PART III

BOOKS IN CLERICAL INVENTORIES IN
JARLSBERG, NEDENES, HEDMARK & ØSTERDALEN,
TROMS & SENJA AND SALTEN
CHAPTER SIX

CLERICAL INVENTORIES IN JARLSBERG
1704–1738 AND NEDENES 1693–1740

This chapter is devoted to the examination of book collections registered in the clerical probate records covering the district of Nedenes and the county of Jarlsberg. The southern Norwegian and coastal district of Nedenes had no major city centre, and was devoid of higher institutions of learning, such as Latin schools. It might thus count as rural. The county of Jarlsberg, on the other hand, was situated south west of Christiania, and covered the city of Tønsberg and surrounding areas. Although Tønsberg was smaller in size than cities like Trondheim and Bergen, it was provided with a Latin school. The county was also a place of fervent Pietism particularly around 1720–1730, much due to the active work of the parson Thomas Gerner and his curates.¹

The Jarlsberg clerical probate records 1704–1738 comprise a total of forty-two different inventories.² Of these, only twenty-three contain detailed descriptions of book collections. Approximately 2,400 titles are listed across the different collections, which makes an average of around 100 books per household. The number of books recorded in the Jarlsberg probate records might therefore be evaluated as relatively important, although it is lower than the average recorded in Trondheim. However, the relatively important number of books listed in Jarlsberg probate records is due to the presence of five major book collectors, all of whom were parsons, namely Jens Kraft (493 books), Niels Kraft (275 books), Gerhard Winge (225 books), Hans Claussen (257 books) and Nicolai Mancin (211 books).

In the first section of this chapter, I shall classify Jarlsberg book collections recorded between 1704 and 1722, collections which were owned by a clerical class that presumably received its education in the period 1680–1710. In the second part of the chapter, I shall analyse book collections listed in the Jarlsberg clerical probate records in the period

² See Jarlsberg clerical probate records 1704–1738, microfilm number NOR10 38.