam. 135 x 75 mm, with corner plates and edgings), 1244 (book covers of leather, diam. 170 x 110 mm, with two strap-and-pin clasps with shell motifs, and pegs).

⁴³ Mats Dreijer, *Berättelse över den arkeologiska utgrävningen och byggnadshistoriska undersökningen av Jomala kyrka 1961*, unpublished excavation report in the Archives of the Ålands museum.

Book components as pars pro toto objects in graves

The *pars pro toto* notion connected to books as grave goods is found in Finnish folklore. There, instead of a complete book, a single leaf or sheet containing sacred words was sufficient as (apotropaic) grave good.⁴⁴ It has also been suggested that the practical reason for placing only a single leaf would have been that books were too valuable to be deposited as a whole.⁴⁵ No identified archaeological examples seem to have been preserved of this ritual, probably because of the poor preservation of single sheets of paper in burials. On the other hand, there is the possibility that leaf bindings without covers and covers without leaves or with sliced leaves as in the previous described cases could have been a variant of the ritual.⁴⁶

There are also examples where metal clasps or furnishings of books have been found in graves, even if some of them might have ended up in graves with the fill.⁴⁷ Three strap-and-pin clasps were found in graves during the excavations of Laitila Church (Olavi Tapio 1967).⁴⁸ Among the finds from Lempäälä Church (Markus Hiekkanen 1983), six strap-and-pin

⁴⁴ Varjola 1980, 120; Koski 2011, 236; on protective attributes of books, book leaves and holy or magic words in Finnish folk tradition, see Toivo Vuorela, *Paha silmä suomalaisen perinteen valossa* (Suomi 109:1), Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura: Helsinki, 45; Jari Eilola, *Rajapinnoilla. Sallitun ja kielletyn määrittäminen 1600-luvun jälkipuoliskon noituus- ja taikuustapauksissa* (Bibliotheca Historica 81), Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura: Helsinki 2003, 61.

⁴⁵ Riska 1990, 219.

⁴⁶ Fragments of other textual documents besides books, mainly letters, accounts etc. are sometimes found in graves, too. For example, in Pernaja Church, several examples of textual paper fragments were found (NM Hist. 38143:18, from grave 1/coffin 8, paper fragment with ink writing, e.g. words *Saxbeek* and *Perno* discernible; NM Hist. 38143:66, from grave 9, paper fragment with ink writing, e.g. Latin alphabet, Arabic numbers and text *Johannes --- Cor Man* discernible; NM Hist. 38143:57, stray find from grave 8, paper fragment with strikethrough Swedish ink writing; NM Hist. 38143:56, paper slice with Swedish ink writing, e.g. The date 1616 and fragment of a signature). Paper in coffins could have a practical function as a filling and cushion although magical purposes cannot be excluded. On paper as concealed, archaeological finds, e.g. Jöns Hauke, 'Neue Forschungen zum "Nonnnenstaub" aus dem Klarissenkloster zu Ribnitz, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern / New Research Concerning the 'Nuns' Dust' (Nonnenstaub) from the Klarissenkloster at Ribnitz, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern', in Ingolf Ericsson & Rainer Atzbach eds., *Depotfunde aus Gebäuden in Zentraleuropa / Concealed Finds from Buildings in Central Europe* (Bamberger Kolloquien zur Archäologie des Mittelalters und der Neuzeit 1; Archäologische Quellen zum Mittelalter 2), scrīpvaz-Verlag: Berlin 2005, 125–130, at 128–129; in the same volume, Birgit Kata, 'Die funde aus dem "Mühlberg-Ensemble" und ihr historisches Kontext – Pergament und Papier als archäologisches Fundgut / The Finds from the "Mühlberg-Ensemble" and its Historical Context – Parchments and Papers as Archaeological Findings', 58–67, at 58, 63–64; and, in the same volume, Daniel Schulz, 'Neuzeitliche Funde (nach 1704) aus Fehl- und Zwischenböden in Schloss Ludwigsburg, Baden-Württemberg / Post-medieval Finds concealed in the Residential Palace Ludwigsburg, Baden-Württemberg', 162–172, at 162–168.

⁴⁷ E.g. Markus Hiekkanen, 'Rengon kirkon historia', in *Rengon historia*, Rengon kunta ja seurakunta: Renko 1993, 51–252, at 72, 77.

⁴⁸ NM Hist. 67100:100 from grave chamber no: 2; NM Hist. 67100: 101 & 102 from grave chamber no: 5; Olavi Tapio, *Laitilan kirkko, tutkimus- ja kaivauskertomus, kaivausten löytöluettelo, 1967*, unpublished excavation report in the Archives of the National Board of Antiquities.

clasps could be connected with brick or timber chamber graves.⁴⁹ In Mynämäki Church (Reino Palmroth 1959), two strap-and-pin clasps could be connected to a chamber grave near the altar.⁵⁰ In Raisio Church (Olavi Tapio 1968) altogether three clasps and one corner plate were found in two chamber graves.⁵¹ In Nousiainen Church (Marja-Terttu Knapas & Olavi Tapio 1967–1968), four clasps deriving from a single chamber grave were found,⁵² and in Korppoo Church (Reino Palmroth 1952), one corner plate is said to have been found in a burial.⁵³ In the excavations of Hailuoto Church (Kirsti Paavola 1985–1987), only one strap-and-pin clasp could definitely be connected to a (chamber) burial.⁵⁴

If there were originally complete books in these graves, more of them should have been preserved and found. The lack of organic parts could in some cases perhaps be explained by the poor preservation conditions, and the lack of other metal furnishings by the fact that in simple hymnals, one or two strap-and-pin fastenings were often the only metal components.⁵⁵ However, there is one aspect which cannot be explained by the preservation conditions or the typical scarcity of metal components in books. In the cases of strap-and-pin clasps found in graves, their counterparts, pegs, should also have been found, at least in excavations with methodology accurate enough as at Lempäälä where strap-and-pin clasps were documented in graves.⁵⁶ Pegs can be regarded as absolutely necessary components in all books with strap-and-pin fastenings (Fig. 12). On this basis, it seems likely that individual clasps, sometimes with their leather straps remaining, were put in graves. This could be explained as a *pars pro toto* grave-goods ritual, perhaps due to thriftiness, as Riska has suggested.⁵⁷ Another option is that clasps would have been given a secondary function as amulets for the dead. Having apotropaic power, they would have been placed on the body or

⁴⁹ NM Hist. 84060: 65 (timber chamber 3), 69 (timber chamber 1), 74 (timber chamber 4), 76 (brick chamber A), 80 (brick chamber C), 82 (brick chamber B); Markus Hiekkanen, *Lempäälän kirkko, arkeologiset tutkimukset keväällä 1983*, unpublished excavation report in the Archives of the National Board of Antiquities.

⁵⁰ NM Hist. 59143: 91, 92.

⁵¹ NM Hist. 68051: 164 (strap-and-pin clasp from chamber 1), 165 (corner plate from chamber 2), 166, 167 (strap-and-pin clasps from chamber grave 2); Olavi Tapio, *Raision kirkon tutkimuskertomus 1968–1969*, unpublished excavation report in the Archives of the National Board of Antiquities.

⁵² NM Hist. 67101: 228–229, 231–232; Marja-Terttu Knapas & Olavi Tapio, *Nousiaisten kirkon tutkimuskertomus v. 1967–68*, unpublished excavation report in the Archives of the National Board of Antiquities.

⁵³ NM Hist. 52107: 1.

⁵⁴ NM Hist. 87131: 643 (inside chamber grave 7); Paavola 1995, 176, footnote 709.

⁵⁵ cf. Riska 1990, 219.

⁵⁶ See footnote 38.

⁵⁷ Riska 1990, 219.

suspended from the neck of the deceased as pendants (see Figs. 1–4 for the resemblance of clasps with jewellery).⁵⁸



Fig. 12. Counterpart of a strap-and-pin clasp, 'peg', from Finström Church (ÅM 424:520). Length 20 mm. Photo: Janne Harjula / Ålands museum.

Changing ritual practices and the increasing use of ecclesiastical books

To sum up, books, or more often their less complete remains, have been found in Finland in soil graves as well as chamber graves,⁵⁹ ranging from the late seventeenth century to at least the late eighteenth century.⁶⁰ In addition, individual components, mainly clasps, have been found in similar contexts. This seems to indicate that complete books, or alternatively their selected components, covers, leaves and also clasps, were put in graves on purpose, most likely as grave goods. Books or their components have for the most part been found in chamber graves (family graves) and much less in ordinary soil graves. However, this is most likely due to chambers being much less disturbed than the burial ground around them with successive burials and the mixing of soil.⁶¹ Therefore in the case of chamber graves, it has been much easier to indicate the relations between artefacts and burials. Still, there remains the possibility that higher frequency of books in chamber graves compared to soil graves was related to the higher social status of

⁵⁸ This hypothesis was suggested by Sonja Hukantaival (Personal communication, Turku, 13.3.2014); on using consecrated objects as amulets, Roberta Gilchrist, 'Magic for the Dead? The Archaeology of Magic in Later Medieval Burials', *Medieval Archaeology* 52 (2008), 119–159, at 128–135.

⁵⁹ On the different find groups from chamber graves in Finnish churches, Kaisa Vanhakylä, *Sukuhaudat osana Suomen kirkkohautaustraditiota. Tarkempi katsaus aiheeseen Espoon, Lempäälän ja Lohjan keskiaikaisten kirkkojen sukuhaudat-aineiston valossa*, Unpublished MA thesis, University of Turku 2007, 47–48, Appendix 6.

⁶⁰ cf. Valk 1991, 150.

⁶¹ cf. Alén 1998, 37.

people buried in chambers.⁶² With the current data, the question remains largely open.

Depositing books or their components in graves seems to become, or at least becomes archaeologically evident in the latter half of the seventeenth century. There seem to be several reasons for this phenomenon. In Finland, burials inside churches become more frequent from the seventeenth century onwards and even more so during the eighteenth century when they peaked. General opinion against burial inside churches then slowly started to change practices from the latter half of the eighteenth century onwards, but the tradition survived in places until the late eighteenth century or even to the beginning of the nineteenth century. Burials in family graves, in particular, continued. All types of burial inside churches were finally banned in 1822.⁶³ It is, therefore, obvious that we have more archaeological find material of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries from church interior excavations than from the preceding periods (more burials > more finds). The earlier periods with fewer and probably more disturbed burials and fewer related grave goods, are under-represented.

Moreover, other changes clearly appear to develop in mortuary practice and ritual during the late seventeenth century.⁶⁴ Göran Tagesson has recognized these when analysing the cemetery material from Linköping Cathedral. There, the dead were now buried in normal clothes and it became more common to put objects, especially personal belongings, in graves. Hence, the number of objects found in graves increases notably.⁶⁵ Similar changes can be seen in Finnish burials.⁶⁶ It is interesting to ask what could explain the profound changes in the treatment of the deceased. According to

⁶² On archaeological distinction of different social status or ethnosocial character between people buried in churchyards, inside churches in dirt graves, or inside churches in chamber graves, see Heikki Valk, 'Artefacts in Estonian urban Churchyards: Reflections on different Traditions and Ideologies', in Detlef Kattinger, Jens E. Olesen & Horst Wernicke eds., *Der Ostseeraum und Kontinentaleuropa 1100-1600: Einflussnahme - Rezeption - Wandel* (Culture clash or compromise 8), Helms Thomas Verlag: Schwerin 2004, 103–112, at 110.

⁶³ Hiekkanen 1988, 68–69; Kirsti Paavola, *Kepeät mullat. Kirjallisiin ja esineellisiin lähteisiin perustuva tutkimus Pohjois-Pohjanmaan rannikon kirkkohaudoista* (Acta Universitatis Ouluensis, Series B, 28), Oulun yliopisto: Oulu 1995, 37–46; Riska 1990, 219; Hanna-Kaisa Korpi & Titta Kallio-Seppä, 'Vainajien hautaustavoista', in Titta Kallio-Seppä, Janne Ikäheimo & Kirsti Paavola (eds), *Iin Vanhan Haminan kirkko ja hautausmaa. Arkeologisia tutkimuksia*, Iin kunta: Ii 2011, 54–69, at 60–61.

⁶⁴ e.g. Markus Hiekkanen, 'Rengon kirkon vanhat haudat', in *Suomen historia* 3, Weilin + Göös: Espoo 1987, 202–203.

⁶⁵ Göran Tagesson, 'Vetande att intet är vissare än döden... Gravar och människor i Linköping genom 700 år', *META* 4 (2003), 3–14, at 9–11; Göran Tagesson, 'Body, identity and material culture. Linköping Cathedral churchyard in the Early Modern Period', in Ing-Marie Back Danielsson, Ingrid Gustin, Annika Larsson, Nanouschka Myrberg & Susanne Thedéen (eds), *Döda personers sällskap. Gravmaterialens identiteter och kulturella uttryck* (Stockholm Studies in Archaeology 47), Stockholms universitet: Stockholm 2009, 153–172, at 162–163.

⁶⁶ e.g. Heikki Valk, 'Neighbouring but distant: Rural burial traditions of Estonia and Finland during the Christian Period', *Fennoscandia archaeologica* 11 (1994), 361–76, at 69–70.

Ann-Sofie Arvidsson, the preparation of the corpse was a task for the relatives and the survivors. Under the new Church Law of 1686, priests were prohibited to be present during the praying ritual, carried out before taking leave from the house for the funeral service in the church. The mourners and relatives now had greater influence on the preparation of the body.⁶⁷ Besides diminished liturgical control, increased emphasis on the individual at the expense of the collective also emerged, as Tagesson has argued.⁶⁸ Interestingly enough, these phenomena of fresh winds blowing were especially in the seventeenth and early eighteenth century in strict contradiction with the official Lutheran mentality and regulations of the state church.⁶⁹

This was also a period when new editions of several religious books appeared, such as a new catechism (Swedish 1689, Finnish 1745), a church manual (Swedish 1693, Finnish 1694), a hymnal (Swedish 1695, Finnish 1701) and several editions of Bibles in both Swedish and Finnish.⁷⁰ As the number of religious books increased, they were made smaller which, accordingly, made them more portable and popular than ever before.⁷¹ And when books came commonly available, the literacy rates in Finland started to rise from the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth century onwards.⁷²

The most important of these books for the individual parishioner was the hymnal, which during the eighteenth century became the most common book owned by people both in the countryside and in towns, and sometimes also the only book owned by poorer households. Besides hymns, it contained the catechism, evangelical texts concerning the church year, a

⁶⁷ *Sveriges kyrkolag av år 1686 jemte ännu gällande stadganden, genom hvilka den blifvit ändrad eller tillökt, utgifven av J. A. Rydén*, J. Sandvall: Jönköping 1846, 184, § 4–5; Göran Lindahl, *Grav och rum. Svenskt gravskick från medeltiden till 1800-talets slut* (Kungl. Vitterhets- historie- och antikvitets akademimens handlingar, antikvariska serien 21), Almqvist & Wiksell: Stockholm 1969, 89–90; Ann-Sofie Arvidsson, *Makten och döden. Stat och kyrka möter svenska efterlevande under ett långt 1700-tal*, Makadam: Göteborg 2007, 237.

⁶⁸ Tagesson 2007, 168, cf. Hiekkänen 2006b, 31.

⁶⁹ On the Lutheran orthodoxy of the period, Kauko Pirinen, 'Puhdasoppisuus', in *Suomen historia* 3, Weilin + Göös: Espoo 1987, 175; Pentti Laasonen, *Suomen kirkon historia 2: vuodet 1593-1808*, WSOY: Porvoo 1991; Hiekkänen 2006b, 32–33; Tagesson 2007, 165–169.

⁷⁰ Aimo Halila, 'Karoliinisen ajan kirkko', in *Suomen historia* 3, Weilin + Göös: Espoo 1987, 183–186, at 174; *Suomen evankelis-luterilaisen kirkon kirkolliskokouksen vuonna 1988 asettaman käsikirjakomitean välimietintö* (Suomen evankelis-luterilaisen kirkon keskushallinto. Sarja A, 1992:1); Tagesson 2007, 166.

⁷¹ Tuija Laine, 'Papiston kirjasta kansan kirjaksi. Suomalaisen uskonnollisen peruskirjallisuuden muoto ja merkitys', *Teologinen Aikakauskirja* 6 (2007), 488–497, at 492. On the numbers of printed books, Päiviö Tommila, 'Suomen sanomalehdistön alkuvaiheet', in Päiviö Tommila ed., *Suomen lehdistön historia 1. Sanomalehdistön vaiheet vuoteen 1905*, Kustannuskiila Oy: Kuopio 1988, 23–34, at 32–33.

⁷² Mikko Juva, *Varsinais-Suomen seurakuntaelämä puhdasoppisuuden hallitsemisena vuosisatoina (1600–1808)*, Turku 1955, 114. As an example, during bishop's investigation visit in Laitila, 1691, it was noticed that 'very few people could read from a book', while during an inspection visit after the Great Wrath in 1724, the literacy level had risen, see Olavi Koivisto, 'Historiallinen aika', in *Laitilan historia I*, Laitilan kunnan ja seurakunnan asettama historiatoimikunta; Laitila 1969, 71–574, at 51; Glasberg 1998, 128.

prayer book, and depending on the edition, other basic religious texts. It therefore evolved into a tool of individual private devotion. The hymnal was also taken along when going to church. During bishops' or deans' inspection visits people were even advised to keep and use the hymnal during services. If only economically possible, every literate family member acquired their own hymnal. Even couples needed more than one book, because men and women sat on different sides of the aisle in church.⁷³

Hence, whatever the actual reasons that led to the increasing deposition of book components, especially clasps, in the church soil, were, it is clear that one basic factor behind the deposition processes was the constantly growing number of certain religious books, the hymnal in particular, and their increased use in church space by individual churchgoers.

The discarding of clasps

Even if a small part of the book components have definitely been found in graves, the majority of finds cannot usually be connected to individual burials. Obviously the accuracy of older excavations in particular has not been adequate enough for noticing all burial-artefact relations. However, the problem of stray finds remains even when more systematic excavations have been carried out.⁷⁴ The relation between finds from graves and not from graves is striking (Tables 1 & 2). It could be asked how we should interpret the hundreds of artefacts, which at least after the diverse formation processes seem to be stray finds.

One factor, of course, is that soil inside the church has usually been moved many times and older burials removed or transferred when new ones were made. In addition, when burial inside churches was forbidden, it was typical to fill in and cover the whole underfloor, or at least the chamber graves, with gravel or sand. Therefore, the context of finds is quite disturbed in most cases. Most of the book components found in churches derive from this mixed underground soil and it can be suggested that a part of the finds,

⁷³ Tuija Laine, 'Manuale Finnonicum 1600-luvulla', in Tuija Laine ed., *Vanhimman suomalaisen kirjallisuuden käsikirja* (Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seuran Toimituksia 686), Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura: Helsinki 1997, 140–143, at 143; Esko M. Laine & Tuija Laine, 'Kirkollinen kansanopetus', in Jussi Hanska & Kirsi Vainio-Korhonen eds., *Huoneentaulun maailma. Kasvatus ja koulutus Suomessa keskiajalta 1860-luvulle* (Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seuran Toimituksia 1266:I), Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura: Helsinki 2010, 258–306, at 286–288; Laine 2007, 494. According to Hiekkanen, the division with women on the northern side and men on the southern side probably had medieval roots, see Hiekkanen 2006b, 29–30.

⁷⁴ e.g. Hiekkanen 1988, 65; Paavola 1995, 176.

now stray finds, originally belonged to burials. It is, however, impossible to establish their proportion.

By looking at the material more closely, at least some of the stray find clasps seems to derive from other primary contexts than burials. Renko Church is a good case study serving as negative evidence of book component-burial correlation. The church floor area was excavated in the 1980s (Markus Hiekkänen 1984).⁷⁵ According to Hiekkänen, the church fell into a state of ruin at some time after the mid-1650s. The stone church was taken into use again in 1779–1783 after restoration.⁷⁶ Burials, however, were still made inside the church walls even when the church was in ruins. After the restoration, no burials were carried out.⁷⁷ The period when Renko Church was in ruins, from the mid-seventeenth to the late eighteenth century, is precisely the period of numerous book clasp finds from churches which were functional, i.e. having church services with the congregation participating. However, there is only one clasp find from Renko (from a mixed context).⁷⁸ On the other hand, there are, for example, finger rings and bead necklaces from graves of the ruin period.⁷⁹ The negative evidence of the Renko case – that there should have been (more) book clasps if they were a standard practice in burial rites – seems to support the idea that clasps were used and deposited even on other occasions than burials.⁸⁰ The next question to be asked is what these activities could have been.

Unintentional discarding, objects getting lost

Apparently the increasing use of books also increased their ending up in archaeological contexts – book components simply became detached over time and some of them were lost. This presumably holds true especially in the case of clasps, which were the most common metal components in books, with their leather straps exposed to breaking apart every time the book was opened or closed. In the few churches where it has been possible to trace the horizontal distribution of clasps,⁸¹ it is generally quite scattered and random. Even where concentrations occur, they do not offer many clues

⁷⁵ Hiekkänen 1993, 51–90; Hiekkänen 2006b, 24; Markus Hiekkänen, *Suomen keskiajan kivikirkot*, Helsinki: Suomalaisen kirjallisuuden seura 2007, 323.

⁷⁶ Hiekkänen 1987, 202; Hiekkänen 2006, 24; Hiekkänen 2007, 325.

⁷⁷ Hiekkänen 1987, 202–203; Hiekkänen 1993, 83–90; Hiekkänen 2006b, 24–25.

⁷⁸ Hiekkänen 1993, Fig. in p. 79.

⁷⁹ Hiekkänen 1987; Hiekkänen 1993, 77; Hiekkänen 2006b.

⁸⁰ The situation can be compared to that of coins. There are very few coins from the ruin period in Renko Church, see Hiekkänen 1993, 76.

⁸¹ Regarding the church excavations in Finnish mainland, the coordinate system was not truly established until the excavations of the 1960s in the churches of Lohja, Laitila, Raisio and Nousiainen, Ehrnsten 2013, 37.

for reasons for the deposition of finds.⁸² In some churches, there are differences between the frequencies of clasps found on the northern and southern parts of the congregation section but this is not systematic. In Raisio church, for example, the emphasis of clasps is on the southern side, while in the churches of Jomala, Nousiainen and Laitila⁸³ the majority of clasps were found on the northern side with a concentration in the NW area in Nousiainen.

There are nevertheless some aspects of clasp distribution, which are more informative and constant than the find distribution of the congregation section. These are the differences in the find frequencies between the chancel and nave i.e. in the east-west distribution. For example, in Espoo church, only three clasps were found in the chancel and 36 in the nave.⁸⁴ The same bias seems to occur even in other churches surveyed, for example in Raisio, Laitila, Nousiainen and Jomala.⁸⁵ This points at a possible correlation between the activity in the congregation section and the occurrence of book clasps. Hiekkanen even noticed that in Espoo Church the find locations of clasps matched with the location of the aisle between the blocks of seats.⁸⁶ It was perhaps easier to dig graves in the free aisle space than seat blocks,⁸⁷ but on the other hand the aisle-clasp find correlation could refer to the unintentional discarding of clasps by the churchgoers. Still, even if lost clasps might be a plausible reason in some cases, this cannot be the whole story behind the found objects. Their number simply seems to be too high for this explanation to be a major cause.⁸⁸ On the other hand, there might have been factors which increase the share of lost clasps and connects these to beliefs. It is often difficult to distinguish intentional acts from chance finds. As Hukantaival writes on coin finds in churches:

It might easily be that a coin accidentally dropped on the church floor was not seen as something that one should pick up, but something that the church (God?) has claimed. This speculation is supported by an observation that intentions of otherworldly agencies were easily seen in chance events.⁸⁹

⁸² e.g. in churches of Hailuoto (Paavola 1995, 181, Fig. 19) and Espoo (Hiekkanen 1988, 64, Fig. 58); similar scattered distribution concerns coin finds of the period (Ehrnsten 2013, 37, 39).

⁸³ The distribution in Laitila Church was noticed also by Glasberg 1998, 77.

⁸⁴ Hiekkanen 1988, 64.

⁸⁵ Surveyed by the author; on Raisio see also Alén 1998, 34.

⁸⁶ Hiekkanen 1988, 64.

⁸⁷ As in Renko Church, see Hiekkanen 1987, 202.

⁸⁸ cf. Hiekkanen 1988, 65.

⁸⁹ Sonja Hukantaival, '*...For a witch cannot cross such a threshold!*' – *Ritual building concealments in Finland c. 1200–1950*, unpublished PhD, Archaeology, University of Turku 2015.

If so, even unintentionally lost clasps could be understood as offerings (see below).

The intentional discarding of redundant objects

Not much can be said of the intentional discarding of redundant objects on the basis of the archaeological material. As with unintentional discarding, there seem to be too many finds for this to be a major explanation. Besides, nearly all fastenings (their metal parts) are intact, not broken. Why get rid of book clasps as they could have been reused? On the other hand, if one had to discard a worn-out book, the consecrated soil of the church interior would have been a good option in the light of practices of how to properly dispose of a sacred object usually by either burning it and/or burying it in sacred ground.⁹⁰

Clasps as individual deposits interpreted as offerings

Hiekkanen noticed that whole books and metal components of books, excluding clasps, were missing from the material from Espoo Church. Moreover, in those clasps where remains of the leather strap were preserved, they seemed to have been in many cases cut off i.e. clasps would have been deliberately detached from books. Based on these observations, Hiekkanen suggested a deliberate disposal of clasps in church soil. He further interpreted the clasps as private offerings of a kind. According to him, their occurrence would be a parallel phenomenon to the frequent deposition of coins under church floors during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century.⁹¹ Both coins and clasps would have been deliberately put into the church soil (between the floor planks). As noticed before, an important observation was that in Espoo Church, many clasps were found in locations which corresponded to the location of the aisle between blocks of seats in the

⁹⁰ According to current Catholic practices, old missals and sacramentaries are to be disposed of by burial either in church grounds or in a Catholic cemetery, either intact or after burning. Protestant theology does not accord sacredness to the page and ink of texts and therefore, there are no doctrines on disposal. It is plausible that medieval Catholic conventions of disposal could have survived into the Lutheran period. On 'concealed' finds related to books, e.g. Martina Edelmann, 'Die Genisa der Synagoge von Veitshöchheim / The Genizah of the Synagogue at Veitshöchheim', in Ingolf Ericsson & Rainer Atzbach (eds.), *Depotfunde aus Gebäuden in Zentraleuropa / Concealed Finds from Buildings in Central Europe* (Bamberger Kolloquien zur Archäologie des Mittelalters und der Neuzeit 1; Archäologische Quellen zum Mittelalter 2), scripvaz-Verlag: Berlin 2005, 147–150; in the same volume, June Swann, 'Interpreting Concealed Shoes and Associated Finds / Die Deutung verborgener Schuhe und vergesellschafteter Funde', 115–119, at 117; Hauke 2005, 125, 129, Fig. 6.

⁹¹ Hiekkanen 1988, 64–65; on the chronological distribution of coins in Finnish churches, see also Ehrnsten 2013, 34, Figs. 4 & 6; Paavola 1995, Fig. 21.

period of the finds. Although Hiekkänen also takes into account the possibility of grave goods and the unintentional discarding of clasps, he notes that even together these two explanations could not explain the large number of clasps found in Espoo Church.⁹²

In surveying the clasp material for this article, it was noticed that although a few clasps might have been cut off from books as Hiekkänen suggested, the majority have either a complete strap preserved or, more frequently, a fragment of a torn strap remaining.⁹³ In either case, it seems that clasps were in fact deliberately detached from books as Hiekkänen suggested. Instead of cutting, this seems to have happened more often by tearing the strap (clasps with torn straps) or detaching it more carefully by removing first the anchor plate or nail holding the strap (clasps with complete straps).

Hiekkänen has suggested a convincing background for offerings. The turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in particular was a difficult period in Finland. First there were the horrible famine years (The Great Famine 1695–1697), followed by war and the ensuing Russian occupation (The Great Wrath 1710–1721). These traumatic events could have influenced the attitudes and behaviour of people. Offerings in churches, for example of coins, could have become more frequent than before.⁹⁴ Besides archaeological observations, there seems to be little written evidence of offerings, their frequency, or the nature of offered items. However, there is information documented during an antiquarian inquiry in 1674 that people in Korsholm, Ostrobothnia still offered coins, dresspins, dresshooks and other objects into an old, hollowed log used for offerings (Finnish *uhritukki*, Swedish *offerstock*), dating from the Catholic Period and situated in a ruined chapel.⁹⁵ Perhaps the deposition of book components was also related to this phenomenon.⁹⁶ Robert W. Scribner has noted:

The profusion of blessed objects (salt, water, palms, herbs, and so forth) that so often gave sacred meaning to the daily life of pre-Reformation Christians did largely disappear from the lives of those of evangelical belief. Yet this did not remove the popular desire for

⁹² Hiekkänen 1988, 64–65

⁹³ cf. Paavola 1995, 177.

⁹⁴ Hiekkänen 1988, 51–52; Ehrnsten 2013, 40.

⁹⁵ Carl Ivar Ståhle, *Rannsakningar efter antikviteter, Band I, Uppland, Västmanland, Dalarna, Norrland, Finland, Häfte I – Text*, Kungl. Vitenhets, Historie och Antikvitetsakademien: Stockholm 1960, 297; Henrik Klackenborg, *Moneta nostra. Monetarisering i medeltidens Sverige* (Lund Studies in Medieval Archaeology 10), Almqvist & Wiksell International: Stockholm 1992, 36–37.

⁹⁶ According to Glasberg (1998, 132), book clasps resembled coins in the sense that both were manufactured of shiny metal. This attribute seems to verify the idea that offerings probably had more symbolic than economic value.

some kind of instrumental application of sacred power to deal with the exigencies of daily life, and Protestants often turned to distinctively “Protestant” remedies, using Bibles, hymnals, and prayer books for their healing and protective power.⁹⁷

Conclusions

The purpose of this article was to survey book remains and artefacts related to books from church interiors in Finland and to assess different explanations for the accumulation of the material. The hypothetical causes for deposition are summarized below. They are divided into two categories, minor and major causes (with the latter given in bold).

Books found in graves

-books as grave goods

Book components found in graves

-book components as grave goods (*pars pro toto* or as apotropaic amulets)

-components in secondary contexts due to the mixing of soil

Books found as stray finds

-books originally as grave goods, but with context disturbed at some stage

-intentional discarding

Book components found as stray finds

-book components originally as grave goods (*pars pro toto* or as apotropaic amulets), **but with context disturbed at some point**

-deliberate deposition (offering) of book components

-unintentional discarding

-intentional discarding

Several contemporaneous causes which could have led to the growth in deposition of books or their components as grave goods were found. Firstly, burials inside churches became more frequent from the late seventeenth century onwards. This causes the burials and all their content, whatever that was, from this period (late seventeenth and eighteenth c.) to be better

⁹⁷ Robert W. Scribner, ‘The Reformation, Popular Magic, and the “Disenchantment of the World”,’ *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 23:3 (1993), 475–494, at 484.

represented than those of the preceding periods. Alongside this, individual burials with personal belongings given as grave goods became more common. This is perhaps partly due to coffins and deceased being prepared at home without the supervision of the church officials after the Church Law of 1686. This made putting personal belongings in coffins easier. Finally, during the eighteenth century, certain religious books, catechisms and hymnals in particular, became portable in size and also much more common than before. The increased number of books was related to their lower prices and perhaps encouraged their use as grave goods in burial rituals. Questions for further studies are related to the dating, frequency and geographical distribution of the 'books in graves' phenomenon. It would also be of particular interest to know the correlation of this tradition with the gender, age and social status of the deceased.

The question of book components recovered as stray finds also requires explanation. It seems that some of the components did not – even originally – derive from graves. Moreover, most clasps clearly show signs of having been deliberately detached from books. As unintentional and intentional discarding can be only regarded as minor factors, intentional depositing seems plausible. The difficult social and economic conditions in Finland (war, occupation, famine years) in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, as stressed by Hiekkänen, certainly made the atmosphere auspicious for offerings even if it is difficult to conclude what precise purpose they would have had. It can be guessed that they could have been made as votive offerings of a kind i.e. in an attempt to generally improve deplorable personal and social conditions.⁹⁸ Another option is to interpret stray finds (clasps) as deposited artefacts which were not grave goods in the strict sense i.e. artefacts put into coffins, but which were nevertheless connected to the deceased and the holy ground by some kind of devotional post-burial rite. In its simplest form, this could have happened by dropping/throwing an artefact/artefacts into a grave after the lowering of the coffin when the grave was still open. After the closing of the grave, depositing into the ground was in most churches still possible through the wooden floor planks. It could be that the latter type of deposition could have been made because of secrecy and individuality.⁹⁹ Moreover, the line between 'unintentionally' and 'intentionally' deposited artefacts is hard to

⁹⁸ On votive offerings, see e.g. Mauno Jokipii, 'Suomen ns. uhrikirkkojen taustaa, historiaa ja tarinaperinnettä', *Suomen kirkkohistoriallisen seuran vuosikirja* 89–91 (1999–2001), 31–76, at 31–40.

⁹⁹ On the secrecy of giving grave goods, see Waronen 1898, 77. The giving of grave goods secretly could have both practical and magical reasons, e.g. avoiding the condemnation of church officials, preventing counter magic etc. (about the functions of secrecy in magical practice, *Tenka Issakainen, Tavallista taikuutta. Tulkinta suomalaisten taikojen merkityksistä Mikko Koljosen osaamisen valossa* (Turun yliopiston julkaisuja, sarja C, osa 347), Turun yliopisto: Turku 2012, 115–117.

draw. Unintentionally detached clasps dropped on the church floor were perhaps not (systematically) looked for and picked up if they were not seen (economically) worthy enough of searching,¹⁰⁰ or if the misplacing was seen as an intention of some otherworldly agency, e.g. 'God's will'. In the latter case, even an unintentionally lost clasp could be regarded as an offering by the church goer.

It is also of interest why besides coins, mainly clasps would have been chosen as the most popular artefact type deposited. The clasps had, of course, the *pars pro toto* connection to holy books. Besides, they were common artefacts, perhaps not too expensive to be stripped from books, and also beautifully and religiously decorated in most cases i.e. well suited as 'memorial gifts' or as amulets.

Consequently, the two major explanations for stray finds of book components from church interiors, 1) *pars pro toto* grave goods / amulets with a disturbed context and 2) post-burial offerings, could have had similar objectives after all. They would have been closely connected to the devotion and commemoration of the deceased buried inside the church. Unfortunately with the present archaeological material, further conclusions, for example, on the frequencies of both rite types cannot be made. More artefacts in church interiors in their original contexts would be needed. To acquire them, more excavations with enough accuracy should be carried out. Moreover, sites chosen for closer scrutiny should have the area beneath the floor as untouched as possible by earlier archaeological excavations or other movement of the soil.¹⁰¹ It would also be necessary to add several other artefact groups to the study for the sake of comparison. Coins would be of particular interest and importance in this sense.

Further questions are related to the distribution of the phenomena described outside Finland or the Nordic countries and also to the more precise dating of observations. Tentatively, it seems that there was not yet a 'books or book components in graves' phenomenon nor 'clasp depositing' during the first half of the seventeenth century. The lack of clasps in Renko Church among the graves of the period from the 15th century to 1650 was already mentioned.¹⁰² In addition, the burial ground of the so-called Julin plot in Turku with hundreds of burials extending from the Middle Ages to

¹⁰⁰ On the reasons of 'not picking up' lost coins, Ehrnsten 2013, 39.

¹⁰¹ There remain ten medieval stone churches in Finland – where the main body of the church was finished – without archaeological excavations. These are the churches of Hattula, Janakkala, Kalanti, Lammi and Pertteli, the church of the Fransiscan convent in Rauma, the chapel of Saint Anne in Salo, and the churches of Taivassalo, Tammela and Vanaja. There are seven churches with only a finished stone sacristy but no conducted excavations: Akaa, Kisko, Köyliö, Loimaa, Mikkeli, Piikkiö and Virolahti, see Hiekkänen 2006a, 40.

¹⁰² Hiekkänen 1987, 203.

the mid-seventeenth century is completely devoid of book clasps; not a single one has been found.¹⁰³ Therefore, it seems that putting books or their elements in graves and depositing book parts as offerings properly begins or is at least archaeologically perceptible and datable only from the late seventeenth century onwards and continues at least to the late eighteenth century. The challenge of studies to come is to determine the dating and contexts of hook-clasps and other book parts from churches, seemingly representing the sixteenth century or even Pre-Reformation forms. At the moment, due to the lack of proper context information, the question whether these items represent the early roots of ritual practices discussed in this paper, or alternatively, are late examples of items with a long use/manufacture period, remains open.

To conclude, the significance of studies such as the present one lies in the multidisciplinary approach and synthesis created by combining sources of history, archaeology and folklore. Even if written documents tell us broadly of literacy and folk religion in the later historical periods in Finland, several essential areas still remain partly or completely unclear. To these sectors, archaeology provides concrete and necessary examples and the means of addressing these questions. As archaeological studies of the material culture of folk religion are currently taking their first steps in Finland,¹⁰⁴ the use of books and their components as ritual objects in (rural) Finland during the post-medieval period can be regarded as an essential addition to this thematic of research.

¹⁰³ Sirkku Pihlman, 'Begravningar i Åbo under slutet av 1500-talet och början av 1600-talet. Tolkningsproblem kring Helgeandskyrkans gravar', *Finskt Museum* (1992), 59–99 at 61, 73, 88–89, 93–94; Hiekkänen 2006b, 29.

¹⁰⁴ See e.g. Sonja Hukantaival, 'Hare's Feet under a Hearth – Discussing 'Ritual' Deposits in Buildings', in Visa Immonen, Mia Lempiäinen & Ulrika Rosendahl (eds), *Hortus novus. Fresh approaches to medieval archaeology in Finland* (Archaeologia Medii Aevi Finlandiae XIV), Society for Medieval Archaeology in Finland: Turku 2007, 66–75; Vesa-Pekka Herva, 'Living (with) Things: Relational Ontology and Material Culture in Early Modern Northern Finland', *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 19:3 (2009), 388–397; Vesa-Pekka Herva & Timo Ylimaunu, 'Folk beliefs, special deposits, and engagement with the environment in early modern northern Finland', *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 28:2 (2009), 234–243; Sonja Hukantaival, 'Horse Skulls and 'Alder-Horse'. The Horse as a Depositional Sacrifice in Buildings', in Audronė Bliujienė ed., *The Horse and Man in European Antiquity (Worldview, Burial Rites, and Military and Everyday Life)* (Archaeologia Baltica 11), Klaipėda University Press: Klaipėda 2009, 350–356; Sonja Hukantaival, '"En hästskalle i murgrunden". Arkeologiska och folkloristiska exempel på byggnadsoffer i Finland under historisk tid', *Fornvännen* 106 (2011), 43–53; Sonja Hukantaival, 'Finding Folk Religion – An Archaeology of 'Strange' Behaviour', *Folklore, Electronic Journal of Folklore* 55 (2013), 99–124 [<http://www.folklore.ee/folklore/vol55/hukantaival.pdf>] (last consulted 9.6.2015); Harjula (in press); Sonja Hukantaival, 'Frogs in Miniature Coffins from Churches in Finland – Folk Magic in Christian Holy Places', in the present volume.

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