Gilbey’s port, the Devon downs, the girl in the helmet with the star and effect of velvety darkness, the tall hat on the Victorian table, the door with the keyhole made dramatic...3

The final work in Moore’s list is none other than Kauffer’s recent original artwork for the dust jacket of Requiem for a Nun.

With the outbreak of the Second World War, Kauffer returned to New York in 1940 with his partner, the textile artist Marion Dorn, whom he would marry in 1950. One of the first artworks Kauffer then produced, which was likely commissioned before he even landed in the US, was a Modern Library cover for William Faulkner’s Sanctuary (1931) that he signed and dated 1940. Bennett Cerf aspired to model his newly acquired Modern Library on Great Britain’s fine presses, and in 1925 visited Francis Meynell’s Nonesuch Press where Kauffer played a vital role. As Nonesuch’s exclusive US agent from 1927, Modern Library/Random House began a long relationship not only with Meynell but with Kauffer too. Other covers that Kauffer did for Faulkner’s works include Light in August (1932), Knight’s Gambit (1949), and the first edition cover of Intruder in the Dust (1948). Although large publishing houses and the paperback revolution in the twentieth century increasingly led to sharp separations between the different material spheres of bookmaking and book marketing, in these lines of correspondence we may just be witness to two artists attempting to bridge such divides.

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doi:10.1093/notesj/gjx139
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POUL ANDERSON, SAXO GRAMMATICUS, AND THE IDOL OF ARKONA

POUL Anderson’s Time Patrol novelettes, later collected under the various titles The Guardians of Time, Time Patrolman, Annals of the Time Patrol, and The Shield of Time, repeatedly return to medieval settings and objects. In the first instalment, for example, the protagonist travels to Anglo-Saxon England after detecting a series of chronological disturbances in some Victorian archaeological reports. Calling his writing ‘fantasy with rivets’, Anderson aimed to achieve historical accuracy in his time-travel fiction. It is worth examining how he came by some of his medieval objects. Especially illuminating is his reference to Slavic idolatry in ‘Delenda est’, the second installment of the series, published in The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction in December 1955.

Anderson was well-versed in medieval history and literature, with a special interest in Scandinavian and Germanic sources. He drew on this knowledge in many of his works, including his novel The High Crusade (serialized in the July, August, and September issues of Astounding Science Fact and Fiction in 1960), which describes the plucky exploits of an English knight after an alien scouting party lands in fourteenth-century Lincolnshire. A short sequel, ‘Quest’, follows the knight as he commandeers a spaceship in search of the Holy Grail. The serialized 1953 novella Three Hearts and Three Lions (later expanded into a full-length book) transports a Danish Resistance fighter from the Second World War to a parallel universe modelled on the Matter of France. Scholars have recently remarked Anderson’s scrupulous use of Icelandic sagas in his 1973 novel Hrolf Kraki’s Saga.1

As with the other stories in the Time Patrol series, ‘Delenda est’ is set in a universe where time-travelling policemen patrol history. Here, patrolman Manse Everard explores an alternate reality in which Scipio Africanus and the Roman army lost the Battle of Zama to Hannibal and the resulting twentieth-century geopolitical configuration closely resembles that of early-medieval Europe. Everard is particularly struck


by the range of alternative religious practices he
witnesses after a strongman named Boleslav
Arkonsky kidnaps him and his companions.
They are led to a ‘great room where Arkonsky
bent the knee to an idol with four faces, that
Svantevit which the Danes had chopped up for
firewood in the other history.’ Several points
suggest that Anderson here references the violent
campaign carried out in the twelfth century by
the Danish king Valdemar and Absalon, Bishop
of Roskilde, against the Slavic inhabitants of
Rügen. Arkonsky’s name clearly derives from
Cape Arkona on Rügen (called Arcon by the
Latin chroniclers), the site of a fierce battle
and the destruction of a Slavic temple.
‘Svantevit’ is a variant spelling of the Slavic
deity whose name was glossed by Christian com-
mentators as a falsus Sanctus Vitus.

Moreover, it is likely that Anderson specific-
ally references the version of the siege of Arkona
recounted in the fourteenth book of Saxo
Grammaticus’ twelfth-century history Gesta
Danorum. Saxo describes the cult statue at
Arkona thus: Ingeus in ede simulacrum, omnem
humani corporis habitum granditate transcindens,
quatuor capitis totidemque ceruicibus miran-
dum perstabat, e quibus duo pectus totidemque
tergum respicere uidebantur. (‘Within the shrine
stood a huge effigy, its size surpassing the height
of any human figure, and it was amazing to look
upon in that it possessed four heads and necks,
two of which looked over its chest, two over its
back.’) While Helmold of Bosau’s Chronica sla-
vorum offers an alternate source for the discus-
sion of the cult of Svantevit, Anderson makes
plain his debt to Saxo Grammaticus in other
publications. In the foreword to his novel The
Golden Horn, he names the Gesta Danorum
alongside Adam of Bremen, William of
Malmesbury, and a host of Byzantine and
Icelandic texts as source material. His 1997
novel War of the Gods retells the story of the
Hadingus, a legendary Danish ruler who fea-
tures in Saxo Grammaticus’ history. Although
these works postdate ‘Delenda est’, they confirm
his long interest in this text.

It is unclear which version of the Gesta
Danorum Anderson used as his source mater-
ial. A native speaker of Danish, he could have
drawn on any number of Danish editions
issued in the nineteenth and early twentieth
centuries. However, a good case might be
made for the English translation of the first
nine books by Oliver Elton, published in
1894 and reissued in 1905, which included the
destruction of the Rügen idols in a series of
appendices. After translating Saxo’s descrip-
tion of the idol at Arkona, its cult practices,
and its toppling, Elton’s version concludes
with a lapidary gloss: ‘the image of Suanto-
Vitus is then chopped into firewood’. This
condenses a lengthy description of the sacking
of Arkona (Book XIV, 39.34), and rhymes
neatly with the description of the idol’s fate
in Anderson’s later short story. I therefore sug-
gest that ‘Delenda est’ not only represents
Anderson’s early use of the Gesta Danorum
as a source, but also that the author used
Elton’s appendices as a guide to medieval
cult practices on Rügen.

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Advance Access publication 28 September, 2017

SOME INFLUENCES ON PHILIP
LARKIN’S ‘CUT GRASS’

On 3 June 1971, Philip Larkin wrote to his
partner Monica Jones that he was ‘trying to
write an ethereal little song ... about the time
of year’. The finished poem was published as
‘Cut Grass’ at the end of July, and collected in

In his edition of The Complete Poems of
Philip Larkin, Archie Burnett offers extracts
from the Book of Isaiah, Keats, Housman,

2 Poul Anderson, ‘Delenda est’, The Magazine of Fantasy
and Science Fiction, ix.vi (December 1955), 26.
3 Saxo Grammaticus, Gesta Danorum, ed. Karsten Friis-
XIV, I.6).
4 Ibid., 1276 (Book XIV, 39.3).

1 Philip Larkin, Letters to Monica, ed. A. Thwaite
(London, 2010), 419.