

## **Abstract**

*Seventeenth-Century Witchcraft Trials in Scotland and Northern Norway* is a comparative study of witchcraft persecution in Scotland and Finnmark, the northernmost region of Norway. The hypothesis to be tested is that the historical witch-hunts in the two regions are complex phenomena, wherein several influential explanatory factors are at work: the demonological element, the role of the state, the local courts, the role of the church, neighbourhood disputes, the spoken word, folk belief, the superstitious north, the personal factor and lastly a direct connection between Scotland and Finnmark through a Scottish district governor installed in Finnmark. A wide range of quantitative and qualitative analyses shed light on the witch-hunts in the two regions during the period 1600-1700. The analyses are based on primary sources from witchcraft persecution, mainly legal documents. The quantitative chapters contain statistical analyses and give information about tendencies in the source material in total. The qualitative chapters contain close-readings of trial documents from a narratological perspective. Through discourse analyses the various voices heard during a trial are analysed: the voice of the scribe, the voice of the law, the voice of the accused person and the voices of the witnesses. The quantitative and qualitative analyses combined provide a broad view of the historical phenomenon in question as well as in-depth studies of individual witchcraft cases. The main finding of the quantitative analyses is that there is a strong correlation between use of torture, demonic pact confessions, panics, local courts and females. The same finding is strengthened by the qualitative analyses, which in addition point to the introduction of demonological notions by the learned elite, the spread of these notions in oral societies, the important roles of government officials and the direct Scottish connection through a governmental official as explanatory factors. The conclusion is that the impact of the demonological doctrine on legal and clerical institutions, the use of torture in local courts to extract demonological confessions and the pressure from local communities to start a witchcraft trial must be seen as influential factors during the witchcraft trials in Scotland and Finnmark.