



“*Per viam asperam et valde longam*”: Voyages of Pilgrims to Local Shrines in Late Medieval Sweden

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In late medieval miracle collections and acts of canonization proceedings, people who are seldom found in other sources come forth and tell us about their experiences. Their tales reach us through a filter of translation, edition and choice by the clerical recorders of miracles, but the requirements of a process of canonization were such that the material left by the scribes has a high degree of trustworthiness when it is used for the questions dealt with in this paper. As the title says, our focus is on the voyages of pilgrims to local shrines in late medieval Sweden.⁹² In fact, it is my belief that most pilgrimage was local or regional in that period.

1.

At the time of Pentecost, 1376, a woman by the name of Gunnild traveled to the newly-founded monastery at Vadstena in central Sweden, where the relics of the Blessed Birgitta had been buried slightly less than two years earlier. She told the recorders of miracles there that her home was in the parish of Romelanda in the Kingdom of Norway.⁹³ She had been paralytic for five years, but after a vow made to the servant of God, that is Birgitta, she quickly regained her health so completely that she could make the hard and very long journey to the monastery at Vadstena (*ad monasterium Wastenam per viam asperam et valde longam*). In fact, she had covered a distance of *c.* 155 miles (250 kilometers). She was accompanied by two other women, a neighbor named Thora and a *miraculée* (a woman healed) named Thorborgh, from a nearby parish.⁹⁴

2.

Gunnild, Thora and Thorborgh are three of a considerable number of pilgrims to the shrine of the Blessed Birgitta at Vadstena who are known to us thanks to the efforts made in the new monastery to document miracles that could help in obtaining the canonization of their founder. The recording of miracles was, for the most part undertaken between the summer of 1374 and the summer of 1376. During the following years, hearings were held concerning the

⁹² This paper was first presented at the 40th Congress of Medieval Studies at the University of Western Michigan at Kalamazoo, Michigan, on 6 May 2005, in the session sponsored by the International Society for the Study of Pilgrimage Arts. A second version was presented at the symposium *Saints and Sermons* in Bergen, Norway, on 2 September 2005. I do not intend here to make a contribution to the discussion of the usefulness of late medieval miracle collections for social history. For this, I direct the reader to the discussion by Christian Krötzel in “Parent–Child Relations in Medieval Scandinavia According to Scandinavian Miracle Collections,” *Scandinavian Journal of History*, vol. 14 (1989), pp. 23–25, and, more recently, by Cordelia Heß in “Heiligenverehrung in Preußen: Die Kanonisationsakten Dorotheas von Montau als Quelle zur Mentalitätsgeschichte,” *Beiträge zur Geschichte Westpreußens*, vol. 19 (2004), pp. 11–13.

⁹³ In what has, since 1658, been the Swedish province of Bohuslän.

⁹⁴ *Acta et processus canonizacionis beate Birgitte*, ed. Isak Collijn (Uppsala, 1924–31), pp. 132–33 (henceforth cited as *A. & P.*).

miracles. These hearings were partially a follow-up of miracles contained in the original collections, but they also resulted in the recording of new miracles. In 1379, a formal process of canonization was opened in Rome, at which six persons from Sweden gave evidence.⁹⁵ While awaiting the canonization of their saintly founder, the Bridgettines of Vadstena also occasionally recorded new miracles.

In the following, I will refer not only to miracles of the Blessed Birgitta, but also to miracles collected in the fifteenth century to promote the canonization processes of three other Swedes. Miracles collected to promote the cases of Bishop Brynolf Algotsson of Skara and Bishop Nils (Nicolaus) Hermansson of Linköping were recorded between 1401 and 1417, while miracles associated with Catherine of Vadstena, the daughter of Saint Birgitta, were recorded between c. 1416 and 1477. None of these processes led to the canonization of the saint in question (at least they have not done so yet).

3.

These fourteenth- and fifteenth-century collections of miracles from local shrines in Sweden provide a relatively rich body of material for the study of medieval patterns of voyage. We shall now focus on four different topics on which information may be gathered from the *miracula*:

- 1) Traveling alone or in groups
- 2) Men, women and children
- 3) Dangers on the route
- 4) Expressions of piety

1) *Traveling Alone or in Groups*⁹⁶

The three Norwegian women mentioned above apparently formed a small group of their own. The same is true in numerous cases where pilgrims could not have their tales validated by other persons from their own parish. In these cases, the only witnesses cited are people of high status—clerics or noblemen—who happened to have been present when a tale was recorded, but who could not possibly have had a personal knowledge of the circumstances behind the story. Sometimes, the reason why witnesses are not present is explicitly stated, as in the case of a woman from Visnum in the province of Värmland, who had traveled more than 100 miles (165 km) to reach the shrine. She told her story “alone without witnesses, whom she had not been able to bring with her because of the long distance between her home and Vadstena.”⁹⁷

Lone pilgrims are, however, less typical than pilgrims traveling with one or more friends and neighbors. We often find sentences like “*hec mulier cum multis vicinis suis ista secum testantibus*” or even “*cum [...] multa vicinorum turba [...] Wastenas veniens*.”⁹⁸ When

⁹⁵ For the canonization process of Saint Birgitta, see *inter alia* Tore Nyberg, “The Canonization Process of St. Birgitta of Sweden” in *Procès de canonisation au Moyen Âge*, ed. Gábor Klaniczay (Rome, 2004), pp. 67–85.

⁹⁶ There is abundant literature on traveling in the Middle Ages. Among the more recent contributions is Thomas Hill’s essay “Unterwegs nach Dänemark: Zur Reisekultur in vormoderner Zeit” in *Medieval Spirituality in Scandinavia and Europe: A Collection of Essays in Honour of Tore Nyberg*, ed. Lars Bisgaard *et al.* (Odense, 2001), pp. 33–50.

⁹⁷ *Processus seu negocium canonizacionis b. Katerine de Vadstenis*, ed. Isak Collijn (Uppsala, 1942–46), p. 115: “*solitaria sine testibus, quos secum nequaquam ad testificandum producere poterat propter maximam distanciam domus eius a Vastenis*” (hereafter cited as *Proc. Kath.*). Also A.&P, p. 136: “*Testes secum de terra sua non habuit nisi filiam suam.*”

⁹⁸ “This woman testified to this together with several neighbors of hers,” or even, “came to Vadstena with a multitude of neighbors;” A.&P, p. 139, 157.

the miracle consisted in a stillborn child coming to life, for instance, neighbor women who assisted in the childbirth might follow the child's mother to the shrine and give witness.⁹⁹

Groups of pilgrims on their way to a shrine often joined with other groups en route. In some cases it seems probable that a group of pilgrims inspired residents of a parish that they went through to make a vow to the saint and then follow them to the shrine. This is probably the case with two miracles recorded in Vadstena on 13 January 1375, one concerning people from Tuna in Dalarna (Dalecarlia), 190 miles (300 kilometers) from Vadstena, the other concerning people in Hovsta parish north of Örebro, which lay on the route of the first group of pilgrims.¹⁰⁰

In a tale from 1376, we hear about a voyage in Norway involving a group of more than a hundred people. When one of them experienced a miraculous healing of his limping horse after a vow to the Blessed Birgitta, the hundred-odd others followed him to Vadstena to bear witness to the miracle. Most of them were probably residents of the town of Skänninge and its surroundings, not far from Vadstena.¹⁰¹ We might guess of such a large group making a common journey to Norway that they were, in fact, pilgrims to the shrine of Saint Olav in Nidaros. This is not explicitly stated, but the time for their journey, the end of June through the beginning of July, can be shown to have been favored by pilgrims to Nidaros from another miracle tale.¹⁰²

This leads us to the question of organized voyages of groups of pilgrims. In my work with the miracle accounts, I have often found instances where pilgrims from neighboring villages or parishes turn up at the shrine on the same date, a circumstance that might indicate the presence of some organizing force. In some cases, the order of the tales has been changed in secondary versions of the collection, which makes it necessary to refer back to the oldest extant manuscript version to identify the original order.¹⁰³

It is never stated in the collections studied here that such and such person was the organizer of pilgrim groups. Instead, evidence may be gathered from the recurrence of certain names in the collection, like those of the parish priests, Arnaldus of Himmeta and Gregorius of Kil, both of whom returned on different occasions accompanied by different parishioners.¹⁰⁴

A special type of organized pilgrimage was the appearance of a large company of Cistercian nuns from nearby Vreta Abbey at the shrine of the Blessed Nils of Linköping in 1405.¹⁰⁵ As nuns were normally not supposed to leave their monasteries, those who had experienced miracles often preferred to send other persons to the shrine to bear witness. This is true for the prioress of Skänninge Dominican nunnery as well as for a Cistercian nun of

⁹⁹ As in the case of the woman Margareta from Björskog in 1375; *A.&P.*, p. 116. On the same pilgrimage, Margareta herself testified to a miracle tale told by another woman from the same parish, who apparently had been part of the same group of pilgrims. The identification of Margareta in the second miracle is, however, uncertain; *A.&P.*, p. 116.

¹⁰⁰ *A.&P.*, pp. 112–13.

¹⁰¹ *A.&P.*, pp. 137–38.

¹⁰² “Två svenska biografier från medeltiden,” ed. Henrik Schück, in *Antiqvarisk tidskrift för Sverige*, vol. 5 (1895), pp. 389–90 (hereafter referred to by its number in the *Bibliotheca hagiographica latina: BHL* 6101–02). In other words, pilgrims to Saint Olav's shrine at Nidaros chose to be there at other times than around his feast day on 29 July.

¹⁰³ Examples of this are given in my *Mirakler och helgonkult: Linköpings biskopsdöme under senmedeltiden. Miracles et cultes de saints: Le diocèse de Linköping au bas Moyen Age* (Uppsala, 1992), e.g. pp. 116–17.

¹⁰⁴ For Arnaldus, see Uppsala University Library, Cod. Ups. C 15 f. 97v, 98v (in the collection of miracles that was used during the canonization process, the order of the tales had been changed: *A.&P.* p. 113, 116, 117). For Gregorius, see *A.&P.*, pp. 118, 124–25, 130–31.

¹⁰⁵ *BHL* 6101–02, p. 346. The nuns even reappeared for a hearing about the miracle in 1417: *Sankt Nikolaus av Linköping kanonisationsprocess*, ed. Tryggve Lundén (Stockholm, 1963), p. 212.

Vårfruberga Abbey, both of whom sent proxies who were not nuns to the grave of the Blessed Catherine in Vadstena.¹⁰⁶

Nobles could be accompanied by servants on their pilgrimage. This is true for Hans Smekor, one of the first pilgrims to Vadstena, who made his humble pilgrimage with bare feet, but accompanied by “*famulo suo*” (his servant), as well as by his noble companions.¹⁰⁷ When the late King Karl Knutsson’s daughter Magdalena arrived at Vadstena in 1472 to testify to a miracle, she was accompanied by no less than fifty servants.¹⁰⁸

2) *Men, Women and Children*

Students of gender relations, and of relations within families, can find rewarding material in miracle collections. Beata Losman, Christian Krötzl, Göran Bäärnhjelm, Janken Myrdal and others have used Swedish miracle accounts for this purpose.¹⁰⁹ Children who experienced miracles were accompanied on their pilgrimage by their father, their mother, or both. I cite as an example a woman from the then Danish province of Scania (Skåne) who, with the help of another woman from the same village, carried her seven-year-old son on her shoulders on a ten-day journey to Vadstena.¹¹⁰

There are a few cases in which children or adolescents are mentioned without any reference to parents. In 1376, a sixteen-year-old boy from the parish of Lommaryd came to Vadstena to be cured from possession by demons, without any parents being mentioned. We cannot know for sure, however, that he really was alone at Vadstena. A sixteen-year-old boy was considered to be of age and competent to witness, and thus other witnesses were perhaps not considered necessary when the miracle was recorded. From another miracle tale, we also know that a nobleman from the same parish was present at Vadstena on the same day, so he may have accompanied the boy there.¹¹¹

A particularly fascinating story among the miracles of Saint Birgitta tells of two women from Scania in Denmark who, on their long way back home from a visit to the grave of the Blessed Birgitta at Vadstena at Easter 1376, passed through a large forest. There, they were attacked by a cruel robber (“*a quodam latrone magne crudelitatis et fortitudinis*”), who took them with him deep into the forest, stripped them, robbed them, and prepared to drown them in a well. The robber was scared, however, when voices were suddenly heard in the forest. He ran away, whereupon two women appeared and saved our Scansians. They considered their rescue to be a miracle, brought about as a result of their prayers to the saint. Thanks to information provided by the women, the royal bailiff in these parts could soon arrest the robber, who was immediately hanged.¹¹²

¹⁰⁶ Skokloster manuscript No 15, in quarto, in the Swedish National Archives f. 114r, 117v.

¹⁰⁷ Data varies between testimonies. Birgitta’s daughter said that he was accompanied by his relatives, while two other witnesses said that he arrived at Vadstena “*cum famulo suo*,” *A &P*, pp. 340, 464, 470.

¹⁰⁸ *Proc. Kath.*, p. 22.

¹⁰⁹ Beata Losman, “Barnafödsel och kvinnosexualitet i mirakelberättelser (Miracles From the Late Middle Age Tell about Childbirth and Women’s Sexual Life)” in *Kvinnors rosengård*, ed. Hedda Gunneng *et al.* (Stockholm, 1989), pp. 142–56, 205; Christian Krötzl, “Parent–Child Relations in Medieval Scandinavia According to Scandinavian Miracle Collections,” *Scandinavian Journal of History*, vol. 14 (1989), 21–37 (see above, note 1); *idem*, *Pilger, Mirakel und Alltag* (Helsinki, 1994), see my review in *Speculum* vol. 72 (1997); Göran Bäärnhjelm and Janken Myrdal, “Miracles and Medieval Life: Canonization Proceedings as a Source for Medieval Social History” in *Procès de canonisation au Moyen Âge*, ed. Gábor Klaniczay (Rome, 2004), pp. 101–16.

¹¹⁰ *A.&P.*, p. 131.

¹¹¹ *A.&P.*, pp. 141–42. The text refers to the young man as “*homo*,” where one might have expected “*juvenis*.” Even more unclear is a case with a twelve-year-old boy from Västmanland in 1472. A priest cited as witness may have been the priest of the boy’s parish, but more likely an *altarista* of Vadstena, *Vita Katherine*, (Holmis, 1487; facsimile edition by Tryggve Lundén, Uppsala, 1981), pp. 85–86.

¹¹² *A.&P.*, pp. 126–27.

Was it really possible for women to travel alone, or in small companies, on the long, sparsely used, and dangerous roads through medieval Sweden? Were the Peace Laws of Birger Jarl from the previous century efficient enough for women to feel secure on the roads? Can the tale of the two Scanians be used as support for an affirmative answer to these two questions? If this tale were our only piece of evidence, it could be argued that the *miracula* genre implies a tendency to emphasize the gravity of the situation from which someone is rescued by the saint's intervention, in this case the solitary and exposed position of the two women.

The same issue could be raised concerning the story of a woman who, returning from a long business trip (*negociis*), broke through the ice on the bay of Bråviken in 1471 but was miraculously saved. No companions or witnesses to the accident are cited, but of course, there is a possibility that the woman, or the recorders, suppressed reference to any witnesses in order to emphasize the danger of the situation and the magnitude of the miracle.¹¹³

These, however, are not the only examples of women traveling alone. In most cases, the fact that female *miraculées* told the story of their healing to the recorders of miracles without any witnesses from their own villages to support them is the only evidence we have that they traveled alone.¹¹⁴ In other cases, as with the previously mentioned woman from Visnum in Värmland, the absence of local witnesses is explicitly explained by the long distance from their home to the shrine.¹¹⁵ The solitude of these women on their road to the shrine does nothing to magnify the saint. On the other hand, the citing of witnesses was a requirement of the genre; so these cases give considerable strength to the conclusion that women actually traveled alone.¹¹⁶

The historian Thomas Szabó at the Max Planck Institute has done some interesting work on the security of, and protection accorded on medieval roads. For example, in a Truce of God (*Treuga Dei*) from Narbonne, dating from 1054, women on the roads were among those who received special protection. Pilgrims were protected by decisions at the Second (1139) and Third (1179) Lateran Councils, though nothing particular is said about female pilgrims in those decisions. Royal roads, *viae regiae*, are protected in the so-called *Leges Henrici* of 1115 in England.¹¹⁷ Protection of roads and pilgrims was thus a priority for legislators in many countries.¹¹⁸ That the dangers of the road were, nevertheless, many and insecurity ubiquitous is, however, clear from Professor Szabó's paper at the Fortieth Congress of Medieval Studies at Kalamazoo in 2005, as well as from the literary, legal and iconographic sources presented by Dr. Gertrud Blaschitz from the Austrian Academy of Sciences at the same congress.¹¹⁹ We will return to this subject under our third heading below.

Gender relations in Sweden during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries are also illustrated by tales in which men send their wives on pilgrimage, or on other missions, or prevent them from going on pilgrimage. I will cite here two examples out of several.

¹¹³ Skokloster manuscript No 15, in quarto, f. 71r, 103v.

¹¹⁴ This is true for a woman and her daughter from Ödsmål in Norway in 1376; *A.&P.*, p. 140. For a widow from Ryssby in southwestern Småland, see *A.&P.*, p. 140; and for two women with a thirteen-year-old girl from Norway in 1388, see *A.&P.*, p. 609.

¹¹⁵ See above, note 6.

¹¹⁶ A recent study by Cordelia Heß on the acts of the canonization process of the Blessed Dorothy of Montau presents evidence of women traveling alone also in the Prussian lands of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century; "Heiligenverehrung in Preußen: Die Kanonisationsakten Dorotheas von Montau als Quelle zur Mentalitätsgeschichte," (see above, note 1), pp. 15–16, 19.

¹¹⁷ Thomas Szabó, "Die Entdeckung der Strasse im 12. Jahrhundert", in *Società, istituzioni, spiritualità: Studi in onore Cinzio Violante*, vol. 2 (Spoleto, 1994), p. 925.

¹¹⁸ This is true also for the Nordic countries, but I have not so far extended this study to Swedish legal sources.

¹¹⁹ Thomas Szabó, "The Danger of Traveling and Security on the Road," and Gertrud Blaschitz, "Threats and Hazards on Middle High German Roads."

- A man in Norra Lundby parish sent his wife to the grave of the Blessed Bishop Brynolf in nearby Skara to fulfill a vow to the saint, according to a testimony at canonization proceedings at Skara in 1417.¹²⁰

- In 1470, a tailor in Rinna parish sent his wife to her brother at Vadstena in order to procure a remedy for her intestinal worms, but as it went, she was instead miraculously cured by the intervention of the Blessed Catherine.¹²¹

It is thus a common expression in the miracle tales that a woman was sent by her husband on different missions. When, on the other hand, a woman in Skärstad parish was cured, but for some reason unspecified in the text had her husband make a pilgrimage for her, it is not said that he was sent by her but only that he performed the pilgrimage.¹²² It may also be noted that, in one case where testimonies to the same miracle were gathered on two different occasions, the woman ascribes to herself a more active role on the second occasion than that ascribed to her on the first.¹²³

¹²⁰ *Vita S. Brynolphi*, p. 173 (testimony to article 39). Another example is *BHL* 6101–02, p.351–52: in 1405, a burgher in Nyköping forbade his wife from making her pilgrimage to Linköping to thank the Blessed Nils for her healing. Nevertheless, the vow of pilgrimage was originally made by the man for his wife. In any case, the man finally repented and accompanied his wife on her pilgrimage.

¹²¹ *Vita Katherine*, pp. [63–65]; *Proc. Kath.*, pp. 78–79.

¹²² Skokloster manuscript No 15, in quarto, f. 118r.

¹²³ *Vita Katherine*, pp. [55–56]; *Proc. Kath.*, pp. 101–02: the nobleman Peter Frändesson in Vånga parish sent his wife to Vadstena with their daughter in 1471. In a later testimony by the child's mother, she ascribed to herself a more active role.



3) *Dangers on the Route*

When discussing dangers encountered on the route, we will not confine ourselves to dangers encountered by pilgrims, but we will also mention cases where road accidents or other adversities resulted in vows to a saint and an ensuing pilgrimage.

Road accidents leading to a vow to the saint are common in medieval miracle collections. I will give a few examples here. In one accident, a child fell from a carriage and a heavy sack of malt fell on top of him, when the heavy load caused the horses to run too fast

on a downhill slope near Vadstena.¹²⁴ In another tale tells us about a man who drove his horses so violently that a bar on the carriage broke and almost killed him—an early case of reckless driving.¹²⁵ One man rode his horse so violently that he fell from it and broke his arm.¹²⁶

When a person who was ill or possessed by demons could not make a pilgrimage by him- or herself, different means of transport were used, such as carts, stretchers or horse-drawn vehicles. An example of the latter is a pilgrimage in January 1408, during which the horses were scared and bolted when Linköping Cathedral, the goal of the pilgrimage, came into sight. The poor man, who was brought on pilgrimage by family and friends, fell out of the carriage, but was raised up by his parents so that he also could see the cathedral, and from then on, he started to recover.¹²⁷ The home of this man was situated 35 miles (55 kilometers) from Linköping. In view of the season, the route that was used was probably the frozen river Stång, and the bolting of the horses may have taken place at the passing of the torrents at Tannefors which is, in fact, the place where the cathedral is first seen.

Crossings of rivers and streams were dangerous enterprises, both in winter and in summer. We have already heard of a woman who went through the ice on the bay of Bråviken with her horse-drawn vehicle.¹²⁸ In another story, a group of merchants from Skänninge town lost a pack, containing all the money they had earned at a market in Värmland, when the packhorse carrying the heavy pack slipped off a ferry at the passing of a torrent. Needless to say, their search for the pack was unsuccessful until they had made a vow to the Blessed Catherine of Vadstena.¹²⁹

The shadow of war is often present in the miracle tales, most frequently in the miracles of the Blessed Catherine. Already in the first Swedish miracle ascribed to Saint Birgitta, a ship carrying her relics from Prussia to Sweden in May 1374 was redirected to a safe harbor because of the situation of war in the country.¹³⁰ In 1470, pirates employed by enemies of the Swedish king attacked a merchant ship carrying burghers from Vadstena, Skänninge and other towns.¹³¹ Less dramatic is the story of a woman from Scania who could not fulfill her vow of pilgrimage to Vadstena for two years because of many troubles (“*propter adversitates multas*”), possibly referring to the state of war between her country, Denmark, and Sweden in the year of the miracle, 1470.¹³² She eventually arrived at the goal of her pilgrimage, but another less-fortunate pilgrim was captured as a spy on the road between Berg parish near Växjö in Sweden and Ronneby in Denmark in 1472.¹³³ In this tale, however, it is not clear whether the verb “*peregrinaretur*” in this text should be read as “was on pilgrimage” or simply “traveled abroad”. To my knowledge, Ronneby is not known to have been a goal of pilgrimage. A robber’s attack on two women from Scania has already been discussed.¹³⁴

¹²⁴ *Vita Katherine*, pp. 57–58. A somewhat similar case is that of a farmer near Linköping who was injured when his carriage fell over on top of him; *Sankt Nikolaus av Linköping kanonisationsprocess*, p. 360.

¹²⁵ *Vita Katherine*, p. 100.

¹²⁶ *Proc. Kath.*, pp. 116–17.

¹²⁷ BHL 6101–02, pp. 365–66; *Sankt Nikolaus av Linköping kanonisationsprocess*, pp. 328–29.

¹²⁸ See above, note 22. See also *A.&P.*, pp. 159–60: a rider broke through the ice in the winter of 1375.

¹²⁹ *Vita Katherine*, p. 69.

¹³⁰ *A.&P.*, p. 146.

¹³¹ *Vita Katherine*, p. 59. A similar story, from the following year, is recorded in *Vita Katherine*, p. 70.

¹³² Skokloster manuscript No 15, in quarto, f. 104.

¹³³ *Vita Katherine*, p. 75.

¹³⁴ See above, note 21.

4) Expressions of Piety

In his or her voyage to the shrine, the pilgrim often chose to express piety by walking barefoot—at least on the final part of the way—and/or forgoing linen clothes. Expressions like “*nudis plantis*” and “*sine lineis*” are very common in the miracle tales when reference is made to the content of the vow or to the pilgrimage itself.¹³⁵ Already, in the first miracle said to have occurred on the Swedish mainland after the arrival of the relics of the Blessed Birgitta, the above-mentioned nobleman Hans Smekor, who had made blasphemous statements about the saint, repented by making his pilgrimage “in great humility, with a most simple garment, and bare feet, for two long days’ journey” (“*in maxima humilitate pauperimoque habitu nudis pedibus per longas duas dietas*”).¹³⁶

In 1475, 36-year-old Nils Jeppsson, who lived near Malmö in Scania, fell from a tree and was severely injured. In his testimony, he said that, after being confined to his bed for half a year, he had a vision in which Saint Birgitta herself told him to make a pilgrimage to her monastery at Vadstena in the Kingdom of Sweden. He should undertake his pilgrimage as a beggar who would go from door to door, and ask for necessities. Furthermore, when he came to his goal, he should make offerings of two wax arms at the altars of Saint Birgitta herself and that of her daughter Catherine. The wax arms were to be procured with alms collected during the journey. Whether or not the humble mode of pilgrimage chosen by Nils Jeppsson was a necessity due to his poverty or an act of piety in accordance with his vision, his tale evidently made impression on the people present in Vadstena at his arrival, and it was later included in great detail in the acts of the canonization proceedings of the Blessed Catherine.¹³⁷ The goal of the registrars in this case as well as in all the other cases discussed above was, of course, to provide evidence of the saint’s reputation for holiness (*fama sanctitatis*), but in so doing they also put together a most useful source of material for later historians of spirituality and everyday life.

¹³⁵ For examples, see *A. & P.*, pp. 138, 141, 177; *BHL* 6101–02, pp. 385–86; Skokloster manuscript No 15, in quarto, f. 118rv; *Proc. Kath.*, p. 87.

¹³⁶ See above, note 16.

¹³⁷ *Proc. Kath.*, pp. 177–79. See also Anders Fröjmark, “The Miracles of St. Bridget and her Daughter St. Katherine” in *Studies in St. Birgitta and the Brigittine Order*, ed. James Hogg, (*Analecta Cartusiana* vol. 35, 19; *Spiritualität heute und gestern* vol. 19; Salzburg & Lewiston, NY, 1993), vol. 1, pp. 70, 71, 73.