

This is a news article written about Thora Asudeh's summer research from one of the local newspapers on Åland, *Ålandstidningen*.

Here is a translation

Thora finds the answers in books from the 1600s

Thora Asudeh has come from Canada to spend July and August researching in the Provincial Archives of Åland. Her Åland roots inspired her to research the reform of the Lutheran Church on Åland in the 16th and 17th centuries. "When I came here, I didn't even know if I would find something useful, but it turned out that there was a lot here" she says.

Thora Asudeh was born on Åland but has lived in Ottawa, Canada almost her entire life. Now she studies Humanities and Religion at Carleton University. This summer she chose to devote herself to research on the reformation movement on Åland.

"The Reformation began in Germany in the 16th century with Martin Luther who called for changes from the Catholic Church at the time. It eventually led to reform in the church in Germany. What I study is history and how this larger movement manifested itself in a small place like Åland. Here on Åland, people didn't think much about what happened in Germany," says Thora Asudeh.

Why did you choose to research about this?

"I am from here and have always been interested in Åland's history, religion and folk beliefs. It's very interesting with all the old churches and how religion works here. This year I have studied the Reformation movement, and I find it interesting. I also knew that Åland is proud of its history independent from Finland and Sweden, and it's a nice place to talk about." In the summer, Thora Asudeh received the "Maurice Price Scholarship" from her university, which made it possible for her to do research this summer instead of working.

"It is a scholarship that a student on my program receives every summer. It should help one with a research project. I said that I am from Åland and that I would very much like to research it."

Thora Asudeh researches using microhistory.

"One studies a specific author, a person or a group from a specific period in history. You read sources closely and note those particular pieces of evidence."

Deep dive in the archive

Thora Asudeh has spent the summer in Ålands Landskapsarkiv to find evidence for her research. "When I came here, I didn't even know if I would find anything I could use in the archive, but it turned out that there was a lot. I came here and started reading the oldest books they had from reformation time. I started in a court book from 1606."

Apart from court books, Thora Asudeh has read old bibles, letters, and tax accounts.

“It can be difficult to understand because of the handwriting. It is old Swedish, and spelling was not universal yet. You can almost hear the dialect the person had when you read the text.

Have you found anything interesting?

“The Reformation happened on Åland and we became Lutheran, but there was no announcement or focused discussion that this would happen, like in Germany. But there was an active shift that happened at some point, I just wasn’t sure if I could find evidence pointing to it. One thing that was super useful is the book Acta Visitatoria by **Boetius Murenius**. He was a vicar and leader on Åland and wrote down what happened in every parish here during the 17th century. It showed how the reformation happened.”

“One day I read about **Andreas Angermannus** who was a priest from Uppsala. He did not like King Johan III who wanted a Catholic reform in Sweden. The king sent Angermannus to Åland to silence him, which didn't work in my opinion. It turns out that almost every clergyman on Åland signed agreeing with him that they wanted to be Lutheran, and that they did not want a Catholic king over Åland, Sweden or Finland. I thought that was very exciting.”

It turned out that it was this type of small details that would lead Thora Asudeh forward in her research.

“The information about Angermannus was just three pages of a book. It was not much, but it was a big deal to me.”

What is the goal of your research?

“By the end of the summer I want to write about what I have done here. Then I’m going to start an honours essay over my last year at the university. The thesis will be about what I researched here. It's an interesting topic and I can promise that no one else at the university will write about it.”

Even though Thora Asudeh has lived in Canada for so long, she comes to Åland in the summers.

“My mother is from Åland and father is from Canada. We have lived here every summer since I was little. When I come here, I live with my mother in Svartsmara.”

Text: Frida Eriksson

Photos: Robert Jansson

Image captions:

1. “Thora Asudeh has come to Åland this summer to research Reformation movements on Åland.
2. In Ålands Landskapsarkiv there are books saved from several hundred years ago
3. The Books Thora Asudeh reads are hand written in old Swedish
4. A court book from the 1600s that is still in good condition despite its age