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# The Oldest Source of Finnish Mythology

*Birchbark Letter* No. 292

## I

In 1934 I traveled to Finnish Karelia to collect folk traditions. In the village Karkku in the Salmi parish, I met Mrs. Nastja Rantsi, from whom I recorded approximately sixty myths and legends.[1] In this connection Nastja mentioned the word *tuohiraamattu* "birchbark letter," which I had not heard before. She claimed she had read some of these legends, belonging to the Karelian Old Believers' tradition, in a birchbark letter at her home in the village Kanabro in Aunus; her home had been a stopping place for those pilgrims who every summer traveled to the Solovetsk monastery located on an island of the White Sea.[2]

Half in fun, I asked other Karelians I met about the birchbark letter. They remembered the word, but nothing more. The word was known even more widely in Finland, up to the shores of the Gulf of Bothnia.[3]

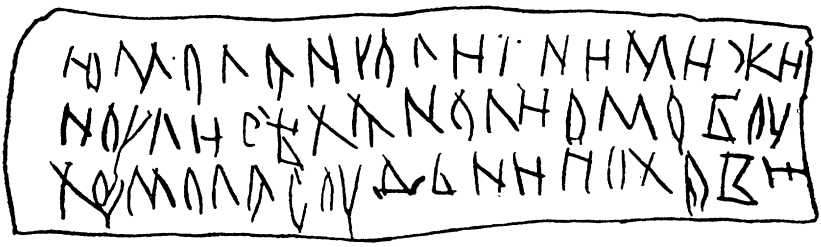
*Tuohiraamattu* (cf. Finnish *raamattu* < Old Russian *gramota* "charter letter") is not an empty word. Birchbark, on the inner surface of which one can easily draw inscriptions and which is almost eternal in its durability, really served as parchment in olden times in North Russia. This was well established in the 1950's when the so-called Novgorod birchbark letters (*novgorodskie gramoty na bereste*) were discovered in archaeological excavations. A large group of Russian scholars has begun to investigate

[1] Martti Haavio, *Suomalaisia legendoja ja rukouksia* (Helsinki, 1945), p. 26; Martti Haavio, *Viimeiset runonlaulajat* (Porvoo, 1943), pp. 255-270.

[2] Cf. Martti Haavio, *Kansanrunojen maailmanselitys* (Porvoo, 1955), p. 112.

[3] Niilo Valonen, *Geflechte und andere Arbeiten aus Birkenrindenstreifen* (= *Kansatieteellinen Arkisto*, IX) (Helsinki, 1952), pp. 132, 158.

and to publish the birchbark letters brought forth from the annual excavations, letters which in many ways illuminate the everyday life of Novgorod from the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries and which are valuable linguistic monuments.




It was no little sensation when the 1957 excavation turned up a little charter (*gramota*) which seemed to contain words of a Balto-Finnic language. J. S. Eliseev published an explanation of it in *Transactions of the Soviet Academy of Sciences*; he identified the language as Karelian.[4] A. V. Arcixovskij showed[5] that the charter – Birchbark Letter No. 292 – originated in the first half of the thirteenth century.

J. S. Eliseev transcribed the text, in which the spaces between the words are not marked (customary in the birchbark letters), in the following manner:

| | |
|---|---|
| jumolanuoli ï nimiži | God's arrow, ten [is] your name. |
| nouli sě xan oli omo bou | This arrow is God's own. |
| jumola soud'ni ioxovi | The God directs judgment. |

In my view, I believe that Eliseev's interpretation requires revision in some places. I read the text this way:

jumola nuoli inimiži
nouli [for nuoli] sekä n[u]oli omo bou
jumola soud'nii okovy [~okov]

The text contains (a) a Finnish – or, if we wish, Karelian – part which can be interpreted and divided into separate lines in the following manner:

[4] *Izvestija Akademii Nauk SSSR, otdel. literatury i jazyka*, XVIII (Moscow, 1959), pp. 63-72.

[5] A. V. Arcixovskij and V. I. Borkovskij, *Novgorodskie gramoty na bereste* (Moscow: Akademija Nauk SSSR, Institut Arxeologii, 1963), p. 120.

| | |
|---|---|
| jumalan nuoli, | God's arrow, |
| ihmisen nuoli, | man's arrow, |
| sekä nuoli oma. | and one's own arrow. |

The text also contains (b) a Russian part which, however, is interrupted by the Finnish word *jumola*:

bou
jumola
soud'nii [= sud'nij]
okovy [~okov]

In both the Finnish and Russian parts the author has substituted the letter *k* with x (*sexä* for *sekä*; *oxovy* for *okovy*). The *a* in the unstressed position he has substituted with *o* (*jumola* for *jumala*; *omo* for *oma*). The word *nuoli* he has written in three ways, *nuoli*, *nouli*, *noli*, which shows that writing down the diphthong has given him difficulties.

Thus the oldest monument of the Finnish language has been brought to light, and, at the same time, the oldest document telling about the religion of the ancient Finns.

There is nothing strange in the fact that in Novgorod, originally the capital city of the Varangian princes, the Finnish language, or more precisely, its eastern, Karelian dialect, was cultivated. Novgorod (which, according to the testimony of Finnish folklore, also had the Finnish name Uusilinna) was an important trading place of the Karelians.[6]

We shall endeavor to determine the function of Birchbark Letter No. 292; for what purpose has it been written? To do so we must probe every

[6] The birchbark letters also attest to this fact. In Birchbark Letter No. 130 (from the fourteenth century) the names Valit and Melit are mentioned (A. V. Arcixovskij and V. I. Borkovskij, *Novgorodskie gramoty na bereste* [Moscow: Akademija Nauk SSSR, Institut istorii material'noj kul'tury, 1958], pp. 66-67). Valit corresponds to the Karelian Vallittu, which was still in use in Inari in the sixteenth century; it appears in numerous place names, for example, in Ilomantsi (Vallitunselkä). The name Melit, again, corresponds to Mielitty, which was still familiar in Lapland in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (T. I. Itkonen, *Suomen lappalaiset*, II [Porvoo, 1948], pp. 502-503). In the same birchbark letter appears the name Vigar, which also can be a Finnish man's name (cf. Viikari), and the place names Kjulolakši and Kurola. Again, in Birchbark Letter No. 2 (from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries) are found the names Věl'jut and Věl'jakaz (A. V. Arcixovskij and M.N. Tixomirov, *Novgorodskie gramoty na bereste* [Moscow: Akademija Nauk SSSR, Institut istorii material'noj kul'tury, 1953], pp. 21-23), which, according to Julius Mägiste, belong to the Balto-Finnic *vilja* family of words ("Itämerensuomalaisia henkilönnimiä Novgorodin tuohikirjeissä," *Virittäjä*, 1957 [Helsinki], 98).

detail of the letter. First, what is *jumolan nuoli* "god's arrow," that is, in which associations does the *jumolan nuoli* concept appear in literature and in folk tradition? Second, what god did the Karelians worship at the beginning of the thirteenth century, when they were for the most part pagans? To be sure, in 1227, about the time of the writing of the birch-bark letter, the Novgorod prince Jaroslav II Vsevolodovič sent priests to baptize the Karelians, but from a much later period there is evidence that the entrance of Christianity to the land of the Karelians was slow and difficult. Finally, we must focus attention on the expression *n[u]oli oma* "one's own arrow." In attempting to shed light on these seemingly unimportant details, we shall become involved with a central problem of religious history: the clarification of the figure of that god who, before the arrival of Christianity, ruled the minds and behavior of the inhabitants of the North as their supreme authority. Admittedly the question about god's arrow, for example, could be illuminated with almost innumerable additional examples; however, the examples which are introduced here should fully suffice for illuminating Birchbark Letter No. 292.

II

Our first question is: What is *jumolan nuoli* "god's arrow?" In German medieval literature the figurative term for lightning, *doners pfîle* (*wilder pfîl der ûz dem dondre snellet*) appears a few times.[7] In English, lightning is referred to as *thunderbolt* or merely *bolt*. Also the Russian *gromovaja strela*, the Estonian *pitkse nool*[8] or *pikse nool*,[9] the Finnish *Pitkäisen nuoli*, the Ostyak *pȧi̯sȧt*, mean literally "thunder arrow." In all these expressions, then, lightning is comprehended as arrows hurled by thunder. But because it is difficult for a person to imagine a phenomenon of nature as an archer, several peoples have considered the hurler of lightning to be a personal thunder god or, what is especially interesting, a god of heaven; thus, the Finnish Ukko and the Hungarian Isten hurl their arrows; the latter's arrow, *istenyala*, is lightning. In H. Göseken's Estonian dictionary appears the name *Perchun nohl*,[10] which corresponds exactly to the

[7] Jacob Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie* (Gütersloh, 1875), I, 149.

[8] F. J. Wiedemann, *Aus dem inneren und äusseren Leben der Ehsten* (St. Petersburg, 1876), p. 457.

[9] Oskar Loorits, *Grundzüge des estnischen Volksglaubens*, II (= *Skrifter utg. av Kungl. Gustav Adolfs Akademien*, 18/2) (Lund, 1951), p. 12.

[10] Kaarle Krohn, *Suomalaisten runojen uskonto* (= *Suomen suvun uskonnot*, I) (Porvoo,

Lithuanian *Perkūno strėlos* "Thunder god's arrow."[11] The term the Lapps use for lightning is Pajän-ńuollâ, Pajan-ńuollâ "Pajan's arrow" (Pajän is a "high god"; that is, a god high in heaven).[12] According to the Cheremis, lightning flashes are arrows of the thunder god (*küdərt'šə̑ jumə̑*).[13] The Demjanka Ostyaks explain that "the old man with wings" (Toxtaŋ-ikə) or "Thunder's old man" (Päi-ikə) kills with his lightning arrow "a being who has eaten and drunk," or *kul*.[14] According to a Buryat myth, thunder is caused by Asän-sagan-tengeri who, "with his fiery arrow," fights against the devil;[15] the Voguls [16]and the Finns[17] also call lightning a "fiery arrow."

We can follow the same theme even to Africa. Sogbā, the thunder god of the Ewe people living on the west coast, resides in a heavenly house surrounded by a blazing fire and forges arrows and axes which he hurls to earth.[18] Further, it may be recalled that the thunder god of the Peruvian Indians is equipped with a sling with which he hurls his lighting. A German scribe uses, in this connection, the word "club" (*Keule*) for the projectiles thrown by the thunder god.[19]

Old civilized nations also explain lightning as the arrow of the thunder god. In Rome Jupiter shot arrows; the name of lightning was *telum Jovis* or merely *telum* "arrow, spear, javelin." In one of Pindar's poetical fragments Zeus' arrows are mentioned as Diòs bélē "the bolts of Zeus' lightning."[20] In his *Theogony* Hesiodos gives an excellent explanation of

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1914), p. 118, quoting from Heinrich Göseken, *Manuductio ad Linguam Oesthonicam* (Reval, 1660).

[11] J. Balys, "Donner und Teufel in den Volkserzählungen der baltischen und skandinavischen Völker," *Tautosakos Darbai*, VI (Kaunas, 1939), 223.

[12] T. I. Itkonen, *Heidnische Religion und späterer Aberglaube bei den finnischen Lappen* (= *Mémoires de la Société Finno-Ougrienne*, 87) (Helsinki, 1946), p. 200.

[13] Uno Holmberg, *Die Religion der Tscheremissen* (= *FF Communications*, 61) (Porvoo, 1926), p. 68.

[14] K. F. Karjalainen, *Die Religion der Jugra-Völker* (= *FF Communications*, 44) (Porvoo, 1922), p. 299.

[15] Uno Harva, *Die religiösen Vorstellungen der altaischen Völker* (= *FF Communications*, 125) (Porvoo, 1938), p. 210.

[16] Lecture of A. Kannisto, February 12, 1938, Helsinki University.

[17] Elias Lönnrot, *Suomalais-Ruotsalainen Sanakirja*, II (Helsinki, 1880), p. 40; Uno Harva, *Suomalaisten muinaisusko* (Porvoo, 1948), p. 99.

[18] Ernst Dammann, *Die Religionen Afrikas* (= *Die Religionen der Menschheit*, 6) (Dillingen, 1963), p. 24.

[19] W. Krickeberg, *Märchen der Azteken und Inkaperuaner Maya und Muisca* (Jena, 1928), p. 285.

[20] H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford, 1953), p. 313.

Zeus' arrow (*kēlon Diós*): "Also the winds brought rumbling earthquake and duststorm, thunder and lightning and the lurid thunderbolt, which are the shafts of great Zeus (steropén kai aitalóenta keraunón, kēla Diós)."[21] Zeus was "thunderbolt-Zeus" (Zeus Keraúnos).[22] Thunderbolt-Jahwe was also the name of the Jewish god,[23] and his lightning was an arrow, as is evident from the following verse from Deuteronomy: "I will heap mischiefs upon them; I will spend mine arrows upon them."[24] Of the gods of Babylonia and Assyria, Enlil or Bel, Marduk, and Aššur were arrow shooters; it should be noticed, however, that the attribute of Enlil, the Sumerian god of the atmosphere, was also a throwing hammer.

When Jupiter's arrow – lightning – struck the earth, the Romans "hid" (*condere*) it; that is, they built at the place it struck a roof supported by four rocks.[25] Such structures were called the graves of lightning (*bidental*, a derivative of *bidens* "two-pointed" > "lightning"). If lightning struck in public place, a circular well was prepared and the words *fulgur conditum* were engraved on the rim of its casement.[26]

Numerous peoples have in another way been interested in the places which the thunder god's arrow struck. Thus the Lapps claim that if one digs the ground where Pâjan-ńuollâ has struck, one will find a hot piece of steel,[27] the remainder of the thunder god's lightning arrow. More commonly it is supposed that a stone weapon can be found at such a place. With this supposition is explained the heavenly origin of arrowheads, wedges, hammers, and axes, which for the most part originated in the Neolithic period, and also that of loose, natural rocks of peculiar shapes. This kind of weapon, which is used for magical purposes, is called *Donnerstein*, *Pfeilstein*, *Donnerkeil*, *Donneraxt*, *Donnerpfeil*, *Strahlpfeil* (Germany); *thunderbolt* (England); *kõue nool* "Thunder's arrow," *välgunool* id., *isu nool* "little father's arrow" (Estonia); *pit'kiz ki'uv* "thunder's stone" (Livonia); *åskvigg* "thunder's wedge" (Sweden); *Tordenkile* (Denmark); *Thor-vigge* (Norway); and *Ukon nuoli* "Ukko's arrow," *Ukon vaaja* "Ukko's wedge," *Ukon nalkki* id. (Finland). The Balto-Finnic

[21] Hesiodus, *Theogonia*, 706-708.
[22] Martin P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion* (München, 1941), I, 187.
[23] Exod. XX:19; 1. Sam. VII:10.
[24] 5. Deut. XXXII:23.
[25] Kurt Latte, *Römische Religionsgeschichte* (= *Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft*, 5/4) (München, 1960), p. 81.
[26] Georg Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Römer* (München, 1902), p. 107.
[27] Itkonen, *Heidnische Religion*, p. 200.

Lydians explain that *st'rela* "arrow, thunder arrow" is a sharp stone which falls from heaven with thunder; when it is pressed against afflicted parts of the body, it "diminishes sticking pains."[28] In thirteenth century Russian literature, thunder arrows and axes (*Strělky i topori gromnii*) are mentioned. People are warned against using them, although these objects, as the author naively says, heal fever diseases, drive away devils (*běsy*), and perform miracles.[29] The name of an ancient weapon used in Mordvin healing magic is *at'am-nal* "old man's arrow."[30] The Ostyaks explain that *paiˀn'oˀt, paˀni ńåʌ* "thunder arrow," flies from heaven; if it is carried along at the hunt, the evil eye cannot harm the hunter; if such a weapon is in the house, no harm will come to the house. It is tied to the net to bring good fishing luck, and so on.[31] The ancient Greeks also believed that lightning struck the earth in the form of a stone weapon and that prehistoric stone axes, as well as other weapons, had been thrown by thunder.[32] These are examples which show that a thunder weapon (Greek *belemnithēs* "dart") which is found in the ground is considered solidified lightning; this belief is known in nearly all of Europe and Asia; it is also known in Africa, and even in America.[33] In magic the *belemnithēs* has a protective effect on its owner and a harmful effect on his opponent.

There are a number of aetiofícts which account for the discovery of a thunder weapon. F. J. Wiedemann reports that in Estonia thunder throws a thunderbolt which melts everything. It penetrates the earth to a depth of seven (in the opinion of others, nine) fathoms and rises at the rate of one fathom a year. When it has arrived at the surface, it is sometimes found and is used to cure diseases which cause stabbing pains.[34] According to the belief of the Livonians, a thunder wedge (thunder stone, thunder bullet) rises to the surface after nine or a hundred years; the wedge is used for curing a toothache.[35] The Lithuanians tell that Per-

[28] Juho Kujola, *Lyydiläismurteiden sanakirja* (Helsinki, 1944), p. 401.
[29] V. J. Mansikka, *Die Religion der Ostslaven*, I: *Quellen* (= *FF Communications*, 43) (Helsinki, 1922), p. 268.
[30] Uno Harva, *Die religiösen Vorstellungen der Mordwinen* (= *FF Communications*, 142) (Helsinki, 1952), p. 158.
[31] K. F. Karjalainen, *Ostjakisches Wörterbuch* (= *Lexica Societatis Fenno-Ugricae*, X) (Helsinki, 1948), pp. 656, 887, 933.
[32] Nilsson, *op. cit.*, p. 187.
[33] Karl Olbrich, "Donnerkeil," *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*, II (Tübingen, 1929-1930), 328.
[34] Wiedemann, *op. cit.*, p. 457.
[35] Oskar Loorits, *Liivi rahva usund*, I (Tartu, 1926), pp. 56, 253.

kűnas' wedge, or arrow, penetrates to a depth of nine or seven fathoms; it rises one fathom every year and at a certain time is again on the surface, at which time it is taken into safekeeping.[36] This aetiofict has particularly spread in German-language countries; in these lands it is claimed, among other things, that a thunder weapon returns to near the surface of the earth on the seventh year, at which time a rooster can scratch it out.[37] This belief is quite general among Russians and Ukrainians.[38] The fict is also known among the Votyaks. "Heaven's stone" (*in-kel'i*), as they call *belemnithēs*, supposedly goes to a depth of forty fathoms in order to return after forty years.[39] The Voguls claim that a thunderbolt which has struck the earth comes to the surface after seven years if flour is offered at the place in sacrifice.[40] The Ostyak *paiṅòt* "thunder arrow" flies from heaven, splits a tree, and goes into its roots; on the third year, at the same time, it rises to the surface. Fortunate is the person who finds it; in a sale one can get as much as three rubles for it.[41]

The Siberian Buryats treat the "return" motifs connected with the thunder arrow in another way. In the service of the god of heaven are seventy-seven smiths who forge new arrows every day. If god's arrow hits the target, the arrow remains at the place defiled and after three days turns in the ground into a stone. Those arrows, on the other hand, which do not reach their goal return to heaven. God's arrows which are found are used for magical purposes.[42]

Buryat aetiofícts remind one to a certain degree of Finnish folk belief. According to Finns, there are two kinds of thunder wedges (*ukkosenvaaja*): pitch black, i.e. flintstone, and light grey, i.e. quartz, "thunder rocks." When a black arrow flies as lightning, a blue, or almost black, whisk flies from it; it kills people and animals more often than does the light-colored wedge. Whoever finds a black wedge must not grasp it with bare hands because while flying through the air it has gathered all diseases and has thus become unclean; a black thunder wedge "burns diseases" away from persons. A light grey thunder wedge, which is circular and

[36] Balys, *op. cit.*, p. 223.
[37] Grimm, *op. cit.*, p. 163.
[38] A. Afanas'ev, *Poetičeskie vozzrenija slavjan na prirodu*, I (Moscow, 1865), p. 242.
[39] Uno Holmberg, *Permalaisten uskonto* (= *Suomen suvun uskonnot*, IV) (Porvoo, 1914), p. 177.
[40] Lecture of A. Kannisto, February 12, 1938, Helsinki University.
[41] Karjalainen, *Ostjakisches Wörterbuch*, p. 656.
[42] Harva, *Die religiösen Vorstellungen der altaischen Völker*, pp. 210-211.

which often has a hole in the center, "does not often remain on the ground; when it comes to the ground it merely lights a fire and returns again to heaven." But if one has succeeded in getting hold of a light grey thunder wedge, he has gotten control of a healing tool which is more effective than the black thunder wedge.[43]

The Lapps, in turn, treat the subject another way. The Lapp god of thunder was called Hora-galles. The name is a borrowing from Scandinavia (Hora < Thor, *galles* < *karl* "man") and its meaning is "Thor-man." According to Priest and Master Johan Randulf, Hora-galles has two weapons; a cross-headed hammer (Krydts-Hammer) and a sledge-hammer (Slegge). He uses the first one to drive away a storm, and the other to destroy his enemies.[44] The Irish tradition connected with the iron club of the Dagda-god represents the same kind of redaction. Dagda, who is possibly the same god whom Caesar called the Jupiter of the Gauls in his work *De bello Gallico*, had a great iron club which killed nine men with one end and with the other restored them to life.[45] Let us note again the number Nine which we met above, although in another function.

The weapon of the old Scandinavian Thor-god was Mjøllnir.[46] Some Edda runes, for example, describe it as a hammer with which the thunder god fights. According to Snorri Sturluson, a hammer throw is preceded

[43] Harjavalta, N. Ruusunen 198-199 (Folklore Archives of the Finnish Literature Society).

[44] Johan Randulf's description of Hora-galles given in connection with an explanation of pictures on a Lapp drum goes as follows: "One of their highest ranking idols, who is called Hora Galles, is the same one whom the old Norwegian heathens called Thor and about whom we can read much in Norwegian chronicles; from him Thursday, as it is still called by we Christians, has received its name. Moreover, he is the same one whom the old Greeks [sic] called Jupiter; the Romans also gave him the same day of the week that we call Thursday and called it Dies Jovi. This idol, who stands forth with a sledgehammer (Slegge) in one hand and a cross hammer (Krydts-Hammer) in the other, is worshiped by the Lapps especially during a thunderstorm in order that he might drive back the thunderstorm with one of his hammers so that it can harm neither them nor their reindeer. Also, when they wish to call down thunder and lighnting upon someone with whom they are angry, they appeal to the idol that, with the sledge-hammer he has in his other hand, he might direct his thunder and lightning against this individual; and they sometimes succeed in this (Ernst Manker, *Die lappische Zaubertrommel*, II = *Nordiska Museet: Acta Lapponica*, VI [Stockholm, 1950], p. 190).

[45] Jan de Vries, *Keltische Religion* (= *Die Religionen der Menschheit*, 18) (Stuttgart, 1961), p. 40.

[46] Jan de Vries, *Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte*, I-II (Berlin, 1957), Sections 263, 394, 425, 430, 454, 502.

by lightning and thunder.[47] A hammer has the peculiarity that it returns like a boomerang to the god's hand. The Þrymskviða rune[48] tells about the Mjøllnir's being hidden at a depth of eight miles: "Eight miles deep I have hidden Hlódir's [= Thor's] hammer." Once again we meet here the motif of the thunder wedge which goes underground and returns. An Old Indian Mahābhārata poem[49] also tells of the returning hammer; this time it is Indra's copper *vajra*, which is given by god to Karna, one of the world's greatest heroes; with it the hero can kill only one enemy, after which the hammer returns to Indra. In the hand of the Lithuanian god Perkūnas is an ax (*kirvis*); if a person sins, Perkūnas hurls his ax at him. When the ax flies, the lightning flashes; afterwards the ax returns to Perkūnas' hand.[50] It is impossible to keep these peculiar ideas separate from the *belemnithēs*-aetiofícts even though in the aetiofícts thunder appears, whereas here gods of thunder are spoken of, and in some cases the weapon is an arrow, in some cases a wedge, a stone, a hammer, an iron club, or an ax. Often the tradition contains the "returning" motif: the weapon penetrates the ground to a depth of three, seven, nine, forty, one hundred fathoms or eight miles and, in most cases, returns to the surface of the earth after the same number of years. These numbers are worth noticing; similar numbers appear also in other functions: seventy-seven smiths forge flying arrows; an iron club kills nine men and restores them to life. The weapon returns to its sender, according to some variants, if it hits the target; according to others, whether it hits it or not. The weapon has a dual power: it kills and restores to life; it destroys and protects.

## III

What was the *jumola* or Jumala "God," who, according to Birchbark Letter No. 292, had an arrow?

The name Jumala enters history in connection with the exploration, trade, and plundering expeditions which the Norwegians made to Bjarmia, the regions at the mouth of the Dvina River. Ottar, or Other, made the first known expedition to those lands in 875; King Alfred has preserved

[47] Snorri Sturluson, *Edda*, ch. 109.
[48] Þrymskviða 7.
[49] Mahābhārata 3.310.24.
[50] Balys, *op. cit.*, p. 316.

a story of the expedition in his supplement to Orosius' world history. As time passed, the descriptions of the expeditions took on a fairy-talelike character; in Orvar Odd's saga, in Bósi's saga (Bósa saga ok Herrauðs), and in Sturlaug Starfsam's saga (Sturlaugs saga starfsama) the fortunes of the brave Vikings in Bjarmia are related. Thus in Bósi's saga it is told how Herrauðr and Bósi go to Bjarmia to fetch the motley gold egg of a giant bird (*gamr*). In the interior of the forest they come upon a shrine in which there is an image of Jómali (þar er göqfgat goð þat, er Jómali heitir). On Jómali's head is a golden crown and on his knees a silver chalice filled with gold. The chalice is so large that four men would have had sufficient work emptying a drinking vessel the same size.[51]

Snorri Sturluson (1178-1241) in Saint Olaf's saga (Helgisaga Óláfs Haraldssonar ~ Óláfs saga hins helga) tells of Thorir Hund and Karl's trade journey to Bjarmia in 1026 which culminated in a plundering expedition. In the beginning the Vikings exchanged their goods for squirrel, sable, and beaver skins. When the fair ended they sailed away from the Dvina River. Soon, however, they turned back to the land to "acquire property," that is, to plunder. They traveled through the forest and arrived at a large clearing in which there was a fenced-in area, a yard. In the yard, which was guarded by six men, there was a mound in which gold and silver had been hidden. The guards happened to be away at that time. In the yard the Vikings saw "the god of the Bjarmians called Jómali" (i garðinom stendr goð Biarma er heitir Jómali). In Jómali's lap was a silver chalice filled with money. Around his neck was a chain, and from the chain hung a great ornament. The Vikings stole the shrine's treasure and broke the head of Jómali's statue, "and the crash was so tremendous that all marveled."[52]

As early as 1782 Henrik Gabriel Porthan observed that the image of Jómali is described in these sources "in a way that indicates its resembling the Swedish Thor,"[53] and in Sturlaug Starfsam's saga, mentioned above, it is said directly that the image was Thor's. In these descriptions it is worth noticing that, in connection with Jómali's image, abundant precious metals are spoken of, such as "gold," "a gold crown," "a silver chalice filled with gold," "a silver chalice," and "an ornament." When

[51] Bósa saga ok Herrauðs, *Fornaldasqgur Nordrlanda* (Reykjavik, 1889), III.
[52] Snorri Sturluson, *Kringla heimsins*: *Helgisaga Óláfs Haraldssonar*, ch. 135.
[53] Christian Erici Lencqvist, *De superstitione veterum Fennorum theoretica et practica, praes. H. G. Porthan* (Aboae, 1782), Sec. 4.

Snorri Sturluson tells about the images of Thor in his work *Kringla heimsins*, he calls attention to their golden character:

He has a hammer in his hand; he is big and hollow, and beneath him is some kind of footstool on which he stands when he is outside. He is abundantly adorned with gold and silver... They saw coming to the court a large group of other peasants who carried in their midst a big wooden figure shining with silver and gold.[54]

There sat Thor, of all the gods the most honored, adorned with gold and silver. King Olaf (Tryggvason) raised the pole ax which he had in his hand and struck Thor so that he tumbled down from his dias.[55]

The Russian Nestor's Chronicle refers to the same precious metals when it describes the image of Perun:

Vladimir then began to reign alone in Kiev (980), and set up idols (*kumiry*) on the hills outside the castle with the hall: one of Perun, made of wood with a head of silver and a mustache of gold... When Dobrynja came to Novgorod, he set up an idol of Perun beside the river Volkhov.[56]

In these descriptions of idols set up by Kiev and Novgorod Varangian princes, scholars have seen, with reason, statues of Thor.[57] As the Rus, the descendants of the Varangians who moved to Russia, called the god worshiped by their forefathers by the Slavic name Perun, so the Karelians on the shores of the Dvina, the Permians, gave Thor the national name Jómali, that is, Jumala.

But the name Thor also seems to have been familiar among the Dvina Karelians, as a verse sung by the famous folk singer Arhippa Perttunen indicates: "Tuuri into a new house, Palvanen into a roofless [house]."[58] Here Tuuri possibly follows the name Thor;[59] Palvanen, which in one rune appears as Pajainen,[60] is distorted from the Lapp Bâjan, Päjân "god high in heaven," which is a variant name for the Hora-galles god.[61]

[54] Snorri Sturluson, *Kringla heimsins*: *Helgisaga Óláfs Haraldssonar*, chs. 112-113.
[55] Snorri Sturluson, *Kringla heimsins*: *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar*, ch. 69.
[56] Mansikka, *op. cit.*, p. 38.
[57] For references see Peter Paulsen, *Axt und Kreuz in Nord- und Osteuropa* (Bonn, 1956), p. 240.
[58] *Suomen Kansan Vanhat Runot* (abbr. *SKVR*), I/4, No. 836.
[59] It may be noted that the name of Thor appears, in a distorted way, also in the Ingrian runes in the expression *Turulta miekkoi*, *Turusta miekkoi*, which goes back to Thor-miekkoi "Thor man" (cf. Hora-galles) (Martti Haavio, *Karjalan jumalat* [Porvoo, 1959], p. 96).
[60] *SKVR*, VI, No. 8.
[61] Itkonen, *Heidnische Religion*, p. 2; Haavio, *Karjalan jumalat*, p. 100.

It might be added that Perun, the name of the Russian thunder god, is Piru in its Finnish borrowed form. But Piru has lost its original function; it is simply "the Devil." The same meaning is conveyed by Perkele, which, according to general belief, has a generic relationship to the Lithuanian Perkūnas ("thunder, thunder god") and the Latvian Pērkuóns ("thunder").[62]

Thus the Finns have used numerous names of foreign origin for the god of heaven and of thunder: in the names of Perkele, Piru, Tuuri, and Pajainen are reflected old cultural relations with Balts, Slavs, Scandinavians, and Lapps. The name Jumala for the heaven and thunder god points to much older, Aryan, cultural relations. The Balto-Finnic word *jumala* has been linked to the Mordvin word *jumi* (in *jumi-ši-pas*), although with some doubts; it has also been connected to the Cheremis *jâm·â*, *ju·m·â*, *jùmo* "heaven, high god." The Finnish-Cheremis word **juma* is thought to be a loan from the Aryans (cf. *dyumán* "light, bright," the epithet of Indra, the Indian heaven and thunder god).[63] Thus the Balto-Finnic *jumala* belongs etymologically to the same group as, for instance, the Sanskrit Dyaus(pitā), the Greek Zeus(patér), the Latin Jupiter (<*Djeupater or *Iupater), which all mean "Heaven-father," and the Old Germanic Tyr-Zio.

In Karelian and Finnish charm prayers the name Jumala is frequently added to Ukko. Jumala is Ukko the high god; that is, "the old man-god who is high (in heaven)."[64] He is "Ukko, the high god, old, heavenly grandfather";[65] "Ukko, the high god, father, ruler of heaven";[66] "Ukko, god of heaven, boisterous one at the cloud's rim";[67] "Ukko, upper lord, god on the cloud";[68] "Ukkonen, upper lord";[69] "Ukkoinen, upper father, the man is the old heavenly one";[70] "Ukkonen, upper god, the man is the old heavenly one."[71] He is armed with the typical arms of a thunder god:

[62] Cf. another explanation by J. J. Mikkola, "Kannel ja sen vastaava balttilainen nimitys," *Kalevalaseuran Vuosikirja*, 5 (Porvoo, 1929), 90.

[63] Y. H. Toivonen, *Suomen kielen etymologinen sanakirja*, I (= *Lexica Societatis Fenno-Ugricae*, XII/1) (Helsinki, 1955), p. 122.

[64] *SKVR*, IX/4, No. 411.

[65] *SKVR*, I/4, No. 546.

[66] *SKVR*, I/4, No. 1753.

[67] *SKVR*, XII, No. 6606.

[68] *SKVR*, VII/4, No. 1580.

[69] *SKVR*, VII/4, No. 3036.

[70] *SKVR*, VII/5, No. 3359.

[71] *SKVR*, VII/4, No. 1578.

a stone sword,[72] a fiery sword,[73] a copper hammer,[74] a copper handled hammer.[75] — It should be noted that god's (Jumala) weapons are usually described as precious metal: a golden club,[76] a golden ax,[77] a silver club,[78] a silver hammer,[79] a silver battle-ax,[80] a silver brush hook.[81] Ukko the high god is called "the golden king."[82] The precious metal motif reminds one of the precious metal of the Bjarmian Jómali's image, but also of the precious metal of Thor's and Perun's images.

Thor's attribute is the Mjøllnir-hammer; the Lapp Hora-galles, who corresponds to Thor, even has two hammers in his hand. As Ukko the high god sometimes has an ax in his hand, one should remember that the Lithuanian Perkűnas sometimes has an ax[83] and that the Yakuts call their thunder god the "ax lord" (*sügä-tojon*);[84] as Ukko the high god has a sword, so sometimes does Perkűnas.[85] The battle-ax (*tappara*) of Ukko the high god corresponds to the Russian *topor* "thunder ax" in the information from the thirteenth century.

Here we have a number of criteria from which the following conclusions can be reached. Ukko the high god represents the same kind of god as the old Scandinavian Thor and the Russian Perun; the same god for whom the Lithuanians used the term Perkűnas and the Lapps the term Hora-galles. In addition, the usage of the term "Ukko the high god" is the same as that of the Lapps: the *galles* in Hora-galles means "old man", as does Ukko.

In standard Finnish, thunder is *ukkonen*, as has become clear from the above; it is a derivative of Ukko "old man." There are numerous charm verses in which Ukko and Jumala are synonymous.[86] Small fragments

[72] K. R. Giers, *Indicia mineralogiae in Fennia sub gentilismo* (Aboae, 1769).
[73] *SKVR*, VII/4, No. 1578.
[74] *SKVR*, VII/4, No. 3038.
[75] *SKVR*, VII/4, No. 3038.
[76] *SKVR*, IX/4, No. 411.
[77] *SKVR*, XIII, No. 9469.
[78] *SKVR*, XIII, No. 252.
[79] *SKVR*, VI, No. 5889.
[80] *SKVR*, XIII, No. 9469.
[81] *SKVR*, V/2, No. 2590.
[82] Christfrid Ganander, *Mythologia Fennica* (Aboae, 1789), p. 98; *SKVR*, I/4, No. 1091; VII/5, No. 4498.
[83] Balys, *op. cit.*, p. 220.
[84] Harva, *Die religiösen Vorstellungen der altaischen Völker*, p. 211.
[85] Balys, *op.* cit., pp. 170, 221.
[86] E.g., *SKVR*, VII/3, No. 1765.

of information[87] also argue for the fact that at the end of heathen times the Balto-Finnic Jumala was a god of heaven who manifested himself in a thunderstorm.

In Finnish charms Jumala is called an old man, who dwells high in heaven. His dwelling place is in the center of heaven, as is evident from the rune verse: "Ukko, the center of heaven."[88] Ukko is merely an epithet for Jumala. Its meaning in this connection is the same as the English *Sir*, the Italian *signore*, the French *seigneur, sire*, each of which derives from the Latin *senior* "older" (medieval Latin *senior* "lord"). The Finnish sorcerer, then, addresses Jumala as "Sir Jumala."

In all those situations in which people pray to Ukko the high god, they refer, in one way or another, to his characteristics as a weather god. He lives on high and rules the clouds. He is asked for rain for the young shoots. In order to disinfect his trap, the hunter asks Ukko the high god to rain frost, ice, or honey. A midwife refers to the fact that Ukko can open the windows of heaven; that is, let his rain flow. At various scenes in a healing drama, a healer reminds Ukko the high god of his thunder characteristics: "Ukko was threshing grain." Another healer refers to his ability to make it hail. A third asks for the weapons of Ukko the high god for himself, so that with their aid he might fight against the disease demons; these weapons are cudgels, clubs, swords, hammers, or axes discussed above.[89] Ukko the high god, then, is by his epithets, functions, and attributes generally the same as weather gods, called by proper names, of high cultures.

## IV

There is still one function of Ukko the high god – or, as is also said, of

[87] Paul Ariste, an Estonian scholar, writes about the Votes, a little Balto-Finnic people south of the Gulf of Finland: "Thunder is, among the Votes in Pummola, merely god (*jumala*)" ("Vadja rahva usundist", *Virittäjä*, 1932 [Helsinki], 136). Uno Harva pointed out that "Ukko the high god is generally called god (*jumala*), and the Vepsians, another little Balto-Finnic people, have no other name for him" (*Suomalaisten muinaisusko*, p. 92). Y. H. Toivonen noted that in the Finnish expression Jumalan voima ("Jumala's power"), the meaning of Jumala is "thunder god" (*op. cit.*, p. 122). Jumalan ilma ("Jumala's weather"), again, means "thunderstorm," actually "thunder god's storm."

[88] *SKVR*, VII/4, No. 1594.

[89] Martti Haavio, "Ukko ylijumala," *Kalevalaseuran Vuosikirja*, XLI (Helsinki, 1961), 36-37.

god (Jumala) – which arouses attention: that of a judge and punisher. In 1833 a sorcerer from Kainuu told to Elias Lönnrot the following litigant's prayer:

> Father Jumala, yourself, hold court in the clouds, in the sky hold clear councils, come and defend your sons, always [be] a help for your children that they may not lose their heads, that their hair would not be lost in vain, that the neck would not break, that the fine hair would not fall.[90]

The theme of court held in the clouds also appears elsewhere: now "he holds court in the clouds,"[91] or "Ukko, the golden king, the strict man of heaven,"[92] or "Ukko, the center of heaven, the boisterous one on the rim of the clouds."[93] It is particularly important that in one variant,[94] the oldest of those recorded (1828), a description of a thunderstorm follows. Ukko, the center of heaven, raises the clouds; now it begins to rain, and Ukko *telkyttää teräsneniä* onto sorcerers, hatted, jealous persons, or counter-sorcerers. What the word *telkyttää* means in this connection is difficult to explain; in his dictionary Elias Lönnrot translates it as "forge" (Smidde). *Teräsnenä*, a circumlocution ("equipped with a sharp point"), brings the arrow with a sharp point to mind. In other variants of the same prayer, Ukko is asked to destroy the enemies with iron hailstones,[95] a golden club,[96] or a copper hammer.[97]

Thus we have ascertained Ukko the high god's function as a judge and punisher. Court is mentioned in connection with Ukko the high god; we remember from above that the image of the god Thor was present on the occasion when the ancient Norwegians gathered at court (*thing*); it is Thor who may have been the *allmátki áss*[98] in the oath formulas. We have also seen that the sorcerer hopes that Ukko the high god, as he holds court in the clouds, will destroy the sorcerer's opponents with his weapon; that is, lightning, which, besides being called a hammer and a club, is also called *teräsnenä*, a steeltipped arrow (?).

In 945 Igor, or Ingor (actually, Old Scandinavian Ingvar), made peace

[90] *SKVR*, XII, No. 7863.
[91] *SKVR*, VII/5, Nos. 4851, 4498.
[92] *SKVR*, VII/5, No. 4498.
[93] *SKVR*, VII/4, No. 1594.
[94] *SKVR*, VII/4, No. 1585; cf. No. 1577.
[95] *SKVR*, VII/5, No. 4498.
[96] *SKVR*, IX/4, No. 1477.
[97] *SKVR*, VII/5, No. 4498.
[98] De Vries, *Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte*, Secs. 58, 143, 174, 200.

with the emperor of Constantinople. The peace treaty has been preserved and in it, among other things, appears the following passage:

> If any inhabitant of the land of Rus' thinks to violate this amity, may such of these transgressors as have adopted the Christian faith incur condign punishment from Almighty God in the shape of damnation and destruction forevermore. If any of these transgressors be not baptized, may they receive help neither from God nor from Perun: may they not be protected by their own shields, but may they rather be slain by their own swords, laid low by their own arrows or by any of their own weapons, and may they be in bondage in this world and in the next.[99]

In the document both the Christian and the pagan oath formulas are reported; the text continues: "And the Christian Russes shall swear according to their faith, and the non-Christians after their custom." In the first place, the curse of God (Russ. Bog) is wished on Christians who break the oath; if they are pagans, they cannot expect help from Perun, or, as is said later in the same document, "he shall ... be cursed by Perun because he violated his oath (*kljatva*)." In the second place, those taking the oath wish upon themselves death from their own weapons if they break the oath.

We do not learn from the document how Perun cursed (*da budet' kljat ot...Peruna*) oath violaters. But we do know how Jupiter, god of the Romans, proceeded when he punished them. Perhaps the procedure of Perun, god of the Slavs, was analogous to that of Jupiter.

On a southern hill of the Roman Mons Capitolinus was the oldest temple of Jupiter (Juppiter Fereterius) in the city, which, according to a myth, was founded by Romulus himself. In the temple's sacrarium was kept a holy *silex*, a piece of some sort of flint or quartz (German *Feuerstein*, Finnish *Ukon kivi*). Georg Wissowa explained that "we must certainly see in the silex an image of the thunderbolt, a reference to the god of heaven ruling thunderstorm."[100] Kurt Latte, on the other hand, thought the *silex* in this case to signify an ax made from flint.[101] It is, of course, impossible, and unnecessary, to determine whether *silex* was a thunderbolt or a thunderax or whether it was either of them. Because the repository of the *silex* was Jupiter's temple, it is to be assumed that it was a stone object connected in one way or another with Jupiter. Jupiter

[99] Mansikka, *op. cit.*, p. 31. Cf. de Vries, *Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte*, Sec. 218.
[100] Wissowa, *op. cit.*, p. 103.
[101] Latte, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

was Juppiter Fulgur or Juppiter Fulgur Fulmen; hence the object was probably the visible representative of his lightning, that is, a thunder weapon. When official agreements were made, the *silex*, or *saxum silex*, was brought from the temple's sacrarium; it was possibly carried on some sort of stand (cf. Juppiter Feretrius "Jupiter equipped with a stand"). In solemn oath-taking ceremonies, a pig was struck dead with the *silex* stone (porcum saxo silico percussit). Afterwards the *silex* was thrown away. At the same time an oath was read: "Si prior defexit publico consilio dolo malo, tum ille die, Diespater, populum romanum sic ferito, ut ego hunc porcum hic die hodie feriam."[102]

In a miniature drama the oath violater's fate is depicted with words and acts. "If," the oath taker wishes to say, "the Roman people break the agreement which has been confirmed by the oath, may Jupiter kill them with his *silex* the same way as I, the representative and oath taker of the Roman people, kill the pig on this occasion: that is, with his thunder." It is interesting that the Romans use the same verb (*percutio*) for the striking of lightning as they do for killing the pig: Iuppiter aliquem fulmine percussit. It should be mentioned that in the German-speaking area the curse word *Donnerkeil* [*schlage*]*!* is quite generally known; in Mecklenburg it is *Dunner sla!*[103] The curse contains exactly the same idea as the wish expressed in the Roman oath directed to Jupiter.

As far as the Roman oath formula is concerned, it is, of course, an analogy formula of the sort which peoples both of antiquity and of later times have used. We shall take an example from Homer:

> O Zeus most glorious and mighty, ye
> Deathless, defend the right!
> Which nation solver shall first
> transgress this covenant-plight,
> Be the brains of them spilt on the earth
> as yonder wine this day,
> Even theirs and their children's, their
> wives' be made the ravisher's prey![104]

As another example we shall mention the oath contained in the previously mentioned peace treaty (971) made by the Russian prince Svjato-

[102] Livius, I 24.8.
[103] Olbrich, *op. cit.*, p. 326.
[104] *Ilias*, 3:999-302.

slav, son of Igor, and the emperor of Constantinople, Johannes Tzimiskes:

> But if we fail in the observance of the aforesaid stipulations, either I or my companions, or my subjects, may we be accursed of the god in whom we believe, namely, of Perun and Volos, the god of flocks, and we become as yellow as gold, and be slain with our own weapons.[105]

The oath takers had the habit of removing their gold ornaments while they were swearing their oaths.

From the above examples a self-cursing formula of the following nature can be reconstructed:

> As I now, on this oath swearing occasion,
> strike a pig dead with a *silex*, you,
> Jupiter, strike me dead with a
> lightning thunder wedge;
>
> As I now, on this oath swearing occasion
> pour wine upon the ground, you, Zeus
> and the gods, spill my brain upon
> the ground;
>
> As now, on this oath swearing occasion,
> the ornaments which I have placed
> before the statue of Perun are
> gold, let me turn yellow like them;
> if I break my oath.

Let us recollect a myth about the Old Scandinavian Thor, to whose forehead was stuck a whetstone thrown by a giant. The myth would make no sense if we did not know that the Lapp Hora-galles had a piece of flint on the crown of his head; as Johannes Schefferus tells in his work *Lapponia* (1674): "In capite infigunt clavum ferreum, cum silicis particula ut si videatur ignem Thor executiat."[106] The myth of the whetstone stuck to Thor's head clearly contains a reminiscence of the *silex* idea, the lightning symbol of the thunder god. Finnish material also sheds light on the matter. A fire striking charm mentions how the Ukko of the air (*ilman Ukko*), the lord or god of the air (*ilman Herra, ilmoinen Jumala*), or Ilmarinen uses a whetstone (*kovasin*) as his weapon when he strikes fire.[107]

[105] Mansikka, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
[106] Johannes Schefferus, *Lapponia* (Frankfurt am Main, 1674), p. 105.
[107] *SKVR*, I/4, Nos. 231, 232, 245, 257; II, No. 702.

On the other hand, the weapon the Ukko of the air uses is a nail (*kynsi*),[108] that is, "thunder god's nail" (*Ukon kynsi*); the latter is the Finnish term for *belemnithēs*.

A wedge (*vaaja*) is sometimes mentioned as the weapon of the fire-striking Ukko of the air.[109] He often strikes "with three eagle feathers,"[110] by which, as archaeologist Jorma Leppäaho has convincingly shown,[111] is meant an arrow equipped with three feathers; the word "arrow" (*nuoli, piili*) appears in Finnish runes as synonymous with *kolmisulka* "triple feather."[112]

The peace treaty of 945, cited above, contains words in which the oath takers wish death for themselves by their own weapons if they break an oath. Among other things, arrows (*ot strěl*) are mentioned as the murder weapons. The same sort of weapon oath was known by the ancient Scandinavians, who, if they swore falsely, had themselves killed by their own swords, horses, and ships.[113] How widely this swearing formula has spread is examplified by the Ostyak procedure on solemn oath taking occasions. In front of the oath taker were put bows, arrows, axes, and battle axes, one of which he had to pick up, "and they strongly believed that if the oath taker took a false oath, that weapon would, in a few days, cause his death."[114] The terse phrase from Birchbark Letter No. 292, "and one's own arrow" must, in our opinion, be interpreted in the same way: "If I swear falsely, may my own arrow kill me, and (adds the oath taker) also the arrow shot by man in general."

If we examine the words of the Novgorod Birchbark Letter No. 292, "God's arrow, man's arrow and one's own arrow," against the background thus presented, we can determine its function. It is a record of an oath taken at the conclusion of some treaty. The manner of expression is rhythmical; the word "arrow" (*nuoli*) appears in the text three times, suggesting parallelism, a stylistic technique of the ancient Finnish runes.[115]

[108] *SKVR*, I/4, Nos. 270, 272; IX/4, No. 1057; XII, Nos. 4487, 4555, 8511.
[109] *SKVR*, XI, No. 1773.
[110] *SKVR*, I/4 No. 236; VI, No. 3189.
[111] Jorma Leppäaho, "Iski tulta...," *Kalevalaseuran Vuosikirja*, XXIX (Porvoo, 1949), 72.
[112] *SKVR*, I/1, No. 631.
[113] *Helgakviða Hundingsbana*, II 19; de Vries, *Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte*, Sec. 218.
[114] K. F. Karjalainen, *Die Religion der Jugra-Völker*, III (= *FF Communications*, 63) (Porvoo, 1927), p. 182.
[115] For example, *isän luonto, emon luonto sekä luontoni omani*; *Ukon väki, jumalan*

From the use of this stylistic technique, it can be concluded that the oath formula is a genuine Finnish traditional oath formula, not a provisional translation from Russian.

In the Finnish oath formula, the oath taker desires death by God's arrow, the God of Heaven's arrow, or Ukko the high god's weapon, that is, lightning. In the Russian oath formula, the oath taker desires his destruction by Perun's curse. In the Roman oath formula, the oath taker desires punishment by Jupiter's weapon, lightning, which is symbolized by *silex*.

In the Finnish oath formula, the oath taker desires destruction by his own arrow, and, in addition, by the arrow of other mortals. In the Russian oath formula, the oath taker gives to his own weapons, including his arrow, the right to kill the breaker of an oath. The ancient Scandinavians and, for example, the Ostyaks are acquainted with the same sort of weapon oath.

The above interpretation of the function of Birchbark Letter No. 292 is prompted by the series of words *bou*, *soud'nii*, and *okovy* (*okov*), which constitute the Russian portion of the same gramota. The word *bou* is an abbreviation of *bogou* (= *bogu*) "God's"; abbreviations of this type, usually with a line over the abbreviated word ($\overline{bou}$, $\overline{bgu}$), were current in Old Russian ecclesiastical texts.[116] The word *soud'nii* (= *sud'nij*) means "of the court" (adj.), and *okovy* (*okov* in the Russian Psalter of 1296) means "fetters." The words *Jumola soud'nii* possibly refer to the fact that if he breaks his oath the oath taker subjects himself to judgment by the god of heaven. *Okovy* (*okov*) brings to mind the words of the peace treaty of 945: "and may they be in bondage in this world and in the next" (i da budut' rabi v'' s' věk'' i v'' buduščii).

Thus Birchbark Letter No. 292 is to be interpreted in approximately the following way: "May the lightning arrow of God, the God of heaven and thunder, may an arrow (shot by another) person, and may my own arrow destroy me if I break the oath made while concluding this agreement; I subject myself to the power of the God of Judgment, the God of heaven and of thunder, and I am ready to be fettered (as a slave)."

Over three hundred years passed after the writing of Birchbark Letter

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*väki, väki vanhan Väinämöisen; Lietsoi päivän, lietsoi toisen, lietsoi kohta kolmannenkin.*

[116] I am obliged to Dr. Heikki Kirkinen for this explanation.

No. 292 before Finnish literature was born. In 1542 the religious reformer and father of Finnish literature, Mikael Agricola, published the first Finnish literary work, an "ABC Book" (*Abckiria*), on the first page of which he used the name Jumala, now in the meaning of the Christian God. Jumala, the god of heaven and thunder, had been transferred to a new function. In 1551 when Agricola printed in the introduction of his Finnish translation of the Psalter a list of the "false gods" of Häme and Karelia, it is true he mentioned Ukko (Wkoi) among the "false gods" of the Karelians, but research has shown that this Ukko has nothing to do with Ukko the high god. On the other hand, at the end of the sixteenth century or the beginning of the seventeenth, Sigfrid Aronus Forsius, a Finnish astrologer of the Swedish king, composed a verse in which he showed that he knew Ukko the high god, that Jumala about whose arrow a note had been made nearly four hundred years earlier on birchbark, the parchment of the north, when the history of the Finnish written word was begun. Forsius' verse read:

> Ucko ciet pluvias, metuendaque fulgura
> vibrat.[117]
>
> Ukko gives birth to rain and throws
> fearful lightning flashes.

*Helsinki*

[117] *Tidningar utgifne af et sällskap i Åbo*, 1778, p. 113.