

SECOND SIGHT IN NORTHERN GERMANY:
TRADITIONAL POPULAR BELIEF AND
PRECOGNITION

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The phenomenon of second sight belongs to three branches of science: parapsychology, psychology, and ethnology. In parapsychology it is part of the extensive field of transsensual perception, which means the faculty of acquiring knowledge of facts and events without the organs of perception. Among the three possibilities of transsensual perception: telepathy, clairvoyance, and precognition, concerning second sight we must exclude telepathy, as a psychic act between persons. Clairvoyance is usually confined to perception of present or past events. Second sight is considered to be a special kind of precognition, consisting of visionary experiences. There is no need to speak of the present scientific position concerning these phenomena in detail.

The contribution of psychology consists in a systematic classification of a psychology of superstition and in the knowledge of eidetics. To Karl Schmeing we owe the thorough elaboration of this knowledge in his works about second sight in northern Germany.

In ethnology, second sight is associated with the conceptions of popular belief, and in this section it is noted with much interest in monographical descriptions as well as in maps and in collections of legends and in descriptions of the entire folklore in a certain region. Differing from parapsychology, ethnology generally considers second sight to be the gift to see more than others, applying not only to future events but also to spirits and invisible things. To persons born on a Sunday, for instance, is attributed this ability.

Strictly speaking, second sight concerns spontaneous experience of future things, which include not only visions, but also auditory phenomena, daydreams, and presentiments appearing as indeterminate feelings.

The following notes are confined to this meaning of second sight and try to answer the question of the relationship between traditional conceptions

of popular belief and the parapsychological problem of precognition. Are the conceptions of second sight found in ethnological sources to be considered as evidences of traditional popular belief or do they contain a "true core"? And if there is a "true core": in which way are both complexes to be distinguished from each other? Emphasis must be laid on the fact that a true core is to be understood as an actually experienced fulfillment of a spontaneous vision of future events. In traditional popular belief and in legends, many occurrences are believed to be true, for instance, the wild hunt, fiery dogs, headless persons, werewolves, bleeding stones, burning treasures, and so on. The true core of second sight is also to be distinguished from the psychic reality based on archetypes found in legends and tales, or from the reality of the psychological function of legends to diminish indeterminable and great fear by means of articulating anxiety and concentrating it into definite shapes.

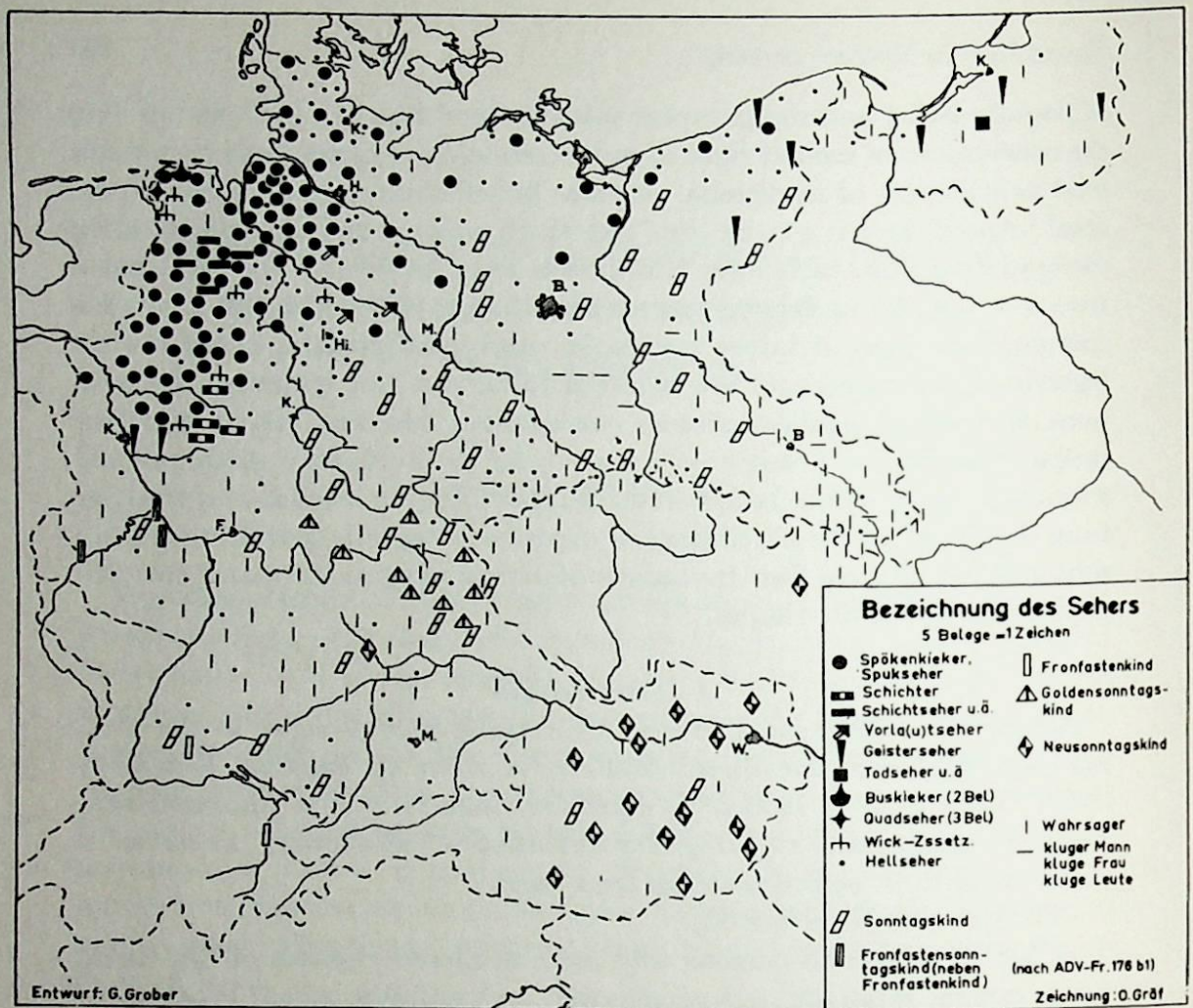
I—THE SEERS

Among the ethnological sources concerning second sight in the German-speaking area, the questionnaires for *Atlas der deutschen Volkskunde* (ADV) from 1930 to 1935 offer extensive material which combines synchronicity and a fairly even regional extension of the answers. Therefore it seems justified to use this material for a basis.

ADV question No. 176 asks:

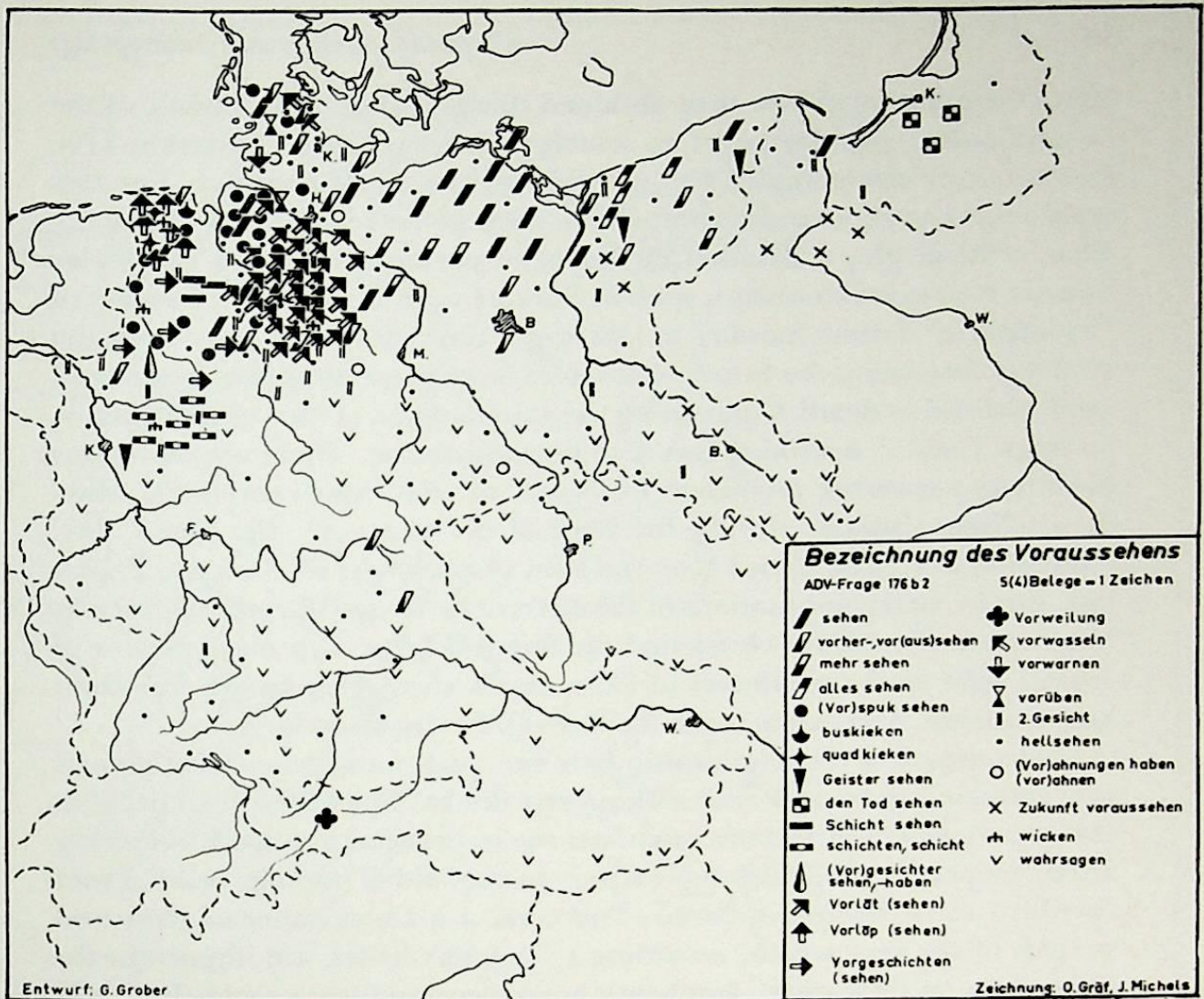
a) Are there certain persons who are considered capable of foreseeing future events? What are such persons and such abilities called? When must they be born to obtain this quality? Do such people have certain outward characteristics and of which quality are they?

Maps 1 & 2 represent the answers given to the inquiry regarding the types of seers and foreseeing. By contrasting striking marks to less striking ones the area of spontaneous foreseeing was more accentuated than answers which attest to only a vague knowledge of the future. This difference is based upon the analysis of the implications of the names and of additional information. For instance, there are practically no reports of spontaneous foreseeing by persons born on a Sunday with a new moon: "Fronfastensonntag." "Hellseher" (clairvoyant) is a name with varying implications. "Wicker" and the like may also be fortune-tellers in everyday language. Just the same can be said of the corresponding activities: "hellsehen" (to be clairvoyant), "wicken," "wahrsagen" (to tell fortunes). The name "zweites Gesicht" (second sight) is known all over Germany and does not concentrate in a certain area. If we compare maps 1 and 2, we may see only minor deviations. Both maps show that the northwest of Germany is the main area of visionary foreseeing, extending along the coast of the Baltic Sea



Map 1. Distribution of seers

towards East Prussia in a narrowing belt. Collections of legends and reports of other European countries show that the German area is part of a "magic circle" including the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Iceland, Scotland, and the Orkneys, partly or as a whole. The maps show that in Germany the main area is the region between the rivers Ems and the lower Rhine in the west and the Elbe in the east. There are many reasons for the assumption that colonists coming from western Germany to settle along the Baltic coast eight centuries ago may have brought the gift of second sight with them. The gradual decreasing towards the east corresponds to the route the colonists took. Concerning the completeness of the extension of the answers on both maps, a restriction must be made. They do not show the spontaneous experiences of the future in the Alps, which according to Karl Ilg can be taken for a "magic chain," comparing it with the magic circle of northern Europe. One cause for this lack might be the relatively



Map 2. Various types of predictions

small number of answers in Austria (Switzerland is not included by ADV). The main reason is more likely to be seen in the fact that in the Alps, forehearing, the so-called “Künden” (announcing) is more frequent than foreseeing, which the ADV questions mainly refer to.

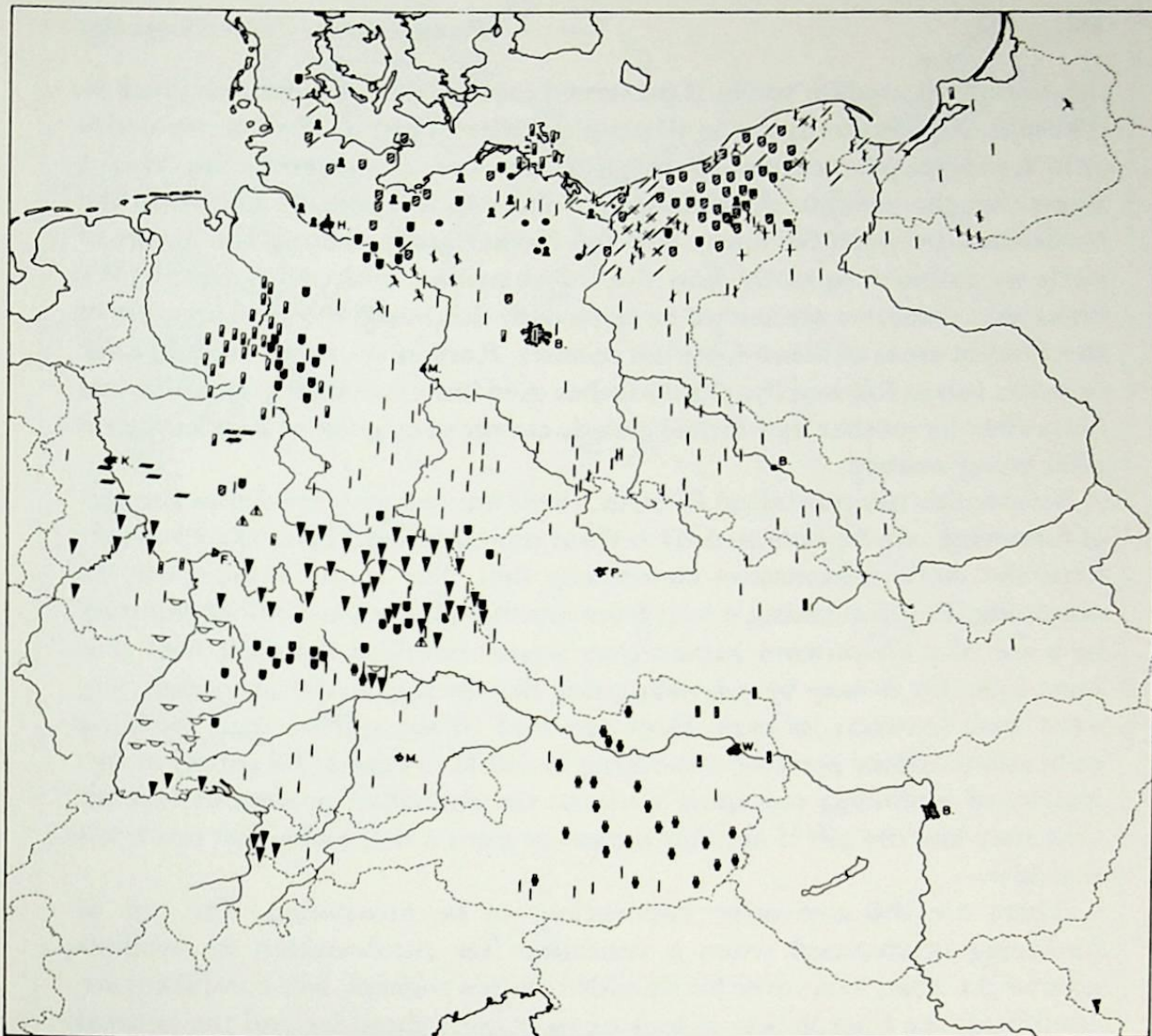
Concerning the extension of names both of foreseers and foreseeing, our question of the parapsychological truth of second sight is easily answered. Regional differences and spreading in more or less extension areas are characteristic of all phenomena of folk culture including popular belief, no matter whether it is real or fictitious. In Finnish folk-narrative research, many examples have been related which show the extension of motives in fairy tales, legends and popular belief in all parts of the world. The mere fact of regional spreading is no proof at all for the “true core” of second sight.

The impression that seers and their reports made on their neighborhood

led to the question of how they obtained this gift. It is characteristic of the conceptions of popular belief to search for explanations. Question 176c selects out of this complex the question of the seer's birthday. For this question, some thousand answers have been given represented in map 3. Most of them give a detailed birthdate of persons born on a particular Sunday who are clairvoyant, such as Sunday with New Moon, Sunday of "Fronfasten," Trinity Sunday, or Christmas time. As mentioned above, the ability of foreseeing the future characteristic of these persons is vague and rarely defined in detail. Concerning the actual region of second sight shown on maps 1 and 2, a striking fact is to be emphasized. There are numerous birthdates appearing anywhere from east to west, for example St. Matthew's Night, Sunday during the hour of divine service, St. John's Day, Christmas Eve, New Year's Eve, the hour of midnight on Sunday, Thursday, Friday, and combinations of the dates of birth and christening such as "born on a Thursday, christened on Sunday." But the main region of second sight in the northwest of Germany is strangely enough free from such evidence. The explanation for this will be discussed later.

Our question of the relationship between traditional popular belief and precognition can be answered without any doubt. The widespread belief in the importance of birthdates manifests the impression visionary foreseeing makes on people; yet, it belongs entirely to the field of popular belief. Proof for this can be offered in detail. There are a great number of days and periods of the year which, according to popular belief, are important for those born on these dates. Implications concerning future events basically take two directions: on one side, misfortune of any kind, as for instance, illness, early or unnatural death, inclination to bad conduct or crime; on the other side, the gift to see spirits and future events. Dates of this kind may also promise luck. In addition, we find connections between birthdates and figures of popular belief. Witches, for instance, are said to be born in May, especially on May 1st. Vampires, "Truden," are born under a new moon, werewolves on St. John's Day and during Christmas time, nightmares on St. John's Day. Witches, nightmares and vampires are determined also by special qualities or events during or after birth. Considering these data, there is no need to add that all "Vorschauer" (visionaries) Karl Schmeing came across are born on days independent of these dates.

Besides dates of birth, the ADV material also contains information relating the acquisition of the gift to other conditions of birth. So we frequently find the information that a seer was born with the skin of the placenta covering his head. This attachment of the embryonic skin has granted the gift of prophecy for the newborn child since ancient times. In accordance with the concept of spells utilizing parts of the body, the skin of



Geburtstermine von Personen, die Zukünftiges sehen können
(nach ADV-Fr. 176c)

- | | |
|--|--|
| — Matthiasnacht | Sonntag |
| — Matthiasnacht, Zwölfte Stunde | ⊥ Sonntag geboren und getauft |
| ● Ostern vor Sonnenaufgang | ⊥ Sonntag, Zwölfte Stunde |
| ▲ Johannistag | ⊥ Sonntag während des Gottesdienstes |
| ▽ Advent | ● Sonntag bei Neumond |
| ● Neujahr, Silvester | ⊥ Sonntag, der zugleich Jahreserster ist |
| ● Termine der Weihnachtszeit außer Neujahr | ⊥ Dreifaltigkeitssonntag |
| ▼ Fasten(sonntag) | λ Donnerstag geboren, Sonntag getauft |
| △ (Sonntag) an hohen Festen | λ Donnerstag, Zwölfte Stunde |
| ● Neumond | ⊥ Donnerstag vor Sonnenaufgang |
| / Zwölfte Stunde | + Sonntag vor Sonnenaufgang |
| × Zwölfte Stunde geboren und getauft | |
- (Auswahl, 3-4 Belege = 1 Zeichen)

Entwurf: G. Grober

0 50 100 km

Zeichnung: R. Helm

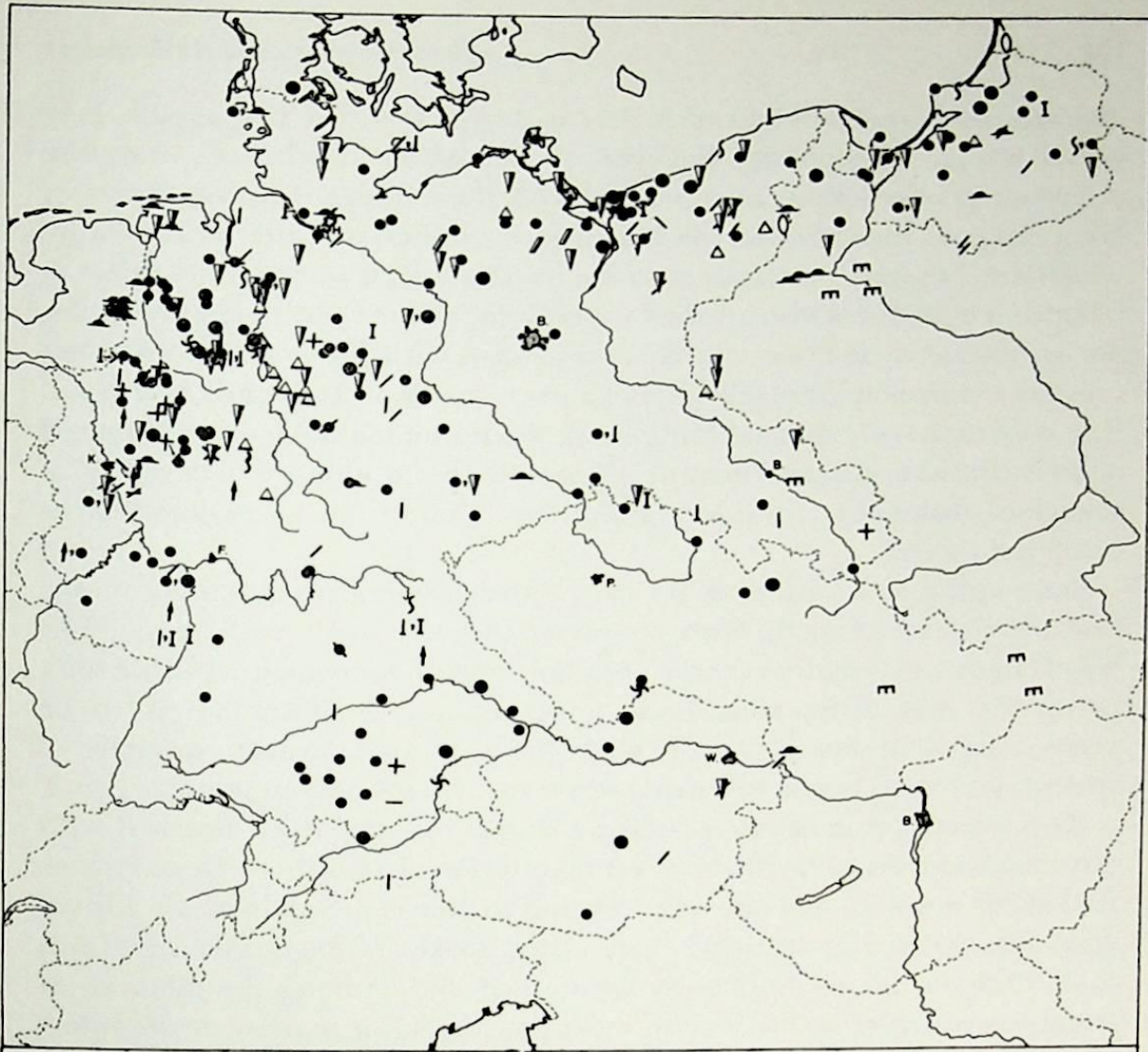
Map 3. Time of birth of persons able to foretell the future

the placenta is used for spells. If preserved carefully, it will give good luck to the child and, furthermore, to all people possessing it; it offers benevolence or luck in legal proceedings, or the gift to prevent or extinguish fire. Map 4 shows that the belief in the influence of this cap is especially known in the borderland between Germany and the Netherlands. Among the marks of birth we rather frequently find the information: "born with teeth." We know that vampires are said to be born with this mark. We find answers of this kind in areas of Slavo-German contact. Rare answers, given only once or twice, run as follows: the child's father died before its birth; the child was born after its mother had already died; clairvoyant persons suckled again after being weaned.

Besides this interpretation of birth, there are concepts held that the gift of foreseeing can be obtained by certain modes of behavior. Map 5 represents the ADV information concerning this. The most familiar way of obtaining the gift is taking it over from another clairvoyant being; this may be a use of a clairvoyant person over whose shoulder the expectant seer must look. Or it may be a howling dog in which case the expectant seer must look between its ears. Dogs are said to see spirits; their howling indicates that they perceive something invisible to others. To get rid of this quality of foreseeing one must undergo the described process in reverse. One may lose the gift if another person or even a dog looks over one's left shoulder.

There are still two other conceptions to be mentioned. The gift of foreseeing is obtained when a candidate for confirmation in walking around the altar, looks over his shoulder. In this concept, two complexes are combined: the interdiction of looking over one's shoulder and the general importance in popular belief of walking around the altar, for instance, during weddings, burials, confessions, christenings, pilgrimages, confirmations. The ADV questionnaire contained no special question concerning the acquisition or loss of the gift, but the information obtained from legends is abundant. These are represented in maps 4 and 5; in map 5 there appears only one occurrence of looking over one's shoulder during a funeral procession. According to legends, the gift of foreseeing may be obtained by looking through the hole of a coffin nail, by looking through the orbits of a skull, or by watching a funeral procession through a fissure in the door. If we return to our question: actual precognition or popular belief, there is no doubt that all information we obtained pointed exclusively to popular belief.

Answers given to ADV question 176d (indicated on map 4) present still more concepts concerning the seer's personality. Among the characteristics represented, we may distinguish two groups: elements of popular belief and



Merkmale von Personen, die Zukünftiges sehen können (Auswahl)

(nach ADV-Fr. 176d)

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| ● introvertiert nach Wesen, Aussehen (Blick), Verhalten | ▲ mit „Haube“ geboren |
| ● eigenartig in Wesen, Aussehen (Blick), Verhalten | △ Augenbrauen zusammengewachsen |
| blaue Augen | △ Augenbrauen fehlen |
| ┆ tiefliegende Augen | ∕ zweierlei Augenfarbe |
| I große Augen | ∩ rote (kranke) Augen |
| — blondes Haar | ∪ rotes Haar |
| + blaue Augen, blondes Haar | ∩ rote Augen, rotes Haar |
| / blaß, kränklich | m mit Zähnen geboren |
| \ hager, dünn | ○ Besonderheiten des Ohres |
| ▽ Begleitumstände des Sehens werden erwähnt
(Last, Unruhe, Zwang) | † unheimliches Aussehen |

Die Zeichen |, —, /, \ treten auch in Verbindung mit anderen Zeichen auf

Entwurf: G. Grober

0 50 100 km

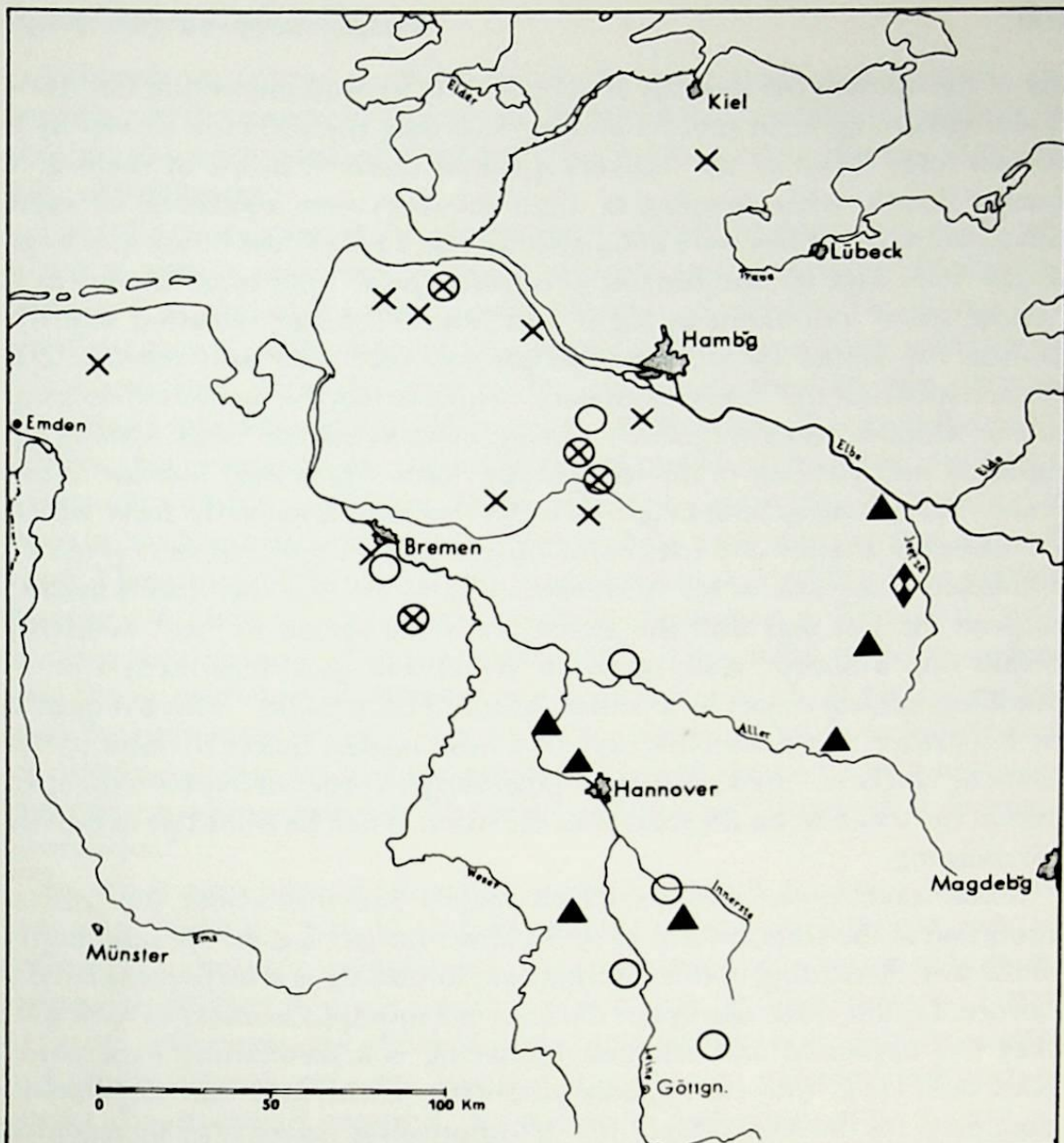
Zeichnung: E. Franke

Map 4. Characteristics of persons able to foretell the future

characteristics independent of it. Let us begin with the first group. Eyebrows grown together are believed to be marks of witches, vampires, nightmares, werewolves, and persons with the evil eye. Missing eyebrows are a rare and thus striking mark indicating special qualities of the owner which are, however, not known to me in detail. Red eyes usually refers to bloodshot eyes but is also applied to the color of the eyes. Eyes of red color are attributed to demons, witches and persons with the evil eye; bloodshot eyes are a conspicuous mark of cruel and evil persons. In popular belief red hair is an extremely disqualifying mark; therefore the birth of a red-haired child is considered a punishment. Persons with red hair are believed to be malicious, dishonest, irritable, and faithless. Traitors are often described as being red-haired.

Concerning peculiarities of the ears, unusually large ears and ingrowing earlobes are mentioned; both characteristics are dealt with in popular belief. In overlooking the marks popular belief is concerned with, we may point out that disfiguring marks are dominating. This fact is to be understood as an expression of the frightening, inexplicable character of second sight and the generally disastrous role visions play in popular belief.

The second group of characteristics shown on map 4 is concerned with physical and mental qualities of a different type. In northern Germany we find an accumulation of answers referring to blue eyes and fair hair. Often, qualities such as pale and sickly looking are spoken of; big, sunken eyes and lean, thin stature are frequently mentioned, too. Among the qualities of mind, represented by circles, we must pay special attention to the information attesting introverted behavior and strange character. In this area, many different answers have been summarized, for instance: inward looking, shy, earnest, piercing, dreaming, strange, extraordinary, different from ordinary people. Answers of that sort are given in southern and eastern Germany too, but they concentrate in the area of second sight known to us from maps 1 and 2. There is no doubt that most of these answers indicate a certain type of person we frequently find in northern Germany. Karl Schmeing confirms in his description of Low German foreseers that they usually represent the typical features of the race in this country, above all those mental qualities which are characterized by integration turned inwards and a schizoid disposition. According to Schmeing, second sight is a hereditary predisposition. This corresponds to the results of parapsychology. This field of science proves by experiment that there exist more or less distinct gifts appearing in more or less capable test persons. In map 4 we find a good number of spontaneous answers, that is, information not specifically requested, regarding circumstances during the visions. These inform us about the psychic state immediately preceding the vision and



Die Gabe des Zweiten Gesichtes wird erworben:

- von einem Hellsichtigen
- × von einem Hund
- ⊗ von einem Hellsichtigen und einem Hund
- ▲ durch Umsehen hinter dem Altar bei der Konfirmation
- ◆ durch Umsehen während das Leichenzugs

Map 5. Various sources of acquisition of the gift of second sight

about the opinion the seer has of his gift. The persons answering the ADV questionnaire agree in reports and legends that the seers are driven by a certain force. Most of the answers speak of anxiety. Some of them give further details: when sleeping at night the seers were awakened by some unknown power. They were compelled to rise, to leave the house and to go to the road and let the funeral procession pass. One man known as a "Spukgucker" ran about at night and returned home sweating heavily. During the actual vision, these people are very pale and restless. Zur Bensen speaks of the "feverish anxiety" which drives the seer out of doors or to the window, most frequently during moonlit nights, after waking up suddenly and yielding to the inexplicable force which may increase intolerably. According to Strackerjan, it is the very resistance to the force which increases the anxiety and may cause illness. Many reports of seers given by Schmeing as a result of his field research show us that the visions usually surprise the seer and that the anxiety of being forced to "see" suddenly breaks into a normal state of mind. We obtain good information in an autobiographical report by a pedlar, called "Pötte-Jakob," which is quoted by Kleibauer: sometimes this man had been restless before a vision; other times he had been lifted up out of a quiet sleep in order to foresee with open eyes at the window, on the road or in the wood. Then he would sleep quietly till morning.

Some spontaneous answers which map 4 provides about the mental condition of the seers, inform us of the effect the gift has on the personality of the seer. According to this information, foreseeing is always considered a burden. I quote some examples: the seers feel unhappy because of their gift; they feel oppressed and anxious; foreseeing is a tormenting experience. Karl Schmeing, too, calls special attention to the fact that depressions dominate, for the seer is afraid that his oppressing visions may be repeated or may be found out. He speaks of a foreseer who fought against his gift and of a woman who could not sleep any more because she was brooding about it. On the other hand, Schmeing warns of the partiality of the conceptions implied by literature and ADV. Many seers consider their gift an absolutely natural thing. I quote Schmeing: "The foreseers known to me are without any exception quiet, earnest people who never behave theatrically." Fr. Kammeier quotes autobiographical data of a seer which agree with this result: He was never oppressed or frightened by his frequent visions although he was convinced of their truth; he even had a distinct and realistic view of life and did not consider his gift worth pondering about. Thus we recognize that the attitude of the seers towards their gift depends on their individual character. But the gift of foreseeing is more frequently considered burdensome than taken for granted.

Although we cannot exclude clichés in conceptions and phrases, oppression and force seem to correspond to the actual condition of such cases and give the impression of a spontaneous happening connected with the drive of fulfillment.

The information about the burdensome and compulsive nature of foreseeing as well as information about physical and mental characteristics attributed to the seers bring up the question of personality types. The questionnaires of ADV offer only little information. Literature referring to actual meetings with the seers is especially valuable. In this context, Schmeing's writings are especially worth mentioning. "I was always surprised at the versatility and the original personality of the seers," he states. "They are natural, intelligent people with common sense. It is only the more or less frequent visions that create in them a certain peculiar state of mind. There are healthy and ill ones among them. According to the poetess Annette von Droste, seers have no marks of extravagance. Even extremely sensitive seers are normal and natural persons. They differ from the society they live in neither in intelligence nor in morals, and there are no preferences regarding age or sex, either. They are not expelled from society but esteemed according to their personality although their visions may cause fear and occasional slander. The gift itself has no pathological features whatsoever."

Schmeing succeeded in pointing out that all seers he was acquainted with were "eidetics," that is, persons who see things which do not exist in reality, in a perfectly natural way. No mere imagining but real organic seeing is performed. Certain types of eidetics can be differentiated. There are more eidetics among children and young people than among adults. Eidetic phenomena may give essential impulses to painters and writers during the process of creating. According to Schmeing, second sight of foreseeers also depends on such an actual seeing of pictures, the only difference being the connection with the future.

This relation to the future, the basically parapsychological phenomenon, is the main subject we have to deal with in the second part of our paper, which is concerned with the visions themselves as they are described in reports and legends.

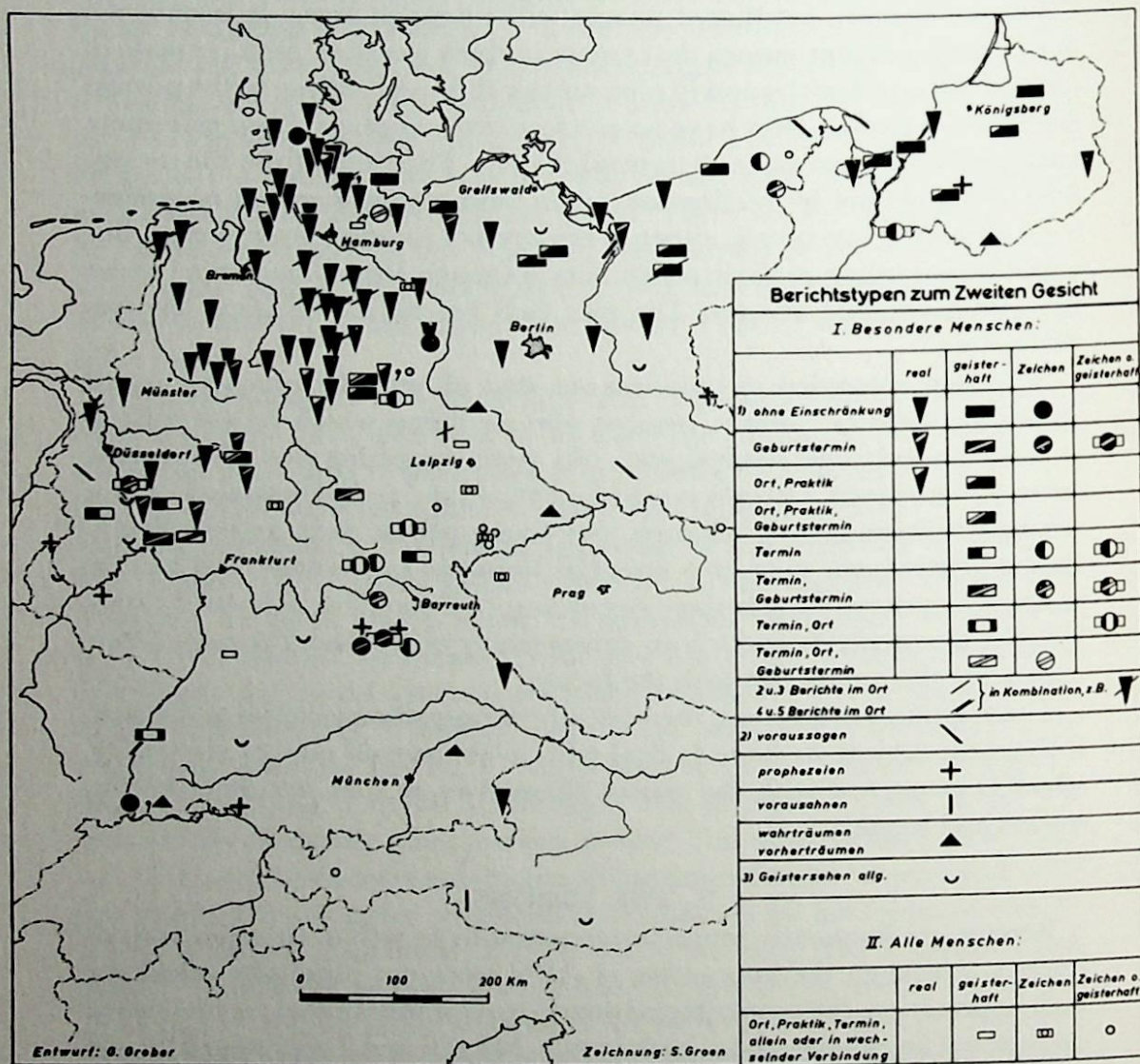
II—THE VISIONS

Reports are frequently found in monographs as well as in collections of legends. Although the guarantees of ADV were not especially asked for such information, they contributed nearly two hundred short reports based on personal knowledge about such events. Maps 6 and 7 represent all such reports made in Germany and Austria. One of the two maps shows the

different kinds of visions, the other one relates their contents. The different kinds of visions (map 6) are classified by various categories.

First category: Future events can be seen by all people or only by persons endowed with a special gift. As ADV question no. 176 only requests the visions of seers, the few data concerning "all people" are thus not interesting for us. The data concerning the seeing of spirits refer to present events and are therefore "wrong."

Second category: Future events are experienced while awake, usually as transsensual visions or in other ways of precognition, such as by having presentiments or by prophecies.



Map 6. Reported types of second sight

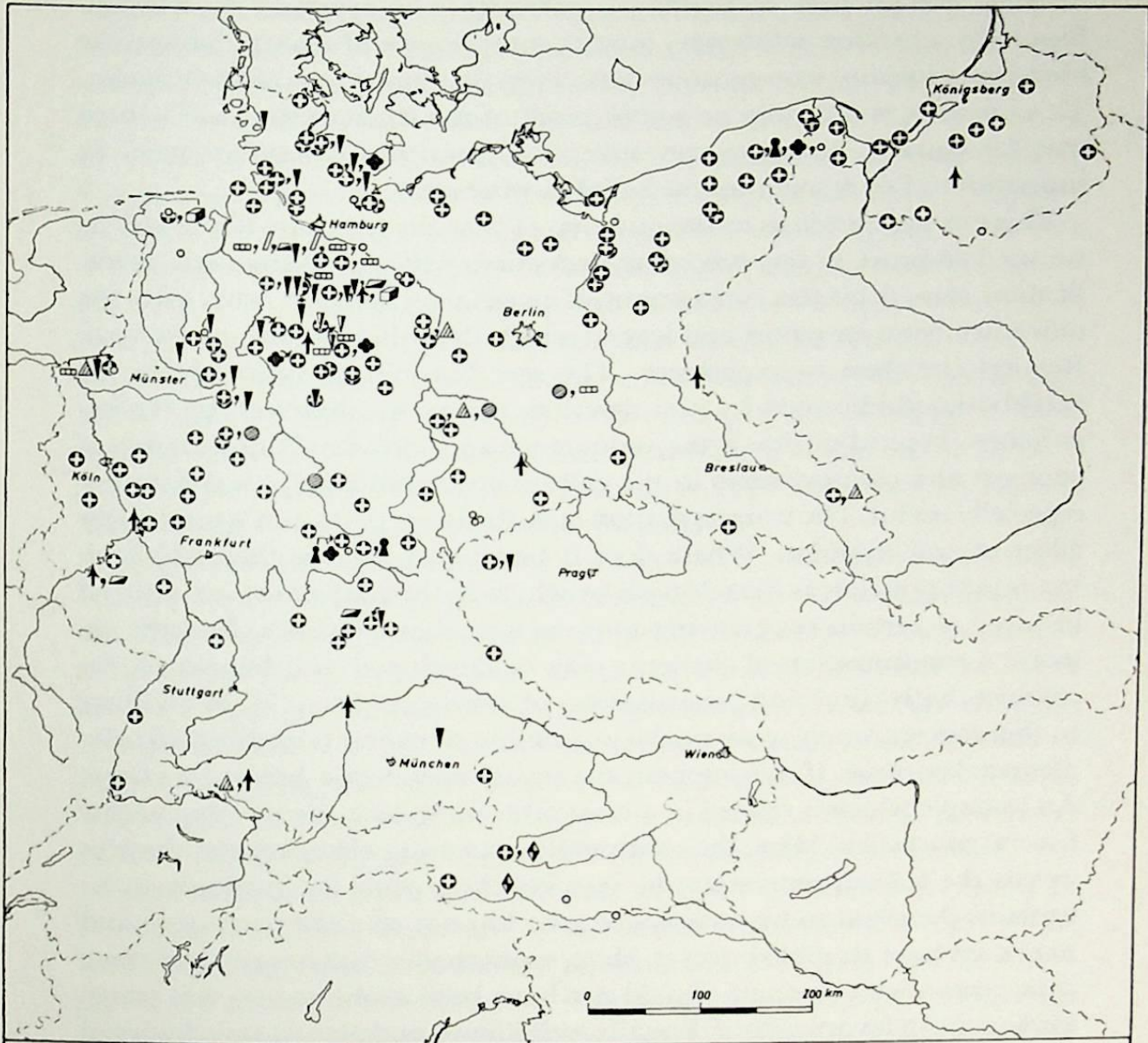
Third category: Future events experienced as a transsensual perception appear in various ways: a) the future event is seen in its whole progress or in its substantial parts exactly as it will come true later on; b) the future event is experienced as an apparition of ghosts: persons who are to die kneel in front of graves, a corpse ascends to heaven; personified death walks toward a house; c) future events are experienced by signs: a fiery coffin is noticed on the roof of a house; lights move over a place where misfortune will occur.

Fourth category: The seers have visions of the sort described above, either under certain conditions or without them. Among these conditions, the least restrictive as far as spontaneous activity is concerned is induced by the date of birth because it permits a spontaneous vision, whereas dependence upon certain dates for visions (Christmas Eve, "Fronfasten," New Year's Eve, St. Matthew's Night) or upon certain places and manipulations (crossways, stopping the clock, looking over one's shoulder) excludes spontaneous foreseeing. Visions of that kind belong to foreseeing provoked on purpose, as is testified in the Swedish *årsgang*. Map 6 shows that foreseeing by signs is especially known in the upper Main area, connected with persons born on "Fronfasten" Sunday. The area of second sight we learned from the names of seers is dominated by realistic and haunted visions. The latter is characteristic of the hinterland of the Baltic, the first for the main region of second sight, that is for Westphalia, Lower Saxony and Schleswig-Holstein; in these areas, sometimes two or more reports are given by the guarantees for one single village. With regard to the parapsychological problem, the spontaneous foreseeing of real events coming true later on, the so-called "Vorgeschichte," is most interesting. Karl Schmeing thinks he found the explanation for this by pointing out an eidetical disposition of the seers. The precognition of the future is only one possible interpretation, which can be added to the visions. Popular belief compensates missing causality by finality, elaborating the interpretation of the future systematically. In 1954, Karl Schmeing pleaded for the following point of view even more to the point: As there is no foreseeing without fulfillment, the foreseer emphasizes events like death, war, fire, which are likely to happen more or less frequently and are thus fulfilled with more or less certainty. This contention of Schmeing has been refuted by well-known scholars. Dealing with Schmeing's book of 1937, Peuckert writes: "I do not dispute that foreseers are eidetical persons. But this fact does not suffice to call second sight an eidetical seeing and to explain it as a physiological event. These explanations do not correspond to the mental background. The eidetical person sees pictures. It is necessary to comprehend the 'film' as a second reality; only in this context, we may speak of second sight. Where there is no knowledge about the second reality, there is no second sight and no 'Vorgeschichte.'" To Schmeing's book of 1954, G. F. Hart-

laub gives the following interpretation: "I am sure that eidetical projection is important for all those phenomena and I think having discovered this fact is an important step forwards. The only question is whether everything is explained by this motion towards the inner experiences of man. The eidetical function only describes the 'how,' the subjective part of the origin of visions, not the 'why,' their special implications. It does not explain why certain persons in a certain place and at a certain time have just these visions and no others. Visions sometimes contain striking truth, the explanation of which is sometimes hard to find or even induced intricately. It is impossible to call every fulfillment of the vision accidental, and the author's statements concerning the 'probability of the improbable' fail to explain the main point."

The study of the reports and legends in the area of second sight makes possible a further remark in order to refute a causal function of eidetics: In the same area, visions depending on eidetical dispositions are combined with auditions, occasionally with smelling and tasting, perceptions which indicate future things as well as seeing, although not as distinctly and effectively. In his *Psychologie des Aberglaubens*, Konrad Zucker pointed to the common basis of these experiences as being presentiments, that is spontaneous, entirely unprovoked and unexpected feelings. These cannot be denied altogether and are therefore not allowed to be associated with superstition. According to his observations, the interpretation of second sight in northern Germany also differs from popular belief in general. As for me, Zucker's interpretation of second sight as a presentiment especially based on vision and his stress of the difference between second sight and superstition correspond to the real core of this phenomenon: Above all, I mention fulfillment of visions convincingly confirmed; the sudden occurrence which makes it inescapable; the symptoms of disposition and the hereditary character of the gift; the natural evidence or the suffering seriousness which characterize the seers according to their psychic disposition, which makes them take their gift for granted.

The summary of the contents of the visions (map 7) shows that the foreseeing of casualties is dominating. The share of mischief amounts to 84%. Names like "buskieken, quadkieken, vorwarnen, Totenseher, Feuerseher, Schwarzseher" show this tendency. The impulses which change presentiments into actual visions are anxiety and worry. This fact corresponds to the share of 82% stated by Bender for affect-negative contents of psi, the main part of which is occupied by telepathy, clairvoyance, and precognition. We must especially mention the intensity of the belief in foreseeing. Henben for instance points out that in Westphalia everything, even a trifle, has its "Vorgeschichte." The fulfillment of visions is considered



Inhalt der Vorgesichte

nach Berichten zu ADV-Frage 176

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------|---|-----------------------------------|
| ⊕ | Tod | ◆ | Hochzeit |
| ! (inverted) | Brand | ↑ | Krieg |
| ▬ (with cross-ticks) | Eisenbahn | △ | Unglücksfälle |
| ▬ (with diagonal lines) | Auto | ◇ | Schicksal der Seele nach dem Tode |
| ⊙ | Geburt | ● | Sonstiges |
| ⊕ | Bauten | ○ | Zukünftiges allgemein |
| ∥ | Straßen | | |

Map 7. Content of predictions

to be so certain that ecclesiastical intercession is necessary to avert it. Especially when fire is foreseen, many conceptions and manipulations like transformation into trees or stones have been developed to avoid fulfillment. This intensity is certainly no sound proof of the truth of the vision, for it may be equally strong in conceptions of traditional popular belief or superstition; I only mention the belief in witchcraft.

This example leads us to the question of how the true core of the visions we tried to prove in our preceding deductions suffers a change and modification caused by the conceptions of popular belief. We start with the difference between report and legend which the collectors know very well. Reports are close to experience. The seer himself or somebody in his neighborhood informed by him describes the event impressed by the experience. Typical of this is the uniqueness and individual appearance of contents and circumstances in the collections. Autobiographical data are especially useful. The transformation of authentic reports into legends is an effect of oral tradition. Where does it begin and what is the result? An important principle is the selection by which individual marks are omitted in favor of certain re-occurring motives and characteristics. In some regions, a concentration of elements may be developed as it happened, for instance, with "fire" and "construction of a railway" (map 7). In addition to this concentration, a particular regulation of contents and stylistic elements takes place. If this happens the report may nearly become a cliché. An example which is related in almost all collections is the meeting with a funeral procession. Here, the continually appearing elements are: the seer avoids the funeral procession; he watches the passing by in paralysis; he explains the event to his companion who has not seen the procession and may even have stumbled over it. Here, spontaneous experience—and there is no reason why its origin should not have been spontaneous—has transformed into a favorite motif. Equally well-known and almost as widespread are tales of a carpenter hearing the noise of sawing and of creaking planks which showed him that he would soon have to make a coffin. In the Alps, the ringing of bells can be compared with these motifs. If the perceptions are ambiguous, as, for instance, lights or knocking, rattling or other noises, they may grow exuberantly and adopt a great number of meanings: lights, for example, may announce death, building of houses, misfortune, construction of a railway; knocking may announce the falling of coffin planks, new buildings, birth, arrival of the physician (who knocks at the door), and so on.

The development of legends is strongly promoted by the force of fulfillment; the visions are connected with the so-called "Austun," which guarantees close attention to start with. The excitement is increased when

extraordinary things come true or when fulfillment takes place in spite of attempts to prevent it. A funeral procession is seen which deviates from the customary course or it is led by unusual or peculiar horses. All attempts to prevent those irregularities fail. The fulfillment occurs as foreseen. Most likely, additions are made to real visions and occasional inventions favor this pattern. Visions of one's own death are especially effective. There are extremely effective, very widespread and often varied types of legends developed in northern Germany. A farmhand sees a coffin standing on the floor. He cuts a lock off the corpse's hair in order to recognize the person who will die. On the following day, he discovers that he himself misses the lock. He leaves the farm, but his destiny is fulfilled. When visiting the farm a year later, he dies and is laid out on the floor. In this story, an original legendary element, the lock which has been cut off, is the real proof and shows the authenticity of the vision. Proofs like this I found only in legends which describe experiences depending on telepathy.

Sometimes visions and auditions are connected with regional motifs of legends. Divine services of ghosts, for instance, indicate persons who will die. Ghosts haunting a house cause noises of knocking which announce future events. For the motif "the hour has come, but the man has not," well known in the Alps, I found two contaminations with foreseeing. An interesting combination of the motif of the funeral procession and legends of persons haunting after their death is to be found in the collection of Schambach. It runs: Near the village of Edmissen, a funeral procession passes. The person who perceives it will have a casualty in his family.

Summarizing our deductions we may say that spontaneous reports of second sight are fairly frequently accepted and transformed by oral tradition. Map 6 may give some further information. This map may be interpreted as a pattern which shows the transformation from report to legend. From the main area of second sight towards its edges, a change can be observed. Spontaneity is restricted by dates, confinement to certain places, and manipulations. In addition to this result, map 3 shows that just the main area of second sight, where spontaneous reports are most frequent, is free from the connection with dates of birth which are characteristic of foreseeing in other regions. Dates, confinement to certain places, and manipulations are part of the conceptions of popular belief and elements of legendary tradition. The change of reports into legends appears on map 6 as a progress in expansion: the restrictions by traditional conceptions increase with the distance from the main area characterized by spontaneous experiences. This result, which is obtained by interpretation of map 6, however, must be modified. Genuine second sight visions may be experienced according to traditional patterns in the same way legendary events

are influenced by traditional conceptions; the experiences depend upon regional conceptions. The foreseeing of events by signs or in an apparition of ghosts represented in map 7 is certainly less distinct and more ambiguous than the visions reflecting "second reality," but the reports of the guarantees do not permit any doubt about precognition being also traceable in traditional motifs and symbols.

In my preceding deductions, I have tried to reveal the true core of second sight which is of interest to parapsychology. I based my work of dissection on the extension of the phenomena as well as on characteristic marks of the seers, the act of foreseeing and the visions themselves. At the end of my report, I would like to stress the fact that in reality we find a very closely connected combination of true core and traditional conceptions. The intensity of fictive conceptions concerning the obtaining and loss of the gift or legendary elements which stress the necessity of fulfillment may originate in a true core; genuine visions may become manifest in conceptions of ghosts and symbols. Each verbalization sets free a process of change in oral tradition which takes place with the necessity of cultural rules. This state of interlacing between real and fictive conceptions seems to be characteristic not only of the problem discussed but also of the research of paranormal phenomena in general. It makes its efforts both challenging and worth while.

DISCUSSION

HERBERT: I would like to ask two short questions concerning the earlier part of your very interesting paper. Question number 1: In the very comprehensive list you gave of paranormal phenomena in northern Germany, there was one rather odd omission, I thought: the phenomenon of the incubus type. Now, question number 2, which is rather more important really, and that is the very interesting maps you showed of what is called the magic circle. Regarding the magic circle, it was not very clear: Did they include the Baltic countries of Latvia, Estonia, etc.? The reason why I ask—at the Prague Conference in June this year, there was a long paper by Dr. Ilmar Soomere of Estonia relating many hundreds of cases which I've printed recently myself, in Latvia and Estonia, and I'm wondering if this is part of your magic circle.

GROBER-GLÜCK: The first question: omission of incubus type. There is no connection between second sight and incubus type.

HERBERT: In the earlier part of your paper you mentioned a very long list including vampires, etc., and this was the only thing you didn't mention.

GROBER-GLÜCK: Certain qualities are attributed to the seer of second sight and I have said that qualities which appear combined with the seer are combined also with other forms of popular belief, and in this direction I have mentioned vampires, etc. But that is only a comparison and I endeavored to say that these marks belong to popular belief in this point—the seer gets marks of popular belief; he has qualities of popular belief.

HERBERT: I think my second question is really more interesting, the magic circle.

GROBER-GLÜCK: Yes. The expression “magic circle” has been created by Peuckert and is a term that does not mean magic literally. But he has found out that there is a certain region above all in which second sight is known. Second sight—that means seeing real things as they actually happen later on. To this magic circle belong the countries I enumerated. I think I have mentioned Denmark, Scotland, Iceland, parts of Scandinavia, etc.

HERBERT: I just wondered if Estonia and Latvia complete the ring.

GROBER-GLÜCK: I have only referred to Peuckert in this quote.

KREITLER: You mentioned in your paper something that, if confirmed, would be of major psychological importance. You said that it was found that seers are highly eidetic. Now, since full-fledged eidetic capabilities are frequently demonstrated by children but rarely by grownups, your findings would change our views on eidetic capabilities. Therefore I would ask you for information. First, how did they test these eidetic capabilities? Second, did they take in their investigations to distinguish between the so-called eidetic capability, and a strong sense of imagery?

GROBER-GLÜCK: Would you repeat your first question, please?

KREITLER: How did they test for the existence of eidetic qualities?

GROBER-GLÜCK: I referred to the books of Karl Schmeing. He has done extensive and intensive field work in northern Germany. He had heard of second sight in his youth and therefore he intended to seek the truth regarding this phenomenon. He has spoken to many persons who were known to him and who were named to him as seers. He has published these interviews in two books, and in these books he has demonstrated his way of examining these persons in relation to their eidetic qualities. He has made real tests and I only can tell you of these two books. I myself have not done any tests, but I refer to them and I think that in Germany this fact was well known and recognized.

BHARATI: What worries me is that all the density in your magic circle is particularly strong in the area where the researchers came from, and since very few of them knew Latvian and Lithuanian, maybe they didn't get the information that is there.

GROBER-GLÜCK: There is a certain connection. If second sight is combined in an effective way with seeing a real fact, it must make a deep impression on the people living among the seers, a deeper impression than if one had only heard it related. Now, your third question: if there is real fulfillment. Each person who once had such a personal experience is convinced that there is truth in it. For instance, with someone in my family the gift has been confirmed, therefore I tend to believe that there is a true core in this. But I think that you have seen that I am quite conscientious to show where is a true core and where is popular belief. One must distinguish between them, and I am convinced that one must distinguish quite firmly, but I do think there is a true core. That is my opinion.

VAN DE CASTLE: My impression would be that this is an account of the popular belief and I think Dr. Kreitler would like to see, as many of us would, some objective experimental testing of the people selected to see whether this could be confirmed.

SKINNER: In terms of your core, I was interested in the relationship of that core and social stratification on the one hand. You said there was no difference between the experiences of men and women. How about social class? What relation exists between these phenomena and social class? And a more complex question: Does this core represent the little tradition which has persisted in spite of the spread of the major religions? For example, I know there is a distinction in Germany between the Protestant area and the Catholic areas. What does it mean in terms of the spread of these religions or other ideas which might have affected the responses of people to questionnaires? In other words, I'm interested in the sociocultural aspects of these phenomena.

GROBER-GLÜCK: I only can refer to the field work of Schmeing, and he has pointed out that neither sex, age nor profession has any influence on these phenomena. And I may add that there are also Protestants in northern Germany, and, for instance, in Austria where you have the phenomenon of hearing, there are Catholics. There is no influence by the practice of confession.

WALTER: This again is an extremely interesting example of very hard field work by people who worked really very hard in the country. Now recently I was in Hungary and in Poland. Both those are communist

countries. Now in Soviet Russia religion is officially prohibited, but there are a few churches open and young people go who wish to and some old ladies who wish to go, do so, and the Soviet government is against any superstitious belief. But in southern Hungary, I was told by my close friends of people with exactly the sort of ability that you described, second sight—foresight and prophecy. There were cases reported to me by my friends, and I can assure you that in southern Russia and in southern Hungary there were the same reports regarding the same people without reference to profession; most of them were academics; some were just ordinary people in villages. I speak a little Russian, and this was very impressive to me that in that country where there is almost a total prohibition of any superstition, my friend said, "Oh yes, that man there, he sees the future quite frequently." And it's exactly as you say. He has a sort of seizure, a sort of trance state in which he has foreseen sometimes small events, sometimes crucial events, in that region. And that's not very surprising because in that region there is a mixture of religions—Mohammedan and what we call Cossack. One of the forecasts this man made was of a tragedy that happened to a steamer. This man had had a vision of a great steamer foundering in the dock, and a steamer was actually wrecked about three months later. Very rare and unique; he saw this very vividly and he told about it. So that even there, three thousand kilometers away, there are happenings of this type around that region.

VAN DE CASTLE: I'm going to take the chairman's prerogative and treat that as a comment about the universality of second sight.

WEINER: There are so many dream books that have been collected over the centuries in all cultures, it would be interesting some day to try to find whether the content of dreams has any universal kind of significance, and I ask one question along that line. When a dead person known to someone appears in that person's dream, is there a standard kind of interpretive reaction to that?

GROBER-GLÜCK: People have second sight while awake, in their normal state, not in dreams. I have only one such report, a clergyman, who described that he dreamt that the neighboring farm was burning in very high flames. He went to his windows and saw no fire. He told of his dream, and three days later the farm was burned. This report exists, but no other.

VAN DE CASTLE: If I could perhaps comment on the point of dreaming of dead people. My impression would be that in many "primitive" groups, dreaming of dead people would be considered a highly undesirable dream. Usually it means someone is coming from the spirit world to take you back with him. I'm not saying that that's a generalization that will always hold.

In our culture, a dream of a deceased loved one may be a source of solace or comfort in working through some of the grief reaction.

BOSHIER: As regards the southern and eastern people of Africa, it would be a very good omen to dream of a member of one's family who is now deceased.

VAN DE CASTLE: I agree that where there is a great deal of emphasis upon ancestor worship, then the appearance of ancestors in a dream would be desirable.

BOSHIER: Absolutely essential.

VAN DE CASTLE: But without the emphasis upon ancestor worship, it would be less desirable.