

“The false teeth in the cod”: a legend in context

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Cor Stoop, a Dutchman, dropped his false teeth overboard when he became seasick during a North Sea fishing trip in September 1994. About three months later, his upper plate was returned to him by another angler, tackle shop owner Hugo Slammat from Amsterdam. While he was gutting a nineteen-pound cod, Slammat discovered the teeth inside. He showed them to the skipper of the fishing boat and was told that someone had lost his dentures while on the boat a few months earlier. A local newspaper reported the remarkable find. Slammat was interviewed by a local radio station. The news report reached the ear of the first angler, Stoop, who went to see Slammat in Amsterdam. The dentures found in the fish fitted him perfectly. Hence, Cor Stoop was convinced he had got his teeth back.

This serendipitous event appeared to be newsworthy. On Wednesday, 30th November, 1994, the story of the “False-Teeth-in-the-Cod” being returned to their owner hit the news—not only in The Netherlands but world wide!

It is not surprising that the newspapers in the North Holland area, where it all happened, covered the extraordinary news, in some cases on the front page. Three out of the five national Dutch newspapers (*Algemeen Dagblad*, *Trouw* and *De Telegraaf*) printed the story too. The other two national newspapers (*de Volkskrant* and *NRC Handelsblad*) may have suspected something fishy about the story and did not print it. *De Telegraaf*, however, took another attitude: the story was front-page news. The paper printed a photograph in full color, showing a smiling Slammat along with Stoop holding his

recovered dentures in his hand. Another shot of the two men and the false teeth was sold to the international news agency *Associated Press*, which distributed the story to its subscribers all over the world. That Wednesday the photo went around the world, together with a media release headed, "Dentures Found in Cod's Stomach Returned to Dutch Owner."

In Sweden the news item was distributed by the news agency TT (Tidningarnas Telegrambyrå) with the title "Tänderna Tillbaka" ("The Teeth Back").² Several American newspapers printed the story, one of them with the following headline: "Here's a fish story you can truly sink your teeth into." The news was broadcast nationwide by *National Public Radio* in their program, *All Things Considered*.³ The news item is also said (unconfirmed) to have been broadcast on television by the BBC, and by CNN on their program, *Headline News*.

The newsworthiness of the "False-Teeth-in-the-Cod" story seems obvious: it is a tale about a marvelous coincidence. Somehow, it seems, people like to believe these kinds of miracles can happen, and, as such, it was considered a unique story. Although the first news item was presented as a singular event, we have evidence that the "False-Teeth-in-the-Cod" tale had been circulating in The Netherlands since 1990. In a survey of contemporary legends in The Netherlands, conducted by our Department in 1991, a Mr. Hamoen from the town of Bodegraven responded with the following story:

The society of cheesemongers went out fishing at the North Sea for the day. More time was spent in drinking than fishing. Cheesemonger Bas Baars not only became drunk but also seasick. Consequently, he had to vomit. While he was feeding the fish, his false teeth followed the contents of his stomach.

Some time afterwards a huge cod was caught. When returning to the harbor, the anglers started gutting their catch.

Guess what was found in the cod's stomach?

Right, Bas Baars's dentures!

Hamoen remembered he had heard the tale from his brother at his birthday party in November 1990. The brother could not recall where and when he had heard it himself. He thought it could have been at another party.

Perhaps we should add that the Hamoen brothers had good fun recounting the story. The cheesemongers formed a separate, higher social class in the region. They tended to dominate local politics, religious affairs and so forth. According to Hamoen, the family were ordinary people who never socialized with the cheesemongers in the upper strata of local society. Probably for them, the telling and retelling of this story confirmed that the cheesemongers should not think they were way above other people.

Another point of interest is that neither the tellers nor their audience were in the position to check the story with the cheesemongers. The name *Baars* might have been deliberately chosen because it stands for a famous house of cheesemongers ("Baars" literally means "perch"). Unfortunately, because Bas Baars died a couple of years ago, we were unable to confirm the details of the story.

Here we are dealing with a humorous tale, "a play upon form" (Douglas 1975: 96). False teeth do, yet do not belong to a person. They can be separated from their owner, but without them the owner is incomplete. To part unwillingly with one's false teeth, then, goes against what we consider normal. It becomes a joke! Furthermore, in this story an inversion takes place: the object we normally eat *with* is eaten *by* a cod, a fish we, in turn, *eat*. Finally, an object supposedly lost forever, returns.

The "False-Teeth-in-the-Cod" tale has recognizable common motifs in the story, such as eating and being eaten, and an object lost to the waves and recovered, in many cases by means of a fish. The leading motif in the news item—the loss of a valuable object and its return in a fish's stomach—is well known in folktale research, dating back to ancient Greece. Aarne-Thompson's, *The Types of the Folktale* (1964), lists this story as AT736A, and names it after one of the oldest versions: *The Ring of Polycrates*. Tubach's *Index Exemplorum* records this story as exemplum 4102, briefly entitled "Ring in Fish" (1969: 315). In Christiansen's *The Migratory Legend* the story is catalogued as legend number 7050, and described as "Ring thrown into the water and recovered in a fish" (1958: 199-201). Finally, Thompson's *Motif Index* shows that in tales of this type not only do rings happen to return in fish; keys, pins, trinkets,

brooches and even swords can be added to the list (see motifs N211.1 to N211.1.5).

In a study on the folktale motif of the ring in the fish, Johannes Künzig adds two other objects of value, namely, pearls and diamonds (1972: 68-69),⁴ noting that in fairy tales it is, most of the time, a grateful fish that returns a lost ring or key to the hero or heroine (68-69). In legends, however, the "Ring-in-Fish" motif is often connected with some kind of divine judgement. In *The Ring of Polycrates* by Herod (c.484 to c.425 BC), for instance, King Polycrates throws a precious ring into the sea as a sacrifice to the gods. By making this gesture, Polycrates hopes his good fortune will last. Soon, however, a fish is brought to him. The ring is found inside the fish, meaning that his sacrifice has not been accepted by the gods. Misfortune then falls upon Polycrates.

In the Arab and Jewish traditions the loss of the ring often serves as a divine punishment, whereas the return of the ring in the fish indicates divine remission has been obtained. Well known is *The Magic Ring of Salomon* tale which is supposed to have led to similar legends in medieval Western Europe. In these legends it is often a saint who throws the key to his penitential fetters into the water. The return of the key to the saint in the stomach of a fish is considered a sign from God that his penance is over.

In The Netherlands another version of this story, *Het vrouwtje van Stavoren* (The Woman of Stavoren),⁵ is well known. The following is a brief account of the legend:

A rich female merchant living in the prospering Dutch seaport town of Stavoren sends out her shipmaster on a journey to obtain the most precious thing in the world for her. Since no man can live without grain, the shipmaster returns with a load of grain. This is a bitter disappointment to the rich woman of Stavoren. She asks the shipmaster on which board the grain was loaded. When this turns out to be on larboard, the woman orders to throw the load into sea over starboard. A beggar warns the woman she is not to waste this precious food: she might be poor and hungry one day herself! Hereupon the haughty woman takes a golden ring from her finger. She throws it into the sea and says: "Sooner will I recover this ring than I will become poor." Then the load of grain is thrown overboard. A few days later there is fish (cod or haddock) on the

menu. To the utter amazement of the woman of Stavoren, her golden ring comes out of the fish when cut open. Soon the woman is reduced to poverty: she loses her fleet and her worldly possessions. The seaport of Stavoren silts up and year after year empty grain grows out of the water.

It is obvious that the woman has been punished for her pride. The tale dates back to the late Middle Ages and explains the decline of Stavoren. The "Ring-in-the-Fish" motif, however, was introduced around 1800. It has been argued that Schiller's poem *Der Ring des Polycrates*, composed in 1797, might have been the source, but the tales differ on a crucial point.⁶ Although both the woman of Stavoren and King Polycrates arouse divine wrath, Polycrates *sacrificed* a ring to the gods. The woman of Stavoren did exactly the opposite: she threw the ring into the water in order to *defy* God. This motif appearing in the Dutch tale may well have its origin in Scandinavian oral tradition, as Christiansen's volume on migratory legends attests.

In all these tales, the loss of a valuable and personal object is *intentional* and contains an explicit message. Although it is *unintentional* in the contemporary "False-Teeth-in-the-Cod" story, a valuable and personal object returns in a similar way. Neither a grateful fish nor a divine judgement emerges from the contemporary tales. If there is such a thing as a moral, it might be that a (profane) miracle sometimes does occur.

But did the wondrous coincidence really take place as presented in the story under consideration here? Not really. After a fortnight, a third angler, taxi driver Roel Pool from Amsterdam, got in touch with the media. He admitted to putting his wife's (Janet) spare dentures in the cod when Slammat was not paying attention. In the meantime, Stoop had found out from his dentist that the false teeth were, indeed, not his.

What we have here, then, is not a serendipitous miracle but a practical joke! Pool and his friend, Klaas Reinders, are both taxi drivers in Amsterdam, where competition is fierce, and the working pressure is extremely high. Moreover, it is a risky profession. The taxi drivers in the capital city very much depend on their wits. They, however, also have a group solidarity of their own, where practical jokes and tall tales are part and parcel of their lore. As a kind of

personal testing, taxi drivers must not be too gullible, but they have to be able to take a joke. For example, the man who pulled up in front of the Hilton Hotel and opened the trunk of his cab to lift his first-rate-customers' suitcases into it. He found the back of the car already filled up with dirty and discarded boxes from the vegetable market, put in there by his dear colleagues. Pool and Reinders cannot get enough of such practical jokes; it is one of their favorite diversions.

Another favorite diversion is fishing. Pool frequently goes out fishing in the North Sea when he needs a real break, taking with him heaps of meat balls and chicken wings—food to be shared with men he might have never seen before. Pool and Reinders went with a day's fishing trip organized by Slammat, the man who caught the cod. Pool was upset because that week he had had some nasty experiences. The fishing trip would be his way to get rid of his worries for a little while. Pool and Reinders had decided that somehow, on this outing, they would pull a joke. Early in the morning, while brushing his teeth, Pool saw his wife's first dental plate—kept as a memento—in the cupboard. He took it with him. Later on, Reinders and Pool got the idea to put Janet's false teeth in the biggest catch of the day.

For Slammat, the fishing had gone well that day. He had landed plenty of fish. His photograph was taken holding a nineteen-pound cod, the biggest catch of the day. While Slammat was away for a while, Pool and Reinders took the opportunity to carry out their plans. Somewhat later, while gutting the cod, Slammat made his remarkable find.

When Pool and Reinders heard on the radio and read in the newspapers that the dentures found in a cod's stomach had been returned to Cor Stoop, they were flabbergasted! They realized that the dentures in question were Janet's and not those lost by Stoop. Janet Pool knew those false teeth were hers. She grew angry and pressed her husband to get the teeth back. Roel Pool, however, feared he would be sued if he revealed the truth. Therefore he kept silent.

On the Friday following the media upheaval, Pool went out fishing on the fishing boat, *Hendrik Karssen*, again. He wanted to discuss the matter in person with the skipper, André Bakker, in order to get some peace of mind. After they had duped Slammat, Pool and Reinders had informed Bakker of the prank. We learned that the

skipper was a man fond of jokes, too, and had appreciated the present one. While he knew it was a hoax, he did not want to spoil the practical joke by telling the media of their deception.

Bakker said he had received numerous phone calls from journalists trying to verify the story. He had also received a call from Slammat informing him that a German television crew intended to produce a documentary on the remarkable event of the dentures found in a cod's stomach, starring Slammat. Slammat suggested to Bakker that if the documentary were to be made aboard the *Hendrik Karssen*, the exposure would create immense publicity for Bakker's enterprise. German anglers had already begun to find their way to his boat, and more were to come! The skipper showed little reaction to this turn of events.

Roel Pool found out about the intended German documentary from the skipper. Pool related to us how his stomach turned when he witnessed the consequences of the media publicity of the "False-Teeth-in-the-Cod" tale aboard the *Hendrik Karssen*.

An extremely tragic shipping disaster had taken place the previous June. The Scandinavian ferryboat *Estonia* capsized and sank, and the bodies of over 600 passengers, the majority of the victims, had to be left at the bottom of the sea. This fact, coupled with the knowledge that cod have been reputed to eat away the flesh of drowned humans, much as they eat the small fish they find at shipwrecks, led to Pool's gruesome discovery after the publicity.

Pool's heart skipped a beat while on board the *Hendrik Karssen* because he saw the amateur fishermen, lifting their rods and calling out "Estonia!" Also, upon landing their fish, the fishermen did not take the trouble to kill the cod with a stick, but immediately slit them open with knives. Pool realized that what they were doing was actually digging for treasure—inspired by the story of the false teeth found in a cod's stomach! Well, if dentures had been swallowed, who knows. . . ? Roel Pool thought it was sickening and morbid. The author of the practical joke decided, then and there, he and his friend had to intervene.

It was actually Pool's friend Reinders who rang the journalist, Edwin van den Berg, from Radio Noord-Holland, who had brought Slammat and Stoop together. Reinders told him that he and Pool had

put the false teeth in the cod, and now they were afraid that things were getting out of hand. Moreover, Janet Pool still wanted her dentures back.

The radio journalist was eager to report the practical joke, but first had to check their story. He asked Stoop to check that the false teeth were really his. Reinders did not wait for Van den Berg to get all the details. Instead he contacted another journalist, Eric de Jager, who was quick to find out from Stoop that the dentist had *just* confirmed the false teeth belonged to someone else. As a result, de Jager's news report was printed first by a set of three local newspapers—the *Leidsch Dagblad*, the *IJmuider Courant*, and the *Haarlems Dagblad*.

The national Dutch media were not at all keen on retracting the initial story. None of the national newspapers that published the story earlier printed corrections. Apparently, the national press feared that printing a retraction would bring their credibility into question.

The national newspapers that ignored the first story, ignored the second one, too. The local media in the North Holland area, however, felt compelled to report that the story was a hoax; the events happened too nearby to ignore. On December 13th, the local newspapers provided a full explanation of the events. In addition, practical joker Roel Pool was interviewed by both local and national radio. A weekly tabloid, *Privé*, dealt with the practical joke on December 30th. Along with a summary of the story, a color photo was published showing Reinders, Roel, and Janet Pool, the latter holding a cod and a dental plate.

A journalist from another local paper, the *Noordhollands Dagblad*, presented the hoax from a humorous angle, possibly to distract the readers from the fact that he was trying to retract the first story. He tried to make the story hilarious by claiming that not only did Pool fool Slammat by putting the dentures in the cod, but that in his turn Stoop fooled Pool again by putting the false teeth in his mouth and maintaining that they fit. This way, the article reads more like another funny news report than as a retraction. One consolation for the media is that it was not just the Dutch reporters who fell for the story, like the headline in *Privé* stressed: "Buffoons Fool World Press."

The revelation of the hoax went around the world again by means of a revised media release from Associated Press. In the United States, *National Public Radio* aired another story on December 13th on the program "All Things Considered" which re-examined the original story. Similarly, the St. John's, Newfoundland *Evening Telegram* published a revised news item on December 17th, the headline reading "Cod Still Good for a Laugh."⁷

Returning to the locale of the story once more, Hugo Slammat was not amused by the admissions of the local pranksters. People walked into his tackle shop, he told us, saying he was a liar. He feared that the whole affair would have dire consequences for his business. Slammat considered the "False-Teeth-in-the-Cod" tale, "Part Two: The Retraction," a public humiliation. His perception was that he had been portrayed as a crook.

André Bakker, the skipper of the fishing boat, felt that Slammat was overreacting, and that it just made things worse if he could not take a joke. Slammat was so angry that he banned the practical jokers from taking part in the fishing trips he organized, ever again. Slammat, apparently, even considered taking legal action.

In a way, Cor Stoop became a victim of the practical joke, too. For about a fortnight, he had believed that Janet Pool's false teeth were his. When he found out this was not the case, he soon was regarded as a somewhat tragi-comic figure. At work, so he told us, his colleagues teased him. He quickly silenced them by saying he had received one hundred thousand guilders for the story. In the media, Stoop had at first stressed that the return of his dentures in a cod's stomach was not a mere coincidence; somehow it was meant to be. He had gone out fishing to celebrate the anniversary of his daughter's marriage, and he got the false teeth back on the anniversary of his own marriage. Stoop and Slammat had gone out fishing with the same boat, and the false teeth were lost and retrieved at the same spot! Although the story was hard to believe, it appeared to be true: so many coincidences seem, in this case, to have led people to the belief it *could not* be a mere coincidence.

Once it became clear Stoop had the wrong teeth, he sent them to Slammat so they could be returned to the rightful owner. As far as we know, the aftermath has not been published or broadcast by the

media. We do not, however, want to keep you in suspense about the "False-Teeth-in-the-Cod" tale, *Part Three*.

Slamat did not return the false teeth to Janet Pool. "If they think they can pull a joke at my expense," he said, "I know another one." He went to the Amsterdam harbor. There he took a ferryboat where, in the middle of the water, he threw Janet Pool's dentures overboard. "They're lying at the bottom now," he told us smiling. For Slamat, it was his way to get even with the practical jokers. Needless to say, this practical joke, in turn, alludes to the plot of another contemporary legend popular in The Netherlands, Belgium, and Northern Germany. For comparison, the tale might be called the "False-Teeth-on-the-Fishing-Line."

A man takes a fishing trip on the North Sea with some friends. After a while he becomes seasick. In the process of vomiting his false teeth drop into the sea. One of his friends feels sorry for him and thinks of a way to cheer him up. When the unfortunate man isn't paying attention, his friend takes his own false teeth out and ties them at the end of his fishing line. Some time later the friend exclaims: "What do you know? I've captured your dentures!" The unfortunate man takes the false teeth off the hook, puts them in his mouth, takes them out again and throws them overboard, saying: "Those aren't mine! They don't fit at all!"

During our research we have come across this modern legend more than a dozen times. Versions of the "False-Teeth-on-the-Fishing-Line" have been published by five tale collectors (Poortinga 1979: 419 (nr.459, "It keunstgebit"); Portnoy 1992: 132 (nr.99, "De gelukkige vinder"); Burger 1993: 91-92 ("Het kunstgebit"); Top 1990a: 276; Top 1990b: 5; Brednich 1991: 128 (nr.98, "Zahnlos")). Somewhat deviant versions, originating from Australia, have been published by Brednich (1991: 128-129), Bishop (1988: 78-79), Scott (1985: 235-236) and Brunvand (1986: 87). More importantly, we have heard this particular story several times when we interviewed the people involved in the case of the "False-Teeth-in-the-Cod." Slamat maintained that the "False-Teeth-on-the-Fishing-Line" story was true, and that his friend, Police Detective Bisschops, had witnessed the events—no better authority than a policeman living just around the corner! When asked, Bisschops confirmed he told the "False-Teeth-

on-the-Fishing-Line" story to Slamat, but he did not wish to maintain he was an eye-witness. When we asked the skipper André Bakker, of the *Hendrik Karssen* fishing boat, what possibly could have inspired Roel Pool to use false teeth for a practical joke, he told the "False-Teeth-on-the-Fishing-Line" story. Furthermore, shortly after *Radio Noord-Holland* broadcast the "False-Teeth-in-the-Cod" story, other people responded by telling the "true" story of the "False-Teeth-on-the-Fishing-Line" over the radio. Finally, we went to practical joker Pool and were told that years ago he, together with a fishing mate called Fred, planned to tie a dental plate to his fishing-line to pull a joke on a friend. Neither Fred nor Pool, however, ever dared to risk their expensive false teeth. Then, the morning in November 1994, Pool decided to take his wife's spare dentures along to use them for the practical joke. Unfortunately, however, these dentures finally disappeared in the water like they did in the legend.

The similarities between the actual events and the "False-Teeth-on-the-Fishing-Line" story are clear. Three crucial plot elements correspond. First: an angler becomes seasick and loses his false teeth to the waves forever. Second: another angler uses other dentures to perform a practical joke. Third: the unfortunate first angler thinks the other dentures are his, but as they do not fit, the other false teeth end up in the water, too. On the one hand, the course of events had never been intended this way; in part fiction and fact coincided accidentally. On the other hand, the resemblance between tale and reality is not a mere coincidence. As a matter of fact, Pool's practical joke was inspired by an existing tale, the same tale which inspired Slamat to throw Janet Pool's dentures overboard.

As we have seen in this story, legends or jokes can lead to ostensive actions. The acting out of the events described in the story, in turn, revitalizes their re-telling. In the present case, the media played a role in the accomplishment of Pool's practical joke, and they contributed to the distribution of the tales.

To put the legend of the "False-Teeth-in-the-Cod" into context we also need to consider the world of amateur fisher-persons, although space does not permit us to discuss the matter in full.⁸ Anglers in The Netherlands consider sea fishing a manly sport. We could as well speak about fishermen because women are an anomaly.

Whenever a woman takes part in a trip, there will be joking at her expense. Also, conditions at sea can be rough. Those who become seasick very likely become the victims of jokes, also.

The anglers regard the fishing trip as a break from everyday life. They say they "forget everything else." They want to have a good time. Although they have very little in common as far as their social backgrounds are concerned, on the fishing boat no such distinctions ought to be made. Their clothing and equipment, their conduct, their fisherman's vocabulary, and their yarns set them apart from the rest of society as a distinct group. The fishing trip can be seen both as ritual drama and as play. Like many games, fishing involves unpredictability, risk-taking, skills, and luck. A key element is that players stand an equal chance. Competitiveness is part of the game but never at the cost of solidarity. After all, it's only a game.

In addition, these trips can be seen as rites of passage (Van Genneep 1960). In a territorial sense, the boat disembarks and steams up onto the fishing waters, where it floats around; whereafter, it returns to the harbor. When heading out, the anglers often sit in the boat's galley together. They share each other's company, drink, talk and sometimes make bets. In this rite of separation their normal social status no longer counts. They are, literally and figuratively, all in the same boat. At their destination they go outside and stand in line along the rail holding their rods and facing the sea. The skipper signals by the sound of a whistle when to start and when to interrupt the fishing. A two-fold blow of the whistle marks the end of the fishing for the day.

After this liminal phase in the activities has concluded, it is time to start cleaning the catch. The successful anglers, at this point, gain prestige among their fellows; the ones who did not catch fish are given some by the others. In this rite of incorporation, they will not be denied the status of fisherman, for what a fisherman does is catch fish. Then they join together in the galley once more. On the one hand, there exists ongoing competition in drinking and telling tall tales, while at the same time, the exchanges promote solidarity. Solidarity is highly valued. For example, the angler who has the biggest catch of the day will win the bet, but he/she has to spend the money on a round of drinks, unifying all in a shared, social experience.

Joking is important in creating the right atmosphere, and it relieves tensions. The anglers tend to be fond of jokes—both verbal jokes and practical jokes. As said before, members of the group must be able to take a joke. Usually people who stand out one way or another—women, the seasick, the "winners"—eventually become the victims of practical jokes. It appears they have to be tested in order to demonstrate they are the same as anyone else aboard. Slamet, in the story under examination, stood out as having had a unique experience; therefore he became the victim of a practical joke by his fishing friends.

Yet another fishy sequel to the story. . . .

On New Year's Eve, Cor Stoop was invited to the studio of *Radio Noord-Holland* to tell the whole story one more time. Our tragi-comic figure this time exploited the genre of the tall tale as he exaggerated the narrative by saying that the day he lost his false teeth the fishing boat approached the British coast, a heavy storm was raging, and the dentures flew some twelve feet up into the air. Stoop bragged that he was going to write a book about the whole affair, to be published in the year 2000, the year of his retirement. On New Year's Eve the tale was proclaimed the best story of 1994.

Many people we asked remember the story of the "False-Teeth-in-the-Cod," but few of them are aware that it was a hoax. Whether this story will truly turn into a new "urban" or "contemporary legend" it is too early to tell. We believe, however, that the tale certainly has the potential to become such a "legend," and one of the few cheerful ones, by the way (Top 1990a: 276 and 1990b: 5). It has been said that nothing beats a good story, even if it is not true (Brunvand 1993: 109)—especially in the case of fisherman's yarns.

The story of the "False-Teeth-in-the-Cod" is, no matter which version one looks at, rooted in existing folktales which, in one way or another, influenced the interpretations or the acts of the people involved. The "False-Teeth-in-the-Cod" is an example of the interaction between folk narrative and socio-cultural behavior, between folklore and practical joking. In this situation, a tale generated people's behavior, and their behavior re-generated a tale. In fact, the distinction between narrative and practical joke is made by

outsiders only. As such, we hope that in our recounting we have made clear that the tale fitted in with a regional tradition of both folklore and folklife.

Appendix: The "False-teeth-in-the-cod" in the media

False Teeth Found in Cod

Courant Nieuws van de dag. "Man Vist Kunstgebit uit Vis." 29 November 1994.

Broadcast *Radio Noord-Holland*, Margreet Reintjes, Edwin van den Berg. 29 November 1994.

False Teeth Returned to Owner

Algemeen Dagblad. "Hongerige Kabeljauw Redt Kunstgebit." 30 November 1994:3.

Courant Nieuws van de dag. "Tanden uit Kabeljauw weer bij Eigenaar." 30 November 1994:3.

De Telegraaf. "Kabeljauw Geeft Kunstgebit Terug." 30 November 1994:1 and 6.

Trouw. "Vis Brengt Gezonken Gebit weer Thuis." 30 November 1994:1.

Haagse Courant. "Kunstgebit Gaat op Avontuur." 30 November 1994:3.

Noordhollands Dagblad, Dagblad Kennemerland. "Uitgebraakt Kunstgebit in Maag van Kabeljauw." 30 November 1994:1.

Haarlems Dagblad (Leidsch Dagblad, IJmuider Courant). "Gebit na Zeereis weer bij Baasje." 30 November 1994.

Dagblad voor Noord-Limburg. "Kunstgebit op Avontuur." 30 November 1994.

Vrij Nederland. "De Ban van de Ring." 10 December 1994.

AP-news release. "Dentures Found in Cod's Stomach Returned to Dutch Owner." 30 November 1994.

Het Laatste Nieuws, (Belgium). "Vis met Kunstgebit." 3 December 1994. [Unidentified American newspaper.] "Here's a Fish Story You can Truly Sink your Teeth into."

The Independent on Sunday (UK). 8 December 1994 (?).

TT-news release (*Tidningarnas Telegrambyrå*, Sweden). "Tänderna Tillbaka." 30 November 1994.

Broadcast: "All Things Considered." *National Public Radio* (USA). 30 November 1994.

Television: item on CNN "Headline News" (?)

Rectification: Practical Joke

Haarlems Dagblad (IJmuider Courant). "Kunstgebit van Kabeljauw is eigenlijk van Mevrouw Pool; Vissersgrap dankzij Media in Recordtijd de Wereld rond." 13 December 1994:13.

Leids Dagblad. "Kunstgebit in Kabeljauw Blijkt Grap." 13 December 1994.

Noordhollands Dagblad, Dagblad Kennemerland. "Kunstgebit in Vis: Grappenmakers 'Gefopt'." 13 December 1994:1.

Nieuwsblad van het Noorden. "Wereldnieuws over Kunstgebit Blijkt Grap." 13 December 1994.

Privé. "Lolbroeken Namen Wereldpers bij de Neus." 31 December 1994:49.

Fortean Times. "Cod's Teeth." April-May 1995:45.

Broadcast *Radio Noord-Holland*. 13 December 1994, 30 December 1994.

Broadcast *AVRO*, Radio 2.

Broadcast *Veronica Nieuwsradio*.

AP-news release. 13 December 1994.

Evening Telegram (St. Johns, Newfoundland, Canada). "Cod Still Good for a Laugh." 17 December 1994.

Broadcast: "All Things Considered." *National Public Radio* (USA). 13 December 1994.

Notes

¹ This is a slightly altered version of the paper presented to the thirteenth Annual Conference of the International Society for Contemporary Legend Research, San Antonio, Texas, 23-27 May 1995. A more elaborate version is published in Dutch; see Meder & Venbrux 1996 [cf. note 8].

² Sent to us by Bengt af Klintberg, 17 July 1995.

³ Art Silverman, senior producer of National Public Radio, wrote to us: "National Public Radio originates from studios in Washington and distributes by satellite programs to about 500 radio stations in all fifty states of the United States of America. We are also heard in Puerto Rico, Guam, and on some stations of Armed Forces Radio around the world. We can be heard on commercial satellite in Europe now, too. Our original cod broadcast was heard at five pm Eastern Standard Time on Wednesday, November 30." (30 January 1995)

⁴ For additional "Ring-in-Fish" stories, see also Jones 1968 (1890), pp. 92-100, 436-441, 503, 510-516.

⁵ See Grimm 1816, pp. 201-204, Kuhn & Schwartz 1848, p. 303, Franke 1932, pp. 282-301, Erfurth 1938, Folkertsma 1967, pp. 172-174, and De Haan 1973, pp. 16-20.

⁶ De Haan 1950, p. 80, De Haan 1972, p. 288; Petersen & Beißner 1943, pp. 363-365.

⁷ Sent to us by Philip Hiscock (Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada).

⁸ See Meder and Venbrux 1996 for a further analysis.

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