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Between Heaven and Hell:

The role of the clergy in the witchcraft prosecutions in Finnmark, 1620–1692.

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The print on the cover-page is William Hogarth's *Credulity, Superstition and Fanaticism. A medley*. Published in March 1762. <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/400102> (Last accessed 25.05.2020).

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Abbreviations:

SATØ = State archive Tromsø.

SATR = State archive Trondheim.

SAST = State archive Stavanger.

RA/EA = Riksarkivet Oslo.

Fol. = Folio(s).

Np. = No pagination in manuscript.

Chapter 1. Introduction.

On the 10th of September 1632, Kirsten, the wife of Rasmus Siverson appeared at a court session in Vardø. She was there to challenge Niels Pedersen who had berated her for being knowledgeable of witchcraft.¹ Her case was initially proceeding well; as she denied the claim that she could use witchcraft in front of the court. Then, the chaplain Hans Pedersen Bang arose and announced to the gathered people, that Kirsten knew just as much witchcraft as Kari, the wife of Jetmund Siverson, who had been executed for witchcraft in March 1632.² Then, Christen Mikkelsen who was the provost of Eastern-Finnmark, announced that Kirsten had used her abilities to inflict pain on the wife of Peder Henningsen. What was originally meant to be a court hearing for Kirsten to challenge a rumour, had developed into a trial where she was suspected of knowing witchcraft, due to the testimony of two clergymen.³

The early modern clergy participated in prosecuting alleged witches, however, it has also been convincingly argued, that some clergymen either practiced benevolent magic or paid others to do it for them.⁴ Benevolent magic was based in the belief that some people could use magic for positive purposes, such as physical healing and finding stolen items. The early modern clergy's understanding of magic was clearly complex, as they prosecuted some forms of magic and showed more leniency towards others.⁵ And yet, the clergy has been given much of the blame for the beginning and continuation of the witchcraft trials in the seventeenth century.⁶ Despite these criticisms, the role of the local clergymen in the witchcraft prosecutions have seldom been extensively analysed in Norway. This dissertation will therefore provide the first in-depth study, of the role of the clergymen in the witchcraft prosecutions that took place in Finnmark between

¹ Hilde Sandvik and Harald Winge (ed.), *Tingbok for Finnmark 1620–1633* (Oslo: Norsk lokalhistorisk institutt, 1987), 302–303. Hereafter referred to as: *Tingbok 1620–1633.*; Liv Helene Willumsen, *The Witchcraft trials in Finnmark Northern Norway* trans. Katjana Edwardsen (Bergen: Skald, 2010), 75–77. All quotes with a reference to Willumsen's source edition have been translated by Katjana Edwardsen unless otherwise stated.

² The influential merchant Laurits Henriksen Bras also supported the chaplain's statement.

³ Willumsen, *Witchcraft trials*, 80–82. In this instance, Kirsten's trial in 1632 was postponed but she was executed for witchcraft in the spring of 1634.

⁴ Bente Gullveig Alver, *Mellem mennesker og magter: Magi i hekseforfølgelsestid* (Oslo: Scandinavian academic press, 2014), 136.

⁵ For other examples of elites who used benevolent magic - Nils Gilje, "Djevelen står alltid bak' demoniseringen av folkelig magi på slutten av 1500-tallet," in *Erkjennelse og engasjement: Minneseminar for David Roland Doublet (1954–2000)*, ed. Bjarte Askeland and Jan Fridthjof Bernt (Bergen: Fagbokforlaget, 2002), 96.

⁶ Hans Eyvind Næss, *Trolldomsprosessene i Norge på 1500-1600-tallet: En retts og sosialhistorisk undersøkelse* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1982), chapter 7, especially p. 293–299.

1620 and 1692. Another original contribution is the analysis of the clergy's behaviour outside of the court prosecutions, this enables the dissertation to shed new light on the differences between norm and practical reality in seventeenth century Finnmark.

1.1. Theme, periodisation and research questions.

The early modern witchcraft prosecutions primarily took place on the European continent, with a continuous period of witchcraft prosecutions from 1560–1782.⁷ The majority of these prosecutions took place during the seventeenth century. Per definition a witchcraft prosecution was a judicial trial where a person was accused of breaking the laws regulating witchcraft criminality. Estimates show that around 100.000 people were put on trial for witchcraft during the early modern period, and around half of them were executed.⁸ In Norway it is estimated that a total of 300 people were executed for witchcraft, and 91 of these executions took place in Finnmark.⁹ Around 75 percent of the people tried for witchcraft in Europe were female, in many ways witchcraft was seen as a female crime, although the gender distribution varied from region to region.¹⁰ There are numerous explanations concerning why the witchcraft prosecutions began and stopped, and there is little consensus among historians. Nevertheless, historians agree that early modern Europeans had a genuine belief in the existence of witches and witchcraft. The universe that the people of the seventeenth century lived in was filled with magical qualities. Common people primarily believed in *maleficium*, a belief that that some humans were born with innate abilities that they could use for evil and destructive purposes, in the popular culture *maleficium* was not connected to the Devil.¹¹ The elite understanding of

⁷ The witchcraft prosecutions also spread to some of the European colonies, such as the witchcraft prosecutions in Salem, Massachusetts, in 1692.

⁸ Louise Nyholm Kallestrup, *I pagt med Djævelen: Trolddomsforestillinger og trolddomsfølgelser i Italien og Danmark efter Reformationen* (København: Anis, 2009), 14.; Wolfgang Behringer estimates that 50.000 people were executed for witchcraft. Wolfgang Behringer, *Witches and witch-hunts: A global history* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 2004), 13.; Brian P. Levack estimates that 45.000 people were executed. Brian P. Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, fourth ed. (London: Routledge, 2016), 21. Hagen estimates that 44.300 people were executed. Rune Blix Hagen, *Dei Europeiske trolddomsprocessane*, third ed. (Oslo: Samlaget, 2014), 30–31.

⁹ Hagen, *Ibid*, 31. In Denmark around 1000 people were executed, in Iceland 21 people, in Sweden 300 people and in Finland 115 people were executed. The witchcraft prosecutions in Finnmark lasted from 1593–1692.

¹⁰ Hagen, *ibid*, 30.; Finland and Iceland primarily executed men for witchcraft. Antero Heikkinen and Timo Kervinen, "Finland: The male domination," in *Early modern European witchcraft: Centres and peripheries*, ed. Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), 321–322.

¹¹ Alver, *Mellem mennesker og magter*, 37. Destructive deeds such as killing livestock, causing poor health or death, and damage to property, in general, things that would have a negative effect on someone's everyday life.

witchcraft, demonized magic and witchcraft through the interpretation of witchcraft as diabolism. Diabolism was directly linked with the learned demonology and argued that all magic and witchcraft originated with the Devil. This means that ‘witchcraft’ in this dissertation, will be an umbrella term for the destructive element found in both *maleficium* and diabolism.

1.1.1. The region of Finnmark and its witchcraft trials in the seventeenth century.

During the seventeenth century, Finnmark was the northernmost outpost and district in the Danish-Norwegian monarchy. Finnmark was governed by a royal *lensmann*, and from 1662 an *amtman*, henceforth the term district governor will be used for both these positions.¹² The region had no fixed borders with Sweden or Russia, and this was an issue of continuous conflict, especially pertaining to the boundaries of taxation rights.¹³ King Christian IV, who reigned from 1596–1648, also maintained an aggressive foreign policy towards the English and Dutch, as they sailed past the region during their trade missions to Russia.¹⁴ Finnmark was home to both the indigenous Sámi and Norwegians, in addition to foreigners, such as Scottish and German fishermen.¹⁵ The region sustained a bad reputation in early modern Europe, as the Sámi were reputed for their knowledge of magic and witchcraft among European intellectuals.¹⁶

The economic backbone of the region was fishing and the sale of dried cod, which resulted in the establishment of fishing villages primarily populated by Norwegians along the coastline. The region was affluent for most of the late middle ages and sixteenth century due to an abundance of fish. The fishermen in Finnmark traditionally sold their fish to the merchants in Bergen, however, the general crisis conjectures that affected Europe throughout the seventeenth century, were intensified in a marginal area such as Finnmark, which reduced the availability

¹² Rolf Fladby, *Hvordan Nord-Norge ble styrt: Nordnorsk administrasjonshistorie fra 1530-åra til 1660* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1978), 28–31, 53, 65, 74.

¹³ Rune Blix Hagen, *Ved porten til helvete: Trolldomsprosessene i Finnmark* (Oslo: Cappelen Damm, 2015), 12. Lars Elenius *et al.* (ed), *The Barents region: A transnational history of subarctic Northern Europe* (Oslo: Pax, 2015), 86.

¹⁴ Már Jónsson, “Denmark–Norway as a potential world power in the early seventeenth century,” *Itinerario* 33 (2009): 17.; Per Einar Sparboe and Rune Blix Hagen (ed.), *Kongens reise til det ytterste nord: Dagbøker fra Christian IVs tokt til Finnmark og Kola i 1599* (Tromsø: Ravnetrykk, 2004), 5–17.

¹⁵ Both Thomis Skott and Villum Skott were registered in the tax records from 1610, Skott meaning Scottish/ Scotsman. SATØ, *Lensregnskap for Vardøhus*, microfilm nr. 519 (1590–1619), *np.*; In 1614/15 Peder Tysch was registered as living in Vardø, Tysch meaning German. *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Among others the exiled Swedish archbishop Olaus Magnus wrote about the Sámi’s special talent concerning witchcraft. Olaus Magnus, *Historia om den nordiska folken* (Stockholm: Gidlunds, 2010), 12.

of grain and other foodstuffs.¹⁷ This, combined with the ‘little ice age’ resulted in a general reduction in fish caught in Finnmark, and these simultaneous catastrophes led to a demographic decline, increased social mobility, looser kin networks, and starvation was evident in Finnmark on several occasions throughout the century.¹⁸

From an ecclesiastical standpoint Finnmark fluctuated between having seven and eight parishes in the seventeenth century, each parish had a parish priest that oversaw several chaplains and bell ringers.¹⁹ Nevertheless, there were periods where some parishes lacked both chaplains and a parish priest. Depending on the location of the parish, the parish priests had to answer to either the provost of eastern or western Finnmark. The provosts answered directly to the district governor and the *superintendent* in Trondheim, who controlled the geographically largest diocese in Denmark–Norway.²⁰ Throughout the century several *superintendents* applied to the king in Copenhagen to be relieved of their visitation duties in Finnmark.²¹ This meant that the two provosts in Finnmark had an increased responsibility as they were meant to conduct the visitations on behalf of the *superintendent*.²² The vast distance between Finnmark and the administrative centres in Copenhagen and Trondheim granted the regional administrators an increased form of autonomy.²³ The involvement of clergymen and especially the provosts in

¹⁷ Arnved Nedkvitne, “*Mens Bønderne seilte og Jægerne for*” *Nordnorsk og Vestnorsk kystøkonomi 1500–1730* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1988), 150–153.; Einar Niemi, *Vadsøs Historie: Fra øyvær til kjøpstad (inntil 1833)* (Vadsø: Vadsø kommune, 1983), 89. The so called *utredet* system was used in Finnmark, each fisherman could only conduct trade with one merchant. The merchants provided the fisherman with foodstuffs, especially grain, in addition to fishing equipment and clothing, the fisherman paid the merchant back in down payments of fish. When less fish was caught the merchants were also less willing to provide the fishermen with equipment and foodstuffs, which was disastrous for the people living in Finnmark.

¹⁸ *Tingbok 1620–1633*, 279.; SATØ, *The archives of the Finnmark district magistrate*, no. 09. Fol. 100b–101a.

¹⁹ A map of the parishes in coastal Finnmark as they were in 1668 is presented in appendix D on p. 122–123.

²⁰ Sigrun Høgetveit Berg, *Trondenes kannikgjeld: Makt og rikdom gjennom Seinmellomalder og Reformasjon* (University of Tromsø: PhD dissertation, 2013), 50–51.

²¹ The *superintendents* were meant to go on visitation every year. Den rettshistoriske kommisjon, *Kirkeordinansen av 1607 og forordning om ekteskap gitt 1582* (Oslo: Norsk historisk kjeldeskrift–institutt, 1985), 83.

²² As stated by king Christian IV in his letter to *superintendent* Isak Grønbech dated the 28th of May 1618. Otto Gr. Lundh, *Norske Rigs-Registranter: Tildeels i uddrag 1603–1618* vol. 4. (Christiania: Brøgger & Christie’s, 1870), 582.; Trygve Lysaker, *Trondhjem stift og Nidaros Bispedømme 1537–1953* vol. 1. *Reformasjon og Enevelde 1537–1804* (Trondheim: Nidaros Restaureringsarbeider, 1987), 113.; A few of the provost’s duties can be mentioned: the general upkeep of church buildings, controlling church registers, internal regulation of clergymen through the *prosterett*, reporting to the *superintendent*, implementing Church-political programs on the regional level.

²³ The three chain-prosecutions that the region experienced all began after a new district governor arrived in the region. Hagen, *Porten til helvete*, 25–27.

some of the witchcraft prosecutions in Finnmark was also a symptom of this autonomy, as the clergymen were normally not allowed to be prosecutors in judicial trials.

It has been estimated that around 3000 people lived in Finnmark in 1664.²⁴ When one considers that 138 people in total were tried for witchcraft in the region between 1593 and 1692, with 91 of them being either executed, tortured to death or died while imprisoned, it becomes clear that based on population size the trials in Finnmark were not only the most severe in Denmark-Norway, but among the most severe in all of Europe.²⁵ In addition, the Norwegian witchcraft trials were usually concerned with *maleficium*, another unique aspect of the witchcraft prosecutions in Finnmark is therefore the large amount of diabolical elements present in the trials. In this regard Finnmark clearly breaks with the frequently used centre-periphery model, which argues that in the European peripheries witchcraft primarily revolved around *maleficium*.²⁶ Nevertheless, although the chain-prosecutions in Finnmark primarily revolved around diabolical elements, accusations of *maleficium* were present in many trials.

The witchcraft prosecutions in Finnmark are marked by three chain-prosecutions, the first chain-prosecution happened in 1621, the second took place in 1652–1653, and the last one in 1662–1663.²⁷ The first two chain-prosecutions started due to shipwrecks that affected the local communities. While the last one began due to a belief that a witches sabbath had taken place, and that the witches had attempted to kill the district governor Christopher Orning, who was active in the region from 1662–1663. The influence of elites is especially noticeable in the 1662–1663 prosecutions, when the political prisoner Anna Rhodius introduced several new demonological elements.²⁸ Several isolated trials also took place throughout the period, but they became less frequent and after the last chain-prosecutions only one death sentence was issued.²⁹

²⁴ Randi Rønning Balsvik and Michael Drake, “Menneskene i Nord-Norge fra istid til nåtid – Fra vogge til grav,” in *Nordnorsk kulturhistorie: Det gjenstridige landet*, ed. Einar–Arne Drivenes *et al.* (Oslo: Gyldendal, 1994), 89.

²⁵ Hagen, *Porten til helvete*, 8, 10. Hagen has found that 84 people were burned to death, three decapitated, two were tortured to death, and two people died while in custody.; Liv Helene Willumsen, *Dømt til Ild og bål: Trolldomsprosessene i Skottland og Finnmark* (Stamsund, Orkana, 2013), 14.

²⁶ In this model, the ‘centre’ was around modern-day Switzerland and the peripheries were places like eastern-Europe and the Nordic countries. Levack, *Witch-hunt*, 9.; Gunnar W. Knutsen has demonstrated the problems in using the centre-periphery model on Norway in general. Gunnar W. Knutsen, “Norwegian witchcraft trials: A reassessment,” *Continuity and change* 18 (2003): 192–194.

²⁷ Prosecutions where the alleged witch denounced others for witchcraft, something that in turn started new trials.

²⁸ Hagen, *Porten til helvete*, 190–211.; Willumsen, *Ild og bål*, 314–318.

²⁹ Willumsen, *Witchcraft trials*, 332–341.

The last serious witchcraft trial in Finnmark was held against the Sámi Anders Poulsen in 1692. The witchcraft trials in Finnmark are often categorized as being top-down, this means that they were started and maintained by the local elites. The Finnmark prosecutions followed the international trend in relation to gender as 82% of the people accused of witchcraft were Norwegian and Sámi women.³⁰ Another unique aspect of the prosecution in Finnmark is that a total of 27 Sámi were put on trial for witchcraft, as will become evident, the local clergymen were also involved in a few trials against Sámi people.³¹ The witchcraft trials where one of the few times the clergymen were allowed to act as prosecutors and interrogators at court due to their perceived specialist understanding of demonology. The role played by these clergymen who were ‘down on the ground’ has been underemphasised in previous research, and it is therefore the objective of this dissertation to investigate their role in the prosecutions.

1.1.2. Research questions and periodization.

This dissertation will therefore address the question of *what was the role of the clergy in the witchcraft prosecutions in Finnmark, 1620–1692?* This will be answered through a systematic analysis of the clergymen’s role in their localities, and a qualitative analysis of the specific witchcraft trials where clergymen were involved. This approach makes it possible to analyse if the role of the clergymen in the witchcraft prosecutions differed from their role outside of the court room. This dissertation will also investigate if the clergymen participated in the decline and end of the witchcraft prosecutions.

Relevant research questions are:

- How did the theologians in Copenhagen understand witchcraft and magic in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries?
- What was the educational level of the clergymen and was there a difference between normative regulation and praxis in Finnmark?
- What was the role of the clergymen in their localities and what type of relationship did they have with their parishioners?
- What were the roles of the clergymen who were active in the witchcraft trials?

³⁰ Willumsen, *Ild og bål*, 266. Primarily Norwegian women were prosecuted for witchcraft, but eight Sámi women were also put on trial for witchcraft. These women came from all walks of life, some were domestic maids and others were married to wealthy merchants.

³¹ Hagen, *Porten til helvete*, 274.

- Did the clergymen participate in causing the decline and end of the witchcraft prosecutions in Finnmark?

The chosen periodization is 1620–1692, as the first explicit mention of the involvement of a clergyman in a witchcraft trial was in 1620.³² The first surviving court records for Finnmark also begin in 1620. The bailiffs account books and district governor Lilienskiold's (active 1684–1701) manuscript concerning the witchcraft trials in Finnmark, provide information concerning witchcraft trials before 1620, but the potential involvement of clergymen is not explicitly stated as the bailiffs account books only contain brief entries and Lilienskiold summarised the trials.³³ Due to the focus of this dissertation the witchcraft trials before 1620 will therefore not be analysed, the periodisation ends in 1692, as this was the year the last serious witchcraft prosecution in Finnmark was held against the Sámi Anders Poulsen. As this topic has not been explored in depth, it is necessary to state already here that some themes will be outside the scope of this dissertation. These particularly pertain to gender and ethnicity, these are both fascinating topics in relation to the Church and clergy in the seventeenth century, but due to space limitations there is unfortunately no room to analyse them extensively in this dissertation.

1.2. Historiography concerning the clergy and the witchcraft trials.

Historical research on the witchcraft prosecutions in early modern Europe is a very active and interdisciplinary field. In Norway, the witchcraft prosecution have been studied extensively in both academic dissertations and works published by professional historians.³⁴ The field is marked by regional studies, this has been the norm in witchcraft studies since Midelfort's seminal study on Southwestern Germany.³⁵ Concerning the prosecutions in Finnmark, Rune Blix Hagen and Liv Helene Willumsen have clearly marked themselves as the authoritative

³² Willumsen, *Witchcraft trials*, 22–26.; *Tingbok 1620–1633*, 31–33.

³³ Lilienskiold's manuscript has been edited and published. See, Rune Blix Hagen and Per Einar Sparboe (ed.), Hans H. Lilienskiold, *Trolldom og ugudelighet i 1600-tallets Finnmark* (Tromsø: Ravnetrykk, 1998), the trials before 1620 are located on pages 69–73.; E.g. the possessions of Christen Skredder and Morten Olsen was registered as income in the bailiffs account books for 1602, after they had been executed for witchcraft in 1601. SATØ, *Regnskap over Vardøhus 1602*, microfilm nr. 519 (1590-1619), 35–36.

³⁴ Two of the most recent master dissertations on the topic: Vegard Klepsvik Vinsjansen, *Trolldomsjakt og kongemakt: Trolldomsprosessar og sentralisering i Ribe og Bergen på 1500-og 1600-talet – Ei komparativ studie* (NTNU, Master dissertation, 2019).; Anne-Sofie Schjøtner Skaar, *En retthistorisk komparasjon av trolldomsprosessene i Mora (1669) og Rendalen (1670–74)* (University of Oslo: Master dissertation, 2019).

³⁵ Erik Midelfort, *Witch hunting in Southwestern Germany 1562–1684: The Social and Intellectual foundations* (Stanford: Stanford University press, 1972).

researchers. Willumsen has a clear focus on gender, demonology, and international influences. Hagen has focused on socio-economic aspects and the witchcraft prosecutions against the Sámi. Willumsen, Hagen and others have published so extensively on the witchcraft prosecutions that there is no room here for an exhaustive historiographical overview. The focus will therefore be on the historiography concerned with the clergy's role in the witchcraft prosecutions.

Both in Norwegian and international studies the role of the local clergy in the witchcraft trials has usually been treated superficially. Their role is often briefly mentioned, with a stronger focus on the opinions of theologians and other clergymen who published on the topic of witchcraft.³⁶ Hans Eyvind Næss, the nestor of Norwegian witchcraft research, argued that both theologians and parish priests were agitators and impetus givers in the witchcraft prosecutions. Næss analysed the opinions of theologians and briefly the role of the clergy in the witchcraft trials and claimed that the clergy conducted a severe breach of their role as spiritual comforters through their role as interrogators. According to Næss, the clergy became the local experts on demonology, and conducted the interrogations based on the demonological interpretation of witchcraft presented in the witchcraft ordinance of 1617.³⁷ Næss further postulates that the clergymen in Norway must be seen as being just as active in the prosecutions as their colleagues in Scotland and the Catholic territories on the European continent.³⁸ Næss's view is currently articulated most strongly by Øystein Rian, he argues that the witchcraft trials were a completely top-down phenomenon, where the state forced its understanding of witchcraft on the population and conducted the trials.³⁹

Gunnar W. Knutsen supported Næss in his own study of the witchcraft prosecutions in Eastern-Norway. Knutsen found 18 involved clergymen, but due to the lack of sources for the early

³⁶ The classical study on clergymen accused of witchcraft is – Harald Schwillus, *Kleriker im Hexenprozeß: Geistliche als Opfer der Hexenprozesse des 16. Und 17. Jahrhunderts in Deutschland* (Würzburg: Echter-Verlag, 1992).; Alison Rowlands has published several articles on the role of the clergy in the witchcraft prosecutions in Rothenburg ob der Tauber. Rowlands analysed their participation through patriarchal structures and gender roles. Several of Rowlands' publications on this topic is referred to throughout this dissertation.

³⁷ Næss, *Trolldomsprosessene i Norge*, 293–299.; Vilhelm Adolf Secher, *Corpus Constitutionum Daniae: Forordninger, recesser og andre kongelige breve, Danmarks lovgivning vedkommende 1558–1660* vol. 3. 1596–1621 (København: Nielsen & Lydicke, 1891), 516–518. More information concerning the 1617 ordinance is presented in the next chapter.

³⁸ Næss, *Trolldomsprosessene i Norge*, 286.

³⁹ Øystein Rian, *Den aristokratiske fyrstestaten 1536–1648* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1997), 374–376.

period of the prosecutions, it is difficult to analyse the role of the clergy in Eastern-Norway. Knutsen, Willumsen, and Hagen all emphasise the religious aspect of the clergyman's presence in the interrogation room. They go against Næss to some degree as they argue that the presence of the clergyman was critical concerning the offering of spiritual solace to the accused. Knutsen and Willumsen have both argued that the presence of diabolical elements in a witchcraft trial did not necessarily equate to the involvement of elites. They emphasise that the population eventually adopted elements of demonology into their own understanding of witchcraft.⁴⁰ This is a clear breach from Næss's argument as he maintained that the diabolical aspects must have been implemented by the clergy.⁴¹

Through his study of the witchcraft trials in Jutland, Jens C. V. Johansen argued that the clergymen participated in stopping the witchcraft prosecutions in Denmark. Johansen maintained that the parish priests did not share the view of the theologians that witches should be executed. Instead Johansen postulated that the priests tried to spread a providentialist understanding of witchcraft among their parishioners. The providentialist view argued that suffering and disasters were a test from God, therefore disasters brought forth by witches were a divine test. The correct response according to the providentialist view was pious self-reflection modelled on Job from the Old Testament. Johansen argued that this view finally broke through after 1625, and through this dissemination of providentialism the clergymen in Denmark participated in ending the prosecutions.⁴² Johansen's theory remains relevant and will be elaborated further and tested on the Finnmark trials in chapter five.

There has also been some dispute as to how one should define the clergy as a professional group in the seventeenth century. Ellen Alm supported Næss to a large extent in her comparative study of the role of the state in the witchcraft trials in Denmark-Norway. Alm criticised several aspects of Johansen's theory concerning the role of the clergy, as she argued that it was

⁴⁰ Gunnar W. Knutsen, *Trolldomsprosessene på Østlandet: En kulturhistorisk undersøkelse* (Oslo: Tingbokprosjektet, 1998), 98–99.; Willumsen, *Ild og bål*, 306.

⁴¹ Næss, *Trolldomsprosessene i Norge*, 298.

⁴² Jens C. V. Johansen, *Da djævelen var ude... Trolddom i det 17. århundredes Danmark* (Odense: Odense Universitetsforlag, 1992), chapter 9.; Johansen's theory has received criticism as there were clergymen in Denmark who wanted to punish alleged witches. Gustav Henningsen, "Trolddom i det 17. århundredes Danmark," (Danish) *Historisk Tidsskrift* 1 (1992): 144.

problematic to interpret the early modern clergy as a homogenous group, and that the clergy were diversified in relation to their understanding of witchcraft. Despite these criticisms, Alm argued in her own dissertation, that the clergy were an active part in creating a united elite front against witchcraft.⁴³

Liv Helene Willumsen and Rune Blix Hagen have analysed the involvement of the clergy in Finnmark. They both emphasise the religious aspects of the clergymen's role, but also emphasise the demonological ideas that came from theologians which gave the clergyman two objectives. Firstly, to extract a confession through spiritual pressure, and secondly the religious aspects of providing solace and comfort, in addition to saving the soul of the accused and granting the last sacrament.⁴⁴ Willumsen has also compared the role of the clergy in Scotland and Finnmark, she then proved that the clergy in Finnmark were more moderate and less involved in the witchcraft trials compared to their Scottish colleagues.⁴⁵ Recent research from the Catholic territories in the Holy Roman Empire argues that theological pastoralism, that is the attempt to reconvert the witches rather than execute them, combined with a better legal defence to stop the witchcraft prosecutions in Innsbruck.⁴⁶ To some extent this recent research dismantles Næss's argument concerning an equal involvement of clergymen across large parts of the European continent.

Concerning literature relating to the Church and clergymen in Finnmark, this dissertation primarily builds on Daniel Thrap and Peter Ravn Sollied's compilations of clergymen, parishes, and churches in the region.⁴⁷ More specialised studies such as the PhD's of Sigrun Høgetveit Berg, Vidar Trædal, and Siv Rasmussen have provided a deeper understanding of the ecclesiastical situation in Northern-Norway. The understanding of the Reformation as a

⁴³ Ellen J. Alm, *Statens rolle i trolldomsprosessene i Danmark og Norge på 1500- og 1600-tallet: En komparativ undersøkelse* (University of Tromsø: Hovedfagsoppgave, 2000), 142–146.

⁴⁴ Liv Helene Willumsen, *Trollkvinne i nord i historiske kilder og skjønnlitteratur* (Tromsø: Lærerhøgskolens skriftserie, 1994), 60–64.; Hagen, *Porten til helvete*, 159.

⁴⁵ Willumsen, *Ild og bål*, 378.

⁴⁶ Johannes Dillinger, "*Evil People*" *A comparative study of witch hunts in Swabian Austria and the Electorate of Trier* trans. Laura Stokes (Charlottesville: University of Virginia press, 2009), 177–179.

⁴⁷ Peter Ravn Sollied, *Prester, prestegjeld og kirker i Finmarken i det 17de århundrede* (Kristiania: J. Chr. Gundersen, 1901).; Daniel Thrap, "Efterretning om Nordenfjelske prester i slutningen af 17de Aarhundre," *Luthersk Ugeskrift* fjerde rekke 20–21 (1891): 320–325.; I have not used Svein Tore Dahl's *Geistligheten i Nord-Norge...* as Dahl's information concerning Finnmark is based on Sollied's monograph.

protracted process that lasted throughout the seventeenth century in northern Norway, has been useful when analysing the educational level of the clergy in Finnmark.⁴⁸ More general studies relating to Norwegian Church history written by Oluf Kolsrud, Andreas Aarflot, and Tarald Rasmussen have provided a broader understanding of the societal role of the Church in Denmark–Norway. Geographical case-studies concerning the socio-normative role of the clergymen has been used as a starting point when interpreting the relationship between the clergymen and their parishioners in Finnmark.⁴⁹

1.2.1 changing theoretical approaches to the witchcraft prosecutions.

A change has taken place in the theoretical explanations connected to the witchcraft prosecutions over the last 30 years. The functionalist arguments that Næss's study was part of as well as the confessionalization theory, and the acculturation theory have been partly disregarded as models to explain the witchcraft prosecutions. The functionalist hypothesis argued that the witchcraft prosecutions served a social function, that they were a 'pressure valve' for social strain in local communities, but the theory has been critiqued for failing to adequately explain the beginning and end of the prosecutions.⁵⁰ Alm and Rian used the acculturation thesis and confessionalization theory in their arguments. The acculturation thesis argued that in 'open societies', that is villages that cooperated with the central authorities, the culture of the elite demonized popular culture and started the process of acculturation which made the commoners partake in the elite's understanding of witchcraft as diabolical.⁵¹ In the acculturation thesis the witchcraft prosecutions were but one arena in which the elites 'conquered the countryside' through an acculturation process maintained by a homogenous elite with influence on the village level.⁵² The confessionalization theory was also concerned with

⁴⁸ Rognald Heiseldal Bergesen, "Introduction – Towards a standardization of faith," in *The protracted Reformation in Northern Norway vol 2.: Towards a Protestant North*, ed. Sigrun Høgetveit Berg *et al.* (Hannover: Wehrhahn, 2016), 7.; Sigrun Høgetveit Berg, *Reformasjonen* (Oslo: Det Norske Samlaget, 2017), 112.

⁴⁹ Especially Jay Goodale's publications have been fruitful when analysing these interactions. Jay Goodale, "Pastors, Privation, and the Process of Reformation in Saxony," *The Sixteenth century Journal* 33 (2002): 71–92.

⁵⁰ It should be noted that Næss's study deals with these issues quite clearly, and his hypothesis that the prosecutions came to an end due to increased judicial strictness is generally accepted concerning the Norwegian trials.

⁵¹ Gustav Henningsen and Bengt Ankarloo, "Introduction," in *Early modern European witchcraft: Centres and peripheries*, ed. Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), 10, 14.

⁵² Robert Muchembled, "Satanic myths and cultural reality," in *Early modern European witchcraft: Centres and peripheries*, ed. Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen (Oxford: Clarendon press, 1990), 146.; Robert Muchembled, "Witchcraft, Popular culture and Christianity in the sixteenth century with emphasis upon Flanders and Artois," *Annales: Economies, societies, civilisations* 7 (1982): 226, 230.; Hagen, *europæiske trolldomsprosessane*, 136.

such a top-down control of popular culture. The religious confession the developing states adopted after the Reformation shaped the identities of the developing states, and provided the state with religious objectives such as obtaining socio-normative control over the piety of its people.⁵³ The acculturation thesis and confessionalization thesis have primarily been disregarded in witchcraft research as they have been critiqued for depriving individuals and groupings of elites, such as the clergymen, of historical agency and individuality through their focus on a homogeneity. They provide little room for difference in praxis across the various parishes and offices in a region; and in many aspects the programs of the state failed at the local level or required large modifications.⁵⁴ Recent research has also shown that the commoners interacted and cooperated with the elites, and that they were more than capable of starting and sustaining witchcraft prosecutions on their own.⁵⁵ Both theories have been criticised for ignoring the sphere of interaction between popular and elite culture, some have even criticized them for ignoring ‘history from below’ completely.⁵⁶ Research conducted in the last 30 years, has also highlighted the need for a more thorough analysis of the role played by those who operated within the sphere of cultural interaction and exchange between elite and popular culture. This dissertation situates itself within that existing historiographical gap through its analysis of the role of the clergymen in the witchcraft prosecutions.

1.3. Sources and methodology

For this dissertation, it has been important to use sources that provide information concerning the clergy’s personal life, education, their relationships and practice in their parishes, and their concrete role in the witchcraft trials. This dissertation is based on both published primary materials and primary materials in manuscript form, located in archives in Oslo, Tromsø, and

⁵³ Ute Lotz–Heumann, “Confessionalization,” in *Reformation and Early Modern Europe: A guide to research*, ed. David M. Whitford (Kirkville: Truman State University press, 2008), 136–138.

⁵⁴ Ian Green, “‘Reformed Pastors’ and *Bons Curès*: The changing role of the parish clergy in Early Modern Europe,” in *Studies in Church History: The ministry - clerical and lay*, vol. 26. ed. W. J. Sheils and Diana Wood (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), 261–262, 278.

⁵⁵ Johannes Dillinger, “Politics, State-Building and Witch-Hunting,” in *Witchcraft in Early modern Europe and Colonial America*, ed. Brian P. Levack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 535–538.

⁵⁶ Susan R. Boettcher, “Confessionalization: Reformation, religion, absolutism and modernity,” *History Compass* 2 (2004): 4–5.; Thomas A. Brady Jr., “Confessionalization: The career of a concept,” in *Confessionalization in Europe 1555–1700: Essays in honor and memory of Bodo Nischan*, ed. John M. Headley *et al.* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 11.; I agree with Ingesman that there is merit in using the theory on the Scandinavian countries. Per Ingesman, “Reformation and Confessionalisation in Early Modern Denmark,” in *The protracted Reformation in Northern Norway: Introductory studies*, ed. Lars Ivar Hansen *et al.* (Stamsund: Orkana, 2014), 30.

Trondheim. To make it easy for the reader to check the primary materials I have referred to Willumen's English translation of the witchcraft trials when discussing specific trials. Willumsen's source edition contains the transcriptions of the archival manuscripts relating to the witchcraft prosecutions in Finnmark. For the time period 1620–1633, I have referred to Sandvik and Winge's published transcription of the court records. Furthermore, this dissertation primarily builds on the critical contextual reading of the surviving records from 484 court sessions held in Finnmark in the period 1620–1663.⁵⁷ Except for the period 1633–1647, the court records are almost complete.⁵⁸ The court records do not only provide a glimpse into criminality in seventeenth century Finnmark, they can also be used to analyse aspects of everyday life, as they contain elements pertaining to trade, debt, and public affairs.⁵⁹ The court records are also useful to see the interactions between the clergymen and their parishioners, and what affairs they brought up at court. Other sources such as bailiff account books and tax registers, have been used when necessary to find more information concerning specific people. Christian IV's *store recess* of 1643, and Christian V's *Norske lov* of 1687 have been used when looking at the penal legislation, the almost identical witchcraft ordinances of 1617 and 1687 have been analysed in-depth.

A qualitative reading of the archives of the *superintendents* in Trondheim for material relating to the clergy in Finnmark in the seventeenth century has been conducted. Several manuscripts were useful and provided information concerning when the different priests were active in the region. One example would be *Series pastorum ecclesia Loppensis* which listed all active clergymen in the parish of Loppa from 1600 onwards.⁶⁰ Most of the documents in the *superintendents'* archive are transcriptions made by *superintendent* Ernst Gunnerus (1718–1773) in the latter half of the eighteenth century. These transcriptions are trustworthy, as the information matches up with other sources when cross-referenced. In *superintendent* Gunnerus's manuscript collection I found a testimonial from two professors in Copenhagen

⁵⁷ For the court records from 1648–1663, I have used the transcriptions of jurist and specialist in gothic handwriting Per Einar Sparboe. I have read all the archival materials that have been referenced to in this dissertation, as well as the trials relating to clergymen and witchcraft in their original manuscript form. I have also performed qualitative readings of court sessions in the years: 1670–72, 1678, 1679, 1682 and 1689. These readings were limited to two or three court sessions per year in order to look for major changes.

⁵⁸ There are some scattered sources from 1634 and 1638, the court records are almost complete from August 1648.

⁵⁹ Hilde Sandvik, "Tinget i Finnmark 1620–1633," *Heimen* 4 (1987): 232–243.

⁶⁰ SATR, ymse protokoller nr. 1. *Biskop Gunnerus kirkehistoriske aktstykker*, Fol. 82b–83b.

confirming that a clergyman in Finnmark had completed his studies.⁶¹ I have also found several clergymen who were active in Finnmark in the published matriculation protocols from the Universities of Copenhagen and Rostock. The archives of the *superintendents*' and the Gunnerus manuscript collection mainly consist of so called secondary primary materials because they themselves are transcriptions, when analysing these sources, I have taken into consideration that some information that was present in the original could have been lost in the transcription.

A few petitions from the *superintendent* in Trondheim to the Danish chancellery concerning the clergymen in Finnmark have been analysed, but a thorough search for material related to Finnmark has not been conducted. Within the abovementioned material, all archival references to the clergymen in Finnmark have been compiled in appendix B at the end of this dissertation. Extensive archival references will usually not be given in the footnotes when discussing the Finnmark clergy as a group, the reader is advised to consult the appendix. All place names have been modernised and all personal names have been standardised.

1.3.1. Qualitative method and critical contextual analysis.

The methodological approach to the sources is a qualitative and especially a critical contextual close reading of the available sources. By utilising this method, it is possible to go deeper into some trials, which is crucial when the objective is to analyse the role of a specific professional group within a larger phenomenon such as the witchcraft prosecutions. When utilising the critical contextual approach, the focus is not only on the things that happened at court but what they can tell us more generally about the clergyman's role in his local community. When provost Hans Pedersen Bang paid down part of Niels Lauritsen's debt to Iver Christensen in 1653, it provides more information than just an exchange of money.⁶² Through the contextual approach one sees that the provost must have been a trusted financially secure man which the poorer members of society could ask for help when they were in economic need. Through this approach the sources are put up against and compared with each other in order to gain a deeper understanding of the clergymen in Finnmark. The contextual approach is useful precisely for

⁶¹ Gunnerusbiblioteket, doc. XA 44. Fol. 24a-25a.

⁶² SATØ, *The archives of the Finnmark district magistrate*, no. 08. Fol. 129a.

highlighting the differences and similarities that existed among the clergymen in Finnmark, and the socio-cultural networks that existed between the clergymen and their parishioners.

Concerning source criticism, there has been an increased focus on the need to treat court records with the same precautions and scrutiny as other historical sources.⁶³ When analysing the sources a focus has been on the author of the source, what message the source gives, and in what context the source was written.⁶⁴ For the majority of the used source material this would be a court trial where a problem or dispute was to be solved. The author of the document would be the magistrate who operated as the scribe and eventually judge. There has been a debate concerning to what extent the scribe wrote down exactly what happened at court, and a difference in praxis is noticeable among the scribes in Norway. Knutsen argues that the scribes in eastern Norway wrote down information as the proceedings took place.⁶⁵ Hagen argues based on a comparison between court records and other materials in Finnmark, that the scribe edited the manuscript after the court proceedings, before he entered them in the court records.⁶⁶ The court records in Finnmark therefore contain the information that the scribe thought was most important; this aspect has been considered throughout the study. Although the scribe noted what he found most important, the records usually have a fluent narrative. Through an investigation of the court records, Willumsen argues that the scribe carried out his professional duties and wrote down what had happened at court, although in summarized form.⁶⁷ Based on the surviving court records there is strong reason to believe that the only thing the scribes in Finnmark excluded from the court records was the usage and explicit mention of illegal torture.

Two theoretical concepts lay the interpretative foundations for this dissertation, they are a Gramscian understanding of hegemony, and Jay Goodale's theory of the 'culture of rule and culture of ruled.' These two theories are respectively used to explain the dissemination of the diabolical idea of witchcraft and the roles of the clergy in their parishes. These theories will

⁶³ Tim Stretton, "Social historians and the records of litigation," in *Fact, fiction and forensic evidence: The potential of judicial sources for historical research in the Early Modern Period*, ed. Sølvi Sogner (Oslo: Department of history, 1997), 17.

⁶⁴ Knut Kjeldstadli, *Fortida er ikke hva den en gang var: En innføring i historiefaget*, Sixth ed. (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2010), 185.

⁶⁵ Knutsen, *Trolldomsprosessene på Østlandet*, 6.

⁶⁶ Hagen, *Porten til helvete*, 112–113.

⁶⁷ Willumsen, *Ild og bål*, 44–45.

therefore be further explained, elaborated, and contextualised through historical examples from both Copenhagen and Finnmark in chapters two and three.

1.3.2. Definitions – *Maleficium* and diabolism.

Maleficium and diabolism were the two overarching interpretations of witchcraft in the seventeenth century, these terms must be further defined as they are frequently put up against each other in this dissertation. Diabolism was the understanding of the elites, heavily rooted in the scientific study of the Devil called demonology. Demonology argued that all kinds of magic and witchcraft originated with the Devil who gave the witches powers through an implicit or explicit pact. In these cases, the defendant was accused of diabolical actions such as shapeshifting, attending the witches sabbath, having a personal demon, and flying. Such diabolical aspects were most frequent when the trials were started and controlled by the elite members of society. The second understanding was that of *maleficium* which was the core of the common people's understanding of witchcraft as destructive magic. The popular understanding of witchcraft argued that some people were born with the ability to cause harm, such as killing livestock or capsizing ships, *maleficium* was not connected to the Devil. Within the popular interpretation, benevolent magic was understood as the positive aspect of magic. Accusations concerning *maleficium* are seen when the accusations were brought up by people from the village communities, although elites could also accuse others for *maleficium*. The diabolical witch was the Devil's footman, while for commoners the witch was a neighbour or stranger who caused physical destruction. These two interpretations of witchcraft frequently overlapped, and there could be accusations and confessions to both types in the same trial.

1.3.3. structure of the dissertation.

Chapter two analyses how the Lutheran orthodox clergy attained a hegemonic interpretation of witchcraft through the 1617 ordinance. Chapter three investigates the educational level of the Finnmark clergy and demonstrates that there was a difference between normative regulation and praxis in Finnmark. The chapter shows that the relationship between clergymen and parishioners was complex and not authoritatively one-sided. Chapter four investigates the role and function of the clergymen who were involved in the witchcraft trials, several cases-studies are provided. Chapter five uses Jens C. V. Johansen's providentialism theory to see if the clergy participated in ending the witchcraft prosecutions in Finnmark. Chapter six concludes the dissertation with the result of the study and the conclusion.

Chapter 2. The ecclesiastical understanding of witchcraft in Denmark–Norway.

To understand the objectives set out for this dissertation, it is necessary to elucidate the relationship between the witchcraft prosecutions and religion. It can be argued that religion was of little importance to the popular understanding of witchcraft. For common people the key issue of *maleficium* was that there existed ‘evil people’ within their communities, that were both willing and capable of inflicting harm on them or their property.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, there was no unbridgeable gap between the elite and popular understandings of witchcraft and magic. Recent research has analysed the ideas of theologians and jurists and demonstrated that their arguments were influenced and made in relation to a popular understanding of witchcraft and magic.⁶⁹ This is most evident in the Lutheran theologians’ demonization of benevolent magic and remnants of Catholic practices. The clergy were supposed to represent the understanding of the elites at the centre in their parishes. An understanding of the interpretation of witchcraft among theologians in the centre, is therefore required to investigate the clergymen’s role as intermediates between the elite and popular understanding of witchcraft and magic in the periphery of Finnmark. The connection between religion and witchcraft is therefore important, as the elite understanding of witchcraft was heavily connected to religion.⁷⁰

This chapter will investigate how the diabolical interpretation of magic gained a hegemonic position among the theologians and other elites in Copenhagen, and how this understanding made its way into the judicial codes.⁷¹ This is relevant to the Finnmark prosecutions as the clergymen in Finnmark were supposed to follow the theological interpretations disseminated from Copenhagen, and everyone were meant to follow the penal legislation. Although demonology was not a stand-alone course, it was most likely something aspiring clergymen

⁶⁸ Robin Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours: The Social and Cultural context of European witchcraft* (London: Penguin, 1998), 4.

⁶⁹ Louise Nyholm Kallestrup, “‘When hell became too small’: Constructing witchcraft in post-Reformation Denmark,” in *Cultural histories of crime in Denmark, 1500 to 2000*, ed. Tyge Krogh *et al.* (London: Routledge, 2017), 20–21.

⁷⁰ Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The idea of witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), 437.

⁷¹ This dissertation uses a Gramscian definition of hegemony as the ability of the state to earn the passive consent of large parts of the population; in relation to the development of existing social norms and structures to fit the state agenda. In the seventeenth century this must be interpreted as the ability of influential groups to gain the favour of the monarch and the council of the realm, in order to advocate for their own understanding of a phenomenon. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971), 12.

encountered at university.⁷² Previous research on the clergy's role in the prosecutions, and especially the aforementioned acculturation thesis, emphasised obligatory education for clergymen as an important instrument concerning the introduction of demonological ideas into local communities.⁷³ In Denmark-Norway education became mandatory for all aspiring clergymen in 1569, and in 1629 an ordinance specified that the clergy had to receive their university education in Copenhagen.⁷⁴ Mandatory education for clergymen was part of the professionalization process and an attempt to create a homogenous clergy. As will be elaborated in a later chapter, only a minority of the clergymen in Finnmark had attended university.⁷⁵ The dissemination of ideas through institutionalised education is nevertheless relevant, as several of the leading Danish demonologists were central figures in the religious discourse and administration of the University of Copenhagen. During his studies in Copenhagen, the *superintendent* in Stavanger, Jørgen Erikssøn (1535–1604), associated with the professor of theology Niels Hemmingsen (1513–1600) and brought several of Hemmingsen's ideas concerning witchcraft back to Norway.⁷⁶

2.1. The sceptical and diabolical interpretation of witchcraft.

The Holy Bible refers to witches, wizards, and necromancers on several occasions.⁷⁷ This provided ample material for the theologians of the medieval and early modern period to develop ideas concerning the relationship between the Devil, God, and humans based on scripture. Exodus 22:18 clearly states: “thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.”⁷⁸ For the Lutheran clergy, the literal interpretation of the Bible was key in moral affairs and religious matters. This reliance

⁷² Johansen disagreed with this because demonology was not listed as a stand-alone course in the three surviving course catalogues from the University of Copenhagen before 1620. Johansen, *Da djævelen var ude...*, 148.

⁷³ Alm, *Statens rolle*, 146.

⁷⁴ Holger Fr. Rørdam (ed), *Danske Kirkelove: samt Udvalg af andre Bestemmelser vedrørende Kirken, Skolen og de Fattiges Forsørgelse fra Reformationen indtil Christian V's Danske Lov, 1536–1683* vol. 2. (København: Selskab for Danmarks Kirkehistorie, 1886), 203.; *Ibid*, vol 3., 173–175.

⁷⁵ Ingebjørg Aamlid Dalen, “The education of the Clergy in Northern Norway,” in *The Protracted Reformation in Northern Norway* vol. 2.: *Towards a Protestant north*, ed. Sigrun Høgetveit Berg *et al.* (Hannover: Wehrhahn, 2016), 88, 90.

⁷⁶ Erikssøn addressed Hemmingsen as his dear schoolmaster who on several occasions had explained the Bible to him. Jørgen Erikssøn, *Om Menniskens udkaarelse til Salighed/ oc det euige lifff/ oc om Guds store Barmhertighed med alle syndere som omvende sig til GUD [...]* (København: Matz Bingaard, 1572), 5.

⁷⁷ Peder Palladius trans. *Biblia, Det er den gantske Hellige Scrifft, vdsæt paa Danske* (København: Ludowich Dietz, 1550). See for example: Exodus 22:18, Deuteronomy 18:10–12, Samuel 15:23, Isaiah 47:12–15, Revelations 21:8.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, Exodus 22:18 – “dw skal icke lade Troldkoner leffue.”

on the Bible intensified under the period of Lutheran Orthodoxy in the seventeenth century.⁷⁹ A thorough elaboration of the development of demonology and the understanding of witchcraft in the Middle Ages is outside the scope of this dissertation, but a brief summary will be provided here.

The protestant demonologists of the sixteenth and seventeenth century adopted much of the medieval scientific study of demonology. Demonological thinking before and after the Reformation can be separated into two overarching discursive interpretations. One was the sceptical understanding based on the canonical law *canon Episcopi*, which argued that witchcraft was an illusion brought on by the Devil, and those who believed these illusions to be true were committing spiritual apostasy. Effectively, the sceptical tradition questioned the reality of witchcraft.⁸⁰ The other main understanding can be labelled the diabolical understanding and was part of the demonology that developed in the late middle ages. The diabolical understanding argued that witchcraft was real and connected to the Devil, magic and witchcraft was then interpreted as wholly evil and contingent on an interaction with the Devil. This was the view which participated in demonizing popular religious rituals and other practices of popular culture. This view was perhaps most famously articulated in Heinrich Kramer's *Malleus Maleficarum* (1486), which argued that no expense or method of interrogation should be spared when prosecuting a witch.⁸¹ Both these interpretations were evident among the first generations of Danish theologians following the reformation, but it was the diabolical understanding that would eventually attain hegemony among the theologians in Denmark-Norway.

⁷⁹ Nils Gilje and Tarald Rasmussen, *Norsk idéhistorie: Tankeliv i den Lutherske stat* vol. 2. (Oslo: Aschehoug, 2002), 70–72.; Tyge Krogh has demonstrated how proponents of Lutheran Orthodoxy maintained their dominant position in Denmark-Norway as royal advisors until the early eighteenth century. – Tyge Krogh, “The rise and fall of Religious crimes and Punishments,” in *Cultural histories of Crime in Denmark, 1500 to 2000*, ed. Tyge Krogh *et al.* (London: Routledge, 2017), 45–48.

⁸⁰ Morten Skovsted, *De danske Troldomsprocessers ophør* (Aalborg: unpublished *speciale*, 1995), 2.; An English translation of the *Canon Episcopi* can be found in – Alan Charles Kors and Edward Peters, *Witchcraft in Europe 400–1700: A documentary history*, second ed. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 60–63.

⁸¹ Hans Peter Broedel, *The Malleus Maleficarum and the construction of witchcraft: Theology and Popular Belief* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 3–8, 34, 53–54.; Rune Blix Hagen, “Onde kvinner som gjør menn glatte i skrittet: *Malleus Maleficarum* – Verdens mest ekstreme bokutgivelse,” *Fortid: Historiestudentenes tidsskrift* 3 (2010): 18–25.

2.2. The providentialist and diabolical interpretation of witchcraft in Denmark-Norway.

The diabolical understanding of witchcraft and magic did not really become dominant in Denmark-Norway until the early seventeenth century, and several theologians had views that can be interpreted as being supportive of parts of the sceptical tradition. The newer demonology focused on the reality of witchcraft and the demonization of popular rituals. This process took place through a focus on the relationship between the Devil and the physical reality of witchcraft and magic. This demonization affected people who considered themselves to be good Christians as they practiced benevolent magic and Catholic rituals. From a normative viewpoint, it was the local clergymen that were meant to enforce the ideas of the theologians on their parishioners, as they acted in their uneasy role as intermediators between elite and popular culture.⁸² Alongside the diabolical development there were elements of the sceptical understanding. The sceptical approach to witchcraft included several elements of criticism towards the judicial and spiritual foundations of witchcraft and magic as a crime.⁸³ The views presented by the sceptical tradition played an important part in developing the witchcraft discourse after the Reformation, and would eventually play part in ending the witchcraft prosecutions.

From the sceptical tradition it was the Württemberg reformer Johann Brenz (1499–1570) who had the largest influence on the theologians in Denmark-Norway, although this influence was limited. Brenz was representative of a larger trend, where preachers downplayed the perceived threat of witchcraft, in order to calm down the common masses. This was necessary because local communities often began looking for witches whom they could blame after local disasters such as fires and floods.⁸⁴ Brenz based his argument in biblical scripture, especially the book

⁸² Peter Burke, *Popular culture in Early Modern Europe*, third ed. (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 322–323.; C. Scott Dixon and Luise Schorn-Schütte, “Introduction: The Protestant clergy of Early Modern Europe,” in *The Protestant clergy of Early Modern Europe*, ed. C. Scott Dixon and Luise Schorn-Schütte (Abingdon: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 33.

⁸³ One famous sceptic was Balthasar Bekker who argued against the belief in sorcery and demonic possession. Balthasar Bekker, *The World bewitch'd or, An examination of the common opinions concerning spirits their nature, power, administration and operations* (London: R. Baldwin, 1695).; Clark, *Thinking with demons*, 182–184, 192–193, 205–208, 445–6, 564.

⁸⁴ Johann Brenz, “On Hailstorms,” [1558] translated by Erik Midelfort, in *Transition and Revolution: Problems and issues of European Renaissance and Reformation history*, ed. Robert Kingdon (Minneapolis: Burgess, 1974), 213–219.; Concerning the link between the destruction of foodstuffs and witchcraft prosecutions see – Wolfgang

of Job.⁸⁵ Erik Midelfort traced this argument back to a sermon Brenz gave on a series of hailstorms that had severely damaged the crops in Württemberg.⁸⁶ Utilising both scientific and theological explanations, Brenz emphasised that even if every single perceived witch was to be burnt, hail would still continue to fall and ruin the crops, because it originated with God. Brenz argued that even if the Devil could create hail and destruction, he would not be able to do so unless God allowed it, as both negative and positive parts of life originated from God's will. According to Brenz the only way to ease God's punishment for humanity's sin was to live pious lives, freed from sin to the greatest extent possible.⁸⁷ Nevertheless, Brenz believed that witches should be punished if it was possible to prove a completed attempt at manipulating the weather, as the persons intentions had been evil.⁸⁸ The ideas expressed by Brenz are referred to as providentialist as they argue for divine providence in earthly affairs.

Within the Scandinavian research concerning the historical witchcraft prosecutions, the providentialist view has been used most effectively by Jens Christian V. Johansen. Johansen argued that providentialism was one of the key factors in the decline and end of the Danish witchcraft trials.⁸⁹ Johansen argued that the parish priests became convinced by providentialism, this made the clergy stop reporting people who were rumoured to know witchcraft to the authorities.⁹⁰ Eventually the clergy managed to convince their congregations to not blame others for disasters and misery. The providentialist view combined with stricter regulations from secular authorities concerning proper evidence and judicial proceedings, which resulted in the end of the witchcraft prosecutions in Denmark according to Johansen. Such a change in the clergy's praxis would have happened despite of the clear formulation of

Behringer, "Weather, Hunger and Fear: Origins of the European Witch-Hunts in climate, society and mentality," *German History* 13 (1995): 1–27.

⁸⁵ Especially the quote: "[...] the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD." Palladius trans, *Biblia*, Job 1:21.

⁸⁶ Midelfort, *Witch-Hunting*, 37.

⁸⁷ Brenz, "On Hailstorms," 213–218.

⁸⁸ Brenz expressed this view in correspondence with Johann Weyer who strongly opposed the witchcraft prosecutions. See - Erik Midelfort trans. "Johann Weyer correspondence with Johann Brenz from *De Praestigiis Daemonum*," in *Transition and Revolution: Problems and issues of European Renaissance and Reformation History*, ed. Robert M. Kingdon, (Minneapolis: Burgess, 1974), 225.

⁸⁹ Johansen, *Da Djævelen var ude...*, 139–157.; Jens Christian V. Johansen, "Witchcraft, sin and repentance: The decline of Danish witchcraft trials," *Acta Ethnographica Hungarica* 37 (1991/92): 414–423.; Jens Christian V. Johansen, "Hekse og troldfolk," in *Danmark og Rænessancen 1500–1650*, ed. Carsten Bach-Nielsen *et al.* (København: Gads, 2006), 325. The theory will be elaborated in sub-chapter 5.1. on pp. 90–92.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

the 1617 witchcraft ordinance, which explicitly stated that it was the responsibility of: “[...] all men in our service [...] such as *bishops, deacons, priests*, mayors, councillors, bailiffs, and all others [...] to report, accuse and punish, as long as they themselves do not wish to stand to justice, as the conspirators of such people [witches].”⁹¹

Brenz’s ideas concerning penance and pious introspection as a response to disasters influenced some Danish-Norwegian theologians. The *superintendent* of Stavanger, Jørgen Erikssøn, although very critical towards witchcraft, argued in favour of penance as a response to disasters in general.⁹² Niels Hemmingsen argued in his *Historia Domini Ihesu Christi* (1562) that the Devil’s powers came from God.⁹³ Hemmingsen also showed providentialist inclinations in his argument, that any and all opposition and misery in life came from God.⁹⁴ Both Erikssøn and Hemmingsen agreed with Brenz that those who completed magical rituals should be executed for their spiritual offence.⁹⁵

Within the diabolical discourse both Protestants and Catholics agreed that *maleficium* was derived from the Devil and should therefore be punished with the death sentence. The main difference between the two confessions was their interpretation concerning the origins of benevolent magic. Catholic theologians were also primarily against this practice, as it often created a hybrid of Church rituals mixed with folkloristic rituals. For the Protestant clergy these rituals were even more blasphemous, as benevolent magic not only often contained remnants of the Catholic confession, but the Lutheran theologians also argued that those who practiced

⁹¹ My translation and emphasis. Secher, *Corpus Constitutionum*, 516–518.

⁹² Jørgen Erikssøn, *Jonah Prophetis skiøne historia udi 24 predicken begrepen [...]* (København: Hans Stockelman, 1592), 163a. My translation. “[...]Therefore he [God] often due to his justified sentence and paternal heart, punish humanity with physical harm and plague, so that they can be driven towards a true penance and return to God, by whom they have been disciplined and admonished for the sake of their benefit and salvation.” Concerning who Erikssøn’s theology was influenced by – John Elliot Quam, *Jørgen Erikssøn. A study in the Norwegian Reformation 1571–1604* (Yale University: PhD dissertation, 1968), 89–96, 101.; Olav Hagesæther, *Norsk Preken: Fra Reformasjonen til omlag 1820 – En undersøkelse av prekenteori og forkynnelse* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1973), 38–40.

⁹³ The sections on witchcraft were translated into Danish as - Niels Hemmingsen, *En undervisning aff den Hellige scrift [...]* trans. from Latin by Rasmus Hansen (København: N.P., 1618), 2b.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 2b–3a. My translation. “[...] such as when God inflicts them or their cattle with sickness or exhaustion and it lasts for a while, then they go straight to the diviners to receive divination, whom with their foolishness tell them if they have been bewitched or not.”

⁹⁵ Erikssøn, *Jonah Prophetis skiøne historia*, 48a. My translation: “[...] and those who are so spellbound and blinded by him [the Devil] that they believe that they can do what Satan does with God’s permission, should not be allowed to live by the secular government under the law of God, especially when they openly and truthfully are convinced they are such people [witches].

benevolent magic had entered an implicit pact with the Devil. In the Finnmark trials such a mixture is perhaps most evident in the trial against Anders Poulsen in 1692, as he mixed Christian elements such as the holy trinity with elements from the polytheistic Sámi religion.⁹⁶ It was the interpretation of all magical practices as diabolical that achieved hegemony among the theologians in Denmark-Norway. The core argument of the diabolical discourse was that although the power might come from God, the necessary contact with the Devil that the witches experienced implicitly or explicitly made witchcraft a grave sin.

2.3. The Lutheran orthodox clergy and the diabolical concept of witchcraft.

Although parts of the sceptical tradition managed to influence some prominent theologians in Denmark-Norway, the theologians chose to interact with and conform to the diabolical discourse. A major influence in this regard seems to have been Martin Luther who based on the turmoil of the sixteenth century developed an almost manichean world-view which spread amongst the clergy.⁹⁷ This dualist understanding of a perceived fight between good and evil forces, fostered an apocalyptic mindset, where the apocalypse seemed to be rapidly approaching.⁹⁸ This mentality participated in the demonization of benevolent magic, which was consequently bound up to the diabolical aspects in the Lutheran understanding of witchcraft. The people who practiced benevolent magic and those accused of practicing *maleficium*, were repeatedly condemned by the Lutheran theologians throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth century. Peder Palladius (1503–1560) was the first *superintendent* of Zealand after the Reformation, he condemned practitioners of benevolent magic, and Catholicism which he argued had implicitly allowed the existence of witchcraft and benevolent magic.⁹⁹ Palladius received support from Hans Tausen (1494–1561) another important *superintendent* in Ribe, who noted that “God has forbidden us to seek help or advice from diviners and witches.”¹⁰⁰ Tausen argued that those who sought out help from practitioners of benevolent magic were

⁹⁶ Willumsen, *Witchcraft trials*, 377–392.

⁹⁷ Sigrid Brauner, “Martin Luther on Witchcraft: A true reformer?” in *The politics of Gender in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Jean R. Brink *et al.* (Kirksville: Sixteenth century journal, 1989), 41–42.

⁹⁸ Kallestrup has shown that the fear of the Devil declined quite quickly, as she found no tendencies of the same level of fear among theologians such as Hemmingsen. Kallestrup, *Pagt med Djævelen*, 71.

⁹⁹ Lis Jacobsen, *Peder Palladius danske skrifter* (København: S. S. Thieles bogtrykkeri, 1925), 110. My translation: “You must not be silent concerning a witch, they will receive their just pay, they can no longer hide in this clear day of the gospel, they will be shamed by the world and that is what they deserve.”

¹⁰⁰ My translation. Holger Fr. Rørdam (ed), *Smaaskrifter af Hans Tausen, udg. For det Kongelige danske selskab for fædrelandets historie og sprog* (København: Thieles bogtrykkeri, 1870), 254.

committing blasphemy and risked losing their salvation. Tausen was one of the few Lutheran *superintendents* who did not believe in the efficiency of benevolent magic, he only believed that witchcraft had an effect.¹⁰¹

Benevolent magic was one of the key concerns for the Lutheran and Lutheran orthodox clergymen when it came to witchcraft. Palladius noted in his visitation protocol: “She is with the Devil; she receives him with her signs, so will you, if you allow yourself or your cattle to receive her signs. It could be that your cow seems healthier, but your soul will be sentenced to eternal damnation with those signs.”¹⁰² This quote by Palladius is representative of the Lutheran theologians’ argument that by using various rituals offered by practitioners of benevolent magic, one risked the eternal damnation of one’s soul. They believed that the power of the practitioner of benevolent magic, did not come from God, indeed, it came from her signs, or other symbols and words conjured up by the practitioner. Hemmingsen would later go on to explain the inherent blasphemy in these signs and symbols, arguing that they could only have an effect through a pact with the Devil.¹⁰³ For the authorities, rituals and objects associated with benevolent magic was concrete evidence which could be used in court to accuse someone for having entered a pact with the Devil. This was a rarity, for many jurists and demonologists, witchcraft was a *crimen exceptum* precisely because of the difficulty of finding physical evidence.

By attributing power to these words, or rituals, the witch believed that there was a source of power other than God, or she dealt implicitly or explicitly with the Devil. This resulted in a breach of the first commandment “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”¹⁰⁴ The court records from Finnmark show that the practitioners of benevolent magic often had a frequently close connection to older hybrid rituals containing Catholic elements. The practitioner operated under the belief that rituals such as doing the sign of the cross, prayers to saints, saying the name of saints over texts, bones and various other items gave them special powers and

¹⁰¹ Torben Brink, “Niels Hemmingsens forståelse af trolddom – En nyvurdering,” *Fortid og Nutid* 2 (1993): 123.

¹⁰² My trans. Jacobsen, *Palladius danske skrifter*, 110.

¹⁰³ Louise Nyholm Kallestrup, *Agents of witchcraft in Early Modern Italy and Denmark* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 38–39.; Hemmingsen, *En Undervisning*, 16a.

¹⁰⁴ Palladius trans, *Biblia*, Exodus 22:3.

abilities.¹⁰⁵ From a Lutheran point of view these rituals frequently breached the second commandment, “thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain.”¹⁰⁶ As benevolent magic in practice frequently broke with two biblical commandments, any possible effect could not come from God directly. The theologians argued that the power had to come from God through the Devil, this made the use of benevolent magic for both practitioner and client into an implicit pact with the Devil. According to the theologians, both those that practiced benevolent magic and those who practiced *maleficium* desecrated the faith and posed a threat to their communities, which should be punished with the death sentence.¹⁰⁷ The reason for this extensive focus on benevolent magic was caused by its continued usage among common people and even some elites, as they saw little harm in the practice, only the potential benefit.

Throughout the period, the theologians in Denmark-Norway read literature that promoted both the sceptical understanding and the diabolical understanding of witchcraft.¹⁰⁸ Evidently, a conscious choice was made to represent a discourse that had a clear diabolical understanding of benevolent magic which also continuously attacked Catholicism and its remnants. By focusing intently on the relationship between benevolent magic, witchcraft, and Catholicism, the theologians were able to dehumanise their confessional adversaries through text and print.¹⁰⁹ The Lutheran orthodox theologians disseminated a very specific discourse concerning what benevolent magic and *maleficium* was meant to be. Even among those theologians where one

¹⁰⁵ Torben Brink, *Den teologiske forståelsen av trolldom i Danmark indtil midten af det 17. århundrede* (Århus: unpublished manuscript, 1992), 22.; E.g. Marite Nielsdatter’s trial in Vadsø in 1690, she was sentenced to spiritual guidance after being accused of divination, she had used a string with a key in one end, and a book in the other, while she swore on the saints Peder [Peter] and Poul [Paul]. Willumsen, *Witchcraft trials*, 370–373.

¹⁰⁶ Palladius trans, *Biblia*, Exodus 22:7.

¹⁰⁷ Hemmingsen, *En undervisning*, 32a–32b. It should also be noted that some of the theologians such as Erikssøn and Hemmingsen were sceptical to trusting rumours in cases of witchcraft. Erikssøn, *Jonah Prophetis skjøna historia*, 48a. My translation. “[...] one should be careful of trusting a rumour or story [...] [so that no one] against the fifth commandment is sentenced to the fire.” Erikssøn’s argument was that if one trusted a rumour and ended up executing someone who was innocent, the authorities would have had conducted a murder which was a breach of the fifth commandment.

¹⁰⁸ Niels Hemmingsen recommended his readers to read Ludwig Milichius’ *Der Zauber-Teuffel* (1563) a book with a diabolical interpretation. He also recommended them to read Johann Weyer’s *De Praestigiis Daemonum* (1536) which stated that witchcraft was not a real phenomenon but rather the stories of melancholy people in need of help. Hemmingsen, *En undervisning*, 6a.; Gerhild Schols Williams, “Demonologies,” in *The Oxford handbook of witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America*, ed. Brian P. Levack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 76.

¹⁰⁹ E.g. the text by Jesper Brochmand who was one of the professors of theology in Copenhagen, superintendent of Zealand, and a demonologist. Jesper Brochmand, *Gudelig Underviisning: om et Guds Barn, uden sin Sielis største skade og Saligheds fordærvelse kan antage den Papistiske Religion [...]* (København: Georgio Hantzsch, 1627). It is also evident in popular print, see Appendix A for a print issued in Denmark in 1581 of a Catholic Jesuit depicted as the devil attacking a protestant couple in the night. The print was originally published in Germany.

finds traces of providentialism, the diabolical arguments were central. This diabolical understanding became completely dominant after Hemmingsen was dismissed from the University of Copenhagen on suspicions of crypto-Calvinism in 1579.¹¹⁰ Although he had providentialist tendencies, Hemmingsen had also supported the diabolical interpretation and participated in establishing it as the official ecclesiastical understanding of witchcraft. After the establishment of a dominant discourse within the theological milieu it was necessary to spread this understanding through the institutions of the state. Through their influence in secular circles, and as state officials, the theologians could influence and shape the legislation concerned with witchcraft. As Kallestrup has argued, the clergy were able to construct the crime of witchcraft within the Danish-Norwegian penal legislation.¹¹¹

2.4. The diabolical understanding of witchcraft and the penal legislation.

Through their writings several theologians used the diabolical understanding of witchcraft to create the burden of responsibility for the state. After the Reformation the monarch was seen as God's representative on earth. The theologians therefore argued that the secular authorities had a responsibility when it came to prosecuting witches, not only because they were earthly rulers, but because a failure to prosecute spiritual evil would go against the law of God.¹¹² This can be seen in Jørgen Eriksson's petition to king Frederick II, which resulted in an ordinance that made benevolent magic equal to *maleficium*, and thereby punishable by death in Norway. Eriksson had complained to the king about the usage of benevolent magic and remnant Catholic practices around Stavanger. Frederick II's response was to issue an ordinance which went into effect in Stavanger and Bergen in 1584. The ordinance fell within the diabolical understanding of witchcraft as it stated: "[...] In Bergen and Stavanger there is a large amount of unchristian association with the misuse of God's name among people who in their sickness seek out unchristian and by God's sacred words, forbidden remedies [...] with witchcraft [...] those who perform such unchristian deeds shall be sentenced to death."¹¹³ The ordinance was made

¹¹⁰ Thorkild Lyby and Ole Peter Grell, "The consolidation of Lutheranism in Denmark and Norway," in *The Scandinavian Reformation: From Evangelical Movement to Institutionalisation of reform*, ed. Ole Peter Grell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 121.

¹¹¹ Kallestrup, "When hell became too small," 20–21.

¹¹² E.g. Eriksson, *Jonah Prophetis skjøne historia*, 48a. "[...] Should not be allowed to live by the secular elites under the law of God."

¹¹³ My translation. Otto Gr. Lundh, *Norske Rigs-Registrarer tildeels i uddrag 1579–1588* vol. 2.2. (Christiania: Brøgger & Christie's, 1863), 571–572.

effective for all of Norway in 1593.¹¹⁴ Another royal letter which regulated magical practices among the Sámi in Northern-Norway was issued in 1609, the letter stated that any Sámi who practiced magic was to be executed. The royal letter of 1609 was part of an elaborate program of controlling the Sámi after a period of economic and political conflicts in the north.¹¹⁵

The witchcraft ordinance of 1617 must be understood as one of the peaks of ecclesiastical influence on penal legislation. The ordinance was issued as part of the celebration of the 100-year-jubilee of Luther's theses in 1517. This jubilee almost coincided with the election of the Lutheran orthodox Hans Poulsen Resen (1561–1638) as *superintendent* of Zealand in 1615. After Resen's election the philippists that followed Hemmingsen's and Melancton's teachings lost influence in Denmark, and Lutheran Orthodoxy established complete dogmatic control.¹¹⁶ It was Resen's committee that announced three ordinances in 1617, one concerned with expenditures at funerals and weddings, another concerned with adultery, and the final ordinance dealt with witchcraft and contained a definition of witchcraft that was clearly based on a theological understanding of the crime.¹¹⁷ The 1617 ordinance demonstrated a clear diabolical understanding of witchcraft: "[...] real witches are those who have bound themselves to the Devil or associate with him."¹¹⁸ Through this definition, the pact or association with the Devil became the central element concerning a legal definition of witchcraft. The law is blatantly clear, if a pact or association could not be proven, then it was not a matter of witchcraft. This formulation would result in gross miscarriages of justice in Finnmark, as various tactics such as illegal torture, denunciations, and the water ordeal were used in order to make the accused confess to attending sabbaths and entering pacts with the Devil. Concerning benevolent magic, the ordinance was rather 'mild' compared to the 1584/93 ordinance which it replaced. The new ordinance ordered that those found guilty of benevolent magic, should be sentenced to leave the country and pay a hefty fine.¹¹⁹ Although the witchcraft ordinance was one of the peaks of

¹¹⁴ Otto Gr. Lundh and Ernst Sars, *Norske Rigs-Registrarer: Tildeels i uddrag 1588–1602* vol. 3. (Christiania: Brøgger & Christie's, 1865), 302–303. The ordinance did not go into effect in Denmark.

¹¹⁵ Lundh, *Norske Rigs-Registrarer*, vol. 4., 296–300.; Ellen Alm, "Kriminalisering av samisk trolldom i 1609 et militærpolitisk tiltak," *Ottar* 5 (2012): 3–11.

¹¹⁶ Per Ingesman, "Fromhed styrker rigerne," in *Danmark og renæssancen 1500–1650*, ed. Carsten Bach-Nielsen *et al.* (København: Gads, 2006), 140. The *superintendent* of Zealand was the *primas* of the Church in Denmark-Norway.

¹¹⁷ Rune Blix Hagen, "1617 forordningen mot trolldom og dens betydning for hekseforfølgelsen i Finnmark," *Ottar* 4 (2017): 21.

¹¹⁸ My translation. Secher, *Corpus Constitutionum*, 516–518.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

ecclesiastical influence, it also demonstrates the limitations of the clergy's influence. The authorities did not share the view of the theologians that benevolent magic by itself was immediately deserving of the death penalty. Although the theologians enjoyed a great level of influence, they were subjugated to the will of the monarch, subsumed into the apparatus of the state, and there existed clear ramifications for the extent of their influence. Although their ideas made it into the penal legislation, they were limited by the monarch as the authorities were unwilling to take such an aggressive stance towards benevolent magic. Clearly, the ideas of the theologians were not representative of all elites, and definitely not for all of society.

After witchcraft had been defined within a diabolical discourse in both the theological milieu and the penal legislation, it had to be disseminated among the representatives of the state, that is the clergy and other officials at both local and regional levels. The dissemination of information at this level, continued primarily through the theologians at the University of Copenhagen as well as the penal legislation. All aspiring clergymen were technically required to attend the university under the ordinances of 1569 and 1629, and under the 1617 witchcraft ordinance they had to prosecute people who were rumoured to practice magic. As will be elaborated in a later chapter, there was a difference between this normative regulation and praxis in Finnmark. Nevertheless, many state officials attended the university and brought demonological ideas back to areas of relevance to the prosecutions in Finnmark. The theologian and demonologist who educated several relevant people in this regard was Jesper Brochmand (1585–1652). Brochmand was one of the most central Danish theologians of the seventeenth century, and he introduced several new elements concerning the diabolical interpretation of witchcraft to Denmark–Norway.¹²⁰ He was the *superintendent* of Zealand from 1638 and he also replaced the theological dogma of Melancthon with his own at the University of Copenhagen. His *magnum opus* the *Systematis Universæ Theologiæ* (1633) became the authoritative text for aspiring clergymen for more than one-hundred years, due to its frequent quotations and re-prints in other works.¹²¹

¹²⁰ Brochmand was the first to introduce diabolic concepts such as: the reality of the witches' flight, transfiguration, and the witches sabbath. Kallestrup, *Pagt med djævelen*, 83.

¹²¹ Oluf Kolsrud, *Presteutdanning i Noreg*, ed. Kristen Valkner (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1962), 152–153.

Brochmand educated two people who are relevant for the trial in Finnmark. The first was the *superintendent* of Trondheim, Erik Eriksen Pontoppidan (1616–1678) who had lodged with Brochmand in Copenhagen.¹²² In his position as *superintendent* of Trondheim, Pontoppidan was the person responsible for the ecclesiastical situation in Finnmark. Pontoppidan also participated in the witchcraft trial against Finn-Kirsten in Trondheim in 1674, when he approved the district governor's request to use torture on Finn-Kirsten.¹²³ Brochmand also taught Jørgen Friis who lived in Finnmark as district governor from 1651–1654, and during his time in the region Friis involved himself in multiple witchcraft trials.¹²⁴ Brochmand is but one example of how the theologians through their state offices, were able to make sure that the established diabolical understanding of witchcraft was disseminated into the elite parts of society.

2.5. The diabolical hegemony and Finnmark.

The seventeenth century experienced a slow process of establishing intellectual hegemony for the diabolical interpretation of witchcraft among the elite strata of society in Denmark–Norway. However, the ideas concerning benevolent magic failed to manifest to the same extent amongst both elite and commoners. The Lutheran Orthodox diabolical interpretation first achieved dominance in the theological milieu, by undermining the arguments for penance and other aspects of the critical tradition. Some theologians had inclinations towards a providentialist interpretation, but they wanted the death sentence for accused witches and emphasised the link with the Devil. Because the Lutheran orthodox clergy were already part of the state, they were already in an ideal position for organising themselves through the state.¹²⁵ The influence of the theologians is evident in the wording of the orders and ordinances issued against witchcraft in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, such as the 1584/93 ordinance, and the 1617 ordinance with its clear diabolical definition. Through the confessionalization process the monarchs

¹²² Ellen Alm, *Trondheims siste heksebrenning: Trolldomsprosessene mot Finn-Kirsten* (Trondheim: Museumsforlaget, 2014), 73. Although he was involved in the trial against Finn-Kirsten in Trondheim, there exists no evidence that Pontoppidan involved himself in the witchcraft prosecutions in Finnmark.

¹²³ *Ibid*, 78.

¹²⁴ Hagen, *Porten til helvete*, 168.

¹²⁵ In this regard I agree with Ingesman's argument that neither a 'the Church' nor a state-church existed in Denmark-Norway after 1536/37. The direct control of the monarch and the loss of almost all privilege for the Church during the Reformation, makes it more correct to talk about the public practice of the Christian religion based on the *Confessio Augustana* that the monarch was ultimately responsible for. Per Ingesman, "Reformation and Confessionalisation," 31–36.

continuously tried to regulate moral behaviour as they attempted to create a homogenous Lutheran state.¹²⁶ The wish and attempts of the theologians to eradicate the perceived enemies of the state, suited the agenda of the state and was supported by the monarch and his council of the realm. The structure of the developing state therefore acted as strategic terrain for the implementation of the hegemonic interpretation of witchcraft and magic.¹²⁷

It should be emphasised that for common people benevolent magic remained something positive, that was gainful rather than diabolic, and witchcraft for the commoners was connected to *maleficium* rather than the Devil. Although Willumsen's research on Finnmark has found that the common people incorporated the diabolical Devil to some extent in their understanding of witchcraft after 1650.¹²⁸ Through the implementation of a diabolical concept of witchcraft in the penal codes, normative regulation provided the definition of a witch. In this regard, it is beneficial to utilize Jonathan Joseph's distinction that the real hegemonic process is not simply the dominance of a group over the other, in this context, the hegemonic process was based on the dominant groups ability to create a hegemonic interpretation of witchcraft, which they could spread through state institutions. This was what the Lutheran orthodox theologians did with their diabolical understanding of witchcraft, when they managed to implement it in the penal codes. The hegemonic process must also be understood based on the relations between groups and structures, in this regard, the clergy and the state.¹²⁹ It can be problematised that the clergymen in Denmark-Norway were already part of the state, and therefore they had limited potential for autonomous action. The importance of the eventual dominance of Lutheran orthodoxy within the theological milieu should therefore be emphasised. Especially as there was an ongoing struggle for influence between philippist and Lutheran orthodox factions in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.¹³⁰ The subsequent interpretation of benevolent magic and witchcraft as diabolical, was based on a continuous engagement with and

¹²⁶ In this dissertation the confessionalisation process is understood as the cooperation between the confessions (Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist) and state after the Reformation to jointly enforce ecclesiastical and social discipline, which through a set of socio-normative regulations made people 'behave' like devoted Christians. See –Ingesman, *Ibid*, 29.

¹²⁷ Jonathan Joseph, "A realist theory of hegemony," *Journal for the theory of social behaviour* 30 (2001): 183.

¹²⁸ Liv Helene Willumsen, "Oral transfer of ideas about witchcraft in seventeenth-century Norway," in *Spoken Words and Social Practice: Orality in Europe (1400–1700)*, ed. Thomas V. Cohen and Lesley K. Twomey (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 82–83.; The diabolical Devil as opposed to the Devil as he sometimes appeared in popular culture where he could be a comedic or even a pitiful character.

¹²⁹ Joseph, "A realist theory of hegemony," 182.

¹³⁰ Bernt T. Oftestad, *et al. Norsk kirkehistorie*, third edition. (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2005), 117.

interpretation of the international discourse. The theological understanding of witchcraft as diabolical gained authority and was sustained by the state through its utilisation in socio-normative legislation. The dissemination of the diabolical interpretation of witchcraft was then spread through state institutions such as the university, judicial courts, and the Church, and the diabolical concept of witchcraft could establish itself as hegemonic among the elite.¹³¹ The Lutheran orthodox theologians, became a successful hegemonic bloc by developing a world view that appealed to other leading groups and institutions in society; as well as to the religious program of the monarch. Through the dissemination of their ideas in both the vernacular and in intellectual debates, the theologians managed to promote their ideas as being in the interest of society as a whole.¹³²

Within the concept of hegemony there is always a latent potential of resistance, as hegemony exists within a sphere of continuous ebb and flow where other interest groups or 'historical blocs' attempt to establish intellectual hegemony for their own understanding of a concept. One could argue that a form of hegemony was established if the people did not actively resist the changes. When this is applied to Finnmark one finds forms of passive resistance, for example four fishermen were fined in Vardø in 1634/35 because they refused to attend the execution of a woman convicted of witchcraft.¹³³ It also remained normal that alleged witches were initially accused of *maleficium* rather than diabolism, so both the common and elite understanding of witchcraft were active at the same time.¹³⁴ Nevertheless, parts of the local population participated in giving impetus to the witchcraft trials on several occasions through networks of co-operators.¹³⁵ In addition, the forced attendance at executions can be analysed in relation to the maintaining of hegemony, as hegemony is primarily based on a cultural understanding of force and consent, its establishment was therefore not dependent on a coercive persuasion of

¹³¹ It should be emphasised that although the hegemonic interpretation influenced the elite, it was not followed by everyone, as hegemony does not equal a monopoly of interpretation. Several nobles and even clergymen in Denmark and Norway continued to practice or pay others for benevolent magical practices. A difference between socio-normative regulation and praxis was evident throughout the period also among the elites at the centre. Alex Wittendorff, "Trolddomsprocessernes ophør i Danmark," (Danish) *Historisk Tidsskrift* 1 (1992): 5.

¹³² T. J. Jackson Lears, "The concept of cultural hegemony: Problems and possibilities," *The American Historical Review* 90 (1985): 571.

¹³³ RA/EA-5023/R/Rb/Rbæ/L0005., 356. The four fishermen were "Osten i Krogen, slodtz Oluff, Christen and Olluff Jonsen."

¹³⁴ Accusation of *maleficium* are for example evident in the trial against Dorette Lauridzdatter in 1657. Willumsen, *Witchcraft trials*, 166–167.

¹³⁵ Rune Blix Hagen, "Troldomsforfølgelsene i Finnmark – Lokaltet, etnisk herkomst og kjønn," *Etter Lemkin: Tidsskrift for studier av folkemord og politisk massevold* 2 (2009): 83.

the populace. Instead, the creation of hegemony was contingent on the tendency of a specific discourse, in this case the diabolical interpretation of magic and witchcraft, to create some form of tangible experience. In the case of the witchcraft prosecutions in Finnmark, this experience was the diabolical elements that increasingly came to dominate the court proceedings and confessions given before execution. Thereby the diabolical interpretation of witchcraft was made readily available to the consciousness of common people. While other elements were ignored or suppressed, such as the traditionally perceived positive aspects of benevolent magic.¹³⁶

One should be careful of labelling this process of establishing hegemony as rapid in Finnmark. Although diabolical ideas concerning witchcraft fused with popular ideas and folklore during the seventeenth century, the popular beliefs concerning witchcraft were not eradicated in Finnmark. Such a survival of the popular interpretation is possible, when one interprets it within Gramsci's emphasis on the various strata within each society.¹³⁷ Within each stratum there existed the potential for a counter-hegemonic bloc, a hegemonic understanding of witchcraft and magic among the elites in Copenhagen did not necessarily reverberate among the various social strata in Finnmark. In Finnmark the diabolical understanding of witchcraft was both supported by some elites, but also opposed through a wide acceptance of the traditional understanding of witchcraft as *maleficium*. This support and resistance towards a hegemonic concept is the reason why the clergy's involvement in the prosecutions must be analysed at the local level. As the clergy operated as interlocutors and existed in the middle of both the hegemonic and counter-hegemonic groupings; meaning that they operated in the sphere of interaction between popular and elite culture. The mixture of the elite's perception of witchcraft and magic as diabolical, and the common people's understanding of *maleficium* as negative, and benevolent magic as positive was therefore possible. This coexistence happened because the formation of intellectual and cultural hegemony does not equal the destruction of popular culture, but rather the enabling of communication along the cultural levels.¹³⁸

¹³⁶ Lears, "The concept of cultural hegemony," 577.

¹³⁷ Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, 23.

¹³⁸ Nadia Urbinati, "The souths of Antonio Gramsci and the concept of Hegemony," in *Italy's Southern Question: Orientalism in one Country*, ed. Jane Schneider (Oxford: Berg, 1998), 142.

Changes in the hegemonic understanding of a concept is perhaps most evident in the rising intensity and subsequent decline and disappearance of a socio-cultural phenomenon such as the witch-hunts. The decline and end of the prosecutions happened despite of the witchcraft ordinance being in effect.¹³⁹ It was the counter-hegemonic sceptical tradition, that eventually undermined the witch-hunts in both a theological and judicial capacity; one need only think of Johansen's argument concerning the providentialist priests.¹⁴⁰

2.6. Chapter summary.

The development of the diabolical interpretation of witchcraft based on the learned science of demonology, took place in the theological milieu in Copenhagen in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. During the seventeenth century, the diabolical interpretation attained hegemony in the theological milieu and was incorporated in the 1617 witchcraft ordinance. This incorporation of a diabolical understanding of witchcraft into the penal legislature was possible, because the wish of the theologians to exterminate all magical practices suited the monarch's agenda of increased moral and social control. From the centre, intellectual concepts were spread through institutionalised education, academic literature, popular print, and state officials, and the witchcraft trials in Finnmark were filled with diabolical moments. Nevertheless, the popular understanding of witchcraft as *maleficium*, and benevolent magic as something positive also survived in Finnmark. Clearly two interpretations of witchcraft coexisted in the region, and the potential for a hybrid understanding that incorporated both is evident. As state officials and interlocutors between elites and commoners, the clergymen were meant to implement the hegemonic understanding of witchcraft presented in the penal legislation, the 1617 ordinance even ordered the clergy to prosecute alleged witches. As there were tendencies of passive resistance towards the hegemonic concept of witchcraft in Finnmark, and differing levels of education among the clergymen in the region, it is necessary to analyse if one can even talk about a group of clergymen with a homogenous interpretation of witchcraft in Finnmark. It is also necessary to explore what authority the clergymen held over their parishioners in order to analyse their potential for a successful dissemination of a diabolical interpretation of witchcraft.

¹³⁹ The 1617/1687 ordinance remained in Norwegian penal legislation until 1842 when it was abolished. Næss, *Trolldomsprosessene i Norge*, 84.

¹⁴⁰ Johansen, *Da djævelen var ude...*, Chapter 9.

Chapter 3. The level of education and the role of the clergy in the localities.

There existed a rather precise understanding within the elite ecclesiastical milieu concerning the nature of witchcraft in Denmark-Norway. These views were nuanced to an extent, but the overarching understanding of witchcraft among the theologians in Denmark-Norway was evidently that witches were the Devil's servants, deserving of the death penalty. These demonological views were elaborated in printed sermons, tracts, books, pamphlets, and other forms of both oral and written dissemination. For those privileged enough to receive education, the most effective way of obtaining this knowledge was the standard conversation and seminar.¹⁴¹ But to what extent did these ideas reach the local clergymen? Printed materials and specialized religious literature were not necessarily easily available in the peripheries, and attending university was expensive. Because institutionalised education has been interpreted as central for the dissemination of a diabolical interpretation of witchcraft, this chapter will shed a light on the level of education among the clergymen in Finnmark. In addition to a focus on educational level, this chapter will also investigate the relationship between the priest and his parishioners, as social relations and tensions were an important factor in the witchcraft prosecutions.

In relation to education, the seventeenth century was a period of reform, and especially the educational criteria required for gaining a state-office became stricter. This is evident through the fact, that the specifications concerning the required education needed for a benefice were changed multiple times in the first half of the century. Mandatory education for clergymen was introduced in 1569, and narrowed even more through various ordinances in 1621, and 1629, before being implemented in king Christian IV's recess of 1643.¹⁴² Out of these three ordinances, the *kirketukts* ordinance from 1629 imposed the strictest criteria for becoming a clergyman. The *kirketukts* ordinance was concerned with ecclesiastical discipline, and it was read aloud at several court sessions in Finnmark during the summer of 1629.¹⁴³ When Christian

¹⁴¹As is evident in the aforementioned dedication by Erikssøn to his dear schoolmaster Hemmingsen. Erikssøn, *Om menniskens Udkaarelse til Salighed*, 5.

¹⁴²Rørdam, *Danske kirkelove*, vol. 2., 205.; Rørdam, *Danske kirkelove*, vol. 3., 173–175.; *Konning Christians dend Fierdis Reces* (København: Jørgen Holste, 1643), Book 1. Chapter, 1. Article 1.; Kolsrud, *Presteutdaningi*, 132.

¹⁴³*Tingbok 1620–1633*, 232.; This ordinance reached Finnmark rather quickly, other primary sources show that the time it took for letters and ordinances to arrive was highly dependent on the travel activities of the scribes and

IV's recess was issued in 1643, the criteria for receiving a clerical benefice were as follows: one had to be male, at least twenty-five years of age, had attended the University of Copenhagen for two or three consecutive years, passed an oral examination given by the *superintendent*, completed a trial phase in a parish after which the parishioners could choose to appoint the aspiring priest, and if the *superintendent* still thought them capable he would appoint the person.¹⁴⁴

The increase in normative regulations in order to become clergy infringed on the communal right of the parishioners to choose their own priest. This was a right the parishioners had had since the Reformation.¹⁴⁵ This system of appointment has been analysed as being part of maintaining good relations between clergyman and parishioners during the early phase of introducing Protestantism to Denmark–Norway, after it was forcefully implemented by king Christian III in 1536–37.¹⁴⁶ The parishioners right to appoint their own priest was weakened under king Christian IV, and under his successors the parishioners lost this right completely. There appears to be some difference of opinion among historians, concerning when the parishioners lost the right to appoint their priest. Valkner argues that the congregation lost the election right in January 1661 with the official establishment of absolute rule, while Nagel argues that they lost this right when Christian V's *Norske lov* was issued in 1687.¹⁴⁷ I disagree with Nagel in this matter, as it is stated in Christian V's *Norske lov* that: “[...] og lader hannem høre af Menigheden [...] og hvis Menigheden da imod hannem noget have billigen at kunde sige, enten paa hans Liv og Levnet, eller paa hans Gaver, maa de det ved Supplication eller Memorial behørige Stæder med Superintendentens og Provstens paaskrift andrage.”¹⁴⁸ It is

other officials who left the region most frequently. There are several examples of correspondence using over a year to arrive. E.g. SATØ, *The archives of the Finnmark district magistrate*, no. 09. Fol. 191b.

¹⁴⁴ Andreas Aarflot, *Norsk Kirkehistorie* vol. 2. (Oslo: Lutherstiftelsen forlag, 1967), 34–36, 39.

¹⁴⁵ Sigrun Høgetveit Berg, “The influence of the Reformation on religious practice in the North,” in *The protracted Reformation in Northern Norway* vol. 2.: *Towards a Protestant North*, ed. Sigrun Høgetveit Berg et al. (Hannover: Wehrhahn, 2016), 24.; Vidar L. Haanes, “Hvad skal da dette blive for prester?” *Presteutdannelsen i spenningsfeltet mellom universitet og kirke, med vekt på modernitetens gjennombrudd i Norge* (Trondheim: Tapir, 1998), 27.

¹⁴⁶ Many of the regional administrators in Norway were ordered to implement the Reformation slowly in order to not cause dismay and revolt amongst the people. Halvor Bergan, *Skriftemål og skriftestol: Skriftemålet i den norske kirke fra reformasjonstiden til i dag* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1982), 73.

¹⁴⁷ Kristen Valkner, *Norges Kirkehistorie ca. 1500–1800* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1959), 41.; Anne Hilde Nagel, “Lutherske Prestefruer,” in *Fra Avlatshandel til folkekirke: Reformasjonen gjennom 500 år*, ed. Eldbjørg Haug (Oslo: Spartacus, 2017), 104.

¹⁴⁸ *Kong Christian den Femtes Norske Lov* (København: Casper Peter Rothe, 1687), Book 2. Chapter 3. Article 3. My translation: “Let the congregation hear him [give a sermon], and if the congregation take offence against his

more correct as argued by Trygve Lysaker, that the increased utilisation of reserving benefices for the succeeding clergyman, restricted the parishioners chances to select their own priest. In effect, the parishioners had the judicial right to influence who would become their next priest, but it became almost practically impossible to put into effect after the reservation of benefices increased around 1670.¹⁴⁹

In the historiography much emphasis has been attributed to the ordinances concerned with the clergy's education. Through this focus, a causal link has been established between centralized education in Copenhagen and dissemination of a diabolical understanding of witchcraft into the peripheries. Ellen Alm argued that centralized education made it possible for both Danish and Norwegian students to acquire demonological knowledge while they were at university.¹⁵⁰ While Øystein Rian, postulated that through a centralisation of education in Denmark, the government made sure that all their officials received the same exposure to the state's agenda. Rian also argued, that this exposure to the states understanding of witchcraft turned the clergy into willing servants who followed a strict diabolical interpretation as endorsed by the theologians in Copenhagen.¹⁵¹ This focus on education and the dissemination of these views in popular and learned print is said to have participated in the introduction of demonological concepts among the parishioners in regional parts of Norway. As a result of this causal link, all sections of the ecclesiastical hierarchy were held responsible for having played a role in the witchcraft prosecutions.¹⁵²

This view goes back to the aforementioned acculturation thesis from the 1980s, where the argument that the Protestant clergy were university educated across the board, helped nurture the concept of a process of acculturation taking place in early modern Europe. Within this theory the clergy was interpreted as a homogenous unit that operated as the state's bulldog,

person or living, or his abilities, they have to use a supplication or memorial with the *superintendent's* and provost's signature."

¹⁴⁹ Lysaker, *Reformasjon og Enevelde*, 181.

¹⁵⁰ Alm, *Statens rolle*, 143. Alm emphasised that the clergy in Norway had a harder time carrying out socio-normative regulation due the geographic size of their parishes.

¹⁵¹ Øystein Rian, "Reformasjonen som katastrofe i norgeshistorien," in *Fra avlatshandel til folkekirke: Reformasjonen gjennom 500 år*, ed. Eldbjørg Haug (Oslo: Spartacus, 2017), 30–31.; Rian, *Den aristokratiske fyrstestaten*, 374–376.

¹⁵² Willumsen, *Ild og Bål*, 255–256.; Hans Eyvind Næss, "Norway: The Criminological context," in *Early Modern European Witchcraft: Centres and peripheries*, ed. Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), 374–375.

willing and wanting to crack down on all forms of non-conformist behaviour.¹⁵³ More recent research concerning the development traits of ‘the protracted reformation’ argue that although the ordinances concerning education were important, their immediate impact have been overestimated in the more peripheral parts of the country.¹⁵⁴ In the seventeenth century, the structural changes needed to educate a larger mass of people at the university level was in a developing stage both abroad and domestic.¹⁵⁵ Sverre Bagge claims that a ‘student explosion,’ began shortly after the Reformation and continued into the seventeenth century.¹⁵⁶ There was indeed an increase in students after the Reformation, but Bagge’s argument seems to be limited by the chronological scope of his article, the real ‘student explosion’ in Denmark-Norway began around 1650, which resulted in a surplus of clergymen in the eighteenth century.¹⁵⁷

This means, that for more than one hundred years after the Reformation, numerous examples can be found of clergymen who had never attended university, especially in the countryside.¹⁵⁸ One example of this practice would be the priest Jørgen Skjelderup in the diocese of Trondheim, on the recommendation of Mentz Christophersen Darre who was the priest in the Nidaros cathedral, he was given two dispensations in 1654.¹⁵⁹ The dispensations were given by both *superintendent* Bredal and the *stiftlensmann* in Trondheim, Skjelderup was under the age of 25 and he had ‘only’ attended what is referred to as *Akademiet* for two years.¹⁶⁰ When the request

¹⁵³ Ian Green criticised this argument already in 1989, he argued that it deprived the individual and groupings of clergy of historical agency and individuality. It also gives no nuance to the clergy’s role within their local communities. Green, “‘Reformed pastors’ and *Bons Curès*,” 261–262, 278.

¹⁵⁴ E.g. Dalen, “The education of clergy in Northern Norway,” 93–96.

¹⁵⁵ Roald Kristiansen, “De lærde prestene i nord,” *Ottar* 4 (2017): 46.

¹⁵⁶ Sverre Bagge, “Nordic students at foreign universities until 1660,” *Scandinavian journal of History* 9 (1984): 18–29.

¹⁵⁷ Gina Dahl, “Geistliges bokkultur 1650–1750: Mangfold eller restriksjon?” in *Reformasjonstidens religiøse bokkultur cirka 1400–1700: Tekst, visualitet og materialitet*, ed. Bente Lavold and John Ødemark (Oslo: Nasjonalbiblioteket, 2017), 47.

¹⁵⁸ Thomas Kaufmann, “The clergy and the theological culture of the age: The education of Lutheran pastors in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries,” in *The Protestant Clergy of Early Modern Europe*, ed. C. Scott Dixon and Luise Schorn-Schütte (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 125.

¹⁵⁹ Lysaker, *Reformasjon og Enevelde*, 138. The *Stiftlensmann* was a leading royal official responsible for the secular side of ecclesiastical administration, especially the economy of/and the estate management within the diocese.

¹⁶⁰ *Akademiet* either refers to the academy for young nobles in Sorø or the cathedral school in Copenhagen, both were prestigious schools. It does *not* refer to the University in Copenhagen as there was a clear differentiation between the various academies and the university in the royal rescripts and ordinances. See: Fredrik A. Wessel Berg, *Register til Rescripter, resolutioner og Collegial-Breve for Norge 1660–1813* (Christiania: Cappelen, 1841), 1.; The foundational letter for “kongelige Adelige Academie udi Soer” was announced in Sørvær 12/05/1624. *Tingbok 1620–1633*, 107.; Holger Fr. Rørdam, *Ny kirkehistoriske samlinger* vol. 2. (København: Selskab for Danmarks kirkehistorie, 1857), 242.

for dispensation was received by the *superintendent*, Skjelderup was already employed as a parish priest within the diocese. *Superintendent* Bredal granted the dispensations because there were so many vacant ecclesiastical positions in Trøndelag and Nordland.¹⁶¹ Appendix B demonstrates that many parishes in Finnmark also had prolonged periods with vacant ecclesiastical positions. Clearly, the practical problems of administrating the geographically largest diocese in Denmark–Norway which covered more than modern day Trøndelag, Nordland, Troms, and Finnmark trumped the idealised legislation written in Copenhagen.

3.1. The educational level of the clergymen in Finnmark.

If the ordinance issued in 1569 requiring a period of university attendance for all aspiring clergymen had been upheld, every single clergyman in Finnmark in the seventeenth century would have had some form of education. This was not the case at all. In fact, the preserved primary sources show that only the minority of the priests in Finnmark were university educated in the seventeenth century. The compilation of clergy in appendix B shows that there were 64 clergymen who were involved with ecclesiastical affairs in Finnmark in the seventeenth century. The compilation includes chaplains, parish priests, and the provosts. The bell ringers have not been added to this compilation for primarily three reasons: they could conduct trade, be on the local jury, and they were often locals.¹⁶² Although the bell ringers were part of the ecclesiastical hierarchy and served specific tasks related to the running of the churches, they often acted outside of the limitations set on the clergy.¹⁶³ Charlotte Appel states that the tax records in Denmark-Norway are usually incomplete as they seldom registered the clergy and the poor.¹⁶⁴ A qualitative reading of the tax records shows that this holds true also for Finnmark, as the clergy were very rarely registered in the tax records. The bell ringers were registered in

¹⁶¹ SATR, *Nidaros Biskop arkiv – ymse protokoller* nr. 1. Fol. 21a–22a. My translation: “[...] As there are so many vacancies in the parishes in Trøndelag and Nordland, when Dr. Petrus Mentzeri received my vocational letter for H. Jørgen Schelderop, I will be obliged to follow the vocational duty of my office.”

¹⁶² In 1655 three bell ringers were registered in Finnmark they all paid full tax: Ingebret Klocker in Kiberg, Jan Klocker in Vardø and Hanns Klocker in Syltevik. – SATØ, *Lensregnskap for Vardøhus* microfilm nr. 521, *np.*; During a visitation in 1649 *superintendent* Bredal and district governor John Cunningham agreed that all working members of the population in Hasvåg were to pay their bell ringer one *pund* (roughly 6 kg) of fish every year. SATØ, *The archives of the Finnmark district magistrate*, Nr. 9. Fol. 008b.

¹⁶³ One of these tasks is made evident in the section on Finnmark in the Thronhjems reformats. The clergy were ordered to teach their bell ringers to sing psalms and songs in the church when the priest was absent. Anne-Marit Hamre, *Thronhjems reformats 1589, Oslo domkapittels jordebok 1595* (Oslo: Kildeskriftfondet, 1983), 92.

¹⁶⁴ Charlotte Appel and Morten Fink-Jensen, *Når det regner på Præsten: En kulturhistorie om sogneprester og sognefolk 1550–1750* (Århus: Hovedland, 2009), 115.

the tax records, this indicates that those who registered and collected the taxes saw a distinction between the bell ringers and the rest of the clergymen.

One of the major differences between the priest and the bell ringer, was that the bell ringers could be part of the jury in the local court cases. In Finnmark the bell ringers Johannis Klocker in Makkaur and Anders Klocher in Kjelvik were periodically local jury members, but the jury cases they appeared on are not out of the ordinary. The one thing that stands out in these trials, is that during a court case in in Kjelvik in 1629, Oluf Jonsen promised to pay Oluf Einersen in various goods, but he also had to give him a hymnal for having fostered a child for some time.¹⁶⁵ The clergy on the other hand were banned from being jury members and the qualitative reading of the court records shows that this was upheld in Finnmark. However, the penal legislation contained loopholes which made it possible to utilise the clergy in court cases, for example the only place the clergy were allowed to share information said in a personal confession, was in a court trial.¹⁶⁶ Such judicial loopholes in combination with the increased autonomy of the regional authorities in Finnmark, opened the door for active participation of clergymen in the witchcraft trials.

In the compilation of the Finnmark clergymen, one finds that out of the total 64 people, only 24 of them had a minimum of cathedral school education and had matriculated at university. However, some precautions must be made, as there is a total of nine clergymen who are addressed as *wellert* or *vellert* in the source materials, in this context this is interpreted as them being well taught and/or knowledgeable. This is further strengthened by the primary evidence demonstrating that six out of these nine had matriculated at university, those six are included in the 24 with confirmed matriculation at university.¹⁶⁷ The remaining three clergymen who are described as “*wellert*” had patronyms for last names. As Dalen points out, if one only knows

¹⁶⁵ *Tingbok 1620–1633*, 225. This is the only time religious literature is mentioned in the court records I have analysed.

¹⁶⁶ *Konning Christians dend Fierdis Reces*, Book 1. Chapter 2. Article 28.; *Christian den femtes Norske Lov*, Book 2. Chapter 5. Article 19.

¹⁶⁷ See appendix B, the six described as “*vellert*” with confirmed institutionalised education: Torben Reiersen, Morten Nilsen Bjerreby, Jacob Albertsen Retz, Søren Lauritsen Lindholm, Moses Sørensen, and Trude Nitter. The three who were “*Vellert / wellert*”: Jens Andersen, Oluff Karlsen, and Hans Pedersen Bang.

the patronym it becomes rather difficult to track them down at an educational institution, due to the large number of patronyms in early modern university matriculation records.¹⁶⁸

The argument that also the remaining three men were educated is further strengthened when one looks at the way the scribe wrote about their ecclesiastical colleagues in the court records. During a court session in Loppa in 1622, the scribe wrote about Jens Andersen the priest in Loppa, and introduced him as “[...] hederlig och vellert mandt her[r] Jens Andersen.”¹⁶⁹ In comparison when the same scribe wrote about his colleagues Christen Nielsen (29/05-1620), Peder Hansen (22/07-1622), Mogens Nilsen (13/04-1624), and Søren Nielsen (5/06-1629) they were not addressed in this way, they only received the honorific title of “H.[err]”.¹⁷⁰ The situation repeats itself later in the century, Jacob Albertsen Retz is addressed as “hederlig och vellerdt” both in 1658 and 1662.¹⁷¹ His colleagues Jens Pedersen, Didrik Hansen, and Daniel Stang were addressed in the normal way of a simple “H.[err]”.¹⁷² As the same scribe wrote down the titles of these individuals, the difference is not caused by the scribe’s writing. The scribe chose to call these men “vellert,” and in that sense they stand out. As six of those who are addressed in this way had an institutionalised education, the use of this term by the scribe highly suggests that also the last three clergymen had some form of institutionalised education. It is however, difficult to draw any conclusive remarks that “vellert” is the equivalent of institutionalised education, as Laurits Nilsen Nyborg was never addressed as “vellert” and he had attended the University of Copenhagen.¹⁷³ Nevertheless, with these abovementioned factors taken into consideration, the remaining three clergymen described as “*wellert*” will be included in the total number of educated clergymen in Finnmark. There were 24 clergymen with confirmed matriculation at university, and the remaining three who were “*wellert*” can be safely assumed to have had some form of institutionalised education. This means that one can

¹⁶⁸ Christian Lange, “Matrikel over norske Studerende ved Rostocks Universitet 1419–1690,” in *Norske Samlinger* vol. 1. (Christiania: Feilberg & Landmark, 1850), 72–94.; Dalen, “The education of clergy in Northern Norway,” 94–95.

¹⁶⁹ *Tingbok 1620–1633*, 82. My translation. “[...] honourable and well-taught man Mr. Jens Andersen.”

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 82, 44, 77, 150.

¹⁷¹ SATØ, *The archives of the Finnmark district magistrate*, no. 09. Fol. 057a–b, 194a–196b.

¹⁷² SATØ, *Ibid*, no. 09. Fol. 022b.; Pedersen (6/07-1655).; *Ibid*, Fol. 004b Hansen (05/07-1654).; *Ibid*, Fol. 070b Stang (5/07/1660).

¹⁷³ SATØ, *Ibid*, no. 09. Fol. 096b.; S. Birket Smith, *Kjøbenhavns Universitets Matrikel 1611–1667* vol. 1. (København: Gyldendal, 1890), 228.

assume that 27 out of a total of 64 clergymen in Finnmark had matriculated at university in the seventeenth century.

Even when including those who are described as “vellert,” less than half of the clergymen in Finnmark had institutionalised education during the seventeenth century. A normal practice for aspiring clergymen in the seventeenth century was to complete a form of apprenticeship with a local parish priest, before being examined by the *superintendent* in order to receive a benefice.¹⁷⁴ Both Dalen and Haanes have found that the traditional examination conducted by the *superintendent* remained a normal route into the ecclesiastical hierarchy, and the low level of institutionalised education among the clergy in Finnmark throughout the seventeenth century supports this claim.¹⁷⁵ The reason this practice of apprenticeship in order to receive a benefice was quietly tolerated, and also accepted by both the central and local authorities, was because of the stiff prices for attending school and university. Institutionalised education remained a privilege for those families who could spare and afford to send their children or relatives to school.¹⁷⁶ When one considers the massive geographical distance between Finnmark and the closest cathedral schools in Trondheim and Bergen; simply getting a child to the town where education was available would have been a costly affair. Attending university for those with a weaker economy became especially difficult after the educational reform of 1621 made it compulsory for those who attended the university in Copenhagen to stay for a minimum of two years. Therefore, it remained quite normal for those with a weaker economy to arrange a form of apprenticeship with their local clergyman in exchange for goods and services.

The sources show that several such apprenticeships took place in Finnmark, one example would be Jon Prest who later became chaplain in Vadsø. As Einar Niemi has shown, Jon Prest appeared in Vadsø in 1614/15, where he remained until around 1625.¹⁷⁷ In 1610 the same “Joenn Prest” was a resident in Vardø, at that time he was registered as a “*dreng*” which meant that he paid half tax.¹⁷⁸ As previously mentioned, the clergy were seldom registered in tax

¹⁷⁴ Kolsrud, *Prestutdanningi*, 108.

¹⁷⁵ Haanes, “*Hvad skal da dette blive for prester?*” 29–31.; Dalen, “The education of the clergy in Northern Norway,” 93–94.

¹⁷⁶ Dixon and Scorn–Schütte, “Introduction,” 11.

¹⁷⁷ Niemi, *Vadsøs Historie*, 208–9.

¹⁷⁸ SATØ, *Lensregnskap for Vardøhus*, microfilm nr. 519., *np*.

registers and Jørgen was the parish priest in Vardø in 1610.¹⁷⁹ Jon having the last name *prest* although he was not the priest, and had yet to become the resident chaplain, likely refers to his affiliation with the priest in Vardø. Simultaneously, both Olluff Prest and Preste Knud were living in Kjelvik, where Hans Mikkelsen was the parish priest in 1610, this too points toward affiliation rather than profession.¹⁸⁰ Both Kjelvik and Vardø were parish churches with subordinate annex churches that could be served by chaplains, this made them ideal parishes for apprentices. I have found no primary sources confirming that Jon Prest had received any form of institutionalised education. Jon's way into the clergy went through a four-year apprenticeship with priest Jørgen in Vardø, before he became the resident chaplain in Vadsø.

This form of apprenticeship could continue under article 20 in king Christian IV's laws concerning the clergy. In the recess of 1643, it was stated that all appointments to the priesthood were conditional until the *superintendent* approved of the candidate after passing the *superintendents* examination.¹⁸¹ As everyone who aspired to become a priest had to pass the examination, irrelevant of their level of education, the authorities were willing to acknowledge the candidature of those who did not have institutionalised education, as long as they had passed the practical requirements within the hierarchical state structure that the Church was part of.¹⁸² One example of this could be priest Bendix who was parish priest in Skjøtningberg in the period between 1627–1631. Bendix presented his letter confirming the reception of his benefice, and it was read aloud and signed by magistrate Niels Jensen at a local court session in 1629.¹⁸³ His parishioners were threatened by the scribe that those who did not follow Bendix's orders would suffer the appropriate consequences; such a warning was in accordance with the Church ordinance of 1537/1539.¹⁸⁴

¹⁷⁹ Sollied, *Prester, prestegjeld*, 38. Jørgen was not registered in the tax record.

¹⁸⁰ SATØ, *Lensregnskap for Vardøhus*, microfilm nr. 519., *np*. Hans Mikkelsen was not registered in the tax record.

¹⁸¹ *Konning Christians dend Fierdis Reces*, Book 1. Chapter 1. Article 20.; Aarflot, *Norsk kirkehistorie*, 35.; Under Christian V's *Norske lov* it became the responsibility of the professors of theology in Copenhagen to grant the priest a testimony, but the students still had to pass the *superintendents* examination. *Kong Christian den Femtes Norske Lov*, Book 2. Chapter 3. Article, 2.

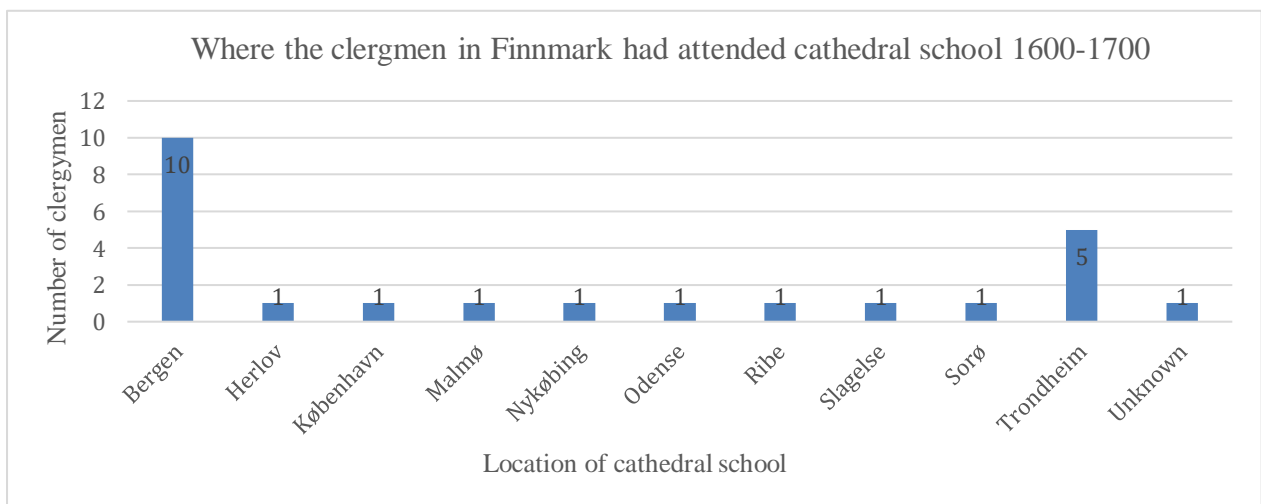
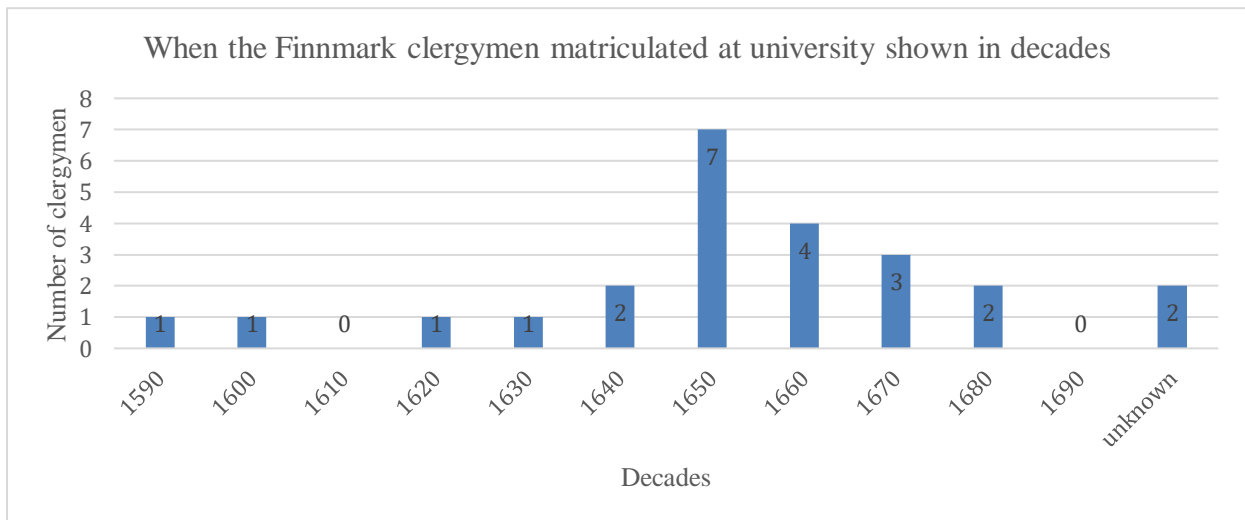
¹⁸² Green, "'Reformed Pastors' and *Bons Curès*," 285.

¹⁸³ *Tingbok 1620–1633*, 234. The source does not state why Bendix had to present his letter of appointment two years after he began working in the parish.

¹⁸⁴ Martin Schwarz Lausten, *Kirkeordinansen 1537/39: Med innledning og noter* (København: Akademisk Forlag, 1989), 192.; I have been unable to confirm that Bendix had any institutionalised education.

3.1.1. Why so few educated priests?

The minority of clergymen in Finnmark were educated, but the graphs demonstrate that the number of clergymen with an institutionalised education began to increase around 1650. In this context, it is important to remember that the last chain-prosecutions in the witchcraft trials in Finnmark happened in 1662–63, although isolated witchcraft trials took place until 1692. This means that by the time most of the educated clergymen in the period arrived in the region, the witchcraft trials were already a dwindling phenomenon. The graphs below do not include the three described as ‘vællert’ as the decade and location of their place of education is unknown. Only the 24 clergymen with confirmed matriculation at university have been included in the graphs:



The level of education among the Finnmark clergymen was lower than what had been prescribed in the ordinances issued in 1621 and 1629. The graphs show that the majority of those who had matriculated at university had attended cathedral school in Norway. There are manifold reasons for this lack of educated Danes in the north and the overall general lack of educated priests. One reason is that the aforementioned ‘student explosion’ only truly began around 1650. In addition, Finnmark’s remoteness combined with its economic and demographic decline in the seventeenth century made it less attractive and luxurious than an urban benefice. Those who had contacts and a higher level of education, used them to land themselves better benefices in less peripheral parts of the country. Nevertheless, some members of elite families worked as clergymen in Finnmark, such as Christian Markussøn Humble the priest in Hammerfest, who had attended the prestigious academy in Sorø and was the son of Markus Christensen Humble the *superintendent* in Stavanger.¹⁸⁵

It seems that the main problem with recruitment, and the reason why many priests left after a short time, was due to the impoverishment of the churches in the region. The churches in Finnmark lacked fortunes and a stable income as they relied on caught fish. Although the churches received gifts and donations from wealthy local elites and their parishioners, they were on several occasions exempted from demands from Copenhagen concerning the collection of money for royal projects, due to their poverty.¹⁸⁶ Periodically the clergy in Finnmark as the rest of the population became impoverished, and struck with hunger during prolonged periods of poor fishing.¹⁸⁷ When Christian IV arrived in Vardø in 1599, the parish priest Claus Christensen, who had been relegated from the university in Copenhagen in his youth, was so

¹⁸⁵ Nagel, “Lutherske prestefruer,” 106. See appendix B, Sorø is located in the Zealand region in Denmark.

¹⁸⁶ E.g. in 1652 the churches in Loppa, Hasvåg, Ingø, Kjølvik, Skjøtningberg, Omgang, and Vardø, were deemed so impoverished that they were exempt from paying the three *riksdaler* the king had demanded from all the churches in the country, in order to help rebuild the cathedral in Trondheim, and the orphanage in Aalborg. SATØ, *The archives of the Finnmark district magistrate*, no. 09. Fol. 074a–075a, 078b, 080b, 081b–082a.; RA/EA, *Danske Kanselli*, 4061/F/ L0058, cupboard 14, pk. 111a, p. 490ff.; Things were a bit better in 1654 as the church in Kiberg was ordered to pay 7/10 of their tithe and the church in Vardø 3/10 of their tithe to the construction of the monarch’s *magisine*. *Ibid*, no. 09. Fol. 015b.

¹⁸⁷ The priest in Kjølvik testified that several people starved to death in the winter of 1630. – *Tingbok 1620–1633*, 279. The fishing was also horrible in 1653, during the worst periods several people starved to death and entire fishing villages were decimated. SATØ, *The archives of the Finnmark district magistrate*, no. 08. Fol. 121b–127a.

impoverished, that the king gave him a yearly allowance of 10 *riksdaler* from Vardøhus castle which his successors also received.¹⁸⁸

The reason for the impoverishment of the clergy goes back to the Middle Ages when the clergy in Finnmark were directly controlled by the archbishop in Nidaros and his specialised stewards.¹⁸⁹ Due to this direct control the region was not split into parishes before the *Throndhjems Reformats* of 1589, which documented 17 churches and 12 clergymen in the region. The *Throndhjems Reformats* explained that the clergy in Finnmark did not receive the clergy's portion of the tithe, as this went directly to the monarch.¹⁹⁰ Instead the clergy in Finnmark entered agreements with their parishioners concerning their yearly salary which was to be paid in *vog* of (usually) dried cod (1 *vog* was roughly 18kg).¹⁹¹ This system created major problems in Finnmark during the seventeenth century as there were prolonged periods of 'black sea' meaning that there was little fish to catch around the coast. A solution to the situation was attempted in 1631 when king Christian IV issued a letter that the clergy were to receive the monarch's 1/3 of the tithe.¹⁹² In addition to the tithe, the clergy were to receive their normal salary paid in *vog* of fish from their parishioners. The issue of salary was a point of contention between priest and parishioners and was frequently brought up at local court sessions. This continued conflict resulted in a state survey carried out by the district governor John Cunningham in 1631, the survey found that among the clergy the priest in Gåsnes had the highest salary.¹⁹³

To increase their sometimes meagre salaries several priests engaged in the *utreder* system. This meant that the priests provided supplies and foodstuffs to local fishermen in exchange for the

¹⁸⁸ Sparboe and Hagen, *Kongens reise til det ytterste nord*, 40, 69.; Niemi, *Vadsø's Historie*, 209. SATØ, *Regnskap over Vardøhus* 1602, microfilm nr. 519 (1590–1619), *np*.

¹⁸⁹ Berg, *Trondenes kannikgjeld*, 193–196.; Lars Ivar Hansen, "'Juxta paganos': The delineation of the religious frontier in the North," in *'Ecclesia Nidrosiensis' and 'Noregs veldi' the role of the Church in the making of Norwegian domination in the Norse world*, ed. Steinar Imsen (Trondheim: Tapir, 2012), 310.; Niemi, *Vadsø's Historie*, 88.

¹⁹⁰ Hamre, *Throndhjems reformats 1589*, 92–93.; In the 1550s the clergy complained that the district governor took all three parts of the tithe for himself. Lysaker, *Reformasjon og Enevelde*, 58, 142.

¹⁹¹ Halkild Nilsen, *Bergensernes handel på Finnmark i eldre tid: Ett bidrag til Bergen og Finnmarks handelshistorie* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1966), 6.

¹⁹² *Tingbok 1620–1633*, 262.

¹⁹³ *Ibid*, 266–268, 273–275, 279. The priest in Gåsnes had 2 *våg* and 1 *pund* (roughly 42 kg.) of fish from each working inhabitant per year in addition to *fjærfisk* (1–2 fish from each boat on days when fish was caught). As this was contingent on the population size within the parish, it is probable that for most of the period, the priest in Vardø had the actual highest *income* amongst the clergy.

fish they caught, which the priest would sell to the highest bidding merchant. The involvement of the clergy in this trade was strictly illegal and broke with both the trade privileges granted to Bergen and Trondheim, and the ordinances refusing clergy to be merchants.¹⁹⁴ Although it was illegal for the clergy to engage in trade against these privileges it continued throughout the period, and was a source of frequent tension between the clergy and the higher strata of the local communities. One noticeable incident was when several clergymen were brought to trial for engaging in illegal trade with a Dutch skipper in 1662.¹⁹⁵ This trade was necessitated as the storages in Bergen had burned down and therefore the communities in Finnmark had not received supplies from Bergen for close to two years. During this emergency the priest in Hammerfest, Morten Nielsen Bjerreby, had to put himself in close to 540 *vog* of debt in order to keep his parishioners alive.¹⁹⁶ This focus on trade could also affect the clergyman's religious duties, as district governor Hans Lilienskiold complained that some clergymen were more interested in selling beer to the Sámi than teaching them the catechism.¹⁹⁷ This hybrid role between pastor and merchant was often necessitated by the poor fishing seasons which was disastrous for the economy in Finnmark, and it could also lead to tense relations between priest and congregation. The declining economy was most likely one of the reasons why it took so long for the educated clergymen to arrive in Finnmark. Especially during the periods of poor fishing, the living conditions in Finnmark were non-lucrative. According to Niemi, it also took

¹⁹⁴ Bergen's privileges were established in 1361 – Rudolf Keyser and Peter A. Munch, *Norges gamle love*, vol. 3. (Christiania: Chr. Grøndahl, 1849), p. 181.; Trondheim's privileges were established in 1455 – Oscar Albert Johnsen *et al.* *Norges Gamle Love: Andre række* vol. 2. (Oslo: Grøndahl og søn, 1934), p. 122.; Lausten, *Kirkeordinansen 1537/1539*, 193.; Ordinances that made it illegal for state employees to impose on trade privileges were issued in 1607 and 1614. - Nilsen, *Bergensernes handel*, 25.; Another reminder concerning the privileges was issued in 1629. *Tingbok 1620–1633*, 233.

¹⁹⁵ The priests did not appear at court, instead they wrote long letters in their own defence which grants us a unique view into their understanding of themselves. The trial against Laurits Nielsen and his letter of defence concerning the illegal trade with the Dutchman – SATØ, *The archives of the Finnmark district magistrate*, no. 09. Fol. 141a–144b.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid*, no. 09. 166b–167b. 540 *vog* was roughly 9720kg.

¹⁹⁷ Lilienskiold, *Trolldom og ugudelighet*, 28.; Siv Rasmussen has found that the clergy in Finnmark was responsible for providing religious instruction to both the Sámi and Norwegians who lived in their parish during the seventeenth century. Although the clergymen only serviced the Sámi areas 1–3 times per year. Rasmussen, *Samisk integrering i norsk og svensk kirke i tidlig nytid: En komparasjon mellom Finnmark og Torne lappmark* (University of Tromsø, PhD dissertation, 2016), 239.

a long time before the priests built themselves proper homes in their parishes.¹⁹⁸ The life of a priest in seventeenth century Finnmark was a risky one, with the possibility of very little reward.

3.1.2. A general lack of education and the witchcraft prosecutions.

The lack of education among the clergy is interesting in the context of the clergymen's role in the witchcraft trials. Jens C. V. Johansen argued that demonology was never a part of the official curriculum at the University of Copenhagen, so there was no concrete introduction to the phenomenon there.¹⁹⁹ However, as demonstrated in the last chapter, through the passing of demonological knowledge from Niels Hemmingsen to Jørgen Erikssøn, these ideas were easily spread through conversations between professors and their students, and the university had famous demonologists for much of the period in both Hemmingsen and later Jesper Brochmand. Nonetheless, the compilation and overview of the educational level in Finnmark, reveal that only the minority of clergymen in the region had a chance to be exposed to elaborated demonological ideas in this way.

Only some of the attitudes from the priests towards witchcraft in Finnmark could have originated at educational institutions. For the priests that never obtained advanced institutional education, the ideas concerning witchcraft must have come from either second-hand sources or through encounters with witchcraft prosecutions. Nine out of the 14 priests mentioned in the witchcraft prosecutions had at least matriculated at university, and several of them were provosts such as Torben Reiersen.²⁰⁰ As will be analysed further in the next chapter, there existed a hybrid interpretation of witchcraft as both *maleficium* and diabolism also among the clergymen who had attended university. Both popular and elite conceptions of witchcraft were present in many of the court cases where clergymen were involved. Evidently, an

¹⁹⁸ Niemi, *Vadsøs Historie*, 317.; For more information on the churches in Finnmark in the seventeenth century, see: Vidar Trædal, *Kirkesteder og kirkebygninger i Troms og Finnmark før 1800* (University of Tromsø: PhD dissertation, 2008), 192–201.

¹⁹⁹ Johansen, *Da Djævelen var ude...*, 148.

²⁰⁰ There has been a debate concerning if Reiersen also had the last name Gamst, after he was registered as Torben Reiersen Gamst in Andreas Erlandsen's study. Andreas Erlandsen, *Biographiske Efterretninger om Geistligheden i Tromsø Stift* (Christiania: Chr. Tønsbergs forlag, 1857), 6. In this debate I agree with Stuve, that it was Reiersen's son in law that was named Gamst, while Torben only had the last name Reiersen. – B. O. Stuve, "Slekten Gamst, Loppa-Skjærvøy," *Håløygminne* 4 (1949): 129–132. To strengthen this argument, I would like to add that Torben is never addressed as Gamst in the court records. In addition, when he wrote a letter to defend himself at court after engaging in illegal trade with a Dutch skipper in 1662, he signed his letter as "Torben Reersen." SATØ, *The archives of the Finnmark district magistrate*, no. 09. Fol. 154b.

institutionalised education did not exclude an acceptance of popular elements of witchcraft. In addition to this, the exposure and dissemination of a diabolical understanding of witchcraft could have come from somewhere other than the clergy. After all, Finnmark was a region with a strong international network through its many foreign workers, foreign district governors such as John Cunningham, strong links to Bergen, and district governors such as Jørgen Friis who had been educated by the famous theologian and demonologist Jesper Brochmand.²⁰¹

Furthermore, it seems that the failure to have all priests attend the university in Copenhagen resulted in a heterogenous understanding of witchcraft. The priests were able to interpret the phenomena in their own social context and lived reality, they accepted elements that according to the ordinance of 1617 were excluded from the crime of witchcraft. The clergymen were shaped by the preconceptions that existed within the communities that they encountered in their everyday lives, but also by the demonological understanding of witchcraft that they had to endorse as employees of the state. Based on the primary materials concerning educational level, it becomes clear that the clergymen in Finnmark were not only exposed to a conceptual interpretation of witchcraft from a centralised institution. They could have learned from each other, their parishioners, and other people who had practical experience with the phenomenon. Thereby, by being exposed to both elite and popular elements of witchcraft and magic, many clergymen also interpreted witchcraft within a hybrid form, that accepted both elite and popular elements.

It also seems to me, that the level of impact the demonology would have had on the aspiring students has been overestimated. In the historiography, much emphasis has been attributed to the fact that Niels Hemmingsen allowed two disputations to be held on themes related to magic in 1569.²⁰² Two disputations is very little compared to the amount of disputations held on more central Protestant themes at the University of Copenhagen.²⁰³ There also seems to be a latent danger in overestimating the impact of these disputations, as the Church historian Oluf Kolsrud

²⁰¹ Liv Helene Willumsen, "Exporting the Devil across the North Sea: John Cunningham and the Finnmark witch-hunt," in *Scottish Witches and witch-hunters*, ed. Julian Goodare (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 53–55.; Hagen, *Porten til helvete*, 168.

²⁰² Torben Brink, "Niels Hemmingsens," 125.; In 1672, Anders Erik Stenichelstrup argued in his disputation that werewolves did not exist and that the witches' flight was impossible. Likewise, in 1673 Jens Hansen Odense argued that succubi and incubi had no effect on humans. Johansen, *Da djævelen var ude...*, 148.

²⁰³ Holger Fr. Rørdam, *Kjøbenhavns Universitets historie: Under Regjeringsraadet og i Kong Christian IV's første tid (1588–1621)* (København: Bianco Lunos bogtrykkeri, 1877), 396ff.

argued, some disputations were good, but quite a few were little more than “attempts at cooking soup on a sausage stick.”²⁰⁴ In addition, according to the surviving church registers from Finnmark from the 1680–90s, no book concerned with demonology ever made it into the ownership of a church in Finnmark. The church registers show that the preachers and inhabitants had access to the ‘mainstream’ religious texts, such as Hans Tommesen’s and Thomas Kingo’s hymnals. Both Niels Hemmingsen’s and Jesper Brochmand’s postils are listed in the church inventories, but their writings concerned with witches are not mentioned in the surviving records.²⁰⁵ It becomes evident that the clergymen’s understanding of witchcraft did not hail only from institutionalised schooling, or state endorsed literature, but also from continuous interaction with both elites, commoners, and the conceptual understanding of witchcraft presented in the prosecutions in their local communities. It is therefore necessary to analyse the relationship between the clergymen and their parishioners in Finnmark, this will also be useful in order to interpret the priest’s role as witness and interrogator in the witchcraft trials.

3.2. The shepherd and his flock – the relationship between the clergy and their parishioners.

Social relations within local communities, both between commoners, and between elites and commoners has been seen as an important factor in modern witchcraft historiography.²⁰⁶ The relationship between the clergymen and their parishioners is said to have taken on another character after Denmark-Norway developed into a confessionalist state after the Reformation; when a system that Martin Schwarz Lausten has defined as *cesaropapist* developed within the state. In this system the monarch, his chancellor, and the *superintendent* of Zealand made the decisions concerning the religious direction the population were meant to follow.²⁰⁷ It became the job of the clergymen to achieve the state’s religious objectives in their parishes. In more recent years several in-depth studies of parishes across Europe has revealed that this put the

²⁰⁴ My translation. Kolsrud, *Presteutdanningi*, 183. “Visstnok var mange dissertatsar suppe på ein pylsepinne, og oppfylte av barnesnakk og trivialiteter.”

²⁰⁵ SATØ, *Finnmark Provsti Kirkeregnskaber 1689–99*, Fol. 2a–b.; Willumsen, *Trollkvinne i Nord*, 60.

²⁰⁶ Robin Briggs, “Witchcraft and the local communities: The Rhine–Moselle Region,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America*, ed. Brian P. Levack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 199–218.

²⁰⁷ Taken from – Øystein Rian, “Reformasjonen i Danmark-Norge 1500–1700: Maktpolitikk eller sensur,” in *Reformasjonstidens religiøse bokkultur cirka 1400–1700: tekst, visualitet og materialitet*, ed. Bente Lavold and John Ødemark (Oslo: Nasjonalbiblioteket, 2017), 26.

clergymen in a difficult position. The priest had to continuously walk the line between being too aggressive when it came to implementing the ideology of the state on his parishioners, which could result in conflict in the localities; and being so passive that he was reprimanded or removed from his post by his superiors. As Jay Goodale has put it, the clergyman had to continuously shift between the “culture of the ruled,” that is his role as a subordinate member of a large hierarchy where he was close to the bottom, and the “culture of rule” where he was to act as an authority within the local parish and lead his parishioners.²⁰⁸

The clergy in Finnmark also had to make continuous adjustments in order to achieve what was expected of them, without receiving push-back from their congregation for infringing on their local customs. In this regard, it should be emphasised that although there were some conflicts, the relationship between the clergy and their parishioners in Finnmark was mainly unproblematic throughout the period. It should also be noted that the source situation is rather scarce when it comes to the regulatory actions of the clergy in Finnmark. Most of the archive concerning the *superintendents* in Trondheim from the seventeenth century is now lost. Andreas Aarflot spoke warmly of the visitation protocols of the *superintendents* in Trondheim, but in a recent correspondence with the state archives it became clear that we no longer know where these protocols are.²⁰⁹

Besides, it does not seem like the *superintendents* upheld the requirements of both the Church Ordinance of 1537/39 and the Norwegian Church ordinance of 1607 which required them to conduct visitations in the diocese every year.²¹⁰ The priest in Bodø parish in the early seventeenth century Maurits Madssøn Rasch, wrote down important events in his life, from his first sermon in Bodø in 1596 until he became the provost of Helgeland in 1639 the *superintendents* held a visitation in his parish only six times.²¹¹ The court records show that

²⁰⁸ Jay Goodale, “The clergyman between the cultures of state and parish: Contestation and compromise in Reformation Saxony,” in *The Protestant Clergy of Early Modern Europe*, ed. C. Scott Dixon and Luise Schorn-Schütte (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 103.

²⁰⁹ Andreas Aarflot, *Norges Kirkehistorie*, 49, 73.; Personal E-Mail correspondence with executive officer Thor-Erik Johnsen from the state archives on 10/12/2019.

²¹⁰ They were meant to go on visitation every year, and in this way visit every parish at least once every third year. Den retthistoriske kommisjon, *Kirkeordinansen av 1607*, 83.; Ingesman, “Visitations as an instrument of discipline in early modern Denmark,” in *The protracted Reformation in Northern Norway vol. 2.: Towards a Protestant North*, ed. Sigrun Høgetveit. Berg *et al.* (Hannover: Wehrhahn, 2016), 211.

²¹¹ Henrik Jørgen Huitfeldt, “Maurits Madssøn Raschs Optegnelser fra Nordlandene 1581–1639,” in *Norske samlinger efter offentlig foranstaltning* vol. 2. ed. Christian C. A. Lange (Christiania: Feilberg & landmarks Forlag,

superintendent Bredal conducted a visitation in Finnmark in 1649; but the existing primary sources also indicate that communication between Finnmark and Trondheim primarily went through letters and officially appointed delegates.²¹² As abovementioned the *superintendents* delegated much of the responsibility for carrying out visitations of the parishes to the two provosts in Finnmark.²¹³ The loss of the provost's visitation protocols from Finnmark, means that there is very little information concerning the yearly visitations from the provost and the use of the *prosterett* in Finnmark, which was meant to be an internal regulatory device for the clergy.²¹⁴ The following segments therefore interpret the relationship between clergy and parishioners based on their interactions during the local court sessions. This is not ideal, as by the time a dispute reached the local courts there had usually been negotiations going on for quite some time.²¹⁵ Such a prolonged conflict was evident when provost Torben Reiersen sued the Sámi Lange Mogens Zarasen in 1672, Reiersen had reprimanded Zarasen on multiple occasions for not attending church for nearly twelve years, before he finally cited him at court.²¹⁶ Nevertheless, the court records normally provide background details, which enables an investigation into the relationship between the clergymen and their parishioners.

3.2.1. Between the 'culture of rule and ruled.'

As the state wanted the clergy to be the enforcers of their ideology on the ground level, they also gave them various tools to implement conformist behaviour in their congregations. One of the tools the clergy had at their disposal to regulate the social behaviour of their parishioners, was the *medhjelperinstitusjonen* that was implemented in Christian IV's recess of 1643.²¹⁷ The

1860), 493–494, 497, 499, 500, 502–503. If the *superintendents* had followed the ordinance, they should have held a visitation in Rasch's parish around 14 times during Rasch's time as parish priest.

²¹² It is evident that he was there as the Sámi in Varanger were accused of sacrilege as they had failed to appear at the visitation. SATØ, *The archives of the Finnmark district magistrate*, no. 08. Fol. 008b, 020a. Failing to appear during a visitation was a crime under *Konning Christians dend Fierdis Reces*, Book 1. Chapter 1. Article 31.; *Superintendent* Bredal reprimanded the parishioners of Ingø in a letter in 1662 because of a reduced salary to the two previous priests in Ingø. SATØ, *The archives of the Finnmark district magistrate*, no. 09. Fol. 181a–b.

²¹³ Otto Gr. Lundh, *Norske Rigs-Registranter: Tildeels i uddrag: vol. 5: 1603–1618* (Christiania: Brøgger, 1870), p. 582.; Rørdam, *Nye Kirkehistoriske samlinger*, 243.; SATR, *Trondheim Bispearkiv*, Da. 247.

²¹⁴ There are some documents in the *superintendents'* archive from the seventeenth century, but these primarily concern the areas south of Vardøhus len. The regulations of the *prosterett* and visitations by the provost are specified in *Konning Christians dend Fierdis Reces*, Book 1. Chapter 1. Article 18, 21.

²¹⁵ Erling Sandmo, *Tingets tenkemåter: Kriminalitet og rettsaker i Rendalen 1763–97* (Oslo: Falch, 1992), 48.

²¹⁶ SATØ, *The archives of the Finnmark district magistrate*, no. 13. Fol. 079a–080a.

²¹⁷ *Christians dend Fierdis Reces*, Book 1. Chapter 2. Articles 1–12. The *medhjelperinstitusjon* was first declared in the ordinance concerning ecclesiastical discipline of 1629.; Laws concerning this institution was expanded in *Kong Christian den Femtes Norske Lov*, Book 2. Chapter 9. Article 1–29.

objective of the *medhjelperinstitusjonen* was for the priest to select a few of his ‘best’ parishioners and they were meant to keep an eye on the moral conditions in the parish. They should especially be on the lookout for the kind of crimes that the local courts had a more difficult time discovering and regulating, such as sacrilege, profanity, slanderous talk, and excessive alcohol consumption. Through this institution the clergymen were brought to the centre of the local rumour mill and gained extensive knowledge of the social relations in their parish, including knowledge of rumours concerned with benevolent magic and witchcraft.

When a moral offence was reported, the priest and the bell ringer were tasked with warning the accused person before they were excommunicated. Those under the threat of excommunication would be admonished from the pulpit three times, before an eventual excommunication was carried out. The *medhjelperinstitusjon* must have been used in Finnmark, as there are several court trials where someone appeared at court to clear their name, as they had been given the lightest form of punishment from the clergy, which was excluding the person from taking the Eucharist as well as giving fines for sacrilege.²¹⁸ One such person was Ragnhild Aamondsdatter who appeared at court in 1670 to clear her name as she had been refused to attend the Eucharist on several occasions by provost Moses Sørensen in Vardø, due to a circulating rumour.²¹⁹ The reason why the refusal of the Eucharist was such an effective tool was due to the strong stigma that developed in the seventeenth century around taking the Eucharist. As Torben Reiersen thundered against his parishioner Rolant in 1682, those who did not seek out God’s Church and received the sacrament were not truly a part of the local community.²²⁰ Taking the Eucharist was a pivotal part of being a functional member of the local community and adult society.

The clergy could not punish every moral offence they encountered, as unrestricted moral regulation of the local congregation, or even harsh criticism, could be met with strong resistance from the local communities. This becomes clear in the court case held against Peder Kjærup

²¹⁸ E.g. Peder Henningsen in 1620 – *Tingbok 1620–1633*, 26.; Several women in the Ekkerø area were refused the Eucharist by priest Hans Pedersen Bang in 1634, as the Sámi Niels Sich had spread rumours that they could practice witchcraft. SATØ, *The archives of the Finnmark district governor*, archival piece 2543, doc. 086.; See also, Rune Blix Hagen, “Dømt til døden for falske trolldomsbeskyldninger: Rettsaken mot samnen Niels Sich i Vadsø 1634,” *Håløygminne* 3 (2019): 345–352.

²¹⁹ SATØ, *The archives of the Finnmark district magistrate*, no. 12. Fol. 092a. The source does not state what the rumour was about.

²²⁰ SATØ, *Ibid.* no. 19. Fol. 058a–b. My translation. “The honourable provost says that [Rolant] is close to denying God, as he does not seek out the Church and God’s house, therefore he cannot be considered to be a proper part of the congregation.”

the parish priest in Skjøtningberg on the 30th of July 1651. The sources indicate that the ecclesiastical situation in Skjøtningberg was complex in the 1640s, a destitute chaplain is said to have lived there alone for quite some time in 1645.²²¹ Peder Kjærup was most likely rather new to his benefice, and he was not satisfied with his parishioners. He was brought to court because he had complained to deputy-bailiff Jacob Richertsen, merchant Christen Jensen, and the district governor Jørgen Friis, that the people in Skjøtningberg lived so sinful lives that they should be put under lock and key.²²² This claim so offended the parishioners that the court trial began the day after the words were spoken. Kjærup was sentenced to meet with the provost Hans Pedersen Bang in Vardø, certainly an unpleasant experience, in these matters the provost and priest never met as equals. The provost was after all the direct manifestation of the *superintendent's* authority in the region and could impose harsh punishments on the priest.²²³

Kjærup was not the only overzealous priest whose religious program was as a nuisance to his congregation in Finnmark. Didrik Hansen was the parish priest of Ingø, and he was undoubtedly the priest that most frequently sued others and was sued himself at the local court. In total, Hansen appeared at three different court sessions for seven different lawsuits. The relationship between Hansen and his parishioners went sour quite quickly after he arrived in 1650. The conflict started because the parishioners had a hard time paying Hansen's salary due to little success in catching fish.²²⁴ From there the situation must have intensified quickly, Hansen had to defend himself against slanderous accusations in both June 1650 and July 1651. In the trial of July 1651 Hansen was forced to sue Christen Nielsen one of his parishioners for slanderous talk, as Nielsen had called the priest a witch while he was drunk!²²⁵ Although no priests were burned for witchcraft in Norway, the circulation of such slander could prove fatal, and a rapid legal response was of importance to squash the rumour – several clergymen in Europe were

²²¹ Sollied, *Prester, prestegjeld*, 29.

²²² SATØ, *The archives of the Finnmark district magistrate*, no. 08. Fol. 045b–047a. My translation: “[...] Had accused the peasants at this court-place, either with unbearable threats of lock and key or injustice in any way which they [the parishioners] now wanted to prove.”

²²³ Ingesman, “Visitations,” 224.; Lausten, *Kirkeordinansen 1537/39*, 225–227. The provost also had increasing secular responsibilities throughout the century, such as the upkeep of church registers, buildings, and economy.

²²⁴ SATØ, *The archives of the Finnmark district magistrate*, no. 08. Fol. 025b.

²²⁵ SATØ, *Ibid*, Fol. 039b.; Jon Skeie has argued that accusing someone of being a witch was historically one of the most severe verbal insults. Jon Skeie, *Om Ærekrænkelser efter Norsk ret* (Kristiania: Olaf Norlis forlag, 1910), 9.; Concerning the importance of removing rumours in the early modern period, Nils Gilje, *Heksen og humanisten: Anne Pedersdatter og Absalon Pederssøn Beyer – En historie om magi og trolldom i Bergen på 1500-tallet*, revised ed. (Bergen: Fagbokforlaget, 2010), 75–76.

executed for witchcraft due to these kinds of circulating rumours.²²⁶ The conflict between priest Hansen and his parishioners must have reached its peak between 1653 and 1654, as he was cited at court by his parishioners for having refused to bless them with the Lord's prayer during a *bededag*, while also refusing to sing the prayers in front of the alter in the late spring of 1653.²²⁷ In this case, the provost Mads Jensen appeared in court on behalf of Hansen, and informed the court that Hansen had to stand to justice in front of the provost, not the secular court.²²⁸ After Hansen had been reprimanded by the provost the relationship between the priest and his parishioners seemingly normalised.

The cases of Kjærup and Hansen demonstrate how important the personal character of the priest was, and what could happen if the parish priests engaged too heavily with the 'culture of rule'. That is if they rapidly attempted to force their parishioners into the religious ideology and 'updated' religious practice enforced by the *cesaropapist* system, without also considering local traditions and customs.²²⁹ By positioning themselves too heavily within the role of spiritual leaders who had to enforce a state approved understanding of religious practices, both Hansen and Kjærup infringed on their parishioners' understanding of themselves as good Christians. This critique led to reactions from their parishioners, but also in Kjærup's case the top administrative body in Finnmark, the district governor. These and other primary sources show that both the parishioners and regional elites had a conceptual understanding of what the priests were meant to do and regulate, and deviation from this could be met with resistance.

The sources indicate that the most successful priests were those who managed to 'pick their battles'. Instead of immediately attempting to change the factors they perceived as wrong in their parishioners' customs, they focused on the larger issues, or they managed to enter

²²⁶ Three clergymen were denounced for witchcraft in Denmark in 1543, one was brought in for questioning and suffered torture, he refused to confess and was later released. Liv Helene Willumsen, "Trolldom mot Kongens skip 1589 og transnasjonal overføring av idéer," (Danish) *Historisk Tidsskrift* (2019): 314.; The clergyman Jens Hansen Rusk was burned for practicing witchcraft in Denmark in 1611. Wittendorff, "Trolldomsprocessernes ophør i Danmark," 6.; Alison Rowlands, "The witch-cleric stereotype in a seventeenth-century Lutheran context," *German History* 37 (2019): 1–7.

²²⁷ A *bededag* was an extraordinary day of prayer, they were an important part of Danish-Norwegian Church politics under the reign of Christian IV as the *bededag* was part of the king's objective of spreading piety in his realm, but they were also a method of collective penance through mass prayer. Oftestad *et al.*, *Norsk kirkehistorie*, 124.

²²⁸ SATØ, *The archives of the Finnmark district magistrate*, no. 09. Fol. 005a.

²²⁹ Goodale, "Pastors, Privation," 88–92.

compromises with their parishioners, although they could utilise the law to force their parishioners to carry out work for them.²³⁰ This balance between being a local authority and in a hierarchy where one was close to the bottom can be demonstrated through Laurits Nilsen Nyborg. On the 4th of July 1661, Nyborg complained to the court in Hasvåg, that several of his parishioners arrived drunk in church and disturbed his sermons. In addition, they were not diligent enough when it came to giving their children a Christian upbringing, and many refused to let their children be taught what can only be interpreted as their *barnelærdom*, that is, their knowledge of the foundational Protestant texts.²³¹ Both the catechization of children, and the endeavour to make parishioners stop drinking on their day off, which coincided with the sermons in church, were issues that were dealt with at length in the penal legislature of the seventeenth century.²³² Implicit evidence from the court sessions reveal that the clergymen did not have the capacity to take all breaches of the law and Christian rituals to court. There were several trials where fishermen and other parishioners in different parts of Finnmark, were sentenced for sacrilege. Those who were fined had either been working during the church sermon, or had set sail before midnight on a Sunday.²³³ These people were often caught because the servants in various households reported that they had seen them go fishing, while the servants themselves had been working.²³⁴ Implicitly the servants revealed that they had also been absent from sermons and working on Sundays, in these cases the servants were never sentenced for sacrilege, although the penal codes stated that *everyone* had to attend church on specific days in the week.²³⁵

²³⁰ *Tingbok 1620–1633*, 105.; Nagel, “Lutherske prestefruer,” 109. E.g. the parishioners were legally obliged to maintain the priests living quarters and yet several negotiations were made between priest and parishioners regarding the upkeep of the clergymen’s living quarters.

²³¹ SATØ, *The archives of the Finnmark district magistrate*, no. 09. Fol. 098a–b.; Concerning the socio-normative importance of having a good foundation in *barnelærdommen* during the seventeenth century, see – Jostein Fet, *Lesande Bønder: litterær kultur i Norske Allmugesamfunn før 1840* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1995), 27.

²³² *Konning Christians dend Fierdis reces*, Book 1. Chapter 1. Article 9.; *Kong Christian den Femtes Norske Lov*, Book 2. Chapter 4. Articles, 14–15. and Book 2. Chapter 5. Article 27.

²³³ SATØ, *The archives of the Finnmark district magistrate*, no. 09. Fol. 010b, 047a, 066b.; *Tingbok 1620–1633*, 148–149, 244, 263, 304.

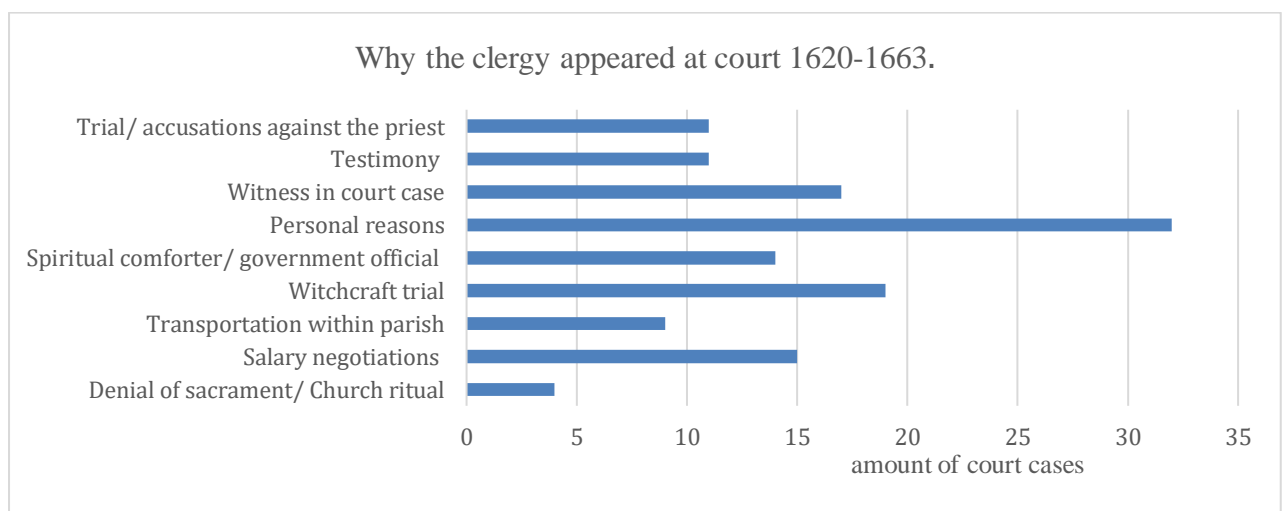
²³⁴ E.g. servant Bodell Paulsdatter implicitly revealed that many did not attend sermons when she witnessed in a court session in Vardø in the spring of 1629. *Tingbok 1620–1633*, 218–221.

²³⁵ *Konning Christians dend Fierdis Reces*, Book 1. Chapter 1. Article 33.; *Kong Christian den Femtes Norske Lov*, Book 2. Chapter 1. Article 5.

The successful priests acted as authorities and attempted to regulate the matters they found most important, such as Laurits Nilsen Nyborg’s focus on drunkenness and the teaching of the foundational texts, this focus on key matters would also please their superiors. Simultaneously, the successful priests gave enough leeway to their parishioners so that conflicts and unnecessary tensions could be avoided. In order to achieve success in certain matters the clergymen were sometimes willing to look the other way on issues that would require a more intense approach, this does not mean that these differences between normative regulation and actual practice in Finnmark were never regulated. Instead, the clergymen stood in-between the elite and popular praxis, and had to give compromises to both sides. Although they had normative tools to regulate the social behaviour of their parishioners, they lacked the means of direct authority as they had to balance and adjust to the situation in their parishes. The process of gaining increased social and moral control was evidently a prolonged process in Finnmark. The establishment of the hegemony of the *cesaropapist* system must therefore be understood as another prolonged process.

3.2.2. The priest as an employee of the state.

As seen in the graph below, the clergymen used the local courts for a multitude of reasons. Together with the merchants, the clergy were undoubtedly the professional group that used the potential of the local courts to its fullest extent. The graph below includes court trials that involved the clergymen and/or their spouses, as court trials involving their spouse would have directly affected the clergyman. The result is that the clergymen or their spouses appeared in a total of 132 court trials between 1620 and 1663.



For the purpose of this dissertation the most interesting point on the graph is the clergy's role as witnesses in court cases and the witchcraft trials. These two rubrics could have been implemented into one, but they have been separated as this dissertation focuses on the clergy's role in the witchcraft trials. It is therefore useful to have the concrete witchcraft trials separated from the other cases where the clergymen appeared as witnesses. This separation is also necessitated due to the stipulation that banned the clergy from being jurors or active prosecutors in court cases. In that regard, the witchcraft trials were the exceptions where the clergymen in Finnmark could participate as members of the court, in the role of prosecutors and interrogators.

Technically, the clergy were only allowed to appear in court as private individuals and this personal use of the court is evident from the graph. The reason why the clergy were able to act as witnesses and become involved in so many trials were due to their strong position in the local communities. If they were able to avoid conflict, the court records show that the clergy could be among the most trusted members of the community and they naturally entered a paternalistic role. When people went to court, it was clearly an 'ace up the sleeve' to have the support of the local clergyman. In addition, the clergy gained much information about their local communities through personal confession which they could utilise in court trials.²³⁶ It should be emphasised that the clergymen primarily used the local courts for their own personal benefit, even when they appeared as witnesses the trials were usually concerned with salary, trade, or debt.

The witchcraft trials were one of the few times when the clergyman's role and function in the periphery of Finnmark crossed into being an active part of the local court. The reason why the clergy were so terrifying for the defendant in the court trials was due to their authority and their deep knowledge of the social relations in the villages. Through the *medhjælper* institution and close contact with the secular sexton, who always had to be one of the wealthiest in the community, they had good connections with both the elite and common people in society. The fisherman Peder Henningsen exemplifies this connection between the church structure and local elites, he was a local juror and successful fisherman who according to the Kiberg tax register of 1643 was undoubtedly the wealthiest man in the village, he was also the church's secular

²³⁶ Bergan, *Skriftemål og skriftestol*, 82–84. It is difficult to say to what extent this was practiced, as there are no records pertaining to what was said in personal confession.

sexton.²³⁷ The primary sources from Finnmark also support Anne Hilde Nagel's argument that the house of the local priest functioned as a sort of social epicentre in the villages.²³⁸ It is frequently mentioned in the trial records that a conflict, or discussion happened in or near the living quarters of a priest.²³⁹ This continuous interaction with their parishioners included the clergy in the local communities and offered an arena of social control outside of church, within this interactive sphere the clergyman stood at the centre of social relations.²⁴⁰ This intimate knowledge of social relations could prove to be fatal, when the clergymen were allowed into the courtrooms as interrogations in their role as specialists in spiritual matters, thus making them active prosecutors in the witchcraft trials. The priests understanding of communal relations and rumours in the localities will also be of major importance in chapter 5 when Jens C. V. Johansen's providentialist theory will be tested on the Finnmark prosecutions.

3.3. Chapter summary.

This chapter has provided the foundation to fully understand the role of the clergy in the witchcraft trials in Finnmark. Although the theologians and administrators in Copenhagen had a clear understanding concerning education and an institutionalised indoctrination of the correct type of Lutheran faith, this was not upheld to perfect standards in Finnmark. Less than half of the clergy in Finnmark, had received the mandatory institutionalised education from the University of Copenhagen in the seventeenth century. The other examples in the chapter have also attempted to highlight the disparity between the normative regulations issued from the centre and the reality in the peripheral parishes. The clergymen were undoubtedly authorities in their local communities but within their interactive sphere between elite and common culture they had to make continuous compromises. These abovementioned examples also support the thesis that the implementation of the structural changes of the Reformation was a protracted process in Finnmark.

²³⁷ RA/EA-5023/R/Rb/Rbæ/L0005, *np*. Henningsen paid 5 riksdaler in taxes, this was the highest amount paid in Kiberg, in comparison Jens Jyde who paid the second highest amount of tax paid 1 ½ riksdaler.

²³⁸ Nagel, "Lutherske prestefruer," 124–126.

²³⁹ E.g. Kaa Anne had called Oluff Nielsen's spouse for a witch, near priest Christen Mikkelsen's shed. *Tingbok 1620–1633*, 211.

²⁴⁰ E.g. priest Torben Reiersen in Loppa had refused to drink with a person named Halvor Jacobsen in 1654, until Jacobsen had faced a court trial. Reiersen accused Jacobsen of conducting "schelmerj och thiufferj." The case ended with Jacobsen being sentenced to church discipline, he was also evicted from the parish of Loppa. SATØ, *The archives of the Finnmark district magistrate*, no. 09. Fol. 2a–b.

Although the clergymen had various instruments such as the *medhjelperinstitusjon* at their disposal to enforce the state's religious program among their parishioners, the clergy were still, at least partly, forced to adopt to the customs of their local communities. The clergy could not necessarily expect the support of the rest of the local elites if they put too much pressure on their parishioners. The clergymen also lacked the capacity to regulate all the religious offences simultaneously, this made them focus on the issues they deemed most important. In these conditions, one can assume with some certainty that the clergymen paid little attention to conducting a sustained campaign in order to implement a diabolical understanding of witchcraft among their parishioners, unless there were active on-going witchcraft prosecutions. Witchcraft was not the only problem the clergymen of seventeenth century Finnmark encountered, and it was definitely not what they encountered most frequently, as only a minority of the clergymen involved themselves in the witchcraft trials. As demonstrated the clergymen used the local courts for a multitude of reasons but they were primarily personal.

The clergymen had to walk the line between "the culture of rule, and culture of ruled". A successful priest was one who knew which battles to fight and gave some leeway to his parishioners. This created room for the survival of popular interpretations of witchcraft and other moral and religious phenomena. The role of the clergy in Finnmark should be interpreted as slowly establishing hegemony within the interpretative framework of the protracted Reformation. By maintaining good relations with his parishioners, the priest became a key figure in local affairs, who should have been up to date on various social tensions and the personal lives of his parishioners through an extensive socio-cultural network. The clergymen's involvement in the witchcraft prosecutions must be understood as an exception from normal court procedures, as the clergymen could act as interrogators in the witchcraft trials

Chapter 4. The role of the clergy in the witchcraft trials in Finnmark.

The witchcraft prosecutions created a set of exceptional conditions concerning the jurisdiction of the clergymen. The witchcraft trials were one of the few times the clergymen could partake in interrogations and local court sessions as state officials, and completely immerse themselves in the ‘culture of rule’. This chapter will provide an overview and in-depth analysis of the role of the clergy in the witchcraft prosecutions in Finnmark. There are 14 clergymen mentioned in the court cases concerned with elements of witchcraft, the names of the clergymen and the dates of the relevant trials have been registered in appendix C. The relevant clergymen can be divided into three groups. The first group of clergymen were only mentioned as potential witnesses by people who were present at court. The second group of clergymen were seen as victims of witchcraft themselves, in those cases their deaths gave impetus to start additional witchcraft prosecutions. The third identified group of clergymen played an active part in the witchcraft trials.

This chapter has two aims, firstly a periodisation combined with a qualitative and quantitative analysis of some of the witchcraft trials where clergymen were active will be provided. Secondly, this chapter will discuss if any ‘expertise’ in witchcraft, developed among the clergymen. Through this approach it is possible to analyse if there existed a stereotypical witchcraft trial with clerical involvement. Finally, this chapter will provide a micro-study concerning provost Hans Pedersen Bang’s understanding of witchcraft and his role in the trials. This brief micro-historical study will offer a new methodological angle to analyse the clergymen’s role in the witchcraft prosecutions in the region. A reduction of the scale of observation concerning Bang’s involvement in the trials is justified, as he was the clergyman engaged in the most witchcraft trials and he also worked in Finnmark for over 30 years.²⁴¹ One of the reasons for his extraordinary involvement was that the parish of Vardø became the epicentre of the witchcraft prosecutions in Eastern-Finnmark. Before the analysis can begin it is necessary to clarify some methodological considerations concerning the way the clergyman have been counted.

²⁴¹ See appendix B and C.; Sollied, *Prester, prestegjeld*, 39, 41.

4.1. Methodological considerations.

In Sølvi Sogner's response to Hans Eyvind Næss's doctoral defence in 1982, Sogner criticised the fact that Næss had included slander cases in his compilation of witchcraft trials in Norway.²⁴² As Sogner emphasised, the involved parties in slander cases were not at court for a breach of laws such as the 1617 ordinance which regulated witchcraft criminality.²⁴³ From a legalistic viewpoint, in a slander case it was the person who had been talked about that appeared as both accuser and offended party. Nevertheless, in pure slander cases neither party were sentenced under the witchcraft paragraphs, but as demonstrated in the introduction, slander cases could develop into per definition witchcraft trials.

However, this compilation has included slander cases when compiling the clergymen, as this dissertation is not only interested in the clergy's role in the trials but also their mentality towards witchcraft. In addition, two methodological considerations justify this inclusion: firstly, the clergymen who were involved in the slander-cases were also involved in other prosecutions that were per definition witchcraft trials. This inclusion will therefore not result in a misleading number of clergymen involved in witchcraft trials, as these clergymen would have been added to the compilation anyway. Secondly, this dissertation is interested in analysing the clergy's role in all court cases that included witchcraft in some way or another. The focus when analysing these slander cases is on the conduct of the priest and how he reacted to the witchcraft element in the trials. As these slander cases also contained elements concerned with witchcraft, they can be used to analyse the clergymen's mentality towards witchcraft, and thereby provide a broader understanding of their role in the prosecutions. This means that the slander cases can be fruitfully included without distorting the overarching interpretation of the clergy's role in the witchcraft trials.

As mentioned, the present study has found 14 clergymen mentioned in the witchcraft trials. In the index at the end of Willumsen's transcription of the court records one finds the names of only twelve clergymen.²⁴⁴ There are three reasons for this difference: firstly, provost Moses

²⁴² Sølvi Sogner, "Trolldomsprosessene i Norge på 1500–1600-tallet," *Norveg: Tidsskrift for folkelivsgransking* 25 (1982): 155–156.

²⁴³ *Konning Christians dend Fierdis Reces*, Book 2. Chapter 28. Article 1.

²⁴⁴ Willumsen, *Witchcraft trials*, 419.

Sørensen in Vardø has not been added to Willumsen's index, although his name is explicitly mentioned in the trial against Magdalena Jacobsdatter from Andersby on the 14th of June 1671.²⁴⁵ Secondly, Oluff Karlsen has not been registered as a clergyman in Willumsen's index although he was the priest in Vardø from 1617–1626. Thirdly, chaplain Ludvig Christensen Paus has been added to the compilation used in this dissertation although his name is not explicitly mentioned in a witchcraft trial. Paus must have been one of the spiritual mentors mentioned in the trial against Marite Nielsdatter in Vadsø on the 1st of December 1690, when she was accused of divination and performing various rituals. In this trial the term spiritual mentors which in the original source is "Siæle sørgere" is used in the plural form on three occasions, this limits the possibility of a misspelling by the magistrate.²⁴⁶ This indicates that both the provost Moses Sørensen and the chaplain Ludvig C. Paus were involved in the trial.²⁴⁷ In Willumsen's index, priest Hans and priest Hans Pedersen are counted as two different individuals. As will be elaborated towards the end of the chapter, Hans Pedersen and Hans Pedersen Bang must have been the same person, and have therefore been counted as such in this compilation.²⁴⁸ In the court records, some of the priests are only passively referred to as the minister or only with their first name. In the instances where the identity of the clergyman has not been explicitly stated, the location of the court session combined with the register in appendix B has been used to find which priest was present at court.

It should be noted, that in the compilation of clergymen provost Christen Mikkelsen has been counted as the clergyman present in the court trial against Anne Mattisdatter held on the 28th of November 1634. Willumsen argues that chaplain Hans Pedersen Bang was present during Mattisdatter's trial, this difference in registration is caused by the way the source is interpreted.²⁴⁹ During the trial, deputy–bailiff Niels Pedersen stated that Synnøve, the wife of Anders Nordmøring had denounced Anne Mattisdatter. Synnøve had confessed that Anne was with her when they sank Jacob Sass's ship.²⁵⁰ The deputy–bailiff stated that chaplain Hans Pedersen Bang knew this information as well. The reason why Bang would have known this

²⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 319.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 373.

²⁴⁷ Sollied, *Prester, prestegjeld*, 40. It is possible that Paus had taken over the administrative duties of the parish at this point, as it was stated in 1694 that Sørensen had been sick and bedbound for several years.

²⁴⁸ To avoid confusion I will refer to him as Hans Pedersen Bang whenever he is mentioned with full name.

²⁴⁹ Willumsen, *Witchcraft trials*, 93–94. Especially reference number 23 on page 94.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 72, 93–95.

information was because both chaplain Bang and deputy-bailiff Pedersen had been part of the team that interrogated Kari, the wife of Jetmund Siverson who denounced Synnøve in 1632.²⁵¹ Chaplain Bang was most likely present during Synnøve's trial as well. The source is therefore interpreted as more of a statement from the deputy-bailiff, that if his testimony was called into doubt, he would be able to gather additional witnesses. In addition, after Anne was sentenced to death and tortured, it was noted that she confessed in the presence of "prouistens" a word that means provost.²⁵² The fact that the court session was held in Vardø, which was the parish of the provost of Eastern-Finnmark also strengthens the argument that provost Mikkelsen was the active interrogator.

Another consideration revolves around the term "and other good people," which in the original is "flere gott folch" or variations of that saying.²⁵³ This term is used in the court records to confirm confessions given either before or after interrogations. A qualitative reading of the court records show that the use of the term does not necessarily mean that a clergyman was present. Only two times does the use of the term "gott folch" seem to have included the clergy, and one of these cases was concerned with slander.²⁵⁴ The main trend is that if the priest was present he was mentioned in addition to this term, as in the witchcraft trial against Kirsten Sørensdatter that took place in Vardø on the 28th of April 1621: "he [the bailiff Søren Nielsen] asked her if she would now [...] confess and admit what she admitted yesterday to [the priest] Her[r] Oluff Karlsen, himself [Nielsen], and to Sander Meen and other good people."²⁵⁵ Therefore, the use of the term "gott folch" in the court records does not implicitly mean that a priest was present. Instead the term seems to be aimed at the local jurors and other members of the upper strata of local society. It could also be a reference to king Christian III's *Københavnske recess* §8 from 1547, which stated that no dishonourable people should stand witness against the honourable.²⁵⁶

²⁵¹ *Tingbok 1620–1633*, 291–293.

²⁵² It should be noted that there is seldom a differentiation between priests and chaplains in the court records, both positions are usually referred with the honorific "H.[err]". There is usually a differentiation between the priest and the provost where the latter is usually referred to with his title.

²⁵³ Willumsen, *Witchcraft trials*, 30.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 67, 135.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 30.

²⁵⁶ Janus L. A. Kolderup-Rosenvinge, *Samling af gamle danske love fjerde del* (København: Gyldendal, 1824), 219. In a judicial context it meant that the accusations and testimonies were overheard and given by people without a criminal record.

With these elements accounted for, it is acceptable to argue that 14 priests were involved in the witchcraft trials in Finnmark. It is, however, difficult to get an accurate estimate of the number of trials each priest was involved in. As there exists passive evidence, which prove that the clergymen were involved in several trials where they are not mentioned in the relevant court records. Such passive evidence is seen when the populace in Vardø answered the written complaints of the political prisoner at Vardøhus, Ambrosius Rhodius' in October 1666.²⁵⁷ Rhodius's letter was retrospective, and he complained that the provost Hans Pedersen Bang had been involved in the interrogation of Peder Oelsen's daughter in Rhodius's chambers. This mentioned daughter must have been the teenager Siri Pedersdatter, although the documents from the local court give quite a lot of detail concerning the sentencing of the witches in 1662–1663, the interrogation of Siri Pedersdatter outside of court does not appear in the records.²⁵⁸ The court of appeal session held by judge Mandrup Schønnebøl in the summer of 1663, also revealed that Bang participated in several undocumented interrogations.²⁵⁹ The example of Bang being involved to a large degree 'behind the scenes', especially during the chain prosecutions, reveal the problem of trying to estimate the number of witchcraft trials each priest participated in based on the court records alone. Nevertheless, it is safe to assume that no more than 14 priests were actively involved in the witchcraft prosecutions in Finnmark.

4.2. Periodisation of the clergymen's involvement in the trials.

As mentioned in the introduction there are no explicit mentions of clerical involvement in any of the witchcraft prosecutions before 1620.²⁶⁰ Concerning the focus of this dissertation, it seems natural to split the period into chronological units based on when the various priests worked in the region. Such a periodization creates three different chronological periods: the first period covers the years 1620–1634, the second period covers the years 1632–1666, and the last period

²⁵⁷ The Rhodius couple had been sent to Vardøhus as political prisoners after the couple had made themselves the enemies of several elite members of society in Christiania. Hagen, *Porten til helvete*, 190–211.; Willumsen, *Ild og bål*, 314–318.; Ambrosius Rhodius had a copy of Niels Hemmingsen's, *De superstitionibus magicis vitandis* in his private book collection. This collection was confiscated by the authorities when he was sent to Vardøhus. Edvard Bull, "En læge i det ældste Kristiania," *St. Hallvard* 4 (1919): 261–275.

²⁵⁸ Martine Ahlet Andreassen, *Trolldomskriminalitet og barn: En komparativ undersøkelse av den rettslige behandlingen av barn involvert i trolldomsprosessene i Øst-Finnmark (1662–63) og Ålvdalen–Mora (1668–69)* (University of Tromsø: Master dissertation, 2017), 35–36.

²⁵⁹ SATR, *Court of appeal protocol for Nordland and Finnmark*, part 2. 1663–1668. Fol. 164.

²⁶⁰ Lilienskiold did not mention clerical involvement in any of the trials before 1620, but he did explicitly mention it on occasion when writing about later trials. Lilienskiold, *Trolldom og ugudelighet*, 94, 132, 200–206.

covers the years 1671–1692. The reason for the brief overlap between the first and second period is caused by the fact that Hans Pedersen Bang first became involved in witchcraft prosecutions in 1632, as can be seen in appendix C. It is interesting to note already here, that these periods quite naturally cover the introduction of demonological elements in the witchcraft trials in the early 1620s, and the gradual development and eventual dominance of demonological aspects in confessions during the 1650–1660s. While the final period matches the decline of the witchcraft prosecutions, which meant that fewer priests were involved in the trials. Due to space limitations, some representative trials have been chosen from each period.

4.2.1. The first group from 1620–1634.

The following clergymen were involved or mentioned in witchcraft trials during this period: priest Mogens Nilsen in Omgang/Makkaur, provost Oluff Karlsen in Vardø, priest Christen Nielsen in Medfjord, priest Håvard Olsen in Medfjord, chaplain Niels in Vadsø, priest Hans Hansen in Sørvær, provost Christen Mikkelsen in Vardø, priest Hans Olsen in Kjelvik and chaplain (later provost) Hans Pedersen Bang in Vadsø. In this group three had attended university, two were ‘vellert’ and for the others I have found no proof of institutional education.²⁶¹

During this period there is a consensus among historians working on the witchcraft trials in Finnmark, that the first demonological elements were introduced to the region. It remains a point of contention between Hagen and Willumsen whether these demonological ideas were introduced by the Scottish district governor John Cunningham.²⁶² This dissertation will make no active effort to solve this debate, but the first time one finds a priest mentioned in the source material is one year after Cunningham was appointed district governor. Priest Mogens was involved in the trial against Karen Eddisdatter in Omgang on the 13th of May 1620.²⁶³ After Karen had failed the water ordeal, she confessed that if priest Mogens had not pushed her through the door, the Devil would have pulled her into the sea. This can be interpreted as a possible suicide attempt by the accused witch, as other elements in the trial suggest that Karen had been illegally tortured. She confessed that when “she was loath to harm people the Devil

²⁶¹ See appendix B, pp. 114–120.

²⁶² Willumsen, *Ild og bål*, 268.; Hagen, *Porten til Helvete*, 25–26.

²⁶³ Willumsen, *Witchcraft trials*, 22–26.; Karen lived in Omgang and was most likely a Sámi.

would torment her cruelly, stretching her limbs so that she bled from her nose and mouth and was near demented.”²⁶⁴ Sometimes, the only way the incarcerated could tell the outside world of their conditions while imprisoned was by attributing the cruelties of the authorities to the Devil. Another possible example could have been when the accused child Ingeborg Iversdatter was possibly sexually assaulted while incarcerated during the chain prosecutions in 1662–63, something she claimed had been done by the Devil.²⁶⁵

The trial against Eddisdatter also highlights the dualistic view of witchcraft as a struggle between good and evil. The only time the Devil would leave Eddisdatter alone was when she was in the presence of the priest; in this context the priest was God’s representative warding off the evil Devil. It is noteworthy that it was while the priest prepared Eddisdatter spiritually, in the original “den tidt handt berette hinde” that she confessed to having killed Abraham Nielsen.²⁶⁶ In this context, the question should then be asked, prepared her spiritually for what? At that point in time Eddisdatter had yet to receive the death sentence. Should this be interpreted as a form of the aforementioned pastoralism, where there was a chance of her returning to the local community if she proved to be a repentant sinner? Most likely not, instead this could shed a light on the general mood in the court room. She had failed the water ordeal, the theory behind the water ordeal was that the sacred water would reject the impure souls. Because of the failed water ordeal, Karen Eddisdatter was branded as guilty before the final sentence was passed, thus the process of preparing her for her death began. The possible use of torture was also implemented after she failed the water ordeal. It seems to be a trend in the Finnmark material, that there is a higher frequency of illegal torture in the cases where the accused failed the water

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 26.; The use of torture before a death sentence had been given was illegal in Denmark-Norway. The presence of the priest in this situation is another example of the difference between normative regulations and praxis in Finnmark. Helle Vogt has argued that the presence of the Sámi could be one of reasons why Finnmark used illegal torture more frequently than other parts of the country. Helle Vogt, “‘Likewise no one shall be tortured’: The use of judicial torture in early modern Denmark,” *Scandinavian Journal of History* 39 (2014): 80.

²⁶⁵ Liv Helen Willumsen, “Children accused of witchcraft in 17th century Finnmark,” *Scandinavian Journal of History* 38 (2013): 28.; See also, Hagen, *Porten til Helvete*, 175.; Willumsen, *Witchcraft trials*, 212. “[...] He took her out into the snow and dragged her around the courtyard and hit her, after which he threw the clothes over [her] head.” Original: “[...] tog hende och førde hende om Kring wdi Sneint paa Pladzen och slog hende, dernest Kaste Klederne offuer hoffuedit.”

²⁶⁶ Willumsen, *Witchcraft trials*, 25.

ordeal, in addition, no existing sources give any indication that anyone ever actually passed the water ordeal.²⁶⁷

This reveals a problem that was continuous throughout the period of the witchcraft prosecutions for the clergymen. Witchcraft was a spiritual crime that affected the earthly realm and should therefore be punished under both the law of God and the king.²⁶⁸ As state employees the clergymen had an explicitly stated responsibility under the witchcraft ordinance of 1617 to prosecute alleged witches, while they simultaneously had a responsibility to save their souls from eternal damnation. This created a situation, where the alleged witch could find themselves receiving spiritual guidance and comfort from the same person that would interrogate them during a torture session. Gunnar W. Knutsen has argued that the mere presence of the priest must have been akin to psychological torture, for a Christian a false confession would mean damnation, while refusing to confess could mean extended periods of torture.²⁶⁹ In this context, it must be remembered that a confession in front of the priest was seen as necessary to receive the last rights and sacrament. There were several witchcraft trials where the accused confessed to the crimes they have been charged with, before ending their confession by asking to receive the last sacrament.²⁷⁰ It was also important for those within the accused's local community that the alleged witches received the sacrament before execution. In 1667, six representatives for the fishermen in Eastern-Finnmark sent a complaint to the state governor, because two women had been executed without receiving the sacrament in the 1662–63 prosecutions.²⁷¹

A very interesting trend that is only really explicit in this first period, is the attempt from the authorities to get the alleged witches to confess that they were organised in an almost militaristic hierarchy. On the 26th of April 1621, Kirsten Sørensdatter was brought to court in Vardø, having

²⁶⁷ Willumsen, *Ild og bål*, 279–280. Willumsen, *Witchcraft trials*, 258.; Rune Blix Hagen, “Forfølgelse av trollfolk i fortid og samtid,” *Kirke og kultur* 1 (2012): 31. Hagen has found that 30 people suffered the water ordeal in Finnmark.

²⁶⁸ This breach of both divine and earthly laws was explicitly mentioned in the trial against Maren Henningsdatter 1/12/1662 as she was found guilty of both witchcraft and having had sexual intercourse with two men that were brothers, this was the same as committing spiritual incest. Willumsen, *Witchcraft trials*, 198.; Næss, *Trolldomsprosessene i Norge*, 39, 83.

²⁶⁹ Knutsen, *Trolldomsprosessene på Østlandet*, 172–173.; Næss, *Trolldomsprosessene i Norge*, 297.

²⁷⁰ E.g. The trial against Kirsten, the wife of Rasmus Siverson on the 29/03/1634, and the trial against Ellen Gundersdatter on the 27/02/1663. Willumsen, *Witchcraft trials*, 81, 236.

²⁷¹ Torkel H. Aschehoug, “Aktstykker om Finmarken i Aaret 1667,” in *Norske samlinger* vol. 1. (Christiania: Feilberg & Landmark, 1850), 132–133.; Hagen, *Porten til helvete*, 159–160.

been denounced by seven other women who had all named her as their admiral.²⁷² Kirsten denied all accusations on the 26th, but when the court reconvened on the 28th of April it became apparent that she had been interrogated in the presence of provost Oluff Karlsen on the 27th of April. The fact that Kirsten was threatened with torture on the 26th, and suddenly confessed to almost all charges, both demonological and those concerned with *maleficium* on the 28th, strongly indicates that she suffered illegal torture. The one accusation she vehemently refused to confess to was that she was the admiral of the other women, that had previously been burned.

Likewise, on the 19th of March 1634, Kirsten, the wife of Rasmus Siverson confessed in the presence of provost Christen Mikkelsen, that the witches were organised in six districts. In the original, the term used is “Roder” which was a term meaning military unit; Kirsten confessed that there were 16 witches in each *rode*.²⁷³ Through her confession she then gave her interrogators the impression that there were at least 96 witches in Finnmark. One should not overlook the fact that clergymen were involved in both these trials. Although the mentioning of the admiral might be a linguistic link to the Scottish witchcraft trials as argued by Willumsen, there is also another theological possibility.²⁷⁴ In the 5th century A.D. a Syrian monk created the hierarchy of angels, and unlike the saints, the angels survived the Reformation as they are found in the Bible.²⁷⁵ Since there was a hierarchy of angels, the early modern theologians spent a lot of time trying to prove that a hierarchy of demons also existed. The presence of a provost in both these trials that focused on a militaristic organisation of the witches, could be interpreted within this theological intellectual change in the early modern period. Even if one agrees with Johansen that the priests did not encounter demonology at university, both provosts had attended university, and in this case only a basic understanding of the Bible and the history of

²⁷² Hagen, *Porten til helvete*, 27.; Willumsen, *Witchcraft trials*, 27.; *Tingbok 1620–1633*, 50.

²⁷³ Willumsen, *Ibid*, 81.; https://www.naob.no/ordbok/rode_2 (Last accessed 25.05.2020). The use of the term *rode* is also known from several Danish witchcraft trials. E.g. in 1623 at a court assembly in Vendsyssel, Kirsten Ibsdatter confessed that her “rodemester” preached in Latin and German, the convened witches could therefore not understand what he was saying. Johansen, *Da djævelen var ude...*, 71–72, 75.

²⁷⁴ Willumsen offers several interesting remarks concerning the use of the term admiral in both the Scottish and the Finnmark witchcraft trials, she argues that this is a linguistic link which could demonstrate influence from district governor Cunningham. Willumsen, *Witchcraft trials*, 18.; Hagen argues that this is simply a reference to the highest rank in the Danish-Norwegian navy, a position the inhabitants of Finnmark would have been familiar with. Hagen, *Porten til helvete*, 153.

²⁷⁵ Diarmaid MacCulloch, *All things made new: Writings on the Reformation* (London: Penguin, 2017), 26–28.; Philip M. Soergel, “Luther on the angels,” in *Angels in the Early Modern World*, ed. Alexandra Walsham and Peter Marshall (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 2006), 65–69.; E.g. Exodus 23:20.

Christianity would have been required.²⁷⁶ These diabolical elements could have arrived in Finnmark through an institutional education, therefore the clergy can be interpreted as adding elements of demonology to the trials. Hagen has found other examples from the witchcraft prosecutions in Finnmark that have similarities to biblical scripture. On the 31st of August 1621 the Sámi Rasti Rauelsen was put on trial in Hammerfest, after he had been denounced for knowing witchcraft.²⁷⁷ During the trial, Rauelsen confessed that he had transferred the evil he had placed in Ingeborg, the daughter of Rasmus Baardsen, into a goat which they had to put to death and throw into the sea. This narrative is similar to when Jesus removed unclean spirits from humans and placed them in pigs, which made the pigs rush to the sea where they drowned.²⁷⁸

The last key feature of the clergy's involvement during this period, is that several people were accused of having killed clergymen with witchcraft.²⁷⁹ This also introduces one of the unique aspects of the Finnmark witchcraft trials, the presence of the indigenous Sámi. At least two of the people accused of killing clergymen with witchcraft were Sámi. During the abovementioned court session in Hammerfest in August 1621, Find Thordsen confessed to having killed priest Christen Nielsen in Medfjord, and Anders Gundersen's wife Ragnhild was denounced for having killed priest Håvard Olsen in Medfjord, although this latter denunciation never developed into a witchcraft prosecution.²⁸⁰ In 1634 Sarve Pedersen denounced Raste Nilsen and his wife Solve Andersdatter for having killed the aforementioned priest Mogens with witchcraft, both Nilsen and Andersdatter were sentenced to death for this in 1638.²⁸¹

The court records reveal that Thordsen, Pedersen, and to an extent Rauelsen, were people at odds with their local communities. Rauelsen was feared by his co-inhabitants, the same went for Pedersen as he used violence to illegally claim tax from fishermen from Nordland, and priest Christen Nielsen had on several occasions complained to his friends about his numerous

²⁷⁶ Johansen *Da djævelen var ude...*, 148. Oluff Karlsen was 'vellert' and Christen Mikkelsen had matriculated at the University of Copenhagen.

²⁷⁷ Willumsen, *Witchcraft trials*, 37.

²⁷⁸ Hagen, *Porten til helvete*, 93.; Matthew 8:28–34.

²⁷⁹ The clergymen were not the only elites thought to have been killed with witchcraft, the first witchcraft trials of the seventeenth century in Finnmark against Christen Skredder and Morten Olsen in 1601, were started because they were accused of killing the district governor Hans Olsen Kofoed with witchcraft. Liv Helene Willumsen, *Steilneset: Memorial to the witches burned in Finnmark – Guidebook* (Oslo: Grøset trykk, 2011), 5–6.

²⁸⁰ Willumsen, *Witchcraft trials*, 36, 39–40.; *Tingbok 1620–1633*, 67–68.

²⁸¹ Willumsen, *Ibid*, 89.; Lilienskiold, *Trolldom og ugudelighet*, 120–122, 134–136.

quarrels with Find Thordsen. As members of the ‘culture of rule’ the clergymen had to make sure that their parishioners followed the royal letter from 1609 which dealt with the regulation of Sámi. The clergy’s participation in this regulation could create problematic relations with some Sámi parishioners. The letter from 1609 has been interpreted as being a diabolization of political problems between the regional administrators and their Sámi inhabitants.²⁸²

Due the few lines dedicated to the clergymen in these three sources, it is difficult to find any political motive in the clergy’s interaction with the accused Sámi. The conflicts were of a social nature, as the clergymen also had to respond to the calls for help from their parishioners. Oluff Rasmussen had for example complained to priest Nielsen that he was unable to get his cow back from Rauelsen. Interfering in such personal squabbles put the clergymen in a confrontational relationship with some of their parishioners, and if they died sudden or quick deaths it could result in witchcraft prosecutions. This is evident as both priests in Medfjord must have died within a rather narrow time frame for both their deaths to be brought up at the same court session. Unfortunately, the only information the sources reveal concerning the clergymen Christen Nielsen and Håvard Olsen in Medfjord, is the mention in these witchcraft trials. There is no existing information concerning the way they dealt with their parishioners, but they were both educated at university level, and they both seem to have been at odds with Sámi members of their local communities. It should be emphasised, that there are almost no diabolical elements in these trials, and their quarrels seem to have been concerned with practical matters rather than religious ones. Nielsen had complained that whenever he quarrelled with Find Thordsen, he became ill afterwards, and if he was to die on one of his journeys his death would have been caused by Find Thordsen.²⁸³ Nielsen’s complaint was an interpretation of witchcraft as *maleficium*, and supports the argument that even among the clergymen, the popular and elite interpretations of witchcraft coexisted in a hybrid form. It is also a possibility that these clergymen played a part in enforcing the state’s political and economic agenda as it has been argued by Hagen; one of the few times open conflict broke out between the ethnic groups in Finnmark was when their interests crashed.²⁸⁴

²⁸² Alm, “Kriminalisering av samisk trolldom,” 3–11.

²⁸³ Willumsen, *Witchcraft trials*, 39.

²⁸⁴ Rune Blix Hagen, “Images, representation and the self–perception of magic among the Sámi shamans of Arctic Norway, 1592–1692,” in *Contesting Orthodoxy in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Heresy, Magic and*

The overarching themes in this period is the introduction of demonological elements, with the continued survival of *maleficium*. The clergy were involved in the court trials as witnesses, spiritual comforters, and interrogators, they might also have played a part as enforcers of the state's economic and political objectives in the region.

4.2.2. The second group from 1632–1666.

The following clergymen were mentioned or involved in the witchcraft prosecutions that took place in this period: provost Christen Mikkelsen, provost Hans Pedersen Bang in Vardø, chaplain (later provost) Moses Sørensen, priest Laurits Caspersen Norman in Omgang, and priest Engebrigt Madsen who was imprisoned at Vardøhus together with the Rhodius couple. In this group three had matriculated at university, Bang was 'vellert', and concerning the remaining two priests I have not found any proof of institutional education.²⁸⁵

While the previous period had seen the introduction of demonological elements in the witchcraft trials in Finnmark, elements of *maleficium* remained in the trials. During this second period the diabolical aspects dominated the trials. If the accused confessed only to the aspects that can be considered to be *maleficium* it was no longer deemed sufficient, and some women were tortured to death as they refused to confess to diabolical witchcraft.²⁸⁶ In this period there are several explicit mentions of clergymen giving impetus to the witchcraft trials, both in the 1630s, and in the chain-prosecutions in 1662–63. Still, due to the missing court records for the period 1633–1647 there is little information concerning a substantial part of the period.²⁸⁷

Nevertheless, as shown in the introduction, the role of the clergy in the trials from the early 1630s demonstrated that chaplain Hans Pedersen Bang and Provost Christen Mikkelsen provided impetus to the witchcraft trials. On the 10th of September 1632, Kirsten, the wife of Rasmus Siverson appeared at court in Vardø.²⁸⁸ This case initially began as a slander case, Kirsten was there to challenge Niels Pedersen from Vadsø as he had berated her for practicing

Witchcraft, ed. Louise Nyholm Kallestrup and Raisa Maria Toivo (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 289–293.; Elenius, *The Barents region*, 100–104.

²⁸⁵ See appendix B, pp. 114–120.

²⁸⁶ Ingeborg the wife of Peder Krog was tortured to death after she refused to confess at her trial in Vardø on the 26th of January 1663. Dorette Poulsdatter was tortured to death after she refused to confess at her trial in Vardø on the 10th of March 1663. Willumsen, *Ild og bål*, 279.

²⁸⁷ There are some scattered sources related to witchcraft trials from 1634 and 1638.

²⁸⁸ Willumsen, *Witchcraft trials*, 75.; *Tingbok 1620–1633*, 303.

witchcraft. After she had denied in front of the court that she was knowledgeable of witchcraft, chaplain Bang stood up and announced that Karri, the wife of Jettmund Siverson had confessed that Kirsten knew witchcraft.²⁸⁹ In addition to this, provost Christen Mikkelsen arose and announced that Peder Henningsen's wife had complained to him that Kirsten had inflicted her with pain. In this trial there seems to have been an almost direct type of cooperation between the clergymen in order to turn a slander case into a witchcraft prosecution. This was an exceptional case, as the norm for when the clergymen were involved in slander cases was that the clergy refused to confirm the accusations and rumours. One example would be when priest Hans Olsen rejected the claim that he had heard Peder Jensen calling Gjertrud, the wife of Thomis Willumsen a witch inside priest Hans's own house.²⁹⁰ This aggressive way of dealing with slander cases as showcased by Bang and Mikkelsen seems to have increased in 1662–63, when the chain prosecutions began and the panic in the local communities increased.

On the 8th of October 1662, Margrete Jonsdatter asked her local community if they had heard that she was rumoured for witchcraft.²⁹¹ Margrete was given a good testimony from her local community in Vardø, although they confirmed that they had heard rumours about her being skilled in witchcraft. By receiving her testimony at a court session, she had completed a judicial response to the rumours and thereby met the social expectations of her local community.²⁹² Through the public testimony Jonsdatter increased her credibility within the local community, but this was not enough. For on the 25th of October 1662 Jonsdatter's husband Styrek Olsen cited three women for having denounced his wife for witchcraft. The district governor Christopher Orning then asked Jonsdatter if she would stand by the statement she had given in the presence of himself, the provost Hans Pedersen Bang and the bailiff Niels Sørensen Fiil, to which "she replies, Yes, and that they had, moreover, at first been the root of the same accusation."²⁹³ Margrete's involvement with the local court ended with her being executed for witchcraft in 1663. Evidently, the elites in the region could in certain cases actively spread the information they received from interrogating other accused witches into the local communities.

²⁸⁹ *Tingbok 1620–1633*, 290–292. Kari was executed for witchcraft in 1632.

²⁹⁰ Willumsen, *Witchcraft trials*, 67.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 175.

²⁹² Næss, *Trolldomsprosessene i Norge*, 195.

²⁹³ Willumsen, *Witchcraft trials*, 176.; For an interesting comparative study of Jonsdatter's trial, see – Liv Helene Willumsen, "Trollkvinnen som fiendebilde," *ARR: Idéhistorisk tidsskrift* 3 (2019): 101–112.

This is evident as the priest Hans Pedersen Bang contributed to *verifying* the rumours in slander cases on at least two occasions.

On the opposite end of such a confirmative role, was the trial against Dorette Lauritsdatter on the 16th of February 1657 in Vadsø, this case revolved around the fact that Niels Pedersen had held Dorette imprisoned as he suspected her of knowing witchcraft.²⁹⁴ Mogens Einersen who was Dorette's husband demanded that the witchcraft she was accused of had to be proven in front of court. Merchant Laurits Henriksen Bras, who was summoned as a witness by Pedersen, accused Dorette of having killed three of his cows because he had taken back the cow he had rented to her, this was a clear case of *maleficium* and considering when this trial took place it is noticeable that it contains almost no diabolical elements. In this case the priest Laurits Caspersen Norman was addressed as a potential witness, as he supposedly had heard Dorette calling Gundelle, the wife of Peder Smeld a witch. This case was eventually dismissed as the court did not accept the presented evidence. The magistrate believed it to be a case of slanderous gossip, and the court threatened Dorette that she would suffer the discipline of the Church if she did not behave in a neighbourly fashion in the future.

One of the reasons why the case against Dorette fell through is clearly theological in nature. Johannes Jonsen dropped his case against Dorette, as his wife had stated that: "she could not blame Dorrite if the Lord had burdened her [Jonsen's wife]."²⁹⁵ This providentialist mindset was often present when the parishioners brought up the poor fishing seasons in court; but it is one of the only direct examples from Finnmark concerning providentialist thinking in a witchcraft trial.²⁹⁶ Historical research on the Danish witchcraft trials have argued that providentialism was a key factor in ending the witchcraft prosecutions, but it is a seldom seen in the Finnmark trials.²⁹⁷ Jonsen's wife could have reached this understanding on her own, but it is stated in the court records that she was a poor woman. As shown, the parish churches in Finnmark only had the 'basics' of religious literature, and due to her poverty, it is questionable

²⁹⁴ Willumsen, *Witchcraft trials*, 166.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 167. Original: "att hun icke Kunnde schylde Dorrite der fore, om gud haffde lagt hennde noget paa."

²⁹⁶ Providentialist thinking in relation to fishing, e.g.: SATØ, *The archive of the Finnmark district magistrate*, no. 09. Fol. 170b–171b., 203b–204a., 214a. An example, my translation. "[...] How God the almighty had in the previous year haunted and punished them, as some of them this past year had almost starved to death as they had been almost incapable of catching any fish." *Ibid*, no. 09. Fol. 100b–101a.

²⁹⁷ Johansen, *Da djævelen var ude...*, especially chapter 9.

if Jonsen's wife had access to additional religious literature. It is therefore likely that she received these providentialist ideas in church during the priest's sermons.

Another element that began to develop in Finnmark towards the end of the chain prosecutions in 1662–1663 was the abovementioned clerical pastoralism.²⁹⁸ In the sentencing against the children Ingeborg, Maren, and Karen on the 27th of February 1663, it is stated that the priests had worked assiduously to reconvert them back to God from the Devil, but they had been unsuccessful in this endeavour.²⁹⁹ In this trial “priests” has been interpreted to include provost Hans Pedersen Bang, chaplain Moses Sørensen, and the prisoner priest Engebrigt Madsen, as the complaints from Rhodius in 1666 implies that Madsen also participated in the interrogations outside of court.³⁰⁰ As the children refused to reconvert, the bailiff and priests negotiated, and the bailiff suggested that the children should be executed to make sure that they did not make other children follow the Devil.³⁰¹ This meant that the clergymen and bailiff advocated for an execution. In this trial, the court found it difficult to pass a sentence, the magistrate and jury decided to pass on the case to the court of appeal judge as the children were minors, and they had not yet taken the sacrament. The children were declared innocent by the court of appeal in 1663.³⁰² If the children had reconverted, they would most likely have been allowed to return to their local communities, although under close supervision. Witchcraft trials against children were often a sign that the major witchcraft prosecutions were in their final phases.³⁰³ These pastoralist tendencies sought to reconvert and return the accused children to their communities. Both the notion of providentialism and the increase of pastoralism, although primarily directed towards the children in 1663, must be understood as another influence from the clergymen.

²⁹⁸ Pastoralism focused on reconverting the witches back from the devil and has been interpreted as an important co-contributor in the decline of the witchcraft prosecutions. Dillinger, *Evil People*, 177–180.; Alison Rowlands, “Father Confessors and Clerical intervention in Witch-Trials in seventeenth-century Lutheran Germany: The case of Rothenburg, 1692.” *The English Historical Review* 131 (2016): 1021.

²⁹⁹ Willumsen, *Witchcraft trials*, 239.; Kirsten Bergh, “Til ild og bål: En kort oversikt over Finnmarks hekseprosesser,” in *Vardøhus festning 650 år: Jubileumsskrift*, ed. G. I. Willoch (Oslo: Landstrykkeriet, 1960), 136.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid*, 286. Question number 12 in Rhodius's letter.

³⁰¹ In Sweden children accused of witchcraft provided the authorities with endless lists of people they had denounced for witchcraft. Bengt Ankarloo, “Sweden: The mass burnings,” in *Early Modern European Witchcraft: Centres and peripheries*, ed. Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), 298.

³⁰² SATR, *Court of appeal protocol for Nordland and Finnmark*, part 2. 1663–1668. Fol. 151–152.; Rune Blix Hagen, “Ingen uediske mennesker skal stå til troende: Lagmannsdømming i Nordnorske trolldomssaker 1647–1680,” *Heimen* 52 (2015): 159.

³⁰³ Hagen, *Porten til helvete*, 191.; Julian Goodare, *The European witch-hunt* (London: Routledge, 2016), 349.

Some clergymen in Finnmark clearly had personal interpretations concerning witchcraft. During the court of appeal session in 1663, it becomes evident that when Anna Rhodius had been interrogating Siri Pedersdatter, she first threatened that she would place Siri and Mari in a house by themselves. This kind of isolation was a torture method frequently used in Sweden, where the priests in shifts kept the imprisoned continuously awake while giving spiritual guidance.³⁰⁴ Then Anna Rhodius proceeded to ask the provost Hans Pedersen Bang “if he could place his cross on her [Siri’s] chest.”³⁰⁵ This must be interpreted as an attempt from Rhodius to start a kind of exorcism, however, Bang refused the request. He stated that “he had once previously made the sign of the cross over her chest and that was in the sacred baptism, therefore there was no need to do so.”³⁰⁶ This tells us that Bang was firmly rooted within Lutheran orthodoxy, as there had been a debate lasting from 1604–1607 in Copenhagen between philippists and Lutheran orthodox factions concerning if the exorcism paragraph should be kept in the baptism. The Lutheran orthodox faction eventually won the debate and the paragraph remained until the eighteenth century.³⁰⁷ Throughout his career, Bang was involved in many trials where the pact with the Devil was emphasised. Still, he did not believe that the Devil had a chance to possess any of the alleged witches if they had received the sacred baptism. So although Anna Rhodius has been rightfully attributed a large degree of influence concerning the implementation of new elements of demonology in the 1662–1663 prosecutions, it is also quite possible that the local clergymen aided in implementing new aspects of demonology and stopped the introduction of others, such as exorcisms.

In this period, the clergymen entered a phase where they were more active as prosecutors in the witchcraft trials. This fits with the overall tendency of the period, as mentioned the prosecuting authorities eventually stopped accepting confessions to only *maleficium*, and applied torture

³⁰⁴ Ankarloo, “Sweden: The mass burnings,” 303.; Ambrosius Rhodius was suspected of having an extensive correspondence with someone in Sweden while he was imprisoned at Vardøhus, although according to his sentence he was not allowed to have access to pen and paper. Willumsen, *Witchcraft Trials*, 298.; SATØ, *The archives of the Finnmark district magistrate*, no. 09. Fol. 205a–b.

³⁰⁵ My translation. SATR, *Court of appeal protocol for Nordland and Finnmark*, part 2. 1663–1668. Fol. 164. Original: “Och med det samme sagde hun [Anna Rhodius] spøtt din (unde i och) i fra dig och bad her[r] Hans sognepresten her[r] Hans [sic] her paa steden at hand uille legge et kaars paa hindis brøst. Huor til her[r] Hans suaritt, at hand haffuer en gang til foren giort kaars paa hindis brøst i den h.[ellige] daab, derfor giøres det icke denne gang videre behoff.”

³⁰⁶ My translation, *Ibid.*

³⁰⁷ The exorcism paragraph was removed between 1606–1610, before it was reintroduced after extensive pressure from the Lutheran orthodox faction in 1610. Oftestad *et al.*, *Norsk Kirkehistorie*, 117.

until they received the confessions they wanted. Willumsen argues that the populace in Finnmark had adopted some of the demonological traits they had experienced in the trials into their own understanding of witchcraft by 1650, and most of these demonological ideas must have been introduced by local elites.³⁰⁸ The involvement of the clergy in this period fits within the wider interpretation of the Finnmark prosecutions being driven from the top-down. One of the key accusations of the 1662–63 trials were that the witches had conspired against the district governor Orning; but this complot also involved provost Bang.³⁰⁹ Both Bang and Orning argued that they were close to invulnerable due to their strong faith in God, this nurtured the idea that a powerful faith in God was an effective way to ward off witchcraft. Through this focus they both participated in strengthening the dualistic understanding of witchcraft as a struggle between God and the Devil, while also strengthening the role of the witch as society's internal other.

4.2.3. The last period 1671–1692.

The following clergymen were active in the witchcraft prosecutions that took place during this period: provost Torben Reiersen in Loppa, provost Moses Sørensen in Vardø, and chaplain (later provost) Ludvig Christensen Paus in Vadsø. In this group all the clergymen had attended the University of Copenhagen.

During this period the decline and eventual end of witchcraft prosecutions took place in Finnmark. After the chain-prosecutions of 1662–63, the criteria for evidence in a witchcraft trial became increasingly stricter and more trials were passed on to the court of appeal. Evidently, it became much more difficult to successfully accuse someone of witchcraft at the local court. Several historical studies have argued that this increased strictness concerning evidence was the leading cause in the decline of the witchcraft prosecutions.³¹⁰ This view is maintained both by historians who see the witchcraft prosecutions as originating among the populace, and those who see the prosecutions as originating among the elite.³¹¹ This increased

³⁰⁸ Willumsen, *Ild og bål*, 306.

³⁰⁹ The child Maren Olsdatter confessed that Solwe had cast a spell on the foot of Karen Rasmusdatter who was the wife of provost Bang, but the witches could not injure Bang. Willumsen, *Witchcraft trials*, 219. This was a recurring theme in the confessions, such as witches being unable to capsize boats due to the sailors unfaltering faith in God

³¹⁰ Hagen, "Ingen uediske," 148–168.; Næss, *Trolldomsprosessene i Norge*, 360.; Willumsen, *Ild og bål*, 367.

³¹¹ Dillinger, "Politics, state-building and witch-hunting," 546.; Næss, *Trolldomsprosessene i Norge*, 273.

strictness relating to evidence is also clear in the witchcraft prosecutions in Finnmark. One example would be when deputy-bailiff Olle Andersen struggled to measure out a sentence against Marite Nielsdatter at a court trial in Vadsø in 1690 after she had used various rituals and the name of saints to divine where stolen items could be found. According to Andersen there was no mention of such a crime in the judicial codes, this is remarkable as Nielsdatter's actions could have been sentenced under the section on benevolent magic in the witchcraft ordinance of 1617/87.³¹² Andersen argued that her practices were shameful and offensive, but he seemingly interpreted the trial as a fraud case rather than a case concerned with benevolent magic. During this last period 14 people were accused of witchcraft, but only one person received the death sentence from the local court.³¹³ This increased strictness concerning the evidence presented at court, also affected the involvement of the clergymen in the prosecutions in Finnmark, due to the nature of the cases and the reduced use of imprisonment there were fewer interrogations outside of court. The decline in interrogations outside of court reduced the possibility of the clergymen to contribute in the prosecutions. Explicit involvement from the clergymen is evident in five out of the total of 14 witchcraft trials in this period. In addition, Moses Sørensen was most likely involved in Karen Simensdatter's trial in 1688, he is not explicitly mentioned in the court records, but he was involved in several of the trials both before and after her trial, and she was sentenced to public confession, a sentence Sørensen would have been required to complete.³¹⁴ This means that the number of trials where clergymen were involved can be increased to six in this last period.

Another important change is the clear differentiation between cases related to benevolent magic and witchcraft. In this last period there is an increase of trials related to benevolent magic. During the chain-prosecutions, the trials that began with accusations of benevolent magic or *maleficium* often developed into full-blown diabolical witchcraft confessions. This last period stands out, because benevolent magic was treated and punished 'mildly' in accordance with the

³¹² Willumsen, *Witchcraft trials*, 373.; Secher, *Corpus Constitutionum*, 516–518. The section concerned with benevolent magic in the witchcraft ordinances explicitly criminalised *manen* and *gjenviising*, which was verbal magic, incantations, and finding lost items by using various objects and performing rituals.

³¹³ Willumsen, *Ild og bål*, 333. Willumsen has found that: one person was executed, four people were found to be innocent, one person was fined, one person was sentenced to leave the country, two people had their trials postponed and never re-opened, two people were sentenced to confess in church, one person died in custody of an unknown reason, one person was killed with an axe while in custody, and for the last person the outcome of the trial is unknown.

³¹⁴ Willumsen, *Witchcraft Trials*, 369–370.

witchcraft ordinance of 1617.³¹⁵ The other key difference in this period, is that the majority of witchcraft prosecutions were held against Sámi, witchcraft trials against Sámi had a different character as proven by both Hagen and Willumsen. Even during the chain-prosecutions the diabolical element was not emphasised as the focus was placed on the Sámi's polytheistic religion and Sámi variants of *maleficium* such as *gand*, or local political and economic conflicts.³¹⁶ This is probably another reasons why there is so little clerical involvement in this period, even during the trial against the Sámi Anders Poulsen in 1692, which was the witchcraft trial that contained the most theological elements, the court records give no indication of clerical involvement.³¹⁷ During Poulsen's trial the interrogation and questioning was carried out only by the local officials and regional authorities.³¹⁸

There seems to be pastoralist tendencies also in this last period, but it is only explicit in one trial and is difficult to interpret. The possible pastoralism can be seen in the witchcraft trial against Kirsten Knudsdatter in 1679/1680. Kirsten was accused by the bell ringer Willatz Mortensen for having inflicted *gand* on his wife and son.³¹⁹ Even after she had been interrogated, she refused to confess to the accusations: “[Kirsten replied] she neither would nor could in any way comply by lying about herself.”³²⁰ The trial against Kirsten was passed on to the court of appeal, where the case was brought up in 1680 and she was found to be innocent. During this trial, there is a noteworthy interaction between Knudsdatter and the provost Moses Sørensen. “[...] priest Moses together with the local elites asked Kirsten to confess and put her

³¹⁵ E.g. Lange Mogens Zarasen was sentenced to being whipped at the pole and flee the country in 1672. Willumsen, *Witchcraft Trials*, 328–329. In this context the term ‘mildly’ must be taken with a grain of salt, being forced to flee the country, or losing social standing after conducting a public confession was of course detrimental for the accused person, however, it must have been better than being executed.

³¹⁶ For more information on *Gand* see – Eldar Heide, *Gand, seid og åndevind* (University of Bergen: PhD dissertation, 2006), 235ff.

³¹⁷ Willumsen disagrees with Hagen and Niemi, that the Poulsen trial is one of the best sources concerning Sami religion from the seventeenth century. Willumsen argues that the Poulsen trial must be analysed as the confession of a man who changed his confession to what he believed his interrogators wanted to hear, in order to survive. Willumsen dismisses Poulsen's trial as a useful source for analysing Sámi religious practice. Liv Helene Willumsen, “Trolldomssak mot en samisk noaide – Anders Poulsen, Vadsø 1692,” *Heimen* 53 (2016): 222.

³¹⁸ Rune Blix Hagen, “Harmløs dissenter eller djvelsk trollmann? Trolldomsprosessen mot samnen Anders Poulsen i 1692,” *Historisk Tidsskrift* 81 (2002): 324– 326.

³¹⁹ Two of Willatz the bell ringer's former wives had previously been executed for witchcraft, Baarne in 1652, and Karen Andersdatter in 1663. See Rune Blix Hagen's open access database on the people accused of witchcraft in Finnmark, process number 67 and 107. <https://dataverse.no/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10.18710/OWP5IP> (Last accessed: 25.05.2020).

³²⁰ Willumsen, *Witchcraft trials*, 352.

mind to God in heaven, to reconvert, so that she could become a child of God.”³²¹ From an initial standpoint this statement has pastoralist tendencies, and as previously argued, Moses Sørensen was most likely involved in the pastoralist attempt of reconverting the children during the 1662–63 prosecutions. However, Kirsten responded that: “she would like to confess, but she was not guilty of any of the things she had been accused of, she was willing to die on this being the truth, she could not lie on her own person.”³²² This can be interpreted as Sørensen having little intention of allowing Kirsten Knudsdatter to reconvert and return to her local community, instead his involvement follows the observed patterns from the other periods. Sørensen’s objective was to get Knudsdatter to confess, so that she could become a repentant sinner and receive the last sacrament in order to reach heaven after her death.

The aspect that is unique to this last period regarding clerical involvement, was when the clergymen interceded on behalf of an accused person. This new type of involvement is most evident in the aforementioned trial against Marite Nielsdatter on the 1st of December 1690. Although Marite had confessed to the accusations, which was some of the most damning evidence in a court trial, she insisted that she had meant no evil and had no knowledge of witchcraft.³²³ The source states that both her spiritual comforters together with the majority of the local community interceded on her behalf while claiming that she was innocent, and several people offered to swear an oath of compurgation on her behalf. Nielsdatter was eventually sentenced to pay two casks of flour to the homeless in the parish and have the sinfulness of her actions explained to her by her spiritual mentors during her next confession.³²⁴ The mentioned spiritual mentors in this trial must have been Moses Sørensen and Ludvig C. Paus. As seen in the trial against Kirsten Knudsdatter in 1679/1680, Sørensen still wanted to execute witches when they were put on trial for *maleficium*. The fact that Paus interceded in Nielsdatter’s trial is also noteworthy. Paus was part of what Niemi has called a scientific and literary milieu in Vadsø during the 1680–90s.³²⁵ Paus must have shared Sørensen’s view on witchcraft as a real phenomenon that needed to be punished; for in a poem meant as a homage to district governor

³²¹ My translation. Næss, *Trolldomsprosessene i Norge*, 203. Original: [...] Hr. Mosis [...] tilige med Øffrigheden bade Kirsten at gaa til rette Bekiendelse, och satte hendis sind til Gud i himmelen, omvende sig saa, at hun kand bliffue it guds Barn.”

³²² My translation. SATR, *court of appeal protocol for Nordland and Finnmark*, 1671–1683, Fol. 77b.

³²³ Lilienskiold, *Trolldom og ugudelighet*, 255.; Willumsen, *Witchcraft trials*, 371–373.

³²⁴ Willumsen, *Witchcraft Trials*, 373.; Lilienskiold, *Trolldom og Ugudelighet*, 254–255.

³²⁵ Niemi, *Vadsøs Historie*, 334.

Lilienskiold, Paus stated that the best thing that happened under the administration of Christopher Orning in the 1660s was that: “witches were sent to the warm bath.”³²⁶ This must be interpreted as reference to the execution of alleged witches during the chain-prosecutions of 1662–63. The fact that both these clergymen interceded on behalf of Marite Nielsdatter, shows that both Paus and Sørensen operated with a clear differentiation and nuance concerning the correct punishment for witchcraft and benevolent magic. The strong response from Nielsdatter’s local community is worth investigating further. Through her confession, it became evident that Nielsdatter had knowledge of and practiced rather elaborate rituals in order to track down thieves, an area of expertise for cunning people at the time. Willem de Blècourt has argued that the cunning people met most resistance from the clergymen, as they both operated within the same sphere of activity in the form of healing and granting spiritual comfort through the offering of rituals.³²⁷ However, due the large amount of support Nielsdatter received from her local community and clergymen, it is possible to interpret her case as the defence of a cunning woman, whose skills the clergymen might also have used when they found it to be necessary.³²⁸

To summarise this period, there was a gradual exclusion of the clergymen from the local courts, this decline was most likely caused by the less frequent use of interrogations outside of court. The witchcraft prosecutions of this period were also of a fundamentally different nature as they dealt with elements of Sámi magic and religion, and the local courts dealt with them primarily on their own. The clergymen continued to take an aggressive stance in cases relating to

³²⁶ My translation. Lilienskiold, *Trolldom og ugudelighet*, 31.

³²⁷ Willem de Blècourt, “Witch doctors, soothsayers and priests. On cunning folk in European historiography and tradition,” *Social History* 19 (1994): 302.; The clergymen often had a responsibility to take care of the sick and treat those who were injured. As when Niels Mikkelsen had stabbed Johan Johnsen with a knife, it was the priest Laurits C. Norman who treated his wounds together with Wendelle Olsdatter. SATØ, *The archives of the Finnmark district magistrate*, no. 08. Fol. 072a–b.; A contemporary of Paus who was very critical towards cunning people was the priest Petter Dass in Alstahaug parish. Dass wrote extensively and is an example of a clergymen in Northern-Norway that represented the wider religious agenda as it was expressed by the theologians in Copenhagen, with his aggressive stance towards benevolent magic. Rune Blix Hagen, “Katekismesangene hos Petter Dass. Norsk Protestantisk demonologi på vers og rim,” In *Efter Reformationen: rapporter til det 29. Nordiske historikermøte* vol. 3. (Aalborg: Aalborg universitetsforlag, 2017), 113.; Cecilie Andersen, *Hr. Petter, Signe-Folk og Satans træl: En undersøkelse av Petter Dass sin oppfatning av trolldom og hvit magi i andre halvdel av 1600-tallet* (University of Tromsø: master dissertation, 2017), 56–72.

³²⁸ Alver stresses the point that also members of the elite such as the local clergymen used the skills of cunning people when it was deemed necessary. Alver, *Mellem mennesker og magter*, 143.; Næss has an example of two priests in Vest-Agder who were brought to court for utilising benevolent magic in an attempt to heal the sickness of one of them. Næss, *Trolldomsprosessen i Norge*, 293.

witchcraft throughout the period as they wanted the accused to be executed. There is little explicit evidence of providentialist thinking or pastoralism among the clergymen who were active in the prosecutions in this period. An interesting trend that develops is the nuanced view and differentiation between witchcraft and benevolent magic as the 1617/1687 witchcraft ordinances were followed more strictly. Some of those found guilty of benevolent magic were sentenced to be disciplined in church. While in one case two clergymen who wanted accused witches executed, interceded on behalf of a person accused of what must be interpreted as being part of a ritual related to benevolent magic. A more nuanced view is seen among the clergy in this period, while they at the same time were increasingly excluded from the court room. This change in mentality could possibly have been caused by an amassed experience in witchcraft trials amongst the clergymen.

4.3. The development of expertise among the clergy in Finnmark.

In his study of the witchcraft prosecutions in Eastern-Norway, Gunnar W. Knutsen argued that the executioner had personal economic incentives for prosecuting alleged witches, as more people executed meant more money in the executioner's pocket. Knutsen showed that due to the large geographical distance between the various witchcraft prosecutions in Eastern-Norway, the different priests and deputy-bailiffs did not partake in enough witchcraft trials to gain any sort of extraordinary expertise concerning witchcraft.³²⁹ Knutsen postulates that since there were so few executioners they had more experience with the phenomenon and had more experience when it came to forcing confessions from alleged witches. This argument could be applied to Finnmark as a new executioner was appointed right before the chain prosecutions began in 1662–63.³³⁰ In the context of this dissertation, it is more interesting to analyse if any expertise concerning witchcraft developed among the clergymen in Finnmark. As aforementioned it was the eastern part of Finnmark that experienced the most witchcraft trials. In Eastern-Finnmark the epicentres of the prosecutions were Vadsø and Vardø, by looking at the map in appendix D it becomes evident that both these villages were within Vardø parish. A

³²⁹ Knutsen, *Trolldomsprosessene på Østlandet*, 176.

³³⁰ Hagen, *Porten til helvete*, 175.; The executioner was named Tor Olsen and he had previously served Torben Reiersen the provost of Western-Finnmark. SATØ, *The archives of the Finnmark district magistrate*, nr. 09. Fol. 173b. District governor Orning pardoned him from his death sentence for grand larceny and appointed him to be the executioner on the 17th of October 1662. *Ibid*, nr. 09. Fol. 224b–225a.

cross-referencing between the map and appendix C also show that the clergymen in Vardø parish were undoubtedly the ones most heavily involved in the witchcraft trials. In addition to the concentration of trials, the parish of Vardø was one of the more stable parishes when it came to the length of the clergymen's active career. Although there were some priests who only worked in the parish for a short period, Christen Mikkelsen, Hans Pedersen Bang, and Moses Sørensen worked in the parish for a combined period of 87 years.

It has become evident, that several of the clergymen in Vardø parish also cooperated and participated in the same witchcraft trials. Hans Pedersen Bang can be described as the middleman in this distribution of expertise between clergymen in Vardø parish. As a chaplain he appeared together with provost Mikkelsen in isolated witchcraft trials.³³¹ When Bang became provost, he had assistance from his chaplain Moses Sørensen in the chain-prosecutions of 1662–63.³³² Sørensen again cooperated with Ludvig C. Paus in the witchcraft prosecutions toward the end of the century.³³³ A relatively high level of expertise based on extensive practical experiences with witchcraft trials seem to have developed among the clergymen in Vardø parish. Unlike the executioner examined by Knutsen, the clergymen received no additional salary for burning witches. In fact, the execution of a parishioner meant a reduction in the clergy's income, as they received *vog* of fish from each parishioner who was not impoverished.³³⁴ The reason this expertise developed among the clergymen in Eastern-Finnmark, was simply because Vardøhus became the centre for the three chain-prosecutions that took place in the seventeenth century. There is very little source evidence to support a hypothesis that the clergymen in Vardø parish had a more aggressive stance towards witchcraft than their colleagues in other parishes. The witchcraft expertise developed through the clergymen's fulfilment of their duties as state officials.

A closer look at the biography and various roles played by one clergyman in the witchcraft trials, can offer nuance to the understanding that the clergy primarily involved themselves in the trials in their role as state employees. Concerning clerical involvement in the witchcraft

³³¹ The trial against Kirsten, the wife of Rasmus Siverson 10/09/1632. *Tingbok 1620–1633*, 303.

³³² We know that they at least cooperated in the attempt to reconvert the children accused of witchcraft. Willumsen, *Witchcraft trials*, 239.

³³³ As is evident in the trial against Marite Nielsdatter in 1690. Willumsen, *Witchcraft trials*, 371–373.

³³⁴ SATØ, *The archives of the Finnmark district magistrate*, no. 09. Fol. 2b.

trials, provost Hans Pedersen Bang stands out, he was involved in two chain-prosecutions and several isolated trials, and he worked in Vardø parish for over 30 years. Bang's involvement will be used to analyse deviances from normative regulations, as well as possible personal incentives for the clergymen to involve themselves in the witchcraft prosecutions.

4.4. Provost Hans Pedersen Bang and the witchcraft prosecutions.

Before Bang's understanding of witchcraft can be analysed it is necessary to prove that Hans Pedersen and Hans Pedersen Bang were the same person. The historiography is not clear on this point, as the three scholarly works that most researchers use when researching the clergy in Finnmark, have no concrete answer to the question if these two were the same person.³³⁵ As previously mentioned, these two are also counted as two different people in Willumsen's index. In the following, I will argue, that Hans Pedersen and Hans Pedersen Bang were the same person, and thereby the clergyman who was involved in the most witchcraft prosecutions.

Priest Hans is mentioned for the first time in the court records during a court session in Vadsø on the 5th of March 1632. Knud Lauritsen stated in court that Hans was present at the deathbed of his wife Birette. Birette had told Hans that her death was caused by witchcraft created by Karri, the wife of Jetmund Siverson.³³⁶ In 1632 Hans was the chaplain in Vadsø, subordinate to Christen Mikkelsen who was the parish priest in Vardø and provost of Eastern-Finnmark. Hans must have become the chaplain sometime between chaplain Niels who was chaplain in 1626 and the trial in 1632, but a precise year of appointment is not known.

One of the methodological problems of being certain that Pedersen and Bang were the same person, is the fact that the court records covering the period 1633–1647 are missing. In addition, there is a report from *superintendent* Peder Schjelderup dated the 8th of June 1641, which stated

³³⁵ To summarise the historiographical debate – Andreas Erlandsen's study does not include Bang at all, it begins with his successor Christen Jakobsen Falster. See – Erlandsen, *Biographiske Efterretninger*, 38. Daniel Thrap argued that Bang arrived in the parish in 1653, Thrap must have been unaware that there was a chaplain by the name of Hans Pedersen active in the parish from the 1630s onwards. See – Thrap, "Efterretning om Nordenfjelske," 322.; Thrap also argued that Bang matriculated at the University of Copenhagen in 1650, under the name Johannes Paulsen Bang. See – Smith, *Kjøbenhavns universitets matrikel: 1611–1667*, 224. Peter Sollied disproved Thrap's arguments concerning Bang's enrolment at university, but Sollied did not draw any conclusive remarks concerning the question of whether Hans Pedersen and Hans Pedersen Bang were the same person, Sollied stated that they *might* have been the same person. See – Sollied, *Prester, prestegjeld*, 39.

³³⁶ *Tingbok 1620–1633*, 291. The source does not mention when Birette died. Testimonies and/or accusations given on the deathbed held extra authority as they were seen to be part of the dying persons last will.

that Vadsø chaplaincy was vacant. The main problem concerns proving that the Hans Pedersen who was provost in the 1650s, was the same person that was active as chaplain during the 1630s. Therefore, it is necessary to prove that Mikkelsen died and Bang was promoted to parish priest and provost before 1641. The sources show that both Mikkelsen and Bang were alive in 1638, as Maren, the wife of Jon Dass, was accused of using witchcraft to kill Mikkelsen's servant in 1638.³³⁷

During a witchcraft trial in 1628 it was stated that Mikkelsen's wife was named Barbra, this is crucial information for finding out that Mikkelsen was dead by 1640.³³⁸ On the 7th of August 1655, Hans Jensen Ørbech read aloud a letter dated the 16th of March 1640, concerning the debt owed by Barbra, the widow of provost Christen, to merchant Christen Christensen in Bergen.³³⁹ Most likely Mikkelsen died not long before this trial was brought up at court. Mikkelsen's death around 1640 would also explain the report from *superintendent* Schjelderup from the 8th of July 1641, where he stated that in Finnmark the parishes of Hammerfest and Kjølvik were vacant, the same applied for the chaplaincy in Vadsø.³⁴⁰

Hans was probably elected as parish priest by his parishioners as their electoral rights were strong in the 1640s. Provost Hans appeared at many court sessions during the 1650s, and every time he was addressed as provost Hans Pedersen.³⁴¹ The first time he was addressed as Hans Pedersen Bang in the court records was on the 23rd of September 1660, still with the title of parish priest of Vardø and provost of Eastern-Finnmark.³⁴² From that date onwards he was addressed as Hans Pedersen Bang until his death in 1664. Based on the presented primary evidence, it is my understanding that Hans Pedersen and Hans Pedersen Bang were the same person. This means that Bang was the clergyman involved in most amount of witchcraft trials.

³³⁷ Lilienskiold, *Trolldom og ugudelighet*, 132. It should be noted that district governor Lilienskiold did not use the normal "*salige*" when he wrote about the deceased. The servant could have been working for Mikkelsen's widow and still be addressed as Mikkelsen's servant after his death.

³³⁸ Willumsen, *Witchcraft trials*, 64.; *Tingbok 1620–1633*, 211. "[...] that the priest's wife Barbra told Kaa Anne."

³³⁹ SATØ, *The archives of the Finnmark district magistrate*, no. 09 Fol. 27b.; In 1655 Hans Jensen Ørbech was "slodtzlougens forualtere paa Waardøehus" meaning he was the *de facto* district governor, while the *de jure* district governor Jørgen Friis was absent from the region.

³⁴⁰ RA/EA-4061/F/L0061 Danske Kanselli, Skapsaker, serie F – Skap 14, pakke 157, litra. L. p. 406.

³⁴¹ E.g. SATØ, *The archives of the Finnmark district magistrate*, no. 08. Fol. 047a, 060a–b, 118a–b.; *Ibid.* no.09 Fol. 008b, 011a, 027a. See appendix B for an extensive list of where he is mentioned in the court records.

³⁴² *Ibid.* no. 09. Fol. 088a.

4.4.1. Normative deviation and personal incentives in the case of Bang.

The witchcraft trials that Hans Pedersen Bang involved himself in have already been used as examples on several occasions. It is therefore possible from the beginning of this micro-study to state that priest Hans wanted to prosecute both *maleficium* and diabolism. He instigated several trials, and the only time he can be interpreted as showing pastoralist tendencies was towards the children in 1662–63. Several of the trials he participated in during the 1630s were clearly marked by an interpretation of witchcraft as *maleficium*. In the trial against Karri, the wife of Jettmund Siverson in 1632, priest Bang and merchant Bras must be seen as the instigators as they appeared at court to recount the confession Birette gave on her death bed.³⁴³ This trial was started on accusations of *maleficium*, the Devil was mentioned only briefly after Karri failed the water ordeal, before she was sentenced to death. However, it was the elements concerned with *maleficium* that dominated the trial.³⁴⁴ Therefore although Karri eventually matched the definition of a witch given in the 1617 ordinance: “real witches are those who have bound themselves to the Devil or associate with him.”³⁴⁵ The trial against Karri was started on accusations of a popular understanding of witchcraft and magic. The fact that priest Hans participated in starting a witchcraft trial based solely on accusations of *maleficium* was a deviation from normative regulations issued in the 1617 ordinance. It is possible that Hans believed in the implicit Devil pact, but there is no explicit evidence of such an understanding in any of the relevant court records. Therefore, it seems that although Bang participated in the later chain-prosecutions that were increasingly dominated by a diabolical interpretation of witchcraft, his own personal understanding of the crime was a hybrid form which incorporated elements from both the elite and popular interpretation.

The deviation between normative regulation and the way Bang operated in Finnmark, is also evident in the trial against the Sámi Niels Sich in 1634. Hagen has called the trial against Sich a reverse witchcraft trial, he was brought to court to prove the witchcraft rumours he had spread concerning several women living in Ekkerø, but he failed to do so and was sentenced to death.³⁴⁶ Bang was only passively involved in Sich’s trial, as it became evident that he had refused to

³⁴³ *Tingbok 1620–1633*, 291–293.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*; Willumsen, *Witchcraft trials*, 72. “Which they cast into the water in the name of the Evil One.”

³⁴⁵ Secher, *Corpus Constitutionum*, 516–518.

³⁴⁶ Hagen, “Rettsaken mot samene Niels Sich,” 345–352.

grant the women the Eucharist because of the witchcraft rumours they had attached to them. As argued in the previous chapter, the denial of the sacrament was a form of socio-normative regulation. From the trial records it does not seem like Bang was the accuser, in fact, it seems he was not even present at the court trial. Under the 1617 ordinance, he was meant to have accused the reputed woman at a local court session as the ordinance stated: “[state officials are to] report, prosecute, accuse and punish [the witches], as long as they themselves do not wish to stand to justice as the conspirators of such people.”³⁴⁷ In this trial Bang did not follow the ordinance, he was not the main accuser, he did not appear as a witness, and he apparently only disciplined the reputed women through church discipline. This deviance from the 1617 ordinance is noticeable, as Bang had no problem instigating witchcraft prosecutions based on rumours in both prior and later witchcraft trials. His understanding of witchcraft accepted both elements of *maleficium* and diabolism, and through the court of appeal case in 1663 it becomes clear that he disagreed with the possibility of demonic possession. As the records for utilisation of church discipline in Finnmark are lost, it is difficult to say if Bang’s behaviour before the Sich trial was an isolated reaction or part of a larger trend. Clearly, even one of the clergymen most heavily involved in the witchcraft trials, had a complex understanding of witchcraft and could deviate from normative regulation.

In the case of Bang one also sees a cooperative element between the elites in the local communities, as it becomes evident that from his time as a chaplain in Vadsø, Bang had cooperated with the Vadsø based merchant Laurits Henriksen Bras in several witchcraft trials.³⁴⁸ Einar Niemi has analysed Bras’s involvement in the witchcraft trials in relation to the sinking of captain Jon Jonsen’s ship outside of Kiberg in 1651; considering Bang’s involvement in the subsequent trials, it is necessary to add that the ship of captain Anders Hess also capsized in the same storm.³⁴⁹ The witchcraft prosecutions that followed the capsizing of these ships, demonstrate why the clergymen could have personal reasons for prosecuting witches. In August

³⁴⁷ My translation. Secher, *Corpus Constitutionum*, 516–518.

³⁴⁸ They appeared together at three witchcraft trials: against Kari, the wife of Jetmund Siverson in 1632. The trial against Kirsten, the wife of Rasmus Siverson in 1632, and against Gundelle Omundtzdatter in 1651–1652. *Tingbok 1620–1633*, 291–294, 302–303.; Willumsen, *Witchcraft trials*, 103–104.

³⁴⁹ Einar Niemi, “Hekseprossesser og økonomi,” *Ottar* 5 (2012): 19–25.; Several people confessed to having participated in sinking the ships, for example: Baarne, the wife of Willatz Mortensen the bell ringer, on the 4th of March 1652. Beritte Edisdatter on the 24th of January 1653, and Lisbet Poulsdatter on the 20th of March 1653. Willumsen, *Witchcraft Trials*, 106, 119, 130.

1653 at a court session in Vadsø, provost Bang stated that he had lost 160 *vog* of fish when Hess's ship capsized in 1651.³⁵⁰ Bang stated that this was his entire yearly income, that he was supposed to sell in Bergen. As aforementioned, the clergymen also conducted trade in order to sustain their income.³⁵¹ It is therefore of importance to emphasise that Bang was heavily involved from the very beginning in the first witchcraft trial against Gundelle Omundtzatter in 1651–52. From the court records it becomes apparent that she confessed to provost Hans on both the fourth and fifth of February 1652. It is unlikely that both these confessions were brought forth through interrogation, for on the fifth of February it was Gundelle who had summoned Hans to her cell as she had wanted to speak with him.³⁵² That Gundelle summoned Hans strengthens the argument that it was of importance for the accused to have access to the priest, as they might have used the priest for spiritual guidance and solace. During the trials from 1652–1653, it would be natural that provost Bang together with merchant Bras wanted to find the alleged witches that had lost them a small fortune in the shipwreck. Bang's son in law, Otte Bang, also participated in several witchcraft trials after the provost died in 1664.³⁵³ Therefore it is possible to argue, that both the Bras and Bang families were nucleus families when it came to participation in the witchcraft trials in Eastern-Finnmark.

This short microstudy of Bang has attempted to highlight that in addition to practicing their duties as state officials, there could also be personal incentives for the clergymen to participate in the witchcraft trials. When the clergymen were involved in the witchcraft prosecutions, their participation must also be analysed in the context of potential socio-economic events that could have afflicted them personally, and therefore have given them additional reasons to involve themselves in the prosecutions. The focus on Bang has also highlighted that the clergy could interact with their parishioners in a way that led to clear deviations from normative regulations. These deviations are most easily spotted through illegal torture and interrogation methods used

³⁵⁰ SATØ, *The archives of the Finnmark district magistrate*, no. 08. Fol. 125b–126a. 160 *vog* was roughly 2900kg.

³⁵¹ E.g. Provost Hans Pedersen Bang had given a woman a barrel of salt on deposit. SATØ, *The archives of the Finnmark district magistrate*, no. 09. Fol. 027a.

³⁵² Willumsen, *Witchcraft trials*, 104–105.

³⁵³ Otte Bang wanted the court of appeal judge to approve the use of the water ordeal in the trial against Kirsten Knudsdatter in 1680. Næss, *Trolldomsprosessene i Norge*, 201.; Hans Pedersen Bang died in 1664, it is therefore difficult to say if he ever met Otte Bang. In 1678 Kirsten Hansdatter was addressed as Otte's "Kiereste" meaning girlfriend. Kirsten and Otte had five children that were minors when Kirsten died in 1687. Willumsen, *Witchcraft trials*, 334.; The probate record after Hansdatter dated 25.06.1687. – SATØ, *The archives of the Finnmark magistrate, Skifteprotokoll 1686–1701*, Nr. 01. Fol 14.

in the prosecutions, but the deviations are also evident through the fact that Bang did not accuse the rumoured women at court in 1634.

4.5. Chapter summary:

The witchcraft prosecutions created a set of exceptional conditions for the clergymen as they allowed them entry into the courtroom as prosecutors. The role played by the clergymen in these trials was complex, but they were allowed to immerse themselves in ‘the culture of rule’ by the local and regional authorities. There is a clear emphasis on the dualism and religious aspects of witchcraft in several of the cases where clergymen were involved. In addition, the clergymen partook in cementing the demonological understanding of witchcraft after 1650, while simultaneously disregarding demonological elements they disagreed with. Like their superiors in Copenhagen, the clergymen who were involved in the prosecutions in Finnmark wanted to prosecute all types of magic and witchcraft, but the Finnmark clergy also showcased a hybrid interpretation of witchcraft that sometimes placed less emphasis on the Devil. It is difficult to interpret clerical involvement in witchcraft trials against the Sámi, as these trials often were of a fundamentally different nature than witchcraft trials against Norwegians, but they can be interpreted as being part of establishing a confessionalist hegemony. A change of mentality takes place after the 1662–63 prosecutions, as the required criteria for evidence became stricter, and the clergymen were increasingly excluded from the interrogations. In addition, a nuanced view between benevolent magic and witchcraft develops, it is possible that benevolent magic was no longer seen to be as threatening, as some clergymen even interceded on behalf of practitioners of benevolent magic.

The complexity of the clergyman’s role in the trials is most evident when one considers that he had to act as both spiritual comforter while also being present during torture sessions. It should nevertheless be remembered that this made complete sense within the focus orthodox Lutheranism had on penance. The primary objective of the clergyman in a witchcraft trial and the reason he was present in interrogations, was because he was supposed to be the local expert on demonology, and because a confession from the accused had to be heard by the priest in order for the accused to reach heaven after execution. The microstudy of Bang demonstrated that the clergymen could have their own incentives for prosecuting witches, while also deviating from the normative regulations regarding the prosecution of alleged witches.

Chapter 5. The clergy and the end of the witchcraft prosecutions in Finnmark.

There were both providentialist and pastoralist tendencies in a few of the witchcraft trials in Finnmark. Especially pastoralism was evident in the court cases against the children accused of witchcraft in 1662–63.³⁵⁴ Nevertheless, the clergymen in Finnmark primarily understood witchcraft in a hybrid form that incorporated elements of *maleficium* and diabolism. One might argue outright, that there is little explicit evidence in the primary sources to support a thesis that the clergy in Finnmark participated in bringing the prosecutions to an end. However, the decline and end of the witchcraft prosecutions was a very complex phenomenon. As Alex Wittendorff argued in his official response to Jens C. V. Johansen's doctoral disputation – it is almost more difficult to explain why the prosecutions stopped, than it is to explain why they began.³⁵⁵

Nevertheless, more recent witchcraft research promotes three main reasons as to why the witchcraft prosecutions came to an end in Europe. Firstly, the demands put to judicial evidence became stricter during the seventeenth century. Secondly, the development of religious pluralism led to a decline in attempts to eradicate people of another religious confession. Thirdly, demonology 'went out of fashion' as the beginning of the Enlightenment led to a dampening of the theological eschatology as a more 'optimistic' theology developed.³⁵⁶ In other words, modern witchcraft research argue that the end of the witchcraft prosecutions came from the leading elites, this would also explain why many commoners, but also elites, continued to believe in witches and witchcraft long after the judicial witchcraft prosecutions ended.³⁵⁷ The increase in judicial strictness is generally accepted as being the leading cause in the decline

³⁵⁴ The case where a providentialist understanding was present is the aforementioned trial against Dorette Lauritsdatter in 1657. Providentialism and pastoralism is defined in the introduction.

³⁵⁵ Wittendorff, "Trolddomsprocessernes ophør i Danmark," 1.

³⁵⁶ Goodare, *European witch-hunt*, 318.; Gary K. Waite sees religious pluralism as a key factor in causing the decline of the witchcraft prosecutions. Gary K. Waite, *Heresy, magic and witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. 2003), especially chapter 6.; Dillinger argues that a combination of judicial restrictions and clerical pastoralism from the 'top' led to the end of the prosecutions in Swabian Austria. This means that the central authorities finally gained complete control over local and peripheral courts which made it impossible for the localities to carry out witchcraft prosecutions. Dillinger, 'Evil People', especially chapter 6.

³⁵⁷ The sources show that both elites and commoners in Finnmark still believed in the reality of witchcraft towards the end of the seventeenth century. This can be seen in district governor Lilienskiold's criticism of the court of appeal judge Schønnebøl after he had dismissed several witchcraft trials due to lacking evidence. It is also evident in bailiff Knag's condemning remarks in the trial against Anders Poulsen in 1692. Willumsen, *Witchcraft trials*, 390.; Lilienskiold, *Trolddom og ugudelighet*, 206, 236–240.

of the witchcraft prosecutions in Norway.³⁵⁸ According to Næss the clergy played no role in the decline of the prosecutions, he maintains that the clergy continued to voice the arguments of demonology well into the 1800s.³⁵⁹

However, Jens C. V. Johansen has argued that the clergymen played an important role in ending the witchcraft prosecutions in Jutland. Johansen's thesis has received quite a lot of criticism, among other things for: overestimating the impact of the clergymen on the general population, for underestimating the influence of individual judges, and for overestimating the impact of religious literature, in addition to not mentioning religious literature that supported the prosecution of witches.³⁶⁰ Despite these criticisms, Johansen continued to argue that the clergymen played an important part in ending the witchcraft prosecutions in Denmark.³⁶¹ And his arguments have not been dismissed, as his theory was recently used by Brian P. Levack to explain the end of the witchcraft prosecutions in Denmark.³⁶² As Johansen attributed so much responsibility to the clergy for ending the witchcraft trials, the theory is highly relevant for this dissertation. And as far as I am aware, the theory has not been applied to any witchcraft trials outside of Denmark. The objective of this chapter is therefore to investigate if the clergy played a part in ending the witchcraft prosecutions in Finnmark by applying Johansen's thesis to the witchcraft prosecutions in the region.

5.1. Jens C. V. Johansen's theory concerning clerical providentialism.

Johansen's theory has been referred to on several occasions throughout this dissertation, but it will be explained more thoroughly here as it lays the foundation for this chapter. Johansen's hypothesis is quite straightforward, he argued that the publication of sermons by Jørgen Erikssøn the *superintendent* in Stavanger in 1592, and the Danish royal historiographer Anders

³⁵⁸ Hagen, *Porten til helvete*, 211–248.; Næss, *Trolldomsprosessene i Norge*, 348–362.

³⁵⁹ Næss, *Trolldomsprosessene i Norge*, 360–361.; Kåre Hansen, *Petter Dass: Guds Øyesteen* vol. 1. (Oslo: K. Hansen, 2018), 237–244. Andreas Nold the priest in Hammerfest attempted to start a witchcraft trial against Karen Tronsdatter in 1746 by sending a letter to *misjonskollegiet* in Copenhagen, the case was never mentioned in the local court records.

³⁶⁰ For some criticisms of Johansen's theory see: Alm, *Statens rolle*, 144–150.; Wittendorff, "Trolldomsprosessernes ophør i Danmark," 4–11.; Gustav Henningsen, "Trolldom i det 17. århundredes Danmark," 143–145.; Knutsen, *Trolldomsprosessene på Østlandet*, 119–120.

³⁶¹ Johansen, "Hekse og troldfolk," 325.

³⁶² Levack, *The witch-hunt*, 247.

Sørenssøn Vedel in 1593, spread a providentialist view among the clergy.³⁶³ As previously mentioned, providentialism hails from the book of Job in the Old Testament, and argued that suffering was a test from God in order to test a Christian's faith. The providentialist view argued that the correct response to suffering or disasters was pious introspection, rather than trying to end ones suffering by doing things such as burning alleged witches.³⁶⁴

Johansen argued that this providentialist understanding of witchcraft was present among the Danish clergymen before 1617. He maintained that when the witchcraft ordinance was issued in 1617, the common people understood that they could prosecute people rumoured to know witchcraft with support from the authorities. Johansen proved in his study that a witchcraft rumour was built up over several years if not decades in Jutland, this meant that there were many rumoured witches to prosecute, which led to waves of witchcraft prosecutions between 1617–1625. According to Johansen, the clergymen reacted to these prosecutions by becoming passive, they did not accuse people of witchcraft at court although they knew the person was rumoured to be a witch. It became evident that the clergymen knew about these people without taking any legal action. Johansen gives the example of “[priest] Oluf Madsen in Elling who stated at a court session in 1623, that Mette Jensdatter had been reputed to know witchcraft since 1602, he had nothing more to add to the case.”³⁶⁵ As emphasised concerning the actions of provost Hans Pedersen Bang in Finnmark, choosing to not accuse someone who was reputed for witchcraft, was a breach of the clergymen's responsibilities as state officials under the witchcraft ordinance of 1617. Instead, Johansen found that the clergymen focused on slowly indoctrinating the providentialist view among the people rather than accusing their reputed parishioners. After 1625, Johansen argued that Jutland ‘ran out’ of witches, as it took a long time for a witchcraft rumour to manifest. The clergymen used this pause in the prosecutions to

³⁶³ It is interesting to note that Johansen presents *superintendent* Jørgen Erikssøn as having a providentialist understanding of witchcraft. Meanwhile Næss presents Erikssøn as a proponent of the witch hunts. Johansen, “Witchcraft, sin and repentance,” 416.; Næss, *Med bål og brann: Trolldomsprosesser i Norge* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1984), 96–97. This representation of Erikssøn belonging to only one of two quite opposite interpretations of witchcraft, seems to be a recurring theme in the historical studies that mention Erikssøn's views on witchcraft. Such a presentation of Erikssøn has little nuance, or rather room to analyse Erikssøn as a person that had a conflicting understanding of witchcraft. A more elaborate study of Erikssøn's understanding of witchcraft is required. Such a study should incorporate the fact that Erikssøn was heavily influenced by both Johann Brenz, and Niels Hemmingsen who had differing views on witchcraft.

³⁶⁴ As previously mentioned, the providentialist view seems to hail from the sermon Johann Brenz gave on hailstorms. Brenz, “On Hailstorms,” 213–218.; Midelfort, *Witch-Hunting*, 37.

³⁶⁵ My translation. Johansen, *Da djævelen var ude...*, 145.

make a breakthrough in implementing the providentialist view among their parishioners, in turn this led to the eventual end of the witchcraft prosecutions in Jutland.³⁶⁶

The key points of Johansen's theory can be emphasised, Johansen found there were many people in Jutland who had been rumoured for being knowledgeable of witchcraft for several years. However, Johansen found many examples of clergymen who knew about these reputed people and chose not to prosecute them at the local court which led to a clear breach of the 1617 witchcraft ordinance. This divergence between normative regulations and praxis is what Johansen called the passivity of the priests, as they instead attempted to implement providentialist ideas among their parishioners.

5.1.1. Testing Johansen's hypothesis on the witchcraft trials in Finnmark.

There are several initial challenges when it comes to applying Johansen's thesis to the witchcraft trials in Finnmark.³⁶⁷ Firstly, his argument relies on a homogenous providentialist interpretation of witchcraft among the clergymen in the region. The presented systematic analysis of the role of the clergymen in their localities and the witchcraft prosecutions, demonstrated that the clergy in Finnmark did not operate as a homogenous group. They operated with shared interest in Church affairs, but they were also competitors when they engaged in illegal trade, such as selling beer to the Sámi.³⁶⁸ In addition, the clergymen who were active in the witchcraft prosecutions in Finnmark, understood witchcraft in a hybrid form as a mixture of *maleficium* and diabolism. Secondly, the key aspect in Johansen's argument is the existence of a rumour, in the Danish witchcraft prosecutions these rumours are easier to find in the sources, as the priest appeared at court and stated that he had known that the person was rumoured to know witchcraft for a certain amount of years. When the clergymen in Finnmark addressed a witchcraft rumour during a court session, they did so in order to have the alleged witch punished or executed. The way the clergy in Finnmark used rumours to drive witchcraft prosecutions forward cannot be interpreted as them having a homogenous providentialist understanding of witchcraft. Thirdly, Johansen stated that sometimes the

³⁶⁶ See – *Ibid*, chapter 9.; Johansen, “Witchcraft, sin and repentance,” 413–423.

³⁶⁷ It is not the objective of this chapter to offer a general critique of Johansen's thesis. I will only highlight the issues related to utilising his thesis on the witchcraft trials in Finnmark. For more general criticisms of the thesis the reader is referred to the works cited in footnote 360.

³⁶⁸ Lilienskiold, *Trolldom og ugudelighet*, 28.

witchcraft rumour was revealed during a denunciation. In Denmark the use of illegal torture and other illegal interrogation methods were almost non-existent.³⁶⁹ In Finnmark a rumour revealed during a denunciation must be interpreted with a large degree of moderation. The use of illegal torture, the dynamics of the denunciations, and the immense pressure the accused was under during the chain prosecutions made them denounce people randomly.³⁷⁰ As in other European chain-prosecutions the stereotype of the witch deteriorated during the chain-prosecutions in Finnmark, as they were fuelled by continued denunciations made by people accused of witchcraft.³⁷¹

As argued in chapter three, the clergymen in Finnmark had tools they used to gain an in-depth understanding of social relations in their parishes, such as the *medhjælper* institution and confessions. Therefore, the clergymen whether active or passive in the prosecutions, were always central media for communication in the local communities in Finnmark, as such they and their families were at the nexus of the local rumour mill. This must be emphasised as Johansen's theory primarily revolves around the existence of a witchcraft rumour and the lack of a judicial response from a clergyman. The compilation of the clergy in Finnmark in appendix B revealed that there were 64 active clergymen in the region during the seventeenth century. Out of these 64 clergymen, the sources show that only 14 of them participated in the witchcraft trials. Almost all of the clergymen in the period would have been active in their benefice during some of these prosecutions, although a few would not due to the brevity of their time in the position.³⁷² A criminal procedure ending with a death sentence was a major event, and one can safely assume that the majority of these remaining 50 clergymen must at least have heard about these witchcraft trials, if they were not present at the trials themselves. In addition, due to the extent that the belief in magic permeated the mental universe of seventeenth century Europe, there is strong reason to believe that these clergymen must have had some personal experience

³⁶⁹ Vogt "Likewise no one shall be tortured," 79.

³⁷⁰ Midelfort has shown how extensive prolonged chain-prosecutions led to a 'crisis of confidence' as the stereotype of the witch broke down, and everyone could be denounced for witchcraft, from the elites to the paupers in society. This is also evident to a lesser extent in the Finnmark trials as some of the accused were the wives of prominent merchants, this led to conflicts between the merchants and the prosecutors. Another typical element of the breakdown of the witch stereotype is the utilisation of denunciations made by children, which was a prominent feature in the 1662–63 chain-prosecutions. Midelfort, *Witch-hunting*, 121–164.; Hagen, "Ingen uediske," 152.

³⁷¹ Alison Rowlands, "Father Confessors," 1023. Rowlands has found a case where a clergyman presented an imprisoned woman with a list of people he wanted her to denounce for witchcraft. On the list were the names of the wives of many of his political opponents on the city council.

³⁷² See appendix B to see when the different clergymen were active in the region.

with rituals connected to a belief in magic – be that benevolent magic or *maleficium*.³⁷³ There are also explicit statements in the court records, that several of the people executed for witchcraft in Finnmark had been rumoured to know witchcraft. Through their central position in the local communications circuits, the clergymen should have had a good grasp on various rumours that circulated in their parish, including those pertaining to magic.

As Alver has argued, if a rumour was to ‘survive’ and manifest itself, two prerequisites had to be met: firstly, it had to be possible to believe the rumour, secondly, there had to be an existing will to believe the rumour.³⁷⁴ This meant that rumours and slander operated as something Hagen has labelled the “linguistic colonialization of the social memory.”³⁷⁵ In this context, it means that every negative encounter with the reputed person was stored within the collective communal memory. Then when someone finally accused the person of witchcraft at court, the collective memory was activated, and there was a mass of people willing to testify to previous incidents that they had suspected to be witchcraft. The detrimental effects of receiving a negative rumour within the collective memory can perhaps best be seen in the witchcraft trial against Kirsten Knudsdatter in 1679. Several witnesses attributed a witchcraft rumour to Kirsten, and when the bailiff asked Kirsten to tell the truth concerning the witchcraft accusations, she responded: “[...] This she refuses to do in any way, replying that they are welcome to take her life, *for after this day she will know no peace anyway because of the aspersions cast on her before court; yet she is innocent.*”³⁷⁶ Clearly, being reputed for witchcraft was disastrous for a person’s social standing within their local community.

Before analysing the rumours, it should be mentioned that provost Torben Reiersen is the only priest who appeared at court and addressed a witchcraft rumour without clearly wanting an execution for the accused.³⁷⁷ Seemingly, Reiersen brought up the witchcraft rumour as he

³⁷³ Edward Bever, “Popular Witch Beliefs and Magical Practices,” in *The Oxford handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America*, ed. Brian P. Levack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 52–55.; Alver, *Mellem mennesker og magter*, 13.

³⁷⁴ Alver, *Ibid*, 107.

³⁷⁵ Rune Blix Hagen, “‘Fiolmæle – Det er en der taler for meget’: Sladder, rykter og andre talehandlinger i trolldomsprosesser,” *ARR Idéhistorisk tidsskrift* 3 (2008): 26.

³⁷⁶ My emphasis. Willumsen, *Witchcraft trials*, 351.

³⁷⁷ As I interpret the involvement of Hans Pedersen Bang and Christen Mikkelsen to be that of giving impetus to the previously discussed trials where they appeared to confirm witchcraft rumours, I do not consider them to have a providentialist understanding of witchcraft. For the trial where Torben Reiersen accused Lange Mogens Zarasen, Willumsen, *Witchcraft trials*, 327–329.

needed a reason to bring the Sámi Lange Mogens Zarasen to court, for not having attended church for twelve years.³⁷⁸ Reiersen stated that Zarasen had a witchcraft rumour attached to him and should be punished. Two Sámi men then accused Zarasen of witchcraft, while Reiersen gave no additional statements about the matter. Zarasen was subsequently sentenced to be whipped at the pole and leave the country, a comparatively ‘mild’ punishment, typical for the last period of the witchcraft prosecutions.

As the clergymen who were active in the witchcraft prosecutions in Finnmark used rumours to drive the prosecutions forward, it is necessary to analyse some rumours that were not revealed by the clergymen. To do this I have developed and used four criteria when compiling witchcraft rumours. This has been done in order to find the rumours confirmed by the largest amount of people, and exclude rumours revealed and confirmed by only one person, primarily during the chain prosecutions. This has been done in order to find the rumours most likely to be genuine, and therefore the rumours that a clergyman should have been aware of through his role within the local communications circuit. Firstly, the rumour had to be confirmed by at least two people. Secondly, denunciations by other witches that mention a rumour have been excluded, unless the rumour was confirmed by other people present at court who were not accused of witchcraft themselves. This exclusion is due to the abovementioned dynamics of denunciations in the chain-prosecutions. In practical terms, this means that Magdalena Jacobsdatter was not added to the compilation after she was denounced as being rumoured for knowing witchcraft in the 1662–63 chain-prosecutions, as the rumour was only confirmed by alleged witches.³⁷⁹ However, Jacobsdatter was added to the compilation after the convened people at the court trial and several of her neighbours: “all uniformly replied that she has been reputed for knowing witchcraft” in 1671.³⁸⁰ Thirdly, when a person appeared in front of court to cleanse themselves or their spouse of a witchcraft rumour it has been included. Lastly, it is not possible to find a time frame for when the rumour began in all trials, but rumours that were seemingly less than a year old have been excluded. As local court was convened twice a year, this meant that the clergyman would have had at least two occasions on which he could have accused the rumoured

³⁷⁸ Torben Reiersen was one of the priests that used the local court the most, many of the cases he brought up were concerned with attendance in church, such as the trial against his parishioner Rolant. SATØ, *The archives of the Finnmark district magistrate*, no. 19. Fol. 058a–b.

³⁷⁹ Willumsen, *Witchcraft trials*, 266.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 324.

person for witchcraft. The names of the accused with a witchcraft rumour attached to them and the date of their trial is presented in appendix E.

There are 18 rumours that fit within the mentioned criteria during the period, 11 rumours were attached to people in the first period (1620–1634), three were attached to people in the second period (1632–1666), and the remaining four were attached to people in the last period (1671–1692). As emphasised by Willumsen and Hagen, the majority of people accused of witchcraft in Finnmark were said to have had a witchcraft rumour attached to them.³⁸¹ Many of these rumours were revealed during the chain-prosecutions, and have been excluded from the compilation if they were only mentioned by alleged witches. The mentioned example of Magdalena Jacobsdatter demonstrates that there are weaknesses within this compilation, that can have led to the exclusion of genuine rumours. For the purpose of this analysis, 18 rumours must be understood as the minimum amount of genuine witchcraft rumours in Finnmark, that the clergymen should have known about. The distribution of rumours throughout the period follow the same pattern that is known from mainland Europe. As the elite members of society took control of the witchcraft prosecutions, the prosecutions ‘from above’ were not really interested in local rumours anymore.³⁸² Instead they were interested in finding the witches that stood behind disasters that affected the local communities, such as the shipwrecks which started the 1652–53 chain prosecutions. Still, it seems that in Finnmark, people with a witchcraft rumour were among the first to be sentenced also in the chain-prosecutions.

It can be useful to demonstrate how such as rumour concerned with witchcraft was created and cultivated in Finnmark. This can be exemplified with Dorette Lauritsdatter who began the denunciations during the 1662–63 prosecutions. On the 16th of February 1657, Mogens Einersenn summoned Niels Pedersen to court as Pedersen had held his wife Dorette imprisoned in 1656 because Pedersen believed that she was knowledgeable of witchcraft.³⁸³ During this

³⁸¹ Willumsen, *Ild og bål*, 283.; Hagen, “‘Fiolmæle,’” 26.

³⁸² These ‘from above’ prosecutions are known in German territories such as Eichstätt, Wuerzburg, Bamberg, and Ellwangen among others. Thomas Robisheaux, “The German witch trials,” in *The Oxford handbook of witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America*, ed. Brian P. Levack (Oxford: Oxford University press, 2014), 185–188.

³⁸³ SATØ, *The archives of the Finnmark district magistrate*, no. 09. Fol. 032a. Dorette Lauritsdatter’s bad reputation can be traced back to 1648, when her first husband Østen had to ask the local community for a testimony on her behalf at a court session in Vadsø. SATØ, *The archives of the Finnmark district magistrate*, no. 08. Fol. 003b.; See also Hagen’s open access database, process number 96.

trial the merchant Laurits Henriksen Bras voiced several complaints against Dorette related to *maleficium*, however, in this trial no one wanted to stand forward as the principal accuser, as was required by the accusatorial court system, as there was an inherent risk in being the principal accuser. Failing to land a conviction could lead to a fine, or as in the case of Niels Sich the sentence could be returned to the accuser, meaning a death sentence for false accusations. In this case the court dismissed Dorrete as they found the given testimonies to be inadequate.³⁸⁴

The traditional way of starting a witchcraft prosecution had been undermined. As argued in the previous chapter, during the period of the chain-prosecutions accusations of only *maleficium* were seen to hold limited proof in front of the court. Bras continued his case against Dorette on the 27th of September 1662, the bailiff Niels Sørensen Fiil cited Dorette as she had been denounced by Bras for having killed two of his workers with witchcraft.³⁸⁵ This time Bras presented several people who witnessed on his behalf that both the men who had died had confessed on their deathbeds that Dorette was the cause of their demise. Once again Bras refused to be the principal accuser, he stated that he brought the case in front of court so that the case might be elucidated and “as for himself he had no knowledge of anything of which to accuse her.”³⁸⁶ Interpreted through Johansen’s thesis, this reluctance to officially accuse Dorette of witchcraft could be interpreted as a providentialist understanding of witchcraft, however, it was clearly not. Bras had blamed Dorette for the death of his cows in 1657, and the bailiff clearly stated that Bras had denounced her for killing his hired men before the trial in 1662. After the evidence was rejected in 1657, Bras activated the collective memory of the community in order to continue his attack on Dorette. Both times he appeared at court he mentioned several damning elements related to her, and both times he had several honourable men stand witness to these accusations without officially accusing her of witchcraft. This must be understood as a “colonisation of the social memory” as Hagen has called it.³⁸⁷ Being brought

³⁸⁴ Willumsen, *Witchcraft trial*, 167.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 168–174.

³⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 173. Alver has analysed the uncertainty connected to witchcraft rumours. Unless the person who felt themselves afflicted by witchcraft had recently been in a quarrel, it could be difficult to pinpoint the guilty person. Those who already had a rumour attached to them were easy to blame, and thereby the rumour often intensified. Bente Gullveig Alver, “Men om hun er skyldig, det ved kun Gud i himlen!’ Et skråblik på tro og tvivl i Norske hekseprossesser,” *Tidsskrift for kulturforskning* 16 (2017): 9.

³⁸⁷ Hagen, “Fiolmæle,” 26.

in front of the court twice, must have been detrimental to Dorette's social standing and have strongly participated in cultivating the witchcraft rumour that became attached to her; in addition to bringing this rumour to the attention of the authorities. For it belongs to Dorette's story, that after the trial on the 27th of September, she was imprisoned at Vardøhus castle until the 6th of November 1662. While she was imprisoned, she was frequently interrogated according to the court records. Dorette's subsequent confession to several witchcraft accusations and her denunciation of other women started the chain-prosecutions of 1662–63.³⁸⁸ In relation to Johansen's thesis, it is striking that provost Hans Pedersen Bang remained uninvolved in this trial. As shown in the previous chapter, Bang and Bras had appeared together as accusers in several witchcraft trials. It could be that Bras had not lamented his woes to Bang, meaning that Bang was potentially unaware of the rumour. Nevertheless, the first time Dorette had to receive a testimony from her local community was in 1648, and after the first accusations of witchcraft against her were discussed at court in 1657, both Bang and his chaplain Moses Sørensen must have been aware of the rumour. It is therefore striking that neither Bang or Sørensen appeared as accusers during the court session in 1662, as these were two of the clergymen most actively involved in the witchcraft prosecutions. Evidently, a lack of involvement by clergymen did not mean that they had a providentialist understanding of witchcraft, as they could be absent in some trials and heavily involved in others, as both Bang and Sørensen were involved in other trials during the chain prosecutions of 1662–1663. This lack of involvement further strengthens the argument that the clergy had a varied approach towards the different witchcraft trials, and that their engagement and involvement could vary from trial to trial.

5.1.2. Prosecuting clergymen and the providentialist theory.

All the required components necessary to use an adapted version of Johansen's hypothesis were present in the Finnmark prosecutions. The existence of witchcraft rumours has been demonstrated, and the clergy did not appear as accusers in the trials against the people who are listed in appendix E. This could be interpreted as the clergymen participating in the passivity that Johansen found in Denmark. However, there are several problems that make it difficult to argue that the clergymen implemented a providentialist view among their parishioners, in order

³⁸⁸ Willumsen, *Witchcraft trials*, 180–182.

to end the prosecutions in Finnmark. The results presented in chapter three, make it difficult to argue that precisely clerically inspired providentialism was one of the main factors for the decline in witchcraft prosecutions. The lack of a systematic study of the clergy in the Jutland region was precisely one of the things Johansen's thesis was criticised for, as Wittendorff argued that such a study would have elucidated many of the weaker points of Johansen's argument.³⁸⁹ The presented systematic analysis of the clergymen in Finnmark, will therefore be used to demonstrate why it is difficult to argue that providentialism was a *primary* reason for the end of the witchcraft prosecutions in the region.

To begin with Johansen stated that he took two things for granted. The first was that the providentialist understanding of witchcraft was common among Danish clergymen. The second was that the issuing of the 1617 witchcraft ordinance with royal support was problematic for the clergymen, as it gave their parishioners a way to prosecute alleged witches.³⁹⁰ Johansen argued that the providentialist understanding was common due to the abovementioned sermon collections by Vedel and Erikssøn. He also emphasised that demonology was not a specified course at university.³⁹¹ The sermon collections published by Vedel and Erikssøn cannot be found in the economic registers for the churches in Finnmark where the other religious literature is registered.³⁹² The surviving registers begin in 1689, so it is possible that Erikssøn's and Vedel's sermons were in the possession of a church or a private person in Finnmark at some point during the period. However, the economic registers contain Hemmingsen's sermon collection from 1561, and comments in the registers concerning some of the Bibles reveal that they had been used to the point where they had begun falling apart.³⁹³ This implies that once a church in Finnmark had acquired a piece of religious literature it kept on to it for as long as possible. In addition, Dahl has found that due to the strong connection with Bergen, religious literature in Northern-Norway was usually international rather than written in Denmark–Norway.³⁹⁴

³⁸⁹ Wittendorff, "Trolddomsprocessernes ophør i Danmark," 6.

³⁹⁰ Johansen, "Witchcraft, sin and repentance," 417.

³⁹¹ Johansen, *Da djævelen var ude...*, 148.

³⁹² SATØ, *Finnmark Provsti Kirkeregnskaber 1689–99*.

³⁹³ Willumsen, *Trollkvinne i Nord*, 61–62.

³⁹⁴ Dahl, "Geistliges bokkultur 1650–1750," 48, 53. Willumsen has found books with German titles in the probate registers of merchants and other influential individuals in Finnmark, such as *Won der Teufels Tyrani*. Willumsen, *Trollkvinne i Nord*, 62.

Concerning the institutionalised education, the systematic study in chapter three demonstrated that out of the 64 clergymen only 27 had matriculated at university.³⁹⁵ According to Johansen's thesis one would expect to see less involvement from these university educated clergymen in the prosecutions; the opposite is the case in Finnmark. Nine out of the total 14 clergymen who were involved in the witchcraft prosecutions were educated.³⁹⁶ That most of the involved clergymen had institutionalised education, suggests that the aspiring students encountered demonology at university in some form or another. In addition, all these educated clergymen primarily advocated for punishment and execution in the witchcraft trials. The analysis of the Finnmark clergy demonstrates that an institutional education did not necessarily equate to a providentialist understanding of witchcraft.

Concerning Johansen's second point about the 1617 ordinance, I believe he underestimates the fact that the clergymen also became the king's men after the Reformation.³⁹⁷ As argued in chapter two, the 1617 witchcraft ordinance should be interpreted at least partly as a result of clerical pressure.³⁹⁸ During the early modern period the pulpit developed into a political tool as well as a place for spreading information about secular ordinances and regulations.³⁹⁹ During the seventeenth century, it became increasingly normal that an ordinance was first read aloud in church, and then at the following court session.⁴⁰⁰ The original witchcraft ordinance that was read aloud in Finnmark in 1620 is lost, but it most likely followed the same pattern of dissemination that is known from Stavanger, where the clergymen read it aloud for their parishioners, and signed the back of the ordinance before passing it on to the next clergyman.⁴⁰¹ The clergymen should be seen as being obliged to participate in distributing information concerning witchcraft, rather than acting passively towards it in Finnmark. No sermons given

³⁹⁵ I have included those who were described as 'vællert.'

³⁹⁶ Throughout the period 1620–1692, there were six clergymen with confirmed institutionalised education, three who were 'vællært' and five clergymen with unknown education involved in the witchcraft prosecutions.

³⁹⁷ Oluf Kolsrud, *Noregs kyrkjesoga II. 1500– ca. 1740* ed. Svein Helge Birkeflet (Oslo: Bibliotek teologisk fakultet, 2007), 81–94.

³⁹⁸ Kallestrup, *Pagt med djævelen*, 86–87, 222.;

³⁹⁹ E.g. Hans Pedersen Bang used the pulpit to inform his congregation about tithe collection in 1662. SATØ, *The archives of the Finnmark district magistrate*, no. 09. Fol. 128b–129a.; The local community in Ingø complained that merchants broke the regulations as they had been announced from the pulpit in 1662. SATØ, *Ibid*, Fol. 180b.; Øystein Lydik Idsø Viken, *Frygte gud og ære kongen: Preikestolen som politisk instrument i Noreg 1720–1814* (University of Oslo: PhD dissertation, 2014), 433–436.

⁴⁰⁰ Martin Schwarz Lausten, "Kongemagt og rigets vel," in *Reformationen i dansk kirke og kultur 1517–1700*, ed. Niels Henrik Gregersen and Carsten Bach-Nielsen (Odense: Syddansk Universitetsforlag, 2017), 177.

⁴⁰¹ SAST, Stavanger len. Boks 2. Konvolutt 2. nr. 38.

by clergymen in Finnmark during the period have survived. But the majority of sermons, and religious literature that dealt with the topic of the Devil and witchcraft in the seventeenth century *promoted* witchcraft prosecutions, or at least active penance in the form of eradicating God's enemies. If an assumption must be made, it seems more plausible to assume that these sermons would have condemned witches, especially during the larger panics in the region.⁴⁰² This assumption is also supported by the behaviour and role played by the clergymen who were active in the prosecutions.

Concerning the last and perhaps key point when testing Johansen's thesis on Finnmark, is the passivity of the clergymen. Most of the clergymen in Finnmark operated their benefice during a witchcraft prosecution, but only a few were directly involved in the trials and none stood forward as the primary accuser. This is difficult to explain, but through the qualitative reading of all the surviving court cases from 1620–1663 the trend is evident. Primarily the clergymen in Finnmark appeared at court for two reasons, one would be if they were summoned to testify in a court case, the second would be personal matters.⁴⁰³ In both these cases, when a clergyman appeared at court the case was primarily related to economy, whether it be trade, debt, or salary.⁴⁰⁴ There is therefore nothing exceptional about the fact that the clergy rarely accused or integrated witchcraft trials, if these had no direct economic or social significance to them. As demonstrated in the microstudy of provost Bang, when the witchcraft affected the clergy personally, they were involved from the first trial. This lack of accusations meant that the clergymen broke with the stipulation in the witchcraft ordinances of 1617/1687.⁴⁰⁵ This further strengthens the argument from the previous chapters, that it was not uncommon for the clergymen in Finnmark to deviate to some extent from state-issued normative regulations. In addition, a cross-reference between appendix C and E reveal that the majority of rumours were

⁴⁰² Wittendorff, "Trolddomsprocessernes ophør i Danmark," 5.; Willumsen, *Ild og bål*, 324.

⁴⁰³ See the graph in sub-chapter 3.3.2. on page 56.

⁴⁰⁴ E.g. provost Hans Pedersen Bang was summoned to witness that Peder Christensen did not owe money to merchant Christen Christensen in 1654. SATØ, *The archives of the Finnmark district magistrate*, no. 09. Fol. 008b, 011a.; E.g. merchant Anders Jensen in Bergen demanded a large sum of money from priest Jacob Ritz, that Ritz's wife had owed Jensen when she died in 1658. SATØ, *Ibid*, no. 09. Fol. 057a.; Knud Olsen had stolen provost Hans Pedersen Bang's brass chamber pot and sold it to Werner Henriksen in 1658. *Ibid*, no. 09. Fol. 062.

⁴⁰⁵ Louise Nyholm Kallestrup, "Wrath and fear. Lutheranism and marginalisation of witches in early modern Denmark," in *Marginality, media and mutations of religious authority in the history of Christianity*, ed. Laura Feldt and Jan N. Bremmer (Leuven: Peeters, 2019), 182.; As can be seen from appendix D, the majority of people rumoured for witchcraft were also put on trial in Vardø parish which developed an 'expertise' in witchcraft prosecutions as argued in the previous chapter. In Vardø parish the clergymen were involved in the witchcraft prosecutions throughout the period, something that also weakens a providentialist theory.

brought up in Vardø parish, and this was the parish where the clergymen were most heavily involved in the prosecutions. The clergymen who worked outside of the parish where the trial took place were not allowed to become involved, as this would have been a breach of the rights of their benefice. Therefore, most of the clergymen can be perceived as passive, when they in reality were stopped from interfering by administrative regulations. If the involvement of additional clergy was required in a case, it became the responsibility of the provost.⁴⁰⁶ It should be emphasised that the records pertaining to the utilisation of church discipline in Finnmark are lost. It is a possibility that several clergymen punished people rumoured for witchcraft with church discipline in the same way Hans Pedersen Bang did with the women involved in the abovementioned trial against Niels Sich in 1634.⁴⁰⁷ Due to the lack of sources, it is difficult to analyse the potential of passive providentialism through such disciplinary action.

It is ultimately difficult to fully explain the passivity of the clergymen, and it is possible that providentialism had spread amongst some of them. Nevertheless, the systematic analysis of the clergymen's role in the prosecutions in the region, suggests that Johansen's thesis concerning providentialism lacks relevance in the case of Finnmark. Providentialism does not appear to have been a major factor in the cessation of witchcraft prosecutions in the region. The active and explicit role played by the clergymen throughout the period, even after the end of the chain-prosecutions in 1662–63, demonstrates that there was no widespread interpretation of witchcraft through a providentialist lens in Finnmark. This means that the reason for the end of the witchcraft prosecutions must be sought outside of the ecclesiastical sphere. This investigation which demonstrated the limited role played by the clergy in ending the prosecutions in Finnmark, ultimately strengthens Næss, Hagen, and Willumsen's theories that the end of the witchcraft prosecutions in Finnmark were caused by increased judicial strictness and professionalisation of the judicial system.

⁴⁰⁶ Næss, *Trolldomsprosessene i Norge*, 298.; Goodare, *The European witch-hunt*, 354. Many clergymen were therefore not involved in witchcraft prosecutions simply because a witchcraft prosecution did not take place at a court session in their parish.

⁴⁰⁷ Blix Hagen, "Rettsaken mot samene Niels Sich," 346. If this was the case it would strengthen the providentialist theory as it would have shown that the clergy preferred to give milder punishments in church rather than handing the alleged witch over to the local court.

5.2. Chapter summary.

Witchcraft rumours existed in Finnmark and were evident in some of the witchcraft trials, and although they were legally obliged to, many clergymen did not prosecute those who were rumoured to know witchcraft. Based on the presented arguments in chapter three and four concerning the clergy's role in the localities and the witchcraft trials, it has been argued that no homogenous providentialist understanding of witchcraft existed among the clergymen in Finnmark. Instead the priests who were active in the trials understood witchcraft as a hybrid mixture of *maleficium* and diabolism which they wanted to punish. The qualitative analysis of the clergy's role in court cases proved that it was the norm that clergymen did not appear as principal accusers in cases that did not directly involve themselves or their family. Most of the trials against rumoured witches took place within Vardø parish, where the clergy actively participated in prosecuting alleged witches both before, during, and after the chain-prosecutions of the 1650s and 1662–63. The passivity of the clergymen cannot be fully explained based on these factors alone, it is therefore possible that the providentialist view manifested among some clergymen in the region. It is, nevertheless, impossible to maintain a thesis that clerical providentialism led to the decline and end of the witchcraft prosecutions in Finnmark. Instead it seems that the increased strictness concerning judicial evidence, which was practiced extensively in the witchcraft trials by the court of appeal judge Mandrup Schønnebøl and his successors, was the reason why the judicial witchcraft prosecutions came to an end in Finnmark. As the end of the judicial witchcraft prosecutions happened although both elites and commoners continued to believe in witchcraft, the decline and end of the witchcraft prosecutions in Finnmark followed the national trend as argued by Næss.⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰⁸ Næss, *Trolldomsprosessene i Norge*, 360–361.

Chapter 6. Conclusion.

In conclusion, the most important results from the analysis of the clergy's role in the witchcraft prosecutions in Finnmark will be reviewed. Simultaneously, answers will be provided to the questions set out in the introduction. This dissertation has investigated the role played by the 14 clergymen that were mentioned or played active roles in the witchcraft prosecutions that took place in Finnmark between 1620–1692. The interpretation of witchcraft expressed in the trials in Finnmark was inspired by the diabolical concept of witchcraft. This learned concept of demonology was especially evident in the three chain-prosecutions that took place during the period. The elite understanding of witchcraft was developed by the theologians and *superintendents* in the dual monarchy through a continuous interaction with the international discourse pertaining to demonology. The Lutheran orthodox interpretation of witchcraft and benevolent magic as diabolical, suited the program set out by the monarch as the developing state underwent a confessionalisation process. The theologians and other elites at the centre, therefore played an important part in demonizing popular practices with Catholic elements, traditional healing practices, and *maleficium*. The Lutheran orthodox theologians obtained a hegemonic interpretation of witchcraft and magic at the centre by gaining a large degree of influence with the monarch and his council, who subsequently implemented the diabolic interpretation in the penal legislation. This happened in the late sixteenth century, but most importantly when witches were defined as either associating or being in a pact with the Devil in the witchcraft ordinance of 1617. It was the learned demonology combined with a basis in penal legislature influenced by the decalogue, that provided the theological and judicial foundations for the witchcraft prosecutions.

The diabolical interpretation of witchcraft attained a hegemonic position at the state level, and through the state institutions, the clergymen and other state officials were meant to introduce the elite interpretation to the peripheral areas of the dual monarchy. In Finnmark, the diabolical interpretation was made tangible to the consciousness of the common people on a multitude of occasions throughout the period. This dissemination primarily took place through confessions to witchcraft that were filled with diabolical elements, but the diabolical interpretation never obtained a hegemonic position among common people. Although the alleged witches gave confessions filled with diabolical elements, the accusations that began the trials were often concerned with *maleficium*. Clearly, the cultural understanding of a concept was not something

that was easily changed, but the common people seemingly adopted some demonological elements around 1650.

The failure to obtain a hegemonic diabolical interpretation of witchcraft in Finnmark, might be tied to the clergymen who worked in the region. As the seventeenth century saw an intensified focus on the professionalisation of state officials, increasing demands were placed on qualifications and education. And yet, only 27 out of the 64 clergymen that worked in Finnmark during the seventeenth century had obtained institutionalised education. This endeavour to educate all clergymen was another process enforced by the Reformation, that must be interpreted as a protracted process in the high north. For in Finnmark, the traditional clerical apprenticeship continued to be a normal route for aspiring clergymen. The subsequent interaction between educated clergymen who had encountered the diabolical interpretation of witchcraft, and what one could call grass-root clergymen, who were immersed in the popular interpretation of *maleficium*, created a hybrid understanding of witchcraft among the clergymen in the region. Some clergymen emphasised the diabolical aspect, others *maleficium* but the norm was that the clergymen prosecuted both types. It becomes evident that a heterogenous understanding of witchcraft existed among the clergy in Finnmark, as there was a distinct nuance among the clergymen when it came to their involvement in the witchcraft prosecutions; in some cases they gave impetus to the trials, while in others they did not prosecute people who were rumoured to know witchcraft.

This hybrid understanding of witchcraft was not very problematic, as the clergy's parishioners also wanted to prosecute witches based on an understanding of witchcraft as *maleficium*. There were even occasions where clergymen, such as priest Christen Nielsen in Medfjord, were believed to have been killed by *maleficium*, precisely because he had interfered in interpersonal quarrels between his parishioners. For the clergymen were central figures in their parishes, and most of them were on good terms with their parishioners. On several occasions, such as in 1662, it was the local priests who saved their parishioners from starving to death when the grain supplies from the merchants in Bergen failed to show up. Quite frequently it becomes clear that the clergy in the region deviated from the normative regulations when it suited them, whether this was in regard to the illegal trade that they conducted, their lack of institutionalised

education, or their missing involvement in witchcraft trials against people reputed to have magical abilities.

Although they were central figures within their parish, the clergymen could not do as they pleased with their parishioners. There are several examples of clergymen who engaged too heavily with the 'culture of rule' and were met with opposition. King Christian IV and his successors had ambitious religious programs, but those of the clergymen who were overambitious in implementing them too quickly could receive push-back from their congregation. For although they were elite figures in their local communities, the clergymen were solidly placed within the interactive sphere between elite and popular culture. The sources demonstrate time and again that the clergymen had to enter compromises with both their parishioners, the other leading elites, and their superiors. Despite, or perhaps because of their role as interlocutors between elite and popular culture, the clergymen were at the centre of the local communications circuits and often acted in a paternal yet authoritative manner towards their parishioners. When one reads the court records one is struck by the amount of trust and faith many of the parishioners placed in their priests, the clergymen were creditors, gave testimonies, attended parties, and interacted with their parishioners in everyday scenarios connected to both pleasure and grief. It is this understanding of the clergyman as a trustworthy paternal figure, in addition to his role as a member of the elite part of society, that is required to understand the roles of the clergy in the witchcraft prosecutions. From the outset the clergyman's role in prosecutions seems contradictory, they had two primary roles as they were meant to act as both spiritual comforters and simultaneously, they could immerse themselves within the 'culture of rule' as prosecutors and interrogators.

One of the roles of the clergy in the witchcraft prosecutions was clearly religious. The very presence of the clergyman in a witchcraft trial had a religious function, as can be seen in the trial against Karen Eddisdatter in 1620, when the presence of priest Mogens was said to ward off the Devil. The clergymen were the representatives of God's power on earth, but through this role the clergymen also contributed to strengthen the dualistic view of witchcraft and the witch's role as society's internal other. The spiritual role of the clergymen underwent a development during the period, initially their primary objective was to hear the confessions and give the alleged witch the last sacrament before execution. In that regard, the religious role of

the clergy was rather simply a rescue mission for the eternal soul, as the corporal body was already considered to be forfeited. During the chain-prosecutions in 1662–1663, this role had evolved, it becomes evident through the attempt of reconverting the children, that the clergymen now believed they had the power to reconvert those who had given themselves to the Devil, and possibly return them to the local society. Concerning the children, the clergymen's endeavours failed, but their role continued to evolve. In the last phase of the trials, there was an increasing usage of giving spiritual guidance as a sentence to those found guilty of practicing benevolent magic, such as the trial against Marite Nielsdatter in 1690. The role of the clergy then became linked with education and teaching those who conducted minor violations against the regulations of benevolent magic, why their actions were sinful based on the Lutheran orthodox interpretation of witchcraft. The most important religious function of the clergyman was the granting of the sacrament. It was important for both the person about to be executed, and the people living in their local community that the person had been allowed to confess and receive the sacrament. In relation to this it was also important for the incarcerated to have access to the priest, in order to receive spiritual guidance and solace. The importance of this role can be seen in 1652 when Gundelle Omundzdatter summoned provost Hans Pedersen Bang to her cell the day after he had interrogated her, in order to talk with him in private.

The other role played by the clergy were as prosecutors and interrogators. As most of the clergymen who involved themselves in the witchcraft prosecutions had attended university, it is perhaps not a coincidence that the first diabolical elements appear together with the first explicit mention of a clergyman in the trial records in 1620. Although the clergymen in Finnmark had a hybrid understanding of witchcraft that accepted both *maleficium* and diabolism, it seems that when they cooperated with other elites in the chain-prosecutions it was the diabolical understanding that was emphasised. During these chain-prosecutions there were also more religious elements present in the forced confessions. For it seems that the clergy introduced several new elements of demonology, one such element could have been the hierarchical and military organization of witches in 1621 and 1634. However, another interesting element that has not been emphasised in previous research, is that the clergy also stopped the introduction of other diabolical elements, such as the make-shift exorcism Anna Rhodius attempted to start in 1663.

Several clergymen such as Christen Mikkelsen and Hans Pedersen Bang gave impetus to the witchcraft trials as they confirmed rumours and denunciations. During the subsequent interrogation and torture sessions, these clergymen must have participated to a large degree in adding demonological elements to the confessions of the accused. Still, the witchcraft prosecutions were another arena where the clergy in Finnmark deviated from normative regulations. Through their position in the local communications circuit the clergymen should have known about rumours related to witchcraft, and the trials reveal that these existed. Still, the clergymen rarely appeared as principal accusers in witchcraft trials, although they were explicitly ordered to do so in the witchcraft ordinances of 1617/87. Instead of prosecuting the reputed people at court, some clergymen clearly attempted alternative approaches, as when Bang refused the women in Ekkerø the sacrament in 1634 after they had become reputed for witchcraft. Irregularities such as these strengthen the argument that the understanding of witchcraft was heterogenous among the clergy in Finnmark. Although there were some providentialist and pastoralist tendencies in the trials, the clergymen who were active in the trials advocated for the execution of alleged witches throughout the entire period. It is therefore difficult to maintain a thesis that the clergy contributed in the decline and end of the witchcraft prosecutions in Finnmark. There is also an inherent problem in trying to separate the clergyman's religious role and his role as a state official during the trials, as these roles were incorporated into one. The clergyman was a state official who had both spiritual and judicial responsibilities when he was involved in the witchcraft trials.

This dissertation has also uncovered that the clergymen did not only involve themselves in the witchcraft prosecutions in their role as state officials. In some cases, the clergymen clearly had personal incentives to involve themselves in the trials, such as when Hans Pedersen Bang became involved in the trial against Gundelle Omundtzatter in 1651–52, after she had been accused of sinking the ship that had contained his salary for an entire year. The clergymen also cooperated with other elites, as is evident from the cooperation between Hans Pedersen Bang and Laurits Henriksen Bras. This means that the involvement of the clergy in the witchcraft prosecutions cannot be interpreted solely through a fulfilment of their duties as state officials, personal motives and social relations must also be accounted for. This social dynamic was important, as the accused witches and the people who accused them were people the clergymen interacted with often if not daily. Some clergymen had known the accused witches all their

lives, as provost Bang stated that he had been the one who had baptised the alleged witch Siri Pedersdatter during an interrogation session in 1662–1663. Because of his long career, Bang had extensive knowledge of and social relations with his parishioners who lived in the areas that developed into the epicentre of the witchcraft prosecutions along the coast Eastern-Finnmark. Through this role within the social dynamics of the parishes and villages the clergymen encountered friends, enemies, and acquaintances on both the side of the prosecuted and the prosecutors. This is most likely one of the reasons why the clergymen deviated from the normative regulations from time to time and gave some alleged witches milder punishments or ignored their duties to accuse them at court. The role of the clergy in the witchcraft prosecutions was clearly a complex one, controlled by a multitude of factors such as official duties, religious responsibilities, personal objectives and agendas. The clergymen normally co-existed, cooperated and compromised with their parishioners and superiors as they acted in their uneasy role in the interactive sphere between elite and common culture. However, in the witchcraft trials, the mutual regulatory relationship between clergyman and parishioners disappeared, as the clergymen were allowed by the authorities to completely join the ‘culture of rule’ and from there drive the prosecutions forward.

6.1. Areas of future research.

As stated in the introduction, this dissertation has not gone in-depth on certain themes such as gender and ethnicity, as there was not enough room for an extensive elaboration within the ramifications of a master dissertation. One potential study which would incorporate gender to a large extent, could use the court trials relating to clergymen compiled in appendix B, in order to analyse the relationship between representatives of the Church and the women and men living in Finnmark. As the clergymen acted in a paternalistic manner, a more detailed study concerning the way the clergymen interacted with the women and men in a judicial setting could shed light on several topics, such as early modern masculinities and gender relations in the region.

The clergymen were key figures in local and regional socio-economic affairs. A future qualitative study should investigate the way the clergymen utilised the local court from 1620–1720. Such a study could shed new light on fluctuations in the relationship between the people

living in Finnmark, the merchants in Bergen and their representatives in the region in order to investigate what role the clergy played in this relationship. Such a study should include supplications sent by local priests and the *superintendents* in Trondheim to the chancellery in Copenhagen.

As mentioned, the field of historical witchcraft research is marked by regional studies and there is a need to elevate the explanatory models to a higher level, one way to do this is through comparative studies. The role of the clergymen in the witchcraft trials has as mentioned usually only been dealt with superficially with an emphasis on the opinions of theologians. A future comparative study should do the opposite, through a clear focus on the clergymen who were down on the ground in the parishes. It should investigate what educational level they had, how they got on with their parishioners, and if they acted differently in court than they did in other situations. Such a comparative approach would make it possible to investigate the role of the clergy in the witchcraft prosecutions on a more national scale. Rogaland is one of the only other regions in Norway that can match the archival sources of Finnmark, this makes a comparison between the two regions a natural starting point. In addition, this dissertation has shown that it was the clergymen who had attended university who usually implemented demonological ideas in the court trials. This weakens Johansen's claim that the clergymen encountered little demonology at university. Although it was not listed as taught course, the clergymen encountered it through professors and demonologists such as Niels Hemmingsen and Jesper Brochmand. A future study should investigate the educational level of the clergymen who were involved in the Norwegian witchcraft prosecutions. I suspect that much of this work has already been done through local history books and genealogy, someone "only" has to collect all the information, systemize it, and relate it to the witchcraft trials.

The court records from Finnmark are on *UNESCO's memory of the world program* for a reason. They are a physical treasure trove concerning elements relating to economic, social, and cultural developments in Finnmark in the seventeenth century. By analysing some of the themes suggested above we can gain new insights about both the region and the witchcraft prosecutions that happened there. The court records still contain the potential to be used in numerous research projects, they just need to be asked new questions, the last line about the witchcraft trials in the high north is therefore yet to be written.

Appendixes.

Abbreviations used in the appendixes:

EN = Einar Niemi, *Vadsøs historie fra øyvær til kjøpstad (inntil 1833)* (Vadsø: Vadsø Kommune, 1983).

HEN = Hans Eyvind Næss, *Trolldomsprosessene i Norge på 15–1600-tallet: En retts og sosialhistorisk undersøkelse* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1982).

HSHW = Hilde Sandvik and Harald Winge (ed.), *Tingbok for Finnmark 1620–1633* (Oslo: Norsk lokalhistorisk institutt, 1987).

KB = Kirsten Bergh, “Til ild og bål: En kort oversikt over Finnmarks hekseprosesser,” In *Vardøhus festning 650 år: Jubileumsskrift*, ed. G. I. Willoch, (Oslo: Landstrykkeriet, 1960), 126–145.

LHW = Liv Helene Willumsen, *The Witchcraft trials in Finnmark Northern Norway*. Trans. Katjana Edwardsen. (Bergen: Skald, 2010).

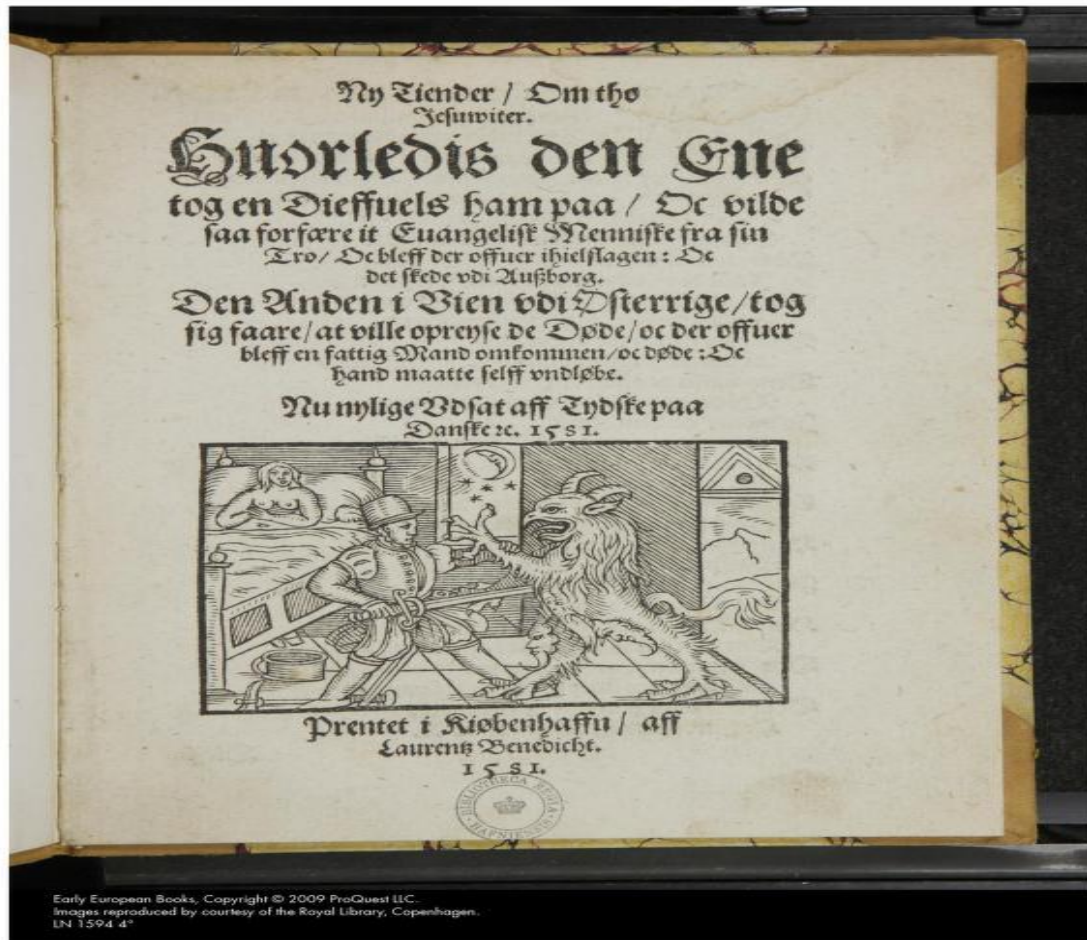
PRS= Peter Ravn Sollied, *Prester, prestegjeld og kirker i Finmarken i det 17de århundrede*. (Kristiania: J. Chr. Gundersen, 1901).

RHPS = Rune Blix Hagen and Per Einar Sparboe (ed.), Hans H. Lilienskiold, *Trolldom og ugudelighet i 1600-tallets Finnmark*. (Tromsø: Ravnetrykk, 1998).

TB = Abbreviation for the Norwegian *Tingbok* meaning court records, which is SATØ, *The archives of the Finnmark district magistrate* no. x. Fol. xxx.

Appendix A.

A pamphlet from 1581 depicting a Jesuit in the shape of the Devil attacking a protestant couple. (Copenhagen: Laurents Benedicht, 1581).



Explanatory note to appendix B.

In the following appendix I have compiled all the clergymen I have come across during my archival research. The clergymen are listed according to the parishes they worked in. The list follows the geographical location of the parishes from west to east, starting with the parish of Loppa. I initially worked based on Peter Ravn Sollied, *Prester, prestegjeld og kirker i det 17de århundrede...*, but I have found more clergymen and confirmed education on several others who are not mentioned in Sollied's monograph.

As the parishes changed quite a bit in Finnmark during the seventeenth century, with variations in the names and switches between parish churches and annex churches, the clergymen have been registered in the parishes as they were in 1668. This has been done in order to structure the compilation. However, there are some exceptions, two clergymen have been registered in Hjelmsø parish. Hjelmsø was its own parish until 1630 when it became an annex church under Loppa. Both these clergymen were active before 1630 and have therefore been registered in Hjelmsø instead of Loppa. The same goes for the clergymen registered in Mefjord which became an annex church under Hammerfest in 1623, and so on.

Some of the clergymen are registered with several professional titles and different parishes. In these instances, the positions are listed according to the order that the clergymen operated them, always starting with the position they had first. To exemplify this with Hans Pedersen Bang, he is listed as chaplain, parish priest, and provost in Vadsø/ Vardø/ Eastern-Finnmark in the period 1632–1664. This means that the first time Bang was mentioned in 1632 he was the chaplain in Vadsø, somewhere around 1640 he became parish priest in Vardø, the parish priest in Vardø also had the position of provost of Eastern-Finnmark. It is often difficult to find the years that the titles changed and therefore only the active period or the years the clergymen were mentioned in the sources have been registered.

The compilation primarily contains references to manuscripts located in archives. TB stands for *tingbok* Norwegian for court records, TB no. 09 is therefore *The archive of the Finnmark district magistrate* no. 09. and so on.

I am certain that this list is not exhaustive, and that there is more information about each priest “out there.” Hopefully, this list can serve as a starting point for others who are interested in the clergymen who worked in Finnmark in the seventeenth century. In this compilation the clergy have been registered with their original patronyms when relevant.

Appendix B: Clergymen in Finnmark during the seventeenth century					
Name:	Professional title:	Parish from west to east (1668):	Year(s) mentioned:	Education:	Reference in primary sources or secondary literature:
Antoni.	Parish priest.	Loppa.	1600.	Unknown.	SATR ymse protokoller nr. 1. kirkehistoriske aktstykker samlet av biskop Gunnerus fra 1600 og 1700-tallet, fol. 82b.
Jens Andersson.	Parish priest.	Loppa.	1620–28.	‘Vellert.’	HSHW. p. 82-83. / <i>Ibid.</i> p. 105. / <i>Ibid.</i> p.141.
Mads Olsson.	Chaplain.	Loppa.	1624.	Unknown.	HSHW. p. 104.
Søren Nilsson.	Parish priest.	Loppa.	1631–1649.	Unknown.	HSHW. p. 273. / <i>Ibid.</i> p. 296-297. / TB. Nr. 8. fol. 028b.
Torben Reiersson (Nidrosiensis).	Chaplain, parish priest, provost of western-Finnmark.	Loppa/ Western-Finnmark.	1651–1695.	Yes, Trondheim, matriculated Copenhagen 1644.	TB. Nr. 9. Fol. 2a-2b./ <i>Ibid.</i> Fol. 053b-054a./ <i>Ibid.</i> Fol. 153b-154b/ <i>Ibid.</i> Fol. 173b./ TB. Nr. 13. Fol. 079a-080a./ TB. Nr. 19. Fol. 058a-058b./ SATR Nidaros biskop arkiv. Da. 118. Forordninger og reskripter 1691-1700./ Smith, <i>Kjøbenhavns universitets matrikkel 1611-1667</i> , p. 184.
Trude Henriksson Nitter.	Parish priest, provost of western-Finnmark.	Loppa/Kjelvik/ Western-Finnmark.	1695, 1699–1719.	Yes, Bergen, matriculated Copenhagen 1679.	PRS. p. 5./ LHW. p. 303. / SATR Trondhjems biskop arkiv, kaldsbreve 1689-1731 pk. Nr. 1. Fol. 3a. / SATR ymse protokoller nr. 1. Biskop Gunnerus kirkehistoriske aktstykker Fol. 82b, 87b. / Smith, <i>Kjøbenhavns universitets matrikkel 1667-1740</i> p. 89.
Anders Larsson Filianus.	Parish priest.	Loppa.	1699–1705.	Unknown.	PRS. p. 6. / SATR Trondhjems biskop arkiv, kaldsbreve 1689-1731 pk. Nr. 1. Fol. 2b. / SATR ymse protokoller nr. 1. Biskop Gunnerus kirkehistoriske aktstykker, Fol. 82b, 87b.
Anders Jensson.	Parish priest.	Sørvær.	1610, 1624(?).	Unknown.	HSHW. p. 122. / <i>Ibid.</i> p. 284.
Hans Hansson.	Parish priest.	Sørvær.	1627–1631.	Unknown.	HSHW. p. 171. / <i>Ibid.</i> , p. 205–206. / <i>Ibid.</i> p. 274. [Could Hans be the same as Johann prest? HSHW. p. 307.]
Jens Pedersson.	Parish priest.	Sørvær.	1649 – before 1654.	Unknown.	TB. Nr. 8. Fol. 008a. / TB. Nr. 9. Fol. 022b.
Søren Lauritsson Lindholm.	Parish priest.	Sørvær.	1654.	Yes, Malmø, matriculated Copenhagen 1642.	TB. Nr. 9. Fol. 022b. /Smith, <i>Kjøbenhavns universitet matrikkel 1611-1667</i> , p. 173.

Jan [?].	Parish priest.	Sørvær / Hasvåg.	before 1660.	Unknown.	TB. Nr. 9. fol. 148a.
Daniel Anderssøn Stang.	Parish priest.	Sørvær/ Hasvåg.	1660.	Unknown.	TB. Nr. 9. Fol. 071a.
Laurits Nilssøn Nyborg.	Parish priest.	Sørvær/ Ingø/ Hasvåg.	1658–1671.	Yes, Odense, matriculated Copenhagen 1651.	TB. Nr. 9. Fol. 052a. / <i>Ibid.</i> Fol.071a. / <i>Ibid.</i> Fol. 096b, 098a-b./ <i>Ibid.</i> Fol. 143a–144b. / TB. Nr. 13. Fol. 079. / Smith, <i>Kjøbenhavns universitet matrikkel 1611-1667</i> , p. 228.
Christian Markussøn Humble.	Parish priest.	Sørvær/ Hammerfest.	1668–1679.	Yes, Sorø, matriculated Copenhagen 1653.	PRS. p. 10. / Nagel, 2017, p. 106. / Smith, <i>Kjøbenhavns universitet matrikkel 1611-1667</i> , p. 239.
Anton Zachariassøn.	Parish priest.	Sørvær.	1678–1685.	Unknown.	PRS. p. 10.
Alexander Larssøn Vigand.	Parish priest.	Sørvær.	1684–1704.	Yes, Trondheim, matriculated Copenhagen 1679.	PRS. p. 11. /SATR Nidaros biskop arkiv pk. Nr. 118. Forordninger og reskripter 1691-1700. / Smith, <i>Kjøbenhavns universitet matrikel 1667-1740</i> , p. 97.
Håvard Olssøn.	Parish priest.	Medfjord.	1606 died before 1621.	Yes, Bergen, matriculated Rostock 1591.	HSHW. p. 66-67. / Norske samlinger vol. 1. p. 88.
Christen Nielsen [Ripensis].	Parish priest.	Medfjord.	1613 died before 1621.	Yes, Ribe [?], matriculated Copenhagen 1604.	HSHW. p. 66-69.
Christen Nilssøn.	Parish priest.	Hammerfest.	1621–1629.	Unknown.	HSHW. p. 44. / <i>Ibid.</i> p. 161. / <i>Ibid.</i> p. 238.
Nils Didrikssøn.	Parish priest.	Hammerfest.	1629–1632(?).	Unknown.	HSHW. p. 231. / <i>Ibid.</i> p. 238.
Clemet Olssønn.	Parish priest.	Hammerfest.	1632 (?).	Unknown.	PRS. p. 15.

Mathias Eriksen Jamptus.	Parish priest, provost of western Finnmark.	Hammerfest/ Kjelvik/ western-Finnmark.	1645.	Cathedral school in Bergen.	Siv Rasmussen. unpublished paper. p. 5.
Mads Jensen.	Parish priest, provost of western-Finnmark.	Hammerfest/ Kjelvik/ western-Finnmark.	1650–1665.	Unknown.	TB. Nr. 8. Fol. 026b. /TB. Nr. 9. Fol. 005a.
Morten Nilssøn Bjerreby.	Parish priest.	Hammerfest.	1661–1668.	Yes, Slagelse matriculated Copenhagen 1653.	TB. Nr. 9. Fol. 101b-102b. / <i>Ibid.</i> Fol. 164b-167b. / Smith, <i>Kjøbenhavns universitet matrikel</i> , p. 244.
Anders Danielssøn Norenberg [Andreas Danielis Bergensis].	Parish priest.	Hammerfest/ Skjøtningberg.	1670–1720.	Yes, Bergen 1660, testimony from Copenhagen 1662.	PRS. p. 15. Gunnerusbiblioteket, dok. XA 44. Fol. 24a-25a. /SATR Nidaros biskop arkiv pk. Nr. 118. Forordninger og reskripter 1691-1700. / Hammond, <i>Nordiske missions historie</i> , p. 233.
Hans Mogenssøn Herdal [Isogaeus].	Parish priest.	Hammerfest.	1671–1719.	Yes, Trondheim, matriculated Copenhagen 1662.	PRS. p. 15. /SATR Nidaros biskop arkiv pk. Nr. 118 forordninger og reskripter 1691-1700. / Hammon, <i>Nordiske missions historie</i> p. 239. / Smith, <i>Kjøbenhavn universitets matrikel 1611-1667</i> , p. 309.
Peder Hanssøn [not the same person as the one below].	Parish priest.	Ingø.	Died in 1628.	Unknown.	HSHW. p. 108-109. / <i>ibid.</i> p. 207.
Peder Hanssøn.	Parish priest.	Ingø/ Omgang.	Before 1620, 1629, 1631, 1639.	Unknown.	HSHW. p. 77. / <i>Ibid.</i> p. 227. / <i>Ibid.</i> p. 275.
Didrik Hanssøn.	Parish priest.	Ingø.	1650 – before 1660.	Unknown.	TB. Nr. 8. Fol. 025b-026a. / <i>Ibid.</i> Fol. 039b. / TB. Nr. 9. Fol. 005. / <i>Ibid.</i> 024a-b. / <i>Ibid.</i> 103b.

Søren Rasmussen Berg.	Parish priest.	Ingø.	1665–1685(?).	Yes, cathedral school in Copenhagen, matriculated Copenhagen 1653.	PRS. p. 19. / Smith, <i>Kjøbenhavns Universitets matrikel 1611-1667</i> p. 241.
Anders Lucassøn.	Parish priest.	Ingø.	mentioned 1681, 1688.	Unknown.	PRS. p. 19.
Daniel Klingenberg.	Parish priest.	Ingø.	1696.	Yes, Trondheim, matriculated Copenhagen 1689.	PRS. p. 19. / SATR Trondhjems biskop arkiv, kaldsbreve 1689-1731 pk. Nr. 1. Fol. 2b. / SATR ymse protkoller nr. 1. Biskop Gunnerus kirkehistoriske aktstykker Fol. 87b. / Smith, <i>Kjøbenhavns universitet matrikel 1667-1740</i> , p. 168.
Peder Enevoldssøn.	Parish priest.	Hjelmsø.	1609 – before 1616.	Unknown.	PRS. p. 20.
Søren Nilssøn.	Parish priest.	Hjelmsø.	1618-1630.	Unknown.	HSHW. p. 63. / <i>Ibid.</i> p. 139. / <i>Ibid.</i> p. 150. / <i>Ibid.</i> p. 160.
Sven Jørgenssøn.	Parish priest.	Tuenes.	before 1609.	Unknown.	PRS. p. 22.
Hans Mikkelssøn.	Parish priest.	Kjelvik.	mentioned 1610, 1612, died before 1626.	Unknown.	HSHW. p. 158-159. / <i>Ibid.</i> , p. 201.
Hans Olssønn.	Parish priest.	Kjelvik.	1627[?] mentioned 1631.	Unknown.	Possibly him - HSHW. p. 187. / definitely him - <i>Ibid.</i> p. 279. / <i>Ibid.</i> p. 310.
Unknown name.	Parish priest.	Kjelvik.	1645, 1662 (?).	Unknown.	TB. Nr. 9. Fol. 191a.
Jens Madssønn Fovige.	Parish priest.	Kjelvik.	1666–1686.	Yes, Bergen matriculated Copenhagen 1659.	PRS. p. 26. / Smith, <i>Kjøbenhavns Universitets matrikel 1611–1667</i> , p. 279.
Magister Peder Thomassøn Waak.	Parish priest.	Kjelvik.	1686–1699.	Yes Bergen, matriculated Copenhagen 1681.	PRS. p. 26. / Smith, <i>Kjøbenhavns Universitets matrikel 1667-1740</i> p. 109.

Jacob.	Parish priest.	Skjødningberg.	mentioned 1614.	Unknown.	PRS. p. 29.
Bendix.	Parish priest.	Skjødningberg.	Before 1627–1631.	Unknown.	HSHW. p. 185. / <i>Ibid.</i> p. 234. / <i>Ibid.</i> p. 268.
Unknown name.	Chaplain.	Skjødningberg.	1645.	Unknown.	PRS. p. 28.
Peder Kjærup.	Parish priest.	Skjødningberg.	nevnes 1651.	Unknown.	TB. Nr. 08 Fol. 045b–047a.
Jacob Albertssønn Retz/Ritze.	Parish priest.	Skjødningberg.	1658–1667.	Yes, Herlov, matriculated Copenhagen 1635.	TB. Nr. 9. Fol. 057a–b. / <i>Ibid.</i> 195a–196b. / Smith, <i>Kjøbenhavn universitets matrikel 1611–1667</i> , p. 127.
Mogens Nilssønn.	Parish priest.	Omgang/ Makkaur.	mentioned 1611, 1620 1624, 1627, 1631. mentioned as deceased 1634 and 1638	Unknown.	HSHW. p. 32. / <i>Ibid.</i> p. 89. / <i>Ibid.</i> 102. / <i>ibid.</i> p. 183. / <i>Ibid.</i> p. 266–267. / LHW. p. 89. / RHPS. 120-122. / <i>Ibid.</i> 134–136.
Laurits Caspersønn Norman.	Chaplain, Parish priest.	Vadsø, Omgang.	1642–1684. Priest in Omgang from 1650.	Unknown.	PRS. p. 41. / TB. Nr. 8. Fol. 024b. / <i>Ibid.</i> 072a-073a. /TB. Nr. 9. Fol. 037a–038a.
Engebrigt Madtzen.	Parish priest.	Aurskog (Romerike) Imprisoned at Vardøhus.	Died between 1663– 1666.	Unknown.	TB. 9. Fol. 205a–b. / Hagen, <i>Porten til helvete</i> . p. 199.
Claus Christenssøn.	Parish priest.	Vardø.	mentioned 1599, 1607.	Relegated from the University of Copenhagen.	PRS. p. 38. / EN. p. 209./ SATØ, Oluff Pedersens regnskap fra 1601.
Jørgen.	Parish priest.	Vardø.	1608–1617.	Unknown.	PRS. p. 38.
Oluff Karlsen.	Parish priest, provost of eastern- Finnmark.	Vardø.	1617–1626.	'Vellert.'	HSHW. p. 27. / <i>Ibid.</i> p. 52. / <i>Ibid.</i> p. 117. / <i>Ibid.</i> p. 125. / RHPS. p. 94. / Håvard Dahl Bratrein, “‘Ei sørgelig sang’ fra 1600-tallet” <i>Håløygminne</i> 1 (1979): 177–185.
Christen Mikkelsønn.	Parish priest, provost of	Vardø.	mentioned 1627, 1632 died around 1640.	Yes, Trondheim, matriculated	HSHW. p. 174. / <i>Ibid.</i> p. 189. / <i>Ibid.</i> p. 211–212. / <i>Ibid.</i> p. 238. / <i>Ibid.</i> p. 262, 265. / <i>Ibid.</i> p. 288. / <i>Ibid.</i> p. 302–303. / TB. Nr. 9. Fol. 027b.

	eastern-Finnmark.			Copenhagen 1624.	
Hans Pedersen Bang.	Chaplain, parish priest, provost of eastern-Finnmark.	Vadsø, Vardø, Eastern-Finnmark.	1632–1664.	'Vellert.'	HSHW. p. 290–294. / <i>Ibid.</i> p. 302–303. / <i>Ibid.</i> p. 305. / <i>Ibid.</i> p. 315–316. / SATØ. Doc. 082. / Doc. 086. / TB. Nr. 8 Fol. 047a. / <i>Ibid.</i> Fol. 060a–061b./ <i>Ibid.</i> 118a–b. / <i>Ibid.</i> 125b–126a. / <i>Ibid.</i> 129a. / TB. Nr. 9. Fol. 008b, 011a. / <i>Ibid.</i> Fol. 027a. / <i>Ibid.</i> 034b–035a. / <i>Ibid.</i> 062a. / <i>Ibid.</i> 088a. / <i>Ibid.</i> 128b–129a.
Christen Jakobssøn Falster [Christiernus Iacobi Nicopia-Falsterus].	Parish priest, provost of Eastern-Finnmark.	Vardø, Eastern-Finnmark.	1664–1667.	Yes, Nykøbing (DK), matriculated Copenhagen 1650.	PRS. p. 39. / Smith, <i>Kjøbenhavns universitets matrikel 1611–1667</i> p. 227.
Hans Hanssøn.	Parish priest.	Vardø.	Mentioned 1668, 1688.	Unknown.	TB. Nr. 21. Fol. 114b–115a. / PRS. p. 39.
Anders Olsen Bergensis.	Chaplain.	Vardø. (Vardø became the chaplaincy and Vadsø the parish church after Paus became parish priest in 1697.)	1695.	Yes, Bergen, matriculated Copenhagen 1668.	PRS. p. 42. /SATR Trondhjems biskop arkiv, Kaldsbreve 1689–1731 pk. Nr. 1. Fol. 2b. / SATR ymse protokoller nr. 1. Biskop Gunnerus kirkehistoriske aktstykker. Fol 86b. / Smith, <i>Kjøbenhavns universitets matrikel 1667–1740</i> , p. 8.
Jon Prest.	Chaplain.	Vadsø.	1610–1625.	Unknown.	EN. 208–209. / SATØ. manntallsregister Vardø 1610.
Moses Sørensen.	Chaplain, parish priest, provost of Finnmark.	Vadsø. / Vardø. / Eastern-Finnmark.	1653–1695.	Yes, Bergen matriculated Copenhagen 1651.	TB. Nr. 9. Fol. 010b. / <i>Ibid.</i> 048a–049a. / TB. Nr. 12. Fol. 36a–b. / <i>Ibid.</i> 092a. / <i>Ibid.</i> 72b–74a. / TB. Nr. 13. Fol. 005a. /SATR Nidaros biskop arkiv pk. Nr. 118 forordninger og reskripter 1694–1700. Smith, <i>Kjøbenhavns universitets matrikel 1611–1667</i> p. 230.
Magister Ludvig Christenssøn Paus.	Chaplain, parish priest,	Vadsø/ Vardø/ Finnmark.	1681–1707.	Yes, Bergen, matriculated	PRS. p. 40. / SATR Trondhjems biskop arkiv kaldsbreve 1689–1731 pk. Nr. 1 Fol. 1b. /SATR Nidaros biskop arkiv pk. Nr. 118 forordninger og reskripter 1691–1700. / SATR

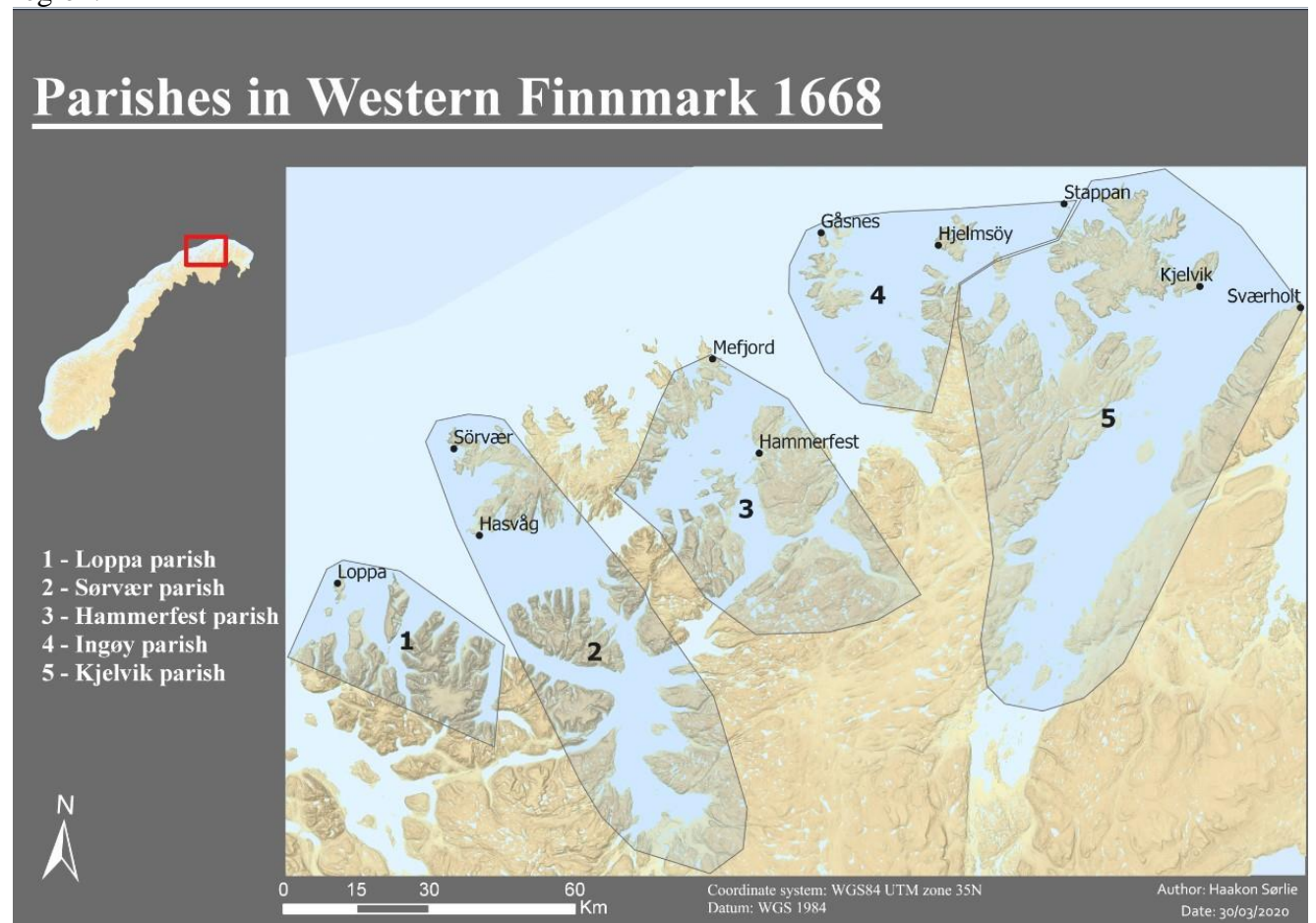
	provost of all of Finnmark.			Copenhagen 1671.	ymse protokoller nr. 1. Biskop Gunnerus kirkehistoriske aktstykker Fol. 86. / Kristian Nissen, p. 118. / <i>Smith, Københavns universitets matrikel 1667–1740</i> , p. 25.
Jesper.	Chaplain.	Vadsø.	1623.	Unknown.	HSHW. p. 84–85.
Nils.	Chaplain.	Vadsø.	1626.	Unknown.	HSHW. p. 152–153.
Søren Hanssønn.	Chaplain.	Vadsø.	1650–1653.	Unknown.	TB. Nr. 8. Fol. 060a–061b. [not sure if it is Bang or Hanssøn].
Samuel Mathiassen [Samuel Matthiæ Finomarckiensis].	Chaplain.	Vadsø.	1676–1680.	Yes, Bergen, matriculated Copenhagen 1668.	PRS. p. 42. / <i>Smith, Københavns universitet matrikel 1667–1740</i> , p. 8.

Appendix C. Clergymen who were mentioned or active in the prosecutions.

This compilation contains the names of the clergymen that were mentioned or actively participated in the witchcraft trials and the dates of the relevant witchcraft trials.

Name:	Date of trial:	Reference:
Mogens Nilsen in Omgang/ Makkaur	13/05/1620 + 6/05/1634 + 30/04/1638	LHW. p. 25, 88–89.; HSHW. 31–33.; RHPS. 120–122, 134–136.
Oluff Karlsen in Vardø.	26–28/04/1621.	LHW. p. 30.; HSHW. 52.; RHPS. 94.
Christen Nielsen in Medfjord.	31/08/1621.	LHW. p. 37–40.; HSHW. 68.
Håvard Olsson in Medfjord.	31/08/1621.	LHW. p. 36.; HSHW. 67.
Niels in Vadsø.	24/07/1626.	LHW. p. 47.; HSHW. 152.
Hans Hansen in Sørvær.	10/05/1627.	LHW. p. 57–58.; HSHW. 171.
Christen Mikkelsøn in Vardø.	27/09/1628 + 10/09/1632 + 29/03/1634 + 9/04/1634 +28/11/1634.	LHW. p. 63–62, 75, 80–81, 83–84, 94.; HSHW. 211, 302–303.; RHPS. 132.
Hans Olsson in Kjelvik.	17/06/1631.	LHW. p. 67.; HSHW. 278.
Hans Pedersen Bang in Vadsø/ Vardø.	05/03/1632 + 20/03/1632 + 10/09/1632 + 15/04/1634+ 28/11/1634 + 25/10/1662 + 26/01/1663 + 27/02/1663 + 25/06/1663 + 8 og 16/10/1666.	LHW. p. 69, 72, 75, 93, 176, 210– 219, 239, 286, 295.; HSHW. 291, 293, 303.; SATR: <i>Court of appeal protocol for Nordland and Finnmark</i> , part 2. 1663–1668. fol. 164. SATØ: archive of the Finnmark district governor, archival piece 2543, doc. 086.
Laurits Casperssøn Norman in Omgang.	16/02/1657.	LHW. p. 165–168.; SATØ. TB. No. 09. fol. 037a–037b.
Engebrigt Madsen political prisoner at Vardøhus.	27/02/1663 + 8 og 16/10/1666.	LHW. p. 239–240, 288, 299–300.; SATØ. TB. No. 09, fol. 257b–258a.
Torben Reiersen in Loppa.	14/08/1672.	LHW. p. 328–329.; SATØ. TB Nr. 13. Fol. 079a–080a.
Moses Sørensen in Vardø.	27/02/1663 + 14/06/1671 + 14–16/06/1680 + 2/07/1689/ 1/12/1690.	HEN. p. 201.; KB. p. 142.; LHW. p. 319, 369–373.; SATØ. TB. No. 09. 257b–258a. SATØ. TB. No. 13, fol. 005a.; SATR, <i>court of appeal protocol for Nordland and Finnmark</i> , 1671–1683, fol. 77b.
Ludvig Christensen Paus in Vardø.	28/05/1688 +1/12/1690.	LHW. p. 362–363, 370–373.

Appendix D. Maps showing the parishes in Finnmark as they were in 1668. Court places have been marked on the map. The provost in Western-Finnmark oversaw the parishes in that part of the region, and the provost in Eastern-Finnmark oversaw the parishes in that part of the region.



Parishes in Eastern Finnmark 1668



- 6 - Skjötningberg parish
- 7 - Omgang parish
- 8 - Vardø parish



0 15 30 60 Km

Coordinate system: WGS84 UTM zone 35N
Datum: WGS 1984

Author: Haakon Sørli
Date: 30/03/2020

Appendix E. People who matched the criteria for a witchcraft rumour during their witchcraft trial in Finnmark.

Name of person:	Place and date of trial:	Reference in source material:
Siri Knudsdatter.	Vardø 11/01/1621.	- RHPS. p. 78–79.
Lisbet Nielsdatter.	Omgang 9/08/1621.	- LHW. p. 31–33.; HSHW. p. 58–59.
Ingri, wife of Thorkild Andersen.	Hammerfest 31/08/1621.	- LHW. p. 35–36.; HSHW. 66.
Rasti Rauelsen.	Hammerfest 31/08/1621.	- LHW. p. 37–38.; HSHW. 67–68.
Find Thorsen.	Hammerfest 31/08/1621.	- LHW. p. 39–40.; HSHW. 68.
Karen Mogensdatter.	Vadsø 24/07/1626.	- LHW. p. 47.; LHW guidebook p. 32.; HSHW. 152.
Maritte Eddisdatter.	Kjelvik 17/08/1626.	- LHW. p. 48.; HSHW. 156–157.
Jacob Thomesen's wife.	Alta - 19/05/1627.	LHW. p. 56–59. HSHW. 171–172.
Ingeborre wife of Ole Monsen.	Vardø - 9/04/1634.	RHPS. p. 116–118.
Sarve Pedersen.	Kjelvik 6/05/1634.	- LHW. p. 88–90.
Anne Mattisdatter.	Vardø 28/11/1634.	- LHW. p. 93–94.
Karen Jonsdatter.	Vardø - 9/02/1654.	LHW. p. 138–148.; SATØ. No. 08. fol. 132b–137a.
Dorette Lauridtzdatter.	Vadsø 26/08/1656+ 16/02/1657 +27/09/1662.	- LHW. p. 165–174.; SATØ. No. 09. fol. 032a, 037a–038a, 211a–213b.
Margrete Jonsdatter.	Vardø 8/10/1662.	LHW. p. 175–179.; SATØ. No. 09. fol. 222b.
Magdalena Jacobsdatter.	Vadsø 15/06/1671.	- LHW. p. 317–326.
Lange Mogens Zarasen.	Loppa 14/08/1672.	- LHW. p. 327–329.
Synnøve Johannesdatter.	Vadsø - 4/06/1678.	LHW. p. 332–341.
Kirsten Knudsdatter.	Vadsø - 1/03/1679.	LHW. p. 344–353.

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