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Reviews

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In *Journal of Northern Studies* 10, 2, 2016, pp. 161–162, the first volume in this edition was dealt with, a visible result of the activities in the research project “Heliga Birgittas texter på fornsvenska” [‘St. Bridget’s texts in Old Swedish’]. The aim of the project is to publish all of St. Bridget’s writings in Old Swedish in an edition meeting a modern philological standard. In the first volume, it was reminded that according to tradition, St. Bridget dictated her revelations in Swedish, whereupon they were translated into Latin. However, St. Bridget was probably also able to work out drafts herself. When the Latin text had been edited, the revelations began to be translated into the vernaculars, including Old Swedish. Now volumes 2 and 3 in the series have been published. The introductions to the two volumes now published differ slightly; personally, I would have preferred it if volume 2 had had the more detailed introduction of volume 3, since that would have made both volumes stand on their own feet. Volume 2 contains 30 chapters in Latin in the so called Alfonsine edition, but in the Old Swedish main translation presented here there are only 22. The eight chapters left out are about knights and the chivalrous culture. All but one of these chapters are wholly or partially found in the Bridgettine Norse manuscript E 8902, and have been included as appendices to the current edition. The teachings in the revelations in this volume are usually given by Christ, but also by the Holy Virgin Mary and (once) by John the Baptist. There seem to be no uniform themes; the revelations are about true and false wisdom and about the relation between the body and the soul, and there are texts about Jews and heathens and different social groups. Just as in the first volume, one finds here an attractive and well-developed figurative language, for example in the bee allegory (Ch. 19) or in the descriptions

of the different houses with various vessels and tools found in a number of chapters (24–27). All the revelations in volume 2 had been recorded before St. Bridget went to Rome in 1349. The revelations in volume 3 were recorded both during her life in Sweden and soon after her arrival in Rome. The focus here is on moral education for the clergy, chiefly bishops—one might call it a bishops’ mirror. In many cases, it is possible to identify the church leaders mentioned by St. Bridget. In the first three chapters, we probably find Bishop Thomas in Växjö, and in Chs. 6–9, the Milanese Archbishop Giovanni Visconti is certainly mentioned. When St. Bridget complains about the poor spiritual condition in Rome by the time of her first speech there, she mentions two older popes, who for very good reasons are usually believed to be Celestinus V and Bonifatius VIII. In Ch. 3 she speaks vividly of a cowardly king, who is probably Magnus Eriksson. In the reading of the revelations, one finds a sharply observant person, and the description is sometimes drastic. The publication of these medieval texts is progressing rapidly and I look forward eagerly to forthcoming volumes.

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Gulbrand Alhaug & Aud-Kirsti Pedersen (eds.),
Namn i det fleirspråklege Noreg, Oslo: Novus Forlag
2015, ISBN 978-82-7099-775-6, 363 pp.

This volume consists of thirteen articles, about half of which deal with the conditions in Northern Norway, where, besides Norwegian, the Sami and Kvenian (Finnish) languages also exist. The other articles in the book are about conditions in the Norwegian Finnskogarna (‘Forests of the Finns’), naming among the Romany people, personal names and immigration, foreign influence on Christian (baptismal) names in Norway and name signs for deaf people. In the introductory chapter, Aud-Kirsti Pedersen describes the Norwegian place-names in multilin-

gual areas, showing that the Finnish and Sami names can be taken over in different forms: a Northern Sami *Ruohtovárri* is rendered in Norwegian as *Råttovarre*, a Northern Sami *Heastagurra* as Norwegian *Hesteskaret* (*heasta* ‘horse’; *gurra* ‘valley, cleft’) etcetera. The different patterns are exemplified and discussed. The Sami place-names in Norway are then comprehensively elucidated by Kaisa Rautio Helander in a many-sided article which shows how the perspectives in Sami and Norwegian names can differ. Irene Andreasson then describes the Kvenian place-names in the Norwegian area, the majority of which have come about in the last few centuries. The names in the Forests of the Finns in Norway are elucidated by Tuula Eskeland. We are reminded here that the Forest Finns in Norway now have the status of a national minority. In the section on personal names, Håkan Rydving gives an account of the personal names among the Sami, and says, among other things, that with a growing awareness of naming traditions, Sami name forms are now becoming increasingly common in writing, too. The trilingual variation of personal names in Nordreisa in the 1970s is dealt with by Anna-Riitta Lindgren, the family names in the Forests of the Finns by Jan Myhrvold and the encounter between the Finnish and the Norwegian naming systems in an article co-authored by Gulbrand Alhaug and Minna Saarelma. Rolf Theil’s article on the naming custom among the Romany people takes the shape of a presentation of the language in question and contains, for example, an interesting section on the mechanisms behind the name changes observed. On the back of the book there is a map of Southern Norway with some names in Romany: *Trøntusfåron* (= Trondheim), *Kakknifåron* (= Hønefoss), *Salsfåron* (= Halden) etcetera. In her article, Mary Barthelemy gives us an insight into a Romany family’s naming patterns. In an article on immigration and personal names, Guro Reisæter deals with a small part of the rich naming custom that is found in Norway today. Gulbrand Alhaug presents a useful overview of foreign influence on the Norwegian baptismal naming custom from the eighteenth century up to our times. Finally, Odd-Inge Schröder describes the signs for persons and places used in the Norwegian sign language. The latter contribution—which shows a rich variation—opened up an entirely new world to me. The comprehensive book is concluded with a subject index, a toponym index, an index of personal names and an index of terrain words.

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Madeleine Bonow, Magnus Gröntoft, Sofia Gustafsson & Markus Lindberg (eds.), *Biskop Brasks måltider. Svensk mat mellan medeltid och renässans*, Stockholm: Atlantis 2016, ISBN 978-91-7353-828-2, 352 pp.

Hans Brask, during the period of 1513–1527 bishop in the Linköping diocese, was highly educated and had studied at several of the most important contemporary universities. But at the same time he was a practically oriented person who wanted to keep a check on all the activities at the castle, the theological development in the diocese and the governing of the country. Matters concerning the economy of the diocese were recorded in a manuscript marked with Linköping's Diocese Library Kh54, called *Biskop Brasks ekonomibok*. In 2013, in connection with the five-hundredth anniversary of Brask's taking up his duties as a bishop, the initiative was taken to translate those parts of the economy book that deal with food and housekeeping. The translation was done by Hedda Gunneng. Some parts have been translated previously, but here we find a consistently produced, easily accessible text. Here we find the so-called *gårdspraktikan*, a list of dishes served at banquets and a list of different "officials" at the estate in Linköping. These texts give us good insights into late medieval housekeeping and thus they constitute an important source material. It may be added that the text is also valuable for researchers interested in word history. But the ambitions have been higher than merely making the texts available. In connection with a conference in Linköping in 2013, researchers from different disciplines tried to apply their respective subject perspectives on the source text. These lectures are now also included in the volume. Here, the reader gets a picture of the bishop as an employer and a practising Christian, we get insights into the late Middle Ages' trade and contact patterns, the period's technical innovations and other things. Among the contributions one can mention ethnologist Marja Hartola's essay on the Finnish pikes, agricultural historian Janken Myrdal's contribution on the period's cheeses and cheese making practices, and geographer Madeleine Bonow's and ethnobiologist Ingvar Svanberg's co-authored essay on fishponds in the late Middle Ages. One gets a bit closer to the complex person of Hans Brask in historian Per Stobaeus' article on the dietary—which is widened to a more elaborated picture of Brask's role in society—and in the former Linköping bishop Martin Lind's contribution on the theology at the dining table. That meals were part of the ritual life is shown in museum director Markus Lindberg's article. There is some new knowl-

edge to be gained from the manuscript, as shown by agricultural historian Alf Ericsson's article, which documents technical innovations in the nation of the period of which evidence has hitherto been lacking. This report clearly shows the disciplinary width of the authors, and there are also other interesting contributions in the volume. Each article has a detailed literature list and a cohesive name index concludes the book. The late medieval manuscript in question has been made available in an excellent way, and through the different studies, the text has also been placed in a larger context. The well-chosen illustrations may be noted as an extra advantage.

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Lennart Elmevik, *Ortnamnsstudier i urval*, Uppsala: Kungl. Gustav Adolfs akademien för svensk folkkultur 2016 (Acta Academiae Regiae Gustavi Adolphi 140), ISBN 978-91-87403-17-0; ISSN 0065-0897, 471 pp.

In this volume, more than fifty works on place-names by Lennart Elmevik have been gathered. They are essays of high quality produced over many decades and naturally, some of the same problems have been dealt with in various essays over the years. This is no disadvantage; on the contrary, it means that as a reader one finds oneself involved in an interesting discussion, where the positions are gradually made more precise. This is especially evident in the first part of the volume, which deals with the Nordic place-name elements *-lösa*, *-sta(d)*, *(-)tuna* and *-vin*. For a long time, a vivid discussion has been going on about these elements, and in the present volume, one finds that Elmevik is involved in a discussion with Gösta Holm and Per Vikstrand about the meaning of the element *-sta(d)*, and with Gun Widmark as regards *-lösa*, which appears in several places in Elmevik's production. However, since these other scholars' contributions are quite naturally *not* included in the present volume, an introductory text outlining the differences between the scholars' opinions would have been helpful for the reader. The same is true of the group of essays that are gathered under the heading "Till diskussionen av sakrala namn" ['On the discussion of sacral place-names'], where names

such as *Härnevi*, *Friggeråker*, *Disevid*, *Gödåker* and *Luggude härad* are dealt with. Elmevik is quite rightly sceptical about the assumption that these are sacral names and his studies show that in several cases there may be alternative explanations. In this section, too, a guiding introduction would have been of help to the reader, and in addition, Elmevik's scholarly position could have been related to a research tradition represented by names such as Magnus Olsen, Jöran Sahlgren, Elias Wessén and Lars Hellberg. There are numerous etymological studies in Elmevik's production, and they are of course found early on in the first parts. In the third part of the book, the purely etymological studies are brought even more to the fore with a number of interesting studies of names of lakes, rivers and islands. Here there are analyses of the names *Ocke*, *Kvädö*, *Dillö*, *Trosa* and *Rönne å*, Emån's old name **Æmb*, and many other names. The fourth part involves a large number of studies containing "interpretations of a number of different kinds of Nordic toponyms of obscure origin," according to the heading of the section. Here one notes the studies on the Norwegian name *Torghatten*, which has been dealt with in several studies by Elmevik and earlier also by Bengt Hesselman. In one of these essays, Elmevik, presenting valid arguments, criticises the interpretation of *Torghatten* found in Harald Bjorvand & Fredrik Otto Lindeman's etymological dictionary *Våre arveord* (2007). Other studies deal with toponyms such as *Vappa* and *Tierp*, where in the derivation work Elmevik interestingly finds support in appellative material found in *modern* Nordic dialects. In this final part, there are also studies of *Börstil*, *Rappestad*, *Räpplinge*, *Sya*, *Normlösa* and other place-names. This is an important collection of toponymic articles, where many good derivations are accounted for.

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Michael Engelhard, *Ice Bear. The Cultural History of an Arctic Icon*, Seattle: University of Washington Press 2016, ISBN 978-0295999-22-7, 304 pp.

For a long time, part of the international image of Sweden included not just the idea that women were tall and blond but also that wild polar bears roamed the streets of Stockholm. Of course, there were no polar bears in the streets of Stockholm, an odd cliché one might think, but it was taken seriously in countries like the USA. More than anything else, it is evidence of a stereotyped analysis of the world. On the other hand, there have been, and still are, polar bears in captivity even in Scandinavia. In AD 894 King Harald of Norway received two young polar bears as a gift from a Norse settler in Iceland. Haakon IV of Norway sent a polar bear to the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II, who sent it on to Sultan El-Kamil of Damascus in 1234. In the 1250s King Haakon IV also sent a polar bear to Henry III of England. The first polar bears came to Sweden in the seventeenth century. The best-known of them is the polar bear that the young Tsar Peter gave in April 1685 to the likewise young Karl XI, and which was kept chained on Helgeandsholmen, where it was able to dive into the waters of Stockholm and catch its own fish. The polar bear came from Novaya Zemlya and was portrayed by David Klöcker Ehrenstrahl.

For much of the twentieth century the Skansen zoo had polar bears, which regularly had young. The cute polar bear cubs were one of the most popular postcard motifs from Skansen in their day. When changes were made to the way animals were kept a few decades ago, Skansen sold its polar bears, to the great dismay of many, but the bear park Orsa Grönklitt still has polar bears. The most famous polar bear in captivity in its day, however, was little Knut in Berlin Zoo, which became a public favourite and a commercial success in 2006. There were even songs written about it, such as “Knut is cute.”

In our time it is perhaps not primarily the polar bear as something to see in a zoo that makes it such a palpable part of our consciousness. Instead it is the worrying signs of climate change, with the polar ice cap rapidly shrinking, which has made the polar bear, more than any other species, into what we could call, with a typical modern cliché, an Arctic icon. We have seen film clips of polar bears sliding around on melting ice floes. At the same time, the modern tourist industry makes it possible for us to go on trips to Svalbard and Greenland in the hope of seeing polar bears. Interestingly, despite the fact that Greenland is a part of the Nordic community, *nanook*, the Greenlandic name for the polar bear, is

probably the only word from Greenlandic/Kalaallisut that can be expected to have spread to the other Nordic countries. There is no doubt, however, that the polar bear is a charismatic species with a powerful cultural charge for people, both in its own immediate environment and in the world as a whole.

The polar bear is a predator that leads a nomadic life in the Arctic Ocean and on the tundra. The species is actually the only predator that views humans primarily as prey. People in the Arctic have therefore viewed it both as a divine creature and an enemy, but also as a food resource, and in recent years as a strong symbol of the ecological crisis in which we find ourselves. For thousands of years mankind has interacted with the polar bear, as is manifested, for instance, in preserved artefacts. The author of this book, Michael Engelhard, has a degree in anthropology from the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, but he works as a wilderness guide and has taken an interest in the place of the polar bear in human cultural history. The result is a rich volume, illustrated with 170 pictures, 145 of them in colour.

In Engelhard's book we are given a broad survey of the polar bear, predominantly based on cultural zoology. The author traces human interaction with polar bears 10,000 years back in time on the basis of finds from the De Long Islands off the coast of Siberia which provide evidence of meetings with local hunters who killed females in particular. The famous Knut is treated in a separate chapter called "The Life and Death of a Superstar," which shows that the attention he attracted also led to conflicts with organizations like PETA. But the public won. They adored Knut (as I was able to see for myself on a visit to Berlin). People still leave flowers in memory of Knut at a bronze plaque erected as a memorial in the zoo. Like another Jim Morrison, Knut suffered a tragic and premature death, which nevertheless made him immortal. He was losing the cuteness factor the older he grew.

Through early data from Japan via Norse sources to early modern travel accounts and maps, the author illustrates dramatic and peaceful meetings with polar bears through the ages. One chapter is dedicated to the place of the polar bear in the history of zoological science. Interestingly, it was not Linnaeus who gave the polar bear its scientific name. Linnaeus knew of Friedrich Martin's description of it from 1675, but since he never saw a polar bear himself, he regarded it as a white variety of the ordinary brown bear. Instead it was the English explorer Constantine Phipps, 2nd Baron Mulgrave, who in his account in 1774 of an Arctic journey left us the first valid description of the polar bear and gave it its scientific name.

Polar bear hunting is given a chapter of its own. It reminds me of when I was in Nanortalik (a town with three polar bears in its coat of arms) over 15 years ago and interviewed an old east Greenland hunter who was legendary in his community for having shot a very large number of polar bears in his youth, but who now, in his autumn years, passed the time with something as peaceful as doing exquisite beadwork and knitting sweaters for his grandchildren! In Sweden too, the romance of polar bear hunting has left its mark in stories and songs. From my youth I remember Tor Bergner of the Klara Bohemians singing a song about polar bear hunters in Hammerfest. There is a particularly fascinating chapter about polar bears in zoos and circuses. Even Sweden had polar bears in circuses in the 1950s. In the nineteenth century there were polar bears in travelling menageries. The many polar bears around 1900 at the fairground Stockholm's Tivoli, present-day Solliden, were taken over in 1906 by Skansen and laid the foundation for large-scale breeding of the species. Skansen kept polar bears until 1984. Snövit (Snow White), born in 1938 at Skansen, was a polar bear cub that aroused almost the same interest among the public as Knut and was cherished by the press in the same way.

The role of the polar bear in cult and beliefs among the Inuit and other circumpolar peoples is the subject of a chapter. The author also considers the erotic charge of polar bear skins, not least in art. We may remind ourselves that the Swedish national poet Verner von Heidenstam is said to have seduced his much younger wife-to-be, Greta Sjöberg, on a polar bear rug when she was still a teenager. The illustrations in Engelhard's book are exquisite, full of exciting angles and almost all of interest as cultural history. Special praise should go to the cover picture of Adolf Nordholm's "At the North Pole—polka for violin and piano" from 1897, with a fantastic scene of dancing Inuit and polar bears playing instruments. There are plenty of photographs of wild polar bears elsewhere, so I appreciate the way the author has taken pains to find captivating illustrations. The result is an engrossing, wide-ranging presentation of the cultural zoology of what is, after all, an Arctic icon. To give an understanding of mankind's close relationship to other species, we need more books of this kind. Cultural zoology is a genre that advances our knowledge of mankind's complex relations to other species.

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Kåre Hoel, *Bustadnavn i Østfold*, 12. Rødenes og Romskog, Utgitt av Institutt for lingvistiske og nordiske studier, Universitetet i Oslo ved Margit Harsson, Oslo: Novus Forlag 2014, ISBN 978-82-7099-770-1, 267 pp.

The onomastic articles in this volume of *Bustadnavn i Østfold* are structured in the same way as in the previous volumes: the interpretations in *Norske Gaardnavne* (NG), Kåre Hoel's treatment of the area's toponyms and the editor's (Margit Harsson) name studies are accounted for separately without being lumped together. The book starts with the analysis of *Rødenes* (pp. 17 ff.), where the first element is not easy to interpret. Hoel focuses on two possible solutions, where an assumed Old West Norse **róða* with the senses 'stake, pole' and 'conversation' are suggested. Based on the latter sense, he imagines a hypothetical *Róðanes*, which might have been an old court place on the isthmus where deliberations were held. But a relation to the sense 'stake, pole' with reference to the shape of the isthmus is also kept open by Hoel. This interpretation is supported by Margit Harsson. *Romskog* seems to be related with the lake name *Rømmen*, which in its turn is connected to a *rime* 'long height (earth or mountain ridge),' *rim* 'pole' etcetera (pp. 137 ff.) with reference to a natural formation protruding into the lake. Many of the names seem to be relatively late formations, which often makes them easy to interpret even where the onomastic background may be obscure. Here one finds names taken from other toponyms such as *Meklenborg* (pp. 75 f.), *Slesvik* (pp. 84 f.), *Holstein* (p. 87), *Gottenborg* (p. 94) and *Pommern* (pp. 124 f.), the imperative name *Krypinn* (p. 147), the probably jocular *Slottet* (that is: 'the castle'; p. 39), the names *Bråka* and *Knåka* (pp. 44, 45), which are formed in relation to each other, and *Fragått* (s. 65 f.), which is probably connected to a place-name *Frågot* in the Swedish province Bohuslän. As usual, some terrain words are focused on in the onomastic articles, such as *klund* m. 'small heap' (pp. 60 f.), *glum* m. 'small, dark and narrow valley' etcetera (p. 72) and *slor* f. 'small moist fat grass ground [...] often covered with water' (p. 112). In some cases, it would have been advantageous to include other Nordic name and word material in the discussion of some of these terrain appellatives. But even relatively young toponyms can be problematic. *Vispa* (p. 31), for example, has previously been regarded as the name of a brook. The name has also been regarded as a reduced form of the German urban name *Wiesbaden*, in view of other places named after toponyms in this area. These two assump-

tions do not seem very plausible; the toponym is more likely to have been formed on a personal byname. An interesting investigation concerns *Oretapp* (pp. 88 ff.), from an *øltappr* ‘bottling of beer, sale of beer for consumption on the premises.’ The analysis of the name *Jåvall* (pp. 31–36) includes a thorough investigation of *vall* and the basis of *jå*, but the investigation of the latter does not result in a safe conclusion. A good thing is that Margit Harsson sometimes challenges previous interpretations, for example regarding the assumed *-vin* name *Hen*, where, after searching for an alternative interpretation (a development of Old West Norse *Hæðinne*), she still chooses to support the earlier interpretation of the name (pp. 42 ff.). However, the first elements in *Stensrud* (p. 67) and *Skislett* (pp. 129 ff.) might have been discussed in greater detail, as might the *bed* that is mentioned in connection with *Ba* (pp. 132 ff.), where other Nordic material could have been included. Special sections deal with lust names and old regional names and the basic topographic words are stated in an alphabetical list (pp. 181 ff.). Some sections also deal briefly with names taken from other toponyms and old plural names (pp. 211 ff.). Sources and literature are accounted for, and there are also various indexes. Many of the names here seem to be fairly young, but that does not make them less interesting in any way. One notes, with satisfaction, that a new volume in the series has been added to the previous ones, and that the editors are in a fair way to concluding this impressive Nordic research project on toponyms.

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Ernst Håkon Jahr, Gudlaug Nedrelied & Marit Aamodt Nielsen (eds.), *Språkhistorieskriving og språkidologi. Eit utval norske språkhistorikarar*, Oslo: Novus Forlag 2016, ISBN 978-82-7099-866-1, 156 pp.

As is clearly shown by the various articles in this book, it was not only the progress of philological research but also the language conflict in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that came to provide the framework for the discussion of language history in Norway. The authors of the different contributions are attached to the University of Agder, Kristiansand, in southern Norway, and have done a great deal of research on Norwegian language history and other Norwegian and Nordic philology.

They are thus reliable guides to the subject. The introductory chapter draws the picture of philology in the nineteenth century and the Norwegian writing on language history at the time. It is quite correctly pointed out that the seven scholars that are closely depicted here are not an entirely self-evident selection; there are other scholars that could equally well have been focused on, such as Ivar Aasen, Johan Storm, Trygve Knudsen and Vemund Skar, to mention just a few. The account of the research partners Hjalmar Falk and Alf Torp is interesting, and describes, for example, the book *Dansk-norskens lydhistorie* (1898) and the problems the two authors had to grapple with. Didrik Arup Seip and his work on language history are then discussed. For example, judgements he made in his *Norsk språkhistorie til omkring 1370* (with two editions 1931 and 1955) are related to Seip's position on language policy. In one chapter, we get to know Marius Hægstad and Gustav Indrebø, and, more briefly, Sigurd Kolsrud and Torleiv Hannaas. The elucidation of Indrebø's *Norsk Målsoga* (posthumously published in 1951) is fascinating. Several of the scholars mentioned hold strong views on matters involving language policy, which clearly distinguishes them from Per Nyquist Grøtvedt and Egil Pettersen, who are also portrayed in the book. Interesting perspectives on East Norwegian language are presented in Grøtvedt's *Skrift og tale i mellomnorske diplomater fra Folden-området 1350–1450*, and Pettersen's studies *Språkbrytning i Vest-Norge 1450–1550* (I–II) are important. But neither Grøtvedt nor Pettersen use their research to legitimise their language policy positions. With great merit, this book places a number of Norwegian works on language history in an ideological context.

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Martin Ježek, *Archaeology of Touchstones. An introduction based on finds from Birka, Sweden*, Leiden: Sidestone Press 2017, ISBN 978-90-8890-517-9, 220 pp.

With his work *Archaeology of Touchstones*, Martin Ježek presents an extensive and exemplary analysis of an often misinterpreted group of artifacts known as touchstones. His analysis is based on the findings from the Viking Age trading place of Birka, Sweden, and demonstrates by means of these touchstones the often far too naïve and unidimensional interpretation of grave goods, even in today's archaeology.

Touchstones denominate testing stones made from schist (silt), that were used to examine the composition and purity of (precious) metals through abrasion, which leaves specific traces on these touchstones. Despite its significant importance for the craft and trade of metals, this group of artifacts was almost absent in academic discourse, except for some case studies by the author of the present book. This was mainly due to the misinterpretation of touchstones as whetstones in a long row of publications, based on low knowledge of the archaeological material or missing detailed studies of the concrete artifacts. When correctly identified as touchstones, these artifacts are normally regarded within the context of metallurgy and—similar to Ježek’s extensively discussed example of blacksmithing tools (see Müller-Wille 1983)—are often seen as evidence for the deceased’s profession. However, the findings given by Ježek illustrate quite clearly, that touchstones—in most cultural contexts—can neither be ascribed only to a specific gender or age group nor coercively to the social elite, and even an association of the touchstones with metal-working tools as grave goods is often missing.

Martin Ježek presents a highly relevant but often misinterpreted or misidentified group of objects that serves as his starting point for an exemplary and partially even harsh criticism and deconstruction of the traditional interpretation of graves as “mirrors of life” (Härke 1997: 25), which still appears in modern archaeology.

His convincing—albeit partially hypercritical—argumentation against the often far too simplistic and naïve patterns of interpretation within traditional burial archaeology are only affected by the book’s central weakness, the slightly vague structuring of the single chapters. And even his skepticism appears to be partially exaggerated or at least not stringent. He postulates several times that grave goods were exclusively deposited because of their symbolic value for the relatives and definitely not because of their potential use by the dead in the afterlife:

Regardless of what Europeans in prehistoric times and the Early Middle Ages thought about the afterlife, it must have been clear to them that the deceased would not need tools, weapons, jewellery, horses, dogs or even other people. (p. 66)

While on the following page he gives an identical interpretation for Christian grave goods as “rosaries, prayer books and pilgrimage tokens” (p. 67), he still mentions the historical tradition to place coins in the graves so that the dead can purchase food in the afterlife only some lines below. By this, he foils his own hypercritical view on the function and meaning of grave goods.

The book is separated into 15 not further subdivided chapters, acknowledgements, an introduction as well as references and an index of places.

After a short introduction about the chosen material, function and meaning of touchstones as well as the differentiation between touchstones and whetstones, the book provides an overview of the appearance and occurrence of touchstones in prehistory with two more detailed case studies on touchstones in Mesopotamic burials and graves of La Tène culture. This is followed by several chapters dealing with an extensive discussion about the symbolism of grave goods and the interpretation of burials as “mirrors” and “hall of mirrors of life,” respectively—always with recourse to the artifact group of touchstones. A stringent structure of the single chapters in relation to each other as well as to the book’s overall structure of argumentation is sometimes difficult to identify. The particular chapters partly merge seamlessly into each other taking up aspects that already have been mentioned before and lacking a final conclusion at the end, which occasionally makes it difficult to follow the argumentation.

The actual topic of the book—the analysis of the touchstones from the burials in Birka—is not presented until the second half of the book. After a classical evaluation of the distribution of touchstones in the burials and their association with other artifacts, the analysis of the material by means of a scanning electron microscope (SEM) to search for signs of abrasion of (precious) metals represents the central aspect of Ježek’s research, with a short catalogue of the investigated material. A separate chapter is dedicated to the surprisingly scarce evidence of nickel on the touchstones from Birka, followed by a short discussion about problems and limits of SEM analysis. With a short account of investigations of touchstones from two spots from Polen, Ostrów Lednicki and Dziekanowice, Ježek presents on the one hand another interesting corpus of touchstones and allows on the other hand a better contextualization for the findings from Birka. Even if the final chapter is entitled *Conclusio*, it does not serve as the eagerly expected concrete summary of the overall results, but more or less as an enlarged discussion about the meaning of artifacts within the sphere of metallurgy and their symbolic value in burial contexts, referring to the argumentation from the book’s first chapters.

An investigation of the petrographic quality of the touchstones from Birka as well as tables with the results from SEM and chemical microanalysis, microscope photos and spectra of metal traces on some selected touchstones from Birka are attached as appendices.

The present study submitted by Martin Ježek convinces with its methodologically and interpretatively cogent analysis of the corpus of touchstones from Birka. His results provide proof for the significant importance of this artifact group for a silver-based bullion-economy as well as for craft and trade of (precious) metals. Furthermore, they cast new light upon metallurgy in Viking Age society in Scandinavia—e. g. by the astonishingly frequent proof of traces of base metals, especially lead.

In addition, by illustrating the symbolic meaning and function of touchstones in funerary contexts, used for the presentation or construction of social identities, which have to be seen entirely detached from the social status or profession of the deceased in reality (see Toplak 2017), his results are an excellent example of the problematic identification of professions in burials (see Staecker 2009: 479–482), as well as of the general discrepancy between this world and the afterlife and graves as “mirrors of life” (Härke 1994; 1997).

In this methodologically and theoretically convincing case study which provides further proof for the traditional simplicity in the interpretation of burials, as well as prehistoric features in general based on antiquated doctrines and insufficient classification of archaeological material, lies the central strength of Ježek’s work, which will be an interesting and inspiring tool for scholars of metallurgy and economy in Viking Age society as well as for more theoretical approaches towards death and burial. The only weak point—beside some minor errors such as the outdated interpretation of Gudingsåkrarna as a ritual hoard (p. 125, 128; see Carlsson 2011)—is the not entirely clearly arranged structure of the single chapters, the lack of concise summaries, and the partially digressive argumentation due to the constant reference to the material corpus of touchstones. A tightening of the first few chapters concerning the historic background of the touchstones and the constant criticism of a traditional and often far too naïve interpretation of burials, as well as a more articulated structure would have been advantageous and would have highlighted the central results and their importance for Viking Age materiality and the theory of burial archaeology.

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Ole-Jørgen Johannessen (ed.), *Bergens kalvskinn*, Oslo: Riksarkivet 2016 (Kildeutgivelser fra Riksarkivet 3), ISBN 978-82-548-0134-5; ISSN 1894-2601, xli + 456 pp.

In the National Archives in Oslo, there is a manuscript signed *AM 329 a fol.* The manuscript appears to consist of copies of copies and it is obvious that the scribe or scribes have not always been careful in their work (p. xxiv) and as a result, it can sometimes be difficult to interpret details in the text. This manuscript, popularly known as *Bergens kalvskinn* ('Bergen's calfskin'), is a land register or a register of church estates in the diocese of Bergen in the middle of the fourteenth century. Since *Bergens kalvskinn* contains more than 1,800 names of farms, it is a valuable source of toponyms in Western Norway. In the preface, the editor rightly characterises the text as a window to economic, legal and social conditions in the late Middle Ages. There is an earlier edition of the source text, compiled in 1843 by P. A Munch, but there is an obvious need for this modern edition. In the introduction, Ole-Jørgen Johannessen

presents a description of the manuscript and the text, which seems to be written in traditional Old Norse, with its lists on mensalgotset ('the priest's revenues'), fabrica ('the church's revenues') and information about the tithes. At the end of the manuscript there are also three dated documents, among others a list of books etcetera in Ølmeim's church in 1321. The editor's ambition is to render the manuscript's text as precisely as possible. The use of capital and small letters follows the source; the edition renders insular *f*, rounded *r* etcetera. In addition, the editor has added a translation of *Bergens kalvskinn*, in the same way as Jon Gunnar Jørgensen did in his edition of Aslak Bolts jordebok (1997). The translation contains some comments regarding identifications and locations of farms that are mentioned and which are either not found in the current volumes (XI and XII) of *Norske Gaardnavne* or are wrongly placed in them. It is extremely valuable that the editor, by including information from the local history literature, presents numerous important pieces of factual information preserved in oral tradition. This finds expression in many places in the volume, for example in the comments on pp. 231, 271 and 293. The book concludes with different kinds of indexes. At the very end, there are some word explanations which includes, for example, measurement terms such as *laupr*, *skettingr*, *spann* and *pveiti*. The edition gives us access to the West Norwegian stock of place-names in the middle of the fourteenth century, and one is grateful that this source now exists in a modern and reliable edition.

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Joanna Kafarowski, *The Polar Adventurs of a Rich American Dame. The Life of Louise Arner Boyd*, Toronto: Dundurn 2017, ISBN 978-1-4597-3970-3, 367 pp.

Louise Arner Boyd (1877–1972) was a remarkable woman who made a name as a self-styled patron of Arctic exploration and research. As a rich multimillionaire she chartered sturdy Norwegian ships and stocked them with scientists, researchers specializing in geomorphology and glacial studies, botanists and plant ecologists, plus the latest in equipment for photogrammetric surveying of landforms and eco-sounding of sea-floors. For her own part she participated as expedition leader and photographer. In biographical dictionaries she liked to be remembered as a

geographer, photographer and collector of botanic specimens. Her most important expeditions—the Louise A. Boyd Expeditions to East Greenland (1931, 1933, 1937 & 1938)—focused on the fjord regions of northeastern Greenland. The later four of these expeditions were officially conducted under the auspices of the American Geographical Society (AGS), which also published expedition reports. The reports from sorties in 1937 and 1938 were combined in a single volume finalized in 1940 but on the advice of the US government it did not see print until 1948; the reason was a fear that making public the contents with its 340 pages including many photographs and maps might advantage the German side in the Arctic sphere during World War II.

By 1941, having proven her mettle, Miss Boyd (as she liked to be called) was recruited by the US National Bureau of Standards to lead an expedition in waters up along the northwestern side of Greenland and then down again along the Canadian coast. The object was to obtain geomagnetic data to improve knowledge of changes affecting the ionosphere, thus investigations strategically valuable as World War II was approaching the US; reliability of radio transmission between North America and Europe was needed. She was also asked by the War Department to write a classified report on the feasibility of York Sound on Baffin Island as a military landing field. During the war years she put at her government's disposal several thousands of photographs taken around Greenland, the volcanic Arctic Ocean island Jan Mayen, and related regions, plus relevant hydrographical, geological, glaciological and other data, strategically useful for the US military at a time when Germany occupied Denmark and sought to control Greenland.

To cap her achievements as a polar explorer Miss Boyd in 1955 at the age of 67 hired a Douglas DC-4 with a Norwegian pilot and crew to fly her on a return trip from Bodø, Norway, to circle in the air over the North Pole, thus becoming the first woman to “see” that geographical pole. Her legacy remains inscribed on maps naming features like an area called Miss Boyd Land and Louise Glacier in northeastern Greenland and the Louise A. Boyd Bank, a submarine ridge along the sea bottom between Bear Island and Jan Mayen Island.

Of the eight trips she made in Arctic regions the final five were devoted to scientific pursuits whose outcomes won Miss Boyd due respect and recognition in the male world of polar research of her time—she was awarded many medals and certificates of appreciation from different governments and learned societies. In the late 1950s, except for in a small circle of polar experts, her achievements fell into relative oblivion as the International Geophysical Year 1957/58 opened a new era with a

new way of doing polar science (cf. Elzinga 2009). By comparison, Louise Boyd as a private patron who funded and fully equipped her own expeditions with the latest equipment—as well as providing all food and provisions—comes closer to some of the patrons and gentleman explorers of the late nineteenth century. Yet, even today some of the results that emanated from her expeditions are still relevant for historically tracing areas of past glacial advance and recession with an eye to reconstructing past climate variations and comparing the current climatic change in the Arctic.

The author of the present volume, Joanna Kafarowski, first came across Louise Boyd's name while conducting fieldwork in Arctic Canada for a doctorate (at the University of Northern British Columbia) on gender, decision-making and environmental contaminants (Kafarowski 2008); reading polar exploration literature in her spare time, she became curious about Miss Boyd. Trying to find out more, Kafarowski discovered there existed no biography about this unusual polar entrepreneur who had inherited a multimillion-dollar fortune in 1920 when her parents died. It became clear that here was an unusual story. Some of the storyline was documented in an exhibition at the San Rafael's Marine History Museum, and that is where Kafarowski for her part initially got an idea that gradually grew into a determination to write the first comprehensive biography of her heroine. It was of a woman left alone in a family mansion in San Rafael in northern California (neighbouring San Francisco), a woman in her early thirties groomed as an upper class socialite and philanthropist who had a dream that became a passion, wanting to penetrate the mysteries of the Arctic. It took the author all of ten years to piece together the story, combing through masses of documentary material, conducting extensive archival studies, and having discussions with persons in several countries, not least Norway. At the same time our author found several gaps in the archival record and therefore in her book and before audiences during speaking tours she makes a point of appealing to readers etc. to tip her off as to further sources like travel-diaries, letters and photographs that might be tucked away in some academic archive or family attic.¹

The book is well structured. It follows and contextualizes the chronology of Louise Boyd's lifeline. The first two chapters deal first with Miss Boyd's early life and the environment in which she grew up, and then her early travels, especially to Europe and a trip in 1924 on a tourist cruise to Spitsbergen on a Norwegian tourist steamer, which whetted the glamorous lady's appetite for Arctic adventure. Chapter 3 covers a big game hunting trip on a ship she chartered two years later to carry

herself and some specially invited wealthy friends to Franz Josef Land to shoot polar bear and bag furs; all the while she recorded numerous activities on film and made lots of photographs that also show amazing images of the sea-, ice- and landscapes through which she passed.

Chapter 4, entitled “Chasing Amundsen,” takes up plans for a similar trip in 1928 that ended up being much more serious. Once again Miss Boyd chartered a ship and paid for everything out of her own purse, but now the original plan was abruptly changed. Roald Amundsen and five companions had just disappeared on a flight northward out of Tromsø on a French-built seaplane en route to Spitsbergen to help in the rescue of survivors of the Nobile airship *Italia* that had crashed onto the Arctic ice. Now it was Amundsen who had become the object of a new search. Miss Boyd immediately pitched in with her chartered vessel, placed it with crew and all at the disposal of the Norwegian state, and loaded it with two seaplanes to help in the grand search and rescue effort involving altogether 15 ships to find Roald Amundsen and his companions. In the chapter, the reader is provided with a goodly amount of context and polar exploration history, for example concerning Andrée’s ill-fated balloon flight and its aftermath. Boyd’s role in the unsuccessful search for Amundsen is highlighted and we learn how she in the process broadened her connections with professionals who she could later consult when planning to launch further expeditions, figures like Hjalmar Riiser-Larsen, Bernt Balch, Lauge Koch, Adolf Hoel, Ejnar Mikkelsen. These and other characters are depicted in the chapter with a series of interesting thumbnail sketches. Furthermore it is shown how Miss Boyd was lifted into the media limelight and decided to deviate from her earlier path of privileged boredom in order to try and make a difference by steering her riches and business management skills towards promoting polar science. It was a decisive moment in the heroine’s life.

Chapters 5–9 give accounts of Boyd’s scientifically oriented polar escapades and their outcomes. Apart from a description of the logistics involved in each separate expedition, five to northeastern Greenland and then the one to western Greenland and the Canadian Arctic, we learn about the various scientists involved, their fieldwork, instruments used, dramatic situations on board and of course the multiple challenges Miss Boyd had to deal with.

July 1 to well into September 1931 (Ch. 5) went from Ålesund to Jan Mayen Is. and northeastern Greenland on the ship *Veslekari* (a sister ship to the *Maud*) captained by Paul Lillenes. On board as research staff was a Swedish surveyor and cartographer, a botanist from San Rafael, a sportsman/big game hunter from a wealthy American family, plus a young Nor-

wegian who assisted Miss Boyd everywhere she went with her heavy camera equipment. All of these men had been recruited via personal contacts. The timing of the expedition coincided with Norway's geopolitical battle with Denmark concerning sovereignty over a large chunk of northeast Greenland that had just been claimed by Norway. That event with all the fanfare around it, flag-waving in Ålesund and amongst exuberant Norwegian hunters encountered on the coast of Greenland is nicely described in this chapter as seen through the eyes of the expeditioners.

June 28–Sept 16, 1933 expedition (Ch. 6) went again from Ålesund with the same ship as before but with Johan Olsen as captain. Now it was a follow-up expedition, again via Jan Mayen to northeastern Greenland, this time more focused and with a research staff in part selected with help from the AGS. Geological surveys and glaciology combined with collecting botanical specimens, sonic depth mapping of features of the sea bottom and tidal gauge readings at various sites. June 4–Sept 24, 1937 expedition (Ch. 7) once more from Ålesund with the *Veslekari* and Olsen as captain was planned as the first of a unit of two expeditions, the second of which followed on June 8–Sept 12, 1938 (Ch. 8) as part of one and the same research plan covering topographical mapping, geology, plant life on glacial margins and extensive hydrographical studies. Apart from further reconnaissance in the regions previously surveyed, the work now also included sonar depth-sounding along the sea floor from Greenland towards and along the coast of Svalbard and northward (1938) up to the edge of the icepack. Additionally, in 1938 a mobile echo-sounder for use on a dory for shallow offshore hydrography in Greenland fjords was included and a radio expert was now also engaged to transmit wireless reports of weather events and ice conditions to meteorological stations. In the accounts of these scientifically focused expeditions Kafarowky again weaves in eye witness reports from diaries plus interesting facets and mention of personalities from earlier history of polar exploration in the regions the Boyd expeditions visited. Chapter 8 also describes how Miss Boyd gained increasing recognition in specialized scientific circles, accumulated awards, received invitations to lecture and was celebrated in media reports. Chapter 9 deals with the Louise A. Boyd 1941 Arctic Expedition, as it was called, on board the ship *Effie M. Morrissey* with the legendary Newfoundland-born captain Bob Bartlett who had once accompanied Peary on three separate attempts to reach the North Pole. Now passage went northward along the western Greenland coast and back along the Canadian coast from Ellesmere Island, Baffin Island and Labrador on the mission to gather data on the effect of polar magnetic fields on radio transmissions. An account is given of the main characters

involved, the geopolitical and scientific contexts, as well as tensions between Miss Boyd on the one hand and Bartlett and his crew on the other.

What strikes me as particularly valuable is how the author brings to life the various expeditions by citing excerpts from the personal diaries of researchers who participated, from letters between them, as well as from Miss Boyd's correspondence. In this way we not only get first hand reports on research conducted and dramatic moments in the polar ice-pack but also a sense of conflicts and tensions that emerged at times in the confined quarters of a ship. Conflicts emerged both from constraints put on scientists by the vagaries of nature and rivalry between them as one or another of them found a particular project received more field-work time than one's own. The situation was sometimes aggravated by Miss Boyd's commandeering leadership style and her unmistakable upper class breeding as a woman of privilege who used her authority and patronship as financier to keep the research staff in line by reminding them of stipulations in the formal contract they had signed with her. If they deviated and published results without clearing it with her as the expedition leader she called on her personal lawyer and legal action was taken. Here was a Lady you did not mess with. Even tough old "Captain Bob" found this out. Excerpts from diaries and correspondence show how coteries developed amongst some of the men who nevertheless were wont to silently suppress their frustrations while Miss Boyd always presented a friendly visage. The various elements of the social dynamics at play and the factors involved are nicely brought to life, providing a dramatic thread in several chapters that helps pull the reader along.

In this connection the author could have gone further to assess the systemic limitations of Boyd's expeditions when viewed in a historical perspective. It is therefore pertinent to recall some observations made by Lauge Koch who was the man who first inscribed the name Miss Boyd Land on the Greenland map. In his review (1949) of the delayed AGS publication under Boyd's name, *The Coast of Northeast Greenland, with hydrographic studies in the Greenland Sea* emanating from the 1937 and 1938 expeditions, Koch (1949: 195) notes:

Although Louis A. Boyd has worked out the scientific programs for her summer expeditions with great forethought, on reading the various chapters of the book one deplors that the scientists had not more time at their disposal. It may be asked whether summer expeditions to the fjords of central East Greenland are now not out of date. The working time of such expeditions is too short and too much depends on the ice conditions, which may vary considerably with the planned scientific work. A number of Danish expeditions

have already wintered in East Greenland, and since 1931 Danish expeditions have established winter stations for scientists, who thus obtained a much longer working period.

Tapering off, Chapter 10 (“The North Pole and Beyond”) first deals with the years 1942–1944 when Miss Boyd served as a special consultant to several branches of the US military and the appreciative recognition gained in this respect from the Department of the Army. Thereafter an account is given of the finalization of the Greenland-volume published 1948, and of the period that followed when she had many countrywide speaking engagements and fulfilled numerous philanthropic and social duties locally in San Rafael society. Travels to Germany and Austria in 1952 are mentioned, as well as three years of intensive lobbying persons in high places in Norway and the US to finally realize the bold plan to fly to the North Pole in 1952, an event accompanied by careful management from her side of information to the media in order to obtain the greatest possible news impact. Relations with the AGS and participation on its Council are also documented, including reference to an internal memo from a staff member of that organization who confirms her disposition as being “extraordinarily self-centered and rather dictatorial” (p. 179). A final section of the chapter rounds off the story of her life, describing how, when all her wealth had been exhausted and some bad investments had been made, the luxurious family mansion was sadly sold; Miss Boyd’s last years were spent in a rented apartment for seniors paid for by close friends.

In her Epilogue, Joanna Kafarowski summarizes the legacy, social history and gender significance in science and more broadly of Miss Boyd’s life and work.

Overall, the book reflects an impressive piece of detective work to craft an informative and readable biography on the basis of scattered archival sources. The author successfully reinstates a remarkable woman in the annals of exploration and research, one whose image had faded after the late 1950s. The biography is richly illustrated with 90 black and white images based on photographs. Further, there are ten informative maps, eight of which display expedition routes, one at the head of each relevant chapter, which is very helpful for the reader. An appendix gives a list of the names of participants in the expeditions carried out from 1926–1941. The battery of footnotes and an extensive bibliography covering archival material, books, articles, old newspaper reports as well as a couple of films and a video are useful for anyone that wants to delve deeper. Finally the book also has a handy index. Altogether the volume is a fine contribution to the literature on the history of Arctic exploration

and research and obviously also has a place in the literature pertaining to “gender on ice,” a more recent genre in which Miss Boyd has hitherto also been largely neglected.²

NOTES

¹ I wish to point out here—for example—that Carl-Gustaf Anrick’s diary was not consulted; it exists in the Uppsala University Library archive.

² Even in the portal book whose title gave the name to this new genre at an intersection between polar exploration history and gender studies (Bloom 1993), Louise Boyd is missing. For a chronological list (1982–2012) of some titles in this genre see the website - <http://www.phys.barnard.edu/~kay/polar/gender.php>

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Kristoffer Kruken (ed.), *Personnamnarbeid av P. A. Munch*, Oslo: Novus Forlag 2016, ISBN 978-82-7099-862-3, 284 pp.

In connection with the establishment of the Norwegian nation in the 1840s and 1850s, the idea was expressed “that the new nation should be built on the foundations of the old one” and that the national language and the personal names should be highlighted. Ivar Aasen and P. A. Munch were important actors in this process. In the volume presented here, Kristoffer Kruken has gathered three important articles by Munch in which the editor has corrected many details—the corrections are shown in a list on pp. 235 ff.—but above all provided with more than sixty pages of detailed and useful indexes. The latter are valuable, as they contain over 4,100 names and name variants. The first article by Munch, published in 1849, has the title “Nogle Ord til Overvejelse om vore brugelige Personnavne, og om at holde vore nationale Navne i Agt og Ære” (‘A few words in consideration of our common personal names and of honouring our national names’), and even its heading reveals that it is a manifesto. The second article, which was published five years later, is a systematic survey of different personal names from historical and cultural perspectives. The third article, from 1857, deals with the national names and their correct writing and pronunciation. This compilation, which is the volume’s most extensive one, contains a large number of names, about 2,500, which makes it a great collection. The names are treated from etymologic, semantic and sound history perspectives, not least parallel Germanic personal names. Some of the investigations are very detailed, such as those regarding *Gaut* and *Gisl*, and in some places place-names are included as well. The Old Norse status of the personal names is focused on by Munch with many references to the names’ use in, for example, the Icelandic sagas and the kings’ sagas. In some places in the volume, there are very clear standpoints *against* some neologisms among the personal names, and here Munch adopts a harsher attitude, chiefly concerning the custom “of adopting foreign names from another language without giving them the form they have in our language” (p. 29). As *Georg* and *Henrik* are common Norwegian names, he finds it “revolting to hear Norwegian children being called *George*, *Henri*, with a French pronunciation.” While Munch argues for the traditional names, he thinks that it would be an affectation to bring back names such as *Starkad*, *Aude*, *Unne*, *Freydis* (p. 40). As Kruken (p. 12) points out, Munch has quite a lot of personal names that he invented himself, among oth-

ers some containing *Bjarn-* and *-gest*. Even if the primary purpose of Munch's works on personal names was ideologically founded, had cultural ambitions and gave clear instructions regarding suitable choices of names, Munch also laid the foundation for a scholarly examination of personal names. For that reason, this edition is also of great interest to Nordic history of science scholars.

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Britta Olrik Frederiksen et al. (eds.), *Opuscula*, vol. XIV, København: Museum Tusculanum Press 2016 (Bibliotheca Arnemagnæana a Jón Helgason Conditæ, vol. XLVIII), ISBN 978-87-635-4362-0; ISSN 0067-7841, 421 pp.

This volume contains no less than three Icelandic texts that now are published for the first time. Of greatest interest is the text called *Gnýs ævintýr*, which is an Icelandic rendering of an exemplum included in the medieval collection *Gesta Romanorum* about a fraudulent trustee who is eventually punished. The Icelandic manuscripts containing this text are late, more precisely from the seventeenth century and later. The current edition is “semi-diplomatic” and was carried out by Jeffrey S. Love, Beeke Stegmann and Tom Birkett; in addition there is a translation into English. The second text, about Lucian and Gedula, is a story ascribed to the poet and clergyman Jón Oddsson Hjaltalín (1749–1835). The text exists in two versions, and its originals are investigated by the editor, Matthew James Driscoll. The third of the volume's new editions is based on a text in AM 601 d 4^{to} written down by Árni Magnússon, and in the heading, the editor, Philip Lavender, wonders whether this text, *Skjaldar Þátr Danakonung's*, might be “a lost fornaldarsaga?” In the volume, we also find two hitherto unpublished text witnesses of the West Nordic translation of the Latin legend of Sancta Agatha; Kirsten Wolf produced this edition and comments. The editions now mentioned constitute half the volume. In the other half there are a number of articles relating to the West Nordic research area. Two articles deal with *Flateyjarbók*, first Kulbrún Haraldsdóttir's article “Die Flateyjarbók und der Anfang ihrer Óláfs saga Helga,” and then Stefan Drechsler's “Ikonographie und Text–Bild–Beziehungen der GKS 1005 fol. Flateyjarbók.” The latter, a

beautifully illustrated article, is about the image–text and image–image relation in the manuscript and gives the reader insights into the cultural and historical background to manuscript production in Iceland. The wide West European context is obvious here. Alex Speed Kjeldsen makes several contributions to the volume: one about a pronoun in the oldest Icelandic original diplomas, in which a number of Norwegianisms in the material are also dealt with, another about some word forms in the original diplomas, and a number of so-called “Småstykker,” for example about Morkinskinna’s parchment. In addition, there are contributions by Knud Ottosen and the late Stefán Karlsson. A couple of indexes conclude the volume. Brita Olrik Frederiksen has successfully coordinated the publication. The other members of the editorial committee are Matthew James Driscoll, Gottskálk Jensson, Anne Mette Hansen, Silvia Hufnagel, Alex Speed Kjeldsen, Tereza Lansing and Annette Lassen. This guarantees editions and philological analyses of the highest standard.

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Christine Peel (ed.), *Guta Lag and Guta Saga. The Law and History of the Gotlanders*, London & New York: Routledge 2015 (Medieval Nordic Laws), ISBN 978-1-138-80421-0, xxii + 334 pp.

In a newly started series from Routledge, *Medieval Nordic Laws*, with Stefan Brink and Ditlev Tamm as series editors, translations into English of the oldest Nordic laws are published. This project provides an international audience with access to important sources of Nordic history. The first book published in the series was *Guta Lag and Guta Saga. The law and history of the Gotlanders*, with Christine Peel as editor. This seems like a suitable start in view of the Guta Lag’s age and independent position in a Nordic perspective. Nor could a more suitable editor have been found, since Peel has previously edited and translated *Gutasagan* (1999) and *Gutalagen* (2009) in the Viking Society for Northern Research Text series. The current edition starts with a presentation of Gotland’s medieval status and accounts for the historical preconditions. In the introduction to *Guta Lag*, she describes the codicological background and presents a stemma of the manuscripts. How the law was compiled in its written form is accounted for; there are different opinions about this among law

historians, but one thing is certain according to the editor: “the redactor (or redactors) was a Gotlander” (p. 24). Previous editions and translations of the law are described and the law is presented with information about how the legal system was organised, what is said about fines, oaths and inheritances, and quite a few other things. The translation follows (pp. 36–87), whereupon the editor presents an extensive critical apparatus (pp. 88–201) followed by tables listing penalties etcetera. In the section on Guta Saga—a kind of appendix to the law—the reader will initially find learned expositions on sinking islands, sanctifying land by means of fire, dreams of snakes, ancient religious beliefs, Saint Olaf’s visit, the building of churches and many other things. Information is also given about previous editions and translations (pp. 277–281) of the Guta Saga and commentaries follow (pp. 283–315). The concluding source and literature list comprising some twenty tightly printed pages bears the hallmark of a well-informed translator and commentator. The comments seem well made and there is only one single point, viz. the words *ed* and *eda (ida)* (pp. 288), that might need some complementary additions or corrections. This edition provides the reader with good opportunities to create a picture of conceptual worlds and everyday life in the medieval Gotland society. Guta Lag and Guta Saga is the beginning of an important international publication project. A second part of the series is an edition of Danish laws presented elsewhere in this issue of the journal. One can only hope that adequate energy and resources will be available for the completion of this gigantic project.

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Line Sandst, *Urbane stednavne – storbyens sproglige dimension. En stilistisk-retorisk analyse af urbane stednavne i det københavnske byrum*, København: Københavns Universitet 2015, 306 pp.; *Appendiks* [‘Appendix’], 1–3, 572 pp.

Line Sandst’s doctoral thesis on urbane place-names is a great research achievement. By way of introduction, the main questions of the thesis are presented; what rhetorical strategies are used in the current place-name formation in Copenhagen, what are the reasons behind the naming and what urban spaces do the place-name formations create, if they create

any urban spaces at all? After a short chapter on the “meaning premise”—which touches on the “eternal” question about the meaning of proper names and proper names in relation to homonymous appellatives—follows a research history that I find too short, and despite the ambitions, too superficial as regards both the Nordic and, in particular, the international perspective. The fourth chapter accounts for terms and introduces the stylistic-rhetorical analysis. Sandst believes that place-names are either a part of “the onomastic normal language mood” or else they conflict with it—this is a cardinal idea. In addition, interesting interpretative concepts are introduced in connection with commercial names and the concept of group named areas in cities. The empirical material of the thesis has been taken from *Indre By*, where Copenhagen’s oldest street names are found, from the so-called *Carlsberg-grunden*, where we find the city’s youngest street names and from *Nørrebo*, which in terms of age is somewhere in the middle between the two first-mentioned areas. The author has gathered all visible names on signs, and some “invisible” ones have also been included, for example unofficial names in the area of Carlsberg-grunden. Other sources used are also accounted for, for example the homepages of shops. It is an immense and multifaceted material that has been collected, as is clearly demonstrated by the three appendices of more than 550 pages that constitute the second part of the thesis. In chapter 6, the author presents a linguistic description of the urban place-names. Of undeniable interest is the section that deals with the commercial names’ morphology and semantics. In the following three chapters, the names in the three areas are gone through. There are numerous observations here, and different proper name strategies can be seen. The process of naming a new area like Carlberg-grunden is thoroughly dealt with, and it is clearly seen here how various different stakeholders try to influence the place-name formation. Not least interesting is the problem of preserving place-names that is thereby illustrated. Regarding Nørrebro Sandst tries to illustrate whether either of the two street name groups focused on—names formed on phenomena in Nordic mythology and names formed on Northern Zealand’s places—creates a unity and thus establishes a place. This is apparently the case with the mythologically motivated names, but hardly with the street names based on the Northern Zealand place-names. The author shows independence, handles a large material she carefully analyses and has both methodological and theoretical ambitions with her work. A number of fundamental onomastic issues are here given an exciting elucidation.

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Christof Seidler, *Das Edda-Projekt der Brüder Grimm. Hintergrund, Analyse und Einordnung*, München: Herbert Utz Verlag 2015 (Münster Nordistische Studien 9), 414 pp., ISBN 978-3-8316-4158-1.

The topic of Christof Seidler's book is the Grimm brothers' edition of heroic poems in the *Older Edda* from 1815, the two translations, one by each brother since they could not agree on the principle of translation, and all the unpublished materials, connected both to the published volume and to two more planned volumes that never saw the light of day.

The Grimm brothers, Jacob and Wilhelm, are now best known for their collection and editions of folktales, and they influenced many later collectors and editors of folktales in this field, such as Peter Christen Asbjørnsen and Jørgen Moe in Norway. In 2005, the Grimm brothers' folktales were added to UNESCO's List of World Heritage. The other field of research to which the name of the Grimm brothers has become connected for all eternity is *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, often called *der Grimm*. This impressive work consisting of 33 volumes was started by the Grimm brothers, and the first volume was published in 1854.

The Grimm brothers had, however, many interests and worked in many fields of research, as many learned men did in the early nineteenth century. Jacob Grimm was born in 1785, his brother Wilhelm in 1786. They both studied law at the University of Marburg. Their main interests were, however, Old German literature and language, in short: cultural heritage. The brothers started to collect folktales as early as 1806. The following year they started to publish articles on Old German *Minnesänger*. Jacob continued with a book on German *Mestersänger*, which is a late medieval genre that can be seen as an offshoot of the older *Minnesänger*. At the same time, Wilhelm wrote his first book on Old Danish heroic poems, ballads and folktales, and both books were published in 1811. Their first co-authored book was an edition of the Old High German poems *Hildebrandslied* and *Wessobrunner Gebet*, published in 1812. Later in the same year, the first volume of *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* was published, and the year after the brothers started a journal, *Altdeutsche Wälder*, which covered Old German literature (the journal ceased publication after few years). In 1815, the second volume of *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* appeared, and as if all this were not enough, during the year 1814 and parts of 1815 Jacob Grimm wrote his *Deutsche Grammatik*, which was published in parts as he wrote it. Later the Grimm brothers continued to publish German

legends (*Sagen*), and Jacob Grimm wrote on German mythology, and Wilhelm on runology.

It is in this wider context of general interest in medieval German literature and culture as well as in the context of the romantic idea of the *volksgeist* as the creator of a nation's intellectual fruits that the Grimm brothers' interest in Eddic poetry must be seen. Since all the Scandinavian speaking peoples belonged to a wider Germanic nation, Eddic poetry fell clearly within the Grimm brothers' field of interest and could fill out and complete the picture they wanted to draw up of Old German literature and culture. The heroic Eddic poems published in the 1815 edition told the same stories as the German *Nibelungenlied*, and were for this reason of special interest to the Grimm brothers. It was certainly not by chance that these poems were chosen for the first volume. Seidler could profitably have placed the Grimm brothers' Edda project more clearly in this wider context.

The present book by Christof Seidler offers a very thorough discussion of the Edda project of the Grimm brothers. He gives an exposition of the brothers' work with the edition of the poems, whom they contacted for help and support, earlier editions they could consult, and what aids they had at their disposal. His account is supported with many quotations from the sources he has used, for example letters both from and to the brothers. Seidler has perhaps chosen to use more and longer quotations than normally found in a book like this, and one objection could perhaps be that the presentation of the sources is given more space than a critical discussion of them. The extensive use of quotations is, however, a good choice. The many quotations from sources that take us close to the Grimm brothers and their time provide us with a very good, close, and detailed picture of their work and all the problems they had to face.

The Grimm brothers' first volume of Eddic poems with two German translations, one by each brother, was published in 1815 after many years of work. The two different translations, Jacob's in verse, Wilhelm's in prose, were due to the fact that the brothers could not agree on how a good translation should be carried out. The Edda project was planned as an edition in three volumes, but the remaining two volumes were never published. It has of course been a matter of discussion why this did not happen. It has even been suggested that the brothers themselves felt that they were not able to compete with other scholars in this field, which demanded competence in the Old Norse language.

Seidler has succeeded in showing that the answer to the question of why the second and third volume of the Grimm brothers' Eddic poems never saw the light of day is a complex one. It is true that the Grimm

brothers got some very negative criticism from other German scholars during their work with the Eddic poems (see Seidler for example pp. 134–155), but these scholars were also in competition with the Grimm brothers, and were perhaps not completely objective. The Grimm brothers had problems finding a publisher for their book on the Eddic poems, this process took many years, and in the meantime one of their competitors, Friedrich Heinrich von der Hagen, published his edition of Eddic poems in 1812. Three years after the Grimm brothers had published their edition of Eddic poems, the Arnamagnæanske Kommission in Copenhagen finally published their second volume of the poems (the first volume had been published in 1787, and the third and last appeared in 1828). In the same year (1818), Rasmus Kristian Rask and Arvid August Afzelius published their edition of Eddic poems in Stockholm, and a few editions of separate poems had also appeared. The Grimm brothers had certainly planned to fill a gap when they first started to work on their Edda project, but von der Hagen managed to get his book out first, and after the two editions of Eddic poems in 1818, the market was flooded. In addition, it turned out that there was next to no money to be made on publishing Eddic poetry, and the Grimm brothers had to take financial considerations in account. Jacob Grimm got his professorship as late as in 1830, Wilhelm five years later. The Grimm brothers may have been disappointed with the lack of interest in their Edda project, and as can be seen from several of Seidler's quotations, they realized that they had some problems with the Old Norse language (see for instance Seidler p. 279), but the reasons for not completing their Edda project were to be found in a series of unfortunate circumstances.

While the Grimm brothers received many critical comments on their edition of Edda poems during their work, the reception was mainly positive after the publication in 1815 (see Seidler pp. 273–278). Seidler finally discusses the impact of the Grimm brothers' Edda research on later scholars and editions of Eddic poems. It is of course not easy to measure impact, and it is especially not easy to measure the Grimm brothers' impact on later research on Eddic poetry, since they published only parts of the material. In connection with the discussion of impact on later scholarship, Seidler gives a survey of important editions in the time after 1815. There is more focus on German editions than on editions from other areas, which is fair enough, but there is reason to suspect that the author is not quite as familiar with editions from countries outside Germany as he is with those in German. One reason to suspect this can be found on p. 296, where we can read that Sophus Bugge's edition from 1867 was normalized (which it was not), and to support this piece of information

there is a reference to Bugge's own edition, but unfortunately to an empty page. All the same, Seidler is able to point out many instances where later scholars have followed the Grimm brothers' edition, for example concerning emendations, order of stanzas, and interpretations.

Seidler has succeeded in taking us back in time to the life and work of the Grimm brothers and their contemporaries. The many long and interesting quotations give the readers an illusion of being there looking over the brothers' shoulder, secretly reading the letters they wrote or received. At times the book is exciting, at least more exciting than scholarly literature normally is.

The book is of course of interest for scholars working with Eddic poetry, or with Old Norse philology in general. It should also be of great interest for scholars working on the history of research. It is worthwhile using a few minutes now and then to reflect on the easy access we have to sources and what aids we have at our disposal compared with scholars like the Grimm brothers who had to wait for months, if not years, for a copy of a manuscript sent from Copenhagen. Scholars interested in the theory of translation will also find tidbits in this book. The brothers' quarrel over how Eddic poetry should be translated is still of interest.

It is to hope that this book on the Edda project of the Grimm brothers will lead to a renewed interest in these impressive scholars who belonged to the generations that laid the foundation for modern scholarship. The production of the brothers is really impressive. Jacob Grimm published some 500 titles, Wilhelm Grimm, whose health was not strong, "only" about 225. Around 20 were co-authored publications (Seidler pp. 255–256).

Seidler's book contains a rather detailed table of contents which is helpful for the readers when navigating through the book trying to find the discussion of a specific issue. There is also a useful index of names.

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Erika Sigurdson, *The Church in Fourteenth-Century Iceland. The Formation of an Elite Clerical Identity*, Leiden/Boston: Brill 2016 (The Northern World vol. 72), ISBN 978-90-04-30156-6, 207 pp.

In *The Church in Fourteenth-Century Iceland: The Formation of an Elite Clerical Identity*, Erika Sigurdson examines the formation of an elite clerical identity in fourteenth century Iceland in addition to providing a comprehensive introduction to the history of the Icelandic Church in the later Middle Ages. In contrast to the better part of research into Iceland's medieval past, Sigurdson examines developments after the submission of Iceland to the king of Norway in 1262–1264 by examining all available categories of sources. Furthermore, Sigurdson acknowledges that her objects of study belonged to and operated within the framework of a transnational organisation, the archdiocese of Nidaros, which comprised the dioceses of Norway and the other Norse overseas dioceses in addition to Iceland. As the history of the Nidaros church province remains relatively unexplored for the late medieval period, Sigurdson's research adds valuable information to our limited knowledge about its elite clerics and clerical networks within the province.

Sigurdson first addresses the challenges facing Icelandic historians working on the developments of the Icelandic Church after 1262–1264. She continues with a general account of Iceland in the fourteenth century and a presentation of the relevant source material and the intellectual milieu that produced the surviving chronicles, bishops' sagas and documents. A milieu dominated by the elite clerics. Sigurdson then presents the chief developments within the Icelandic Church after 1264, giving legitimacy to the designation "the long fourteenth century." Against this backdrop, Sigurdson examines the formation of an elite clerical identity following the introduction of benefices and the organisational changes of the late thirteenth century. Sigurdson identifies a group of elite priests whose social status was in part determined by their control and ownership of landed property, the principal indication of high social status in fourteenth-century Iceland. This group of clerics benefitted from the growth of local ecclesiastical bureaucracy, notably with the introduction and further development of the diocesan offices of *officialis* and *ráðsmaðr* (vicar-general) and *prófastr* (provost). Sigurdson demonstrates how the elite clerics developed a shared identity based on elements including the holding of diocesan offices and advisory positions, a sense of interdependence within the group, the existence of domestic as well as

regional clerical networks, in addition to universal ecclesiastical values.

Sigurdson offers an informed and balanced assessment of the Icelandic church's development after 1262–1264 and of the predominantly Icelandic field of research. Without doubt, Sigurdson's own contribution to the field, most notably the identification of elements that contributed to the formation of an elite clerical identity, will serve as an example to future analyses of cleric identity within the Nidaros province. However, the wider implications of Sigurdson's results would have been easier to assess if they had been viewed in light of similar developments on the sub-episcopal level elsewhere. A broader perspective would have enabled discussions concerning local versus universal formation of elite identities and the role of the reform movement as opposed to the move towards "national" churches in these processes. There is a potential for theoretical advancement in Sigurdson's work that could have been realised with a stronger focus on the role of the universal church in the formation of local clerical identity in two of its most remote dioceses. Moreover, the analysis would have benefitted from a comprehensive discussion concerning the application of "identity" and "identity formation" in medieval research and a clarification of their use within the context of ecclesiastical history.

Sigurdson's analysis underlines the importance of the Icelandic elite clerics' relations to the Norwegian ecclesiastical community. However, the result of this analysis would likely have been strengthened if she had made full use of the Norwegian context and available Norwegian research. For instance, the examination of the so-called archiepiscopal benefices in Iceland (p. 126) and other discussions about benefices would have benefitted significantly from a comparison with conditions in Norway, where control of profitable benefices was an important factor in the conflict between the archbishop and his chapter. Sigrun Høgetveit Berg's extensive study of the canonry of Trondenes would have provided relevant information about church finances in the late medieval Nidaros province (for example *Trondenes kannikgjeld – makt og rikdom gjennom seinmellomalder og reformasjon*, University of Tromsø 2013). Additionally, Solrun Hommedal's excellent master thesis, which compares the role of the officialis in Iceland and Norway from 1290 to 1458, is of direct relevance to Sigurdson's analysis of the importance of the diocesan offices (*Dom og dommere: En undersøkelse av officialembetet i Norge og på Island 1290—1458*, NTNU 2010; available online)

A more comprehensive reading of the Norwegian scholarship would likely have produced answers to questions about Norwegian clerics' motivation for becoming bishops in Iceland and allowed for greater elabo-

ration of the topic of connections between Iceland and Norway in the fourteenth century. It is hardly surprising that Icelanders held clerical positions in Norway, when an Icelander, Hauk Erlendsson, held the most prominent judicial office in Norway and served as royal advisor in the first decades of the fourteenth century. A more thorough examination of Norwegian clerics' careers before they became bishops in Iceland is necessary to draw conclusions about their motivation. For instance, Audun Torbergsson Raude was one of the most powerful clerics in Norway before he became bishop of Hólar in 1313. As a Nidaros canon, he was one of the leaders of the chapter in a conflict with Archbishop Jørund in the 1290s and early 1300s. He was King Hákon V's treasurer in Nidaros and one of the king's trusted men. In addition, Audun held Trondenes canonry, the most profitable benefice in northern Norway. According to *Lárentius saga biskups*, Audun's fellow canons conspired against him in order to limit his influence over the king by choosing him as bishop of Hólar (see for example *Norsk biografisk leksikon*; available online)

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Jón Viðar Sigurðsson & Sverrir Jakobsson (eds.),
Sturla Þórðarson. Skald, Chieftain and Lawman,
Leiden: Brill 2017, ISBN 978-90-04-34235-4, 291 pp.

Sturla Þórðarson (1214–1284) is known as the author of two kings' sagas, *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar* and *Magnús saga Hákonarsonar*, the latter only extant in fragments, and the so-called *Íslendinga saga* which forms a part of the large *Sturlunga saga* compilation. He was also responsible for a redaction of *Landnámabók* usually referred to as *Sturlubók*. Sturla is further known as a poet and much of his poetry is found in *Sturlunga saga*. But Sturla is not only an author and poet, he was in his time perhaps primarily regarded as a leading chieftain in Iceland and a representative of the Norwegian king. Poetry and politics seem to have gone hand in hand in all his activities.

In 2014 it was 800 years since the birth of Sturla Þórðarson. This was marked with a conference in his memory in Reykjavík. Most of the

chapters in the book under review here were developed from papers presented at this conference. The book serves as a kind of sequel to a book published in 1988 by Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir and Jónas Kristjánsson based on a conference held in 1984 to commemorate Sturla's death in 1284. The relation between these two conferences is treated by Gunnar Harðarson in the final chapter of the book (see below).

The great interest in Sturla Þórðarson can also be seen in the rich scholarship concerning his various roles in thirteenth-century Iceland and Norway. Central works in recent decades are Guðrún Nordal's monograph *Ethics and action in thirteenth-century Iceland* (1998), which explores various ethical questions concerning e.g. family relations, sexuality and violence as they appear in the *Íslendinga saga* of Sturla Þórðarson, and Úlfar Bragason's *Ætt og saga* (2010) arguing for the close study of the literary aspects of the *Sturlunga saga* compilation which includes the *Íslendinga saga*.

The present book addresses a number of interesting aspects of Sturla Þórðarson, as a politician and chieftain and as a writer and poet, in twenty-two chapters. The subtitle *Skald, Chieftain and Lawman* indicates the themes that the editors regarded as central. These are, however, not the three themes that I see when I read the book. Rather, you could say that the two main aspects treated are poetics and politics in Sturla Þórðarson's life and work, perhaps with a stronger focus on his role as a poet and a user of the tools of literacy. The chieftain and lawspeaker are not really central objects of inquiry.

The work of editing chapters which are based on conference presentations is never easy. It is not always obvious how the chapters interrelate and sometimes the subjects of individual chapters may even be difficult to incorporate into the book. As I will return to below, I think the editors of the present volume have encountered both these problems when forming the book. There are three chapters that form a kind of introduction to the poet and politician Sturla Þórðarson and provide a natural starting point for the whole collection. It is hard, however, to discern any obvious plan in the order of the following chapters, except maybe that the key-note paper by R.I. Moore and the final chapter that forms a kind of summary and reflection on the themes of the conference together provide a conclusion. The intermediate chapters, I suggest, could have been ordered in a more coherent way that helped the readers in their quest for an understanding of Sturla Þórðarson and his works. In the following, therefore, I will treat the chapters, not in the order they appear in the volume, but rather in a way that indicates the interrelations between the different themes treated by the authors.

Of course my suggestions for an order of reading the chapters can be equally questioned; there are always choices and many possible ways of ordering chapters in an anthology.

As the published book appears, the three first chapters in the collection paint a background to Sturla Þórðarson's life and work and therefore form a natural starting point of departure; here I agree with the order. The first chapter provides an introduction of the politician Sturla Þórðarson written by the two editors, Jón Viðar Sigurðsson and Sverrir Jakobsson. This introduction with its focus on Sturla as a chieftain, however, relates in fact only to some of the chapters of the book. As an introductory chapter it could perhaps have given the reader a broader introduction also of the writer, poet and individual as we can discern him from our sources. It does, however, provide a useful introduction to the game of power in Iceland and in relation to Norway in Sturla Þórðarson's days, with detailed discussions of political moves as well as more belligerent ones.

The list of works attributed to Sturla Þórðarson is introduced and discussed in a chapter by Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir. She concentrates primarily on the four works that can be attributed to Sturla Þórðarson with certainty, that is *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar*, the fragmentary *Magnúss saga lagabætis*, a version of *Landnámabók* and the so-called *Íslendinga saga*. In her chapter, Guðrún Ása chooses to also treat one of the works where the attribution is less agreed on, that is on parts of the law code known as *Járnsiða*. I think it is a wise principal decision to limit this presentation to the works that are agreed on by most scholars today. A discussion of the more tentative attributions of other works to the Icelandic chieftain and the preservation of these texts in the extant source material would have made this chapter much longer and also rather more speculative.

Sturla Þórðarson appears as an educated and literate man, and the works attributed to him stretch over a number of literary genres. We know little in detail, however, about his education. Jón Viðar Sigurðsson presents a general introduction to the education of a man of Sturla's stature. This is a rather short chapter, the significance and width of the subject taken into consideration, and it only provides basic insights into what is known about the education of the elite in Iceland in the thirteenth century. It should be obvious, however, that a more thorough treatment could not be expected in this context and would have demanded an explicit focus on the education and learning of Sturla and his contemporaries.

Sturla Þórðarson's use of sources in *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar* and *Íslendinga saga* is the subject of two chapters in the collection. Randi

Bjørshol Wærdal discusses the oral tradition on which Sturla would have based some of his narrative and its relevance for the historian, in this case in the descriptions found in *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar*. After a general presentation of the debate about written and oral sources to Sturla Þórðarson's saga on King Hákon, Wærdal sets out to argue for the courtier Gautr from Mel as a possible oral source, first of all to the earlier years of the king's reign. The arguments are often formulated with caution and this is definitely a good mode, as the basis for suggesting oral sources generally for this work is rather thin. This does not, however, mean that it is not worth raising the question.

The use of references to charters and letters in the contemporary sagas with a focus on the works attributed to Sturla Þórðarson, *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar* and *Íslendinga saga* is discussed by Lena Rohrbach. Rohrbach argues that these references should primarily be seen as part of the narrative strategies of the writers and not necessarily reflect historical documents. More important, she concludes, are the attitudes to the use of written documents of the saga writers. In her discussion of the various uses of documents in the sagas under scrutiny, she argues that Sturla Þórðarson exhibits a command of the narrative technique of including documents that is exceptional but also part in a common reflection among the Norse writers on the use of the written word. She states:

This suggests that these innovations in Old Norse historiography have to be placed within a broader European trend that exhibits reflections on literacy practices in literary as well as historiographic contexts from the twelfth century onwards. The same trend was also taken up in medieval Icelandic ecclesiastical historiography, discernable in *Árna saga* and other Bishops' sagas, but it needed a talented author to turn sober references into a well-balanced narrative (106).

Two chapters in the collection explicitly treat Sturla Þórðarson as a poet and his use of poetry as a source in his historical works. In her contribution, Guðrún Nordal discusses how Sturla Þórðarson uses his own verse in his prose narratives, with a focus on *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar*. She presents a study of Sturla Þórðarson's use of his own poetry in relation to that of his older brother Óláfr. The latter composed his verses when Hákon Hákonarson was still alive and with the king as a more direct recipient, while Sturla composed his verses more or less at the time when he was writing the saga. The relation between the verses attributed to the two poets in the prose narrative therefore contributes to our general understanding of *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar* and the work of its author. From this study Guðrún Nordal argues that Sturla Þórðarson

played an “important role as the creator of *prosimetrum* in the latter part of the thirteenth century” (120). This claim is highly plausible, but the arguments could perhaps have been more explicit.

Roberta Frank sets out to re-establish the honour of Sturla Þórðarson as a poet. In her study she presents close readings of verses from all four poems attributed to Sturla, in four different meters, *hrynhent*, *kviðu-hátr*, *haðarlag* and *dróttkvætt*. She argues that we must read Sturla’s poetry more carefully to understand the underlying ambiguity of his verses and how they work in the prose context. Frank’s discussion is important, not least because it points out the difference in poetic evaluation and appreciation in different times. While scholars of our time have often regarded Sturla as a rather dull poet, his contemporaries were obviously of another opinion, more positive to his artistic ability. Frank concludes:

Sturla’s contemporaries admired his verse: *Sturlunga saga* begins by naming him not chieftain, historian, or lawman but *skáld*; it ends with King Magnús entreated to listen to Sturla’s verse: “Let him recite, for I am told he is a very great poet and his poem will be exceptionally good.” The king gives Sturla a positive review. He deserved nothing less (p. 147)

This could indicate that the focus of the present collection maybe should have been more on Sturla Þórðarson as a poet, but that will have to be a theme for future studies.

I now turn to a number of studies that treat Sturla Þórðarson as a writer related to his life and the milieux where he lived and worked. In an interesting chapter Helgi Þorláksson treats the alleged impartiality of Sturla Þórðarson. The chapter argues well for Sturla as a conscious politician forming *Íslendinga saga* to suit his purposes. Helgi concludes:

Íslendinga saga is often biased, subjective, partial. This fact should hardly surprise us. We have to realize that this work is apologetic and has its limitations. Its author was sophisticated and could take on different roles. Sturla may at times perplex readers of *Íslendinga saga* and *Sturlubók*, but that is only as long as they don’t see him as a politician and the king’s official. We should not forget the politician when we enjoy the texts of the author (211).

The perspective on Sturla as a subjective and creative writer depending on his time and personal environment is further strengthened by Úlfar Bragason who focuses on the relation between Sturla and his uncle Snorri Sturluson. The central argument of this chapter is that Sturla’s work should first and foremost be understood as literature, based on the

literary conventions of its time. The description of Snorri Sturluson in *Íslendinga saga* must therefore be analysed with these conventions in mind. Úlfar stresses that “Íslendinga saga is a product of the saga-writer’s values and his time, his view on people and issues, his affect and empathy” (171). This important focus on *Íslendinga saga* as a literary work composed by a creative author is gaining ground in relation to the more traditional use of the text as a historical document, a significant change in perspective which is displayed in most of the contributions to the present collection.

Auður Magnúsdóttir also takes a literary approach to the work of Sturla Þórðarson in her study of how women are described in *Íslendinga saga*. Women are generally not central in medieval writing and this is also the case in the Icelandic literature of the period. Auður argues, however, that it is definitely worthwhile to scrutinise more closely the descriptions Sturla makes in his work of his own kinswomen. She acknowledges the methodological difficulties of this study and the need for close reading:

However, in order to visualise women and the feminine in *Íslendinga saga*, we cannot only rely solely on the literal word, but must read the text with all the narrative interpretative tools available to the modern literary scholar. (182)

Auður Magnúsdóttir provides an original reading of the description of Sturla’s female cousins, the daughters of Snorri Sturluson, in *Íslendinga saga*, making them visible and individual agents within the saga. She concludes:

A close reading of *Íslendinga saga* reveals an author who despite his illusory objective approach is in every way involved in his own narrative. Although cleverly hidden, his emotions, sympathies and antipathies occasionally become visible. (191)

We have thereby become more aware both of the lives of women in Sturla’s days as well as of Sturla himself as an individual.

From this approach to Sturla as an author and as an individual agent in his environment in Iceland, the perspective changes to that of the court of Magnús Hákonarson. There are three chapters in the collection that could form a unit discussing the relation between *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar* and *Íslendinga saga* as two quite different descriptions of the rule of Hákon Hákonarson and his relation to Iceland and the Icelandic chieftains, and yet written by the same author. The three

authors agree that the two works are different, but to some extent they disagree about the conclusion. Hans Jakob Orning argues that when he wrote *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar*, Sturla Þórðarson was limited in his freedom as a writer by the proximity of the Norwegian king, Hákon's son Magnús. When he wrote *Íslendinga saga* later in life he was in Iceland, and could apply a more Icelandic perspective on the period when Icelandic chieftains struggled to find a way to live under the supremacy of the Norwegian king. Orning argues that Sturla did not "lie" outright (whatever *lie* would mean to a medieval writer) but rather that "[d]ifferent interpretations of the past created different pasts as well" (155).

Theodore M. Andersson comes to more or less the same conclusions in his discussion of the two works. He argues that there are two distinct lines of saga writing about the Norwegian kings, one with a clear Norwegian perspective and another with a more Icelandic bias. The two works by Sturla would from this point of view end up in different groups of sagas, with *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar* as an example of the Norwegian focus and *Íslendinga saga* as a representative of an Icelandic view on the events. Andersson concludes:

Where Sturla was free from centralized control, he has often been admired for his relative neutrality, but where he was subject to royal constraint, it is more difficult to assume a neutral posture. Sturla wrote what King Magnús and his courtiers wanted him to write. (167)

Ármann Jakobsson presents a rather different view of Sturla Þórðarson as a writer of *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar* and *Íslendinga saga*. He agrees that it "is tempting to juxtapose *Íslendinga saga*, his labour of love, with *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar*, a career move and a job like any other, undertaken to please the king" (194). Against this, he argues that Sturla is a servant of the Norwegian king throughout his life and that the two apparently different views are still representations of him as an author, someone who will always bring something of himself to any text he writes (195). Regarding our expectations of one or the other of the two works being more "true" than the other he concludes:

When it comes to the thirteenth century presented to us by Sturla Þórðarson, 'truth' is inevitably an opaque notion. His account is intimate and subjective and there is no way of avoiding the personal aspect. (199)

But Sturla Þórðarson was not only interested in his contemporary political and cultural life. He is also considered responsible for one of the re-

dactions of *Landnámabók*, the Icelandic book of the earliest settlement, the so-called *Sturlubók*. This redaction has received a clearly marked section of its own in the book, formed of four chapters.

In an introductory chapter Sveinbjörn Rafnsson presents the work *Landnámabók* (to the extent that it is meaningful to talk about a *work*). Sveinbjörn dates the origin of this work to c. 1100, arguing that this early version has been influential on Ari Þorgilsson's *Íslendingabók*, which dates to between 1122 and 1133. The main part of his discussion focuses on the three main extant versions of *Landnámabók*, the so-called *Melabók*, *Sturlubók* and *Hauksbók* redactions. In his discussion Sveinbjörn argues that much of what we find in the *Sturlubók* version should rather be related to the intentions of Sturla Þórðarson and his contemporaries in relation to their own needs of legitimisation for the kin and family of the elite in a changing world. His final comment on Sturla, that he “was born as a child of the Icelandic republic and died as a retired servant of the Norwegian king” sums up this argument concisely.

After this chapter I would have placed two studies that approach *Landnámabók* from the perspective of *memory studies*. Ann-Marie Long provides introductions to these theories and argues for the relevance they have for our understanding of Old Norse literature in general, as well as in the more limited context of Sturla Þórðarson's use of *Landnámabók* as it is extant in the *Sturlubók* version. She comes to a conclusion that echoes the quote above from Sveinbjörn Rafnsson:

Sturla, like Ari and Snorri, belonged to the native chieftain class. At a time when the legitimacy of the native aristocratic order was being questioned, he lionised and immortalised the past of his ancestors, a process which endowed the Sturlungar with intrinsic merit and privileged status, derived from genealogical links to prominent Norwegian ancestors. (68)

In the third chapter on *Landnámabók*, Verena Hoefig treats the tale of the first *landnámamenn* ('settlers'), Ingólfr Arnason and his foster brother Hjörleifr. Hoefig argues that much of this tale as it is presented in *Sturlubók* relates to similar tales of what she refers to as *divine twins* who form the origin of a city (e.g. Romulus and Remus) or original settlers (e.g. Hengist and Horsa). Hoefig's approach to the material and to the use of theory is more orientated towards the material than Long's; together they represent well the relevance of studies of cultural memory in Old Norse scholarship. It is interesting, finally, to note that Hoefig, more than the first two authors, argues that Sturla Þórðarson writes in opposition to the Norwegian king rather than being the retired servant.

In a fourth, and last chapter focusing on *Landnámabók* Gísli Sigurðsson relates more closely to the main subject of the book, Sturla Þórðarson and his activities as a writer of poetry and prose narratives. In this study the idea of outlaws leaving Norway for Iceland in order to escape Haraldr hárfagri is challenged and seen as invented by the Sturlungar, primarily Snorri Sturluson in his *Heimskringla* and Sturla Þórðarson in *Landnámabók*. Gísli treats the relation between the narrative about Grettir Ásmundarson in *Grettis saga* and Snorri's narrative about the exodus to Iceland. He argues that these narratives relate to a larger *immanent saga* based both on oral traditions and more contemporary needs to legitimise the Sturlungar family and their relation to the Norwegian king, be it Haraldr hárfagri, Óláfr Haraldsson or the more contemporary Hákon Hákonarson (who instigated the killing of Snorri Sturluson).

One chapter in the collection treats Sturla Þórðarson as an encyclopaedic writer, responsible for the collection of encyclopaedic works, presumably in a now lost manuscript, the so-called *Codex Reseniani*, reconstructed with the help of various later copies that have survived. Sverrir Jakobsson takes this reconstructed collection as his starting point in exploring the encyclopaedic background of Sturla's other works. From his analysis of this rather uncertain material Sverrir Jakobsson concludes:

In the *Encyclopaedia*, we can see Sturla Þórðarson at work as a historian from the late 1240s to the time of his death in 1284. His erudition was such as one would expect from a secular official like the lawspeaker, but his interest in chronology, astronomy and mathematics might be evidence of a clerical education, wherever Sturla acquired it. (222)

The parallels to a later Icelandic collector, Haukr Erlendsson, who wrote large parts of what today is known as *Hauksbók*, are mentioned. The erudition demonstrated in the extant texts and manuscripts related to these members of the Icelandic and Norwegian elite provides an image of a group of men with interests in a wide range of topics that were central in European scholarship in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century. It should be said, however, that there is still some uncertainty both concerning the attribution of *Codex Reseniani* to Sturla and the extent to which Haukr was responsible for the whole collection found in *Hauksbók*.

Finally Sturla Þórðarson's role as a lawman is touched on in one chapter. Patricia Pires Boulhosa points out the relevance of reading the sources closely in her study of the reception of the thirteenth century law *Járnsíða*. Her discussion of *Árna saga biskups* focuses on how we should

understand the narrative of the saga and is critical of earlier scholars' tendency to look for factual information rather than the underlying arguments of the narrative. Boulhosa presents a new understanding of the processes in which the introduction of *Járnsiða* in Iceland took place. Her attempt to connect her discussion to Sturla Þórðarson, however, is not convincing; this study has no real relevance for the main subject of the book, the chieftain and writer Sturla Þórðarson, but this does not make the chapter less interesting and relevant for those interested in the processes leading up to the introduction of the new law *Jónsbók*. And it does of course also contribute to our understanding of the time of Sturla Þórðarson.

One of the chapters based on papers from the conference is more difficult to incorporate in the collection, and I wonder if it should perhaps not have been included. Philadelphia Ricketts argues that

[d]etailed, labour-intensive research is necessary to reconstruct families in order to calculate dates of birth, marriage, and death, so vital for a study of marital demographics (33–34)

Her presentation of this work with a focus on women in relation to Sturla Þórðarson, however, does not provide many new insights as far as I can judge. She states as a conclusion concerning arranged marriages:

We should not assume that every relationship was made by parents for their own or their family's benefit, simply because we do not have evidence to the contrary. Þórdís Snorradóttir and her daughter Kolfinna Þorvaldsdóttir are proof that sometimes individuals acted on their own initiative and to further their own ends. (43)

The long discussion of demographics established from a narrative work rather than administrative data, however, is not convincing in itself, and the result concerning the two women mentioned is there to see for anyone who reads the narrative, even without any labour-intensive demographic analysis.

Two more chapters are included in the book. In what seems to be the printed version of a key-note paper, R.I. Moore discusses history and identity in twelfth-century Eurasia. This chapter provides interesting reading, based on Moore's earlier work, but it has little to do with either Sturla Þórðarson or his time. It is of course relevant to print this paper as a documentation of the conference, but perhaps it should have been introduced in a way that made it clearer that it did not relate very much to the topic of the book.

Finally there is a concluding chapter by Gunnar Harðarson discussing the content of the conference and how it differed from earlier scholarship and related to the above mentioned conference of 1984. His reflections on the changes in our views of both Sturla Þórðarson and the literate culture of which he was a part are interesting; and they are definitely to the point. He states:

Thus, at 1984's *Sturlustefna*, the issue of Sturla's subjectivity did make an appearance, despite the continued prevalence of previous conceptions of his objectivity. However, at the conference in 2014, there was a marked change, in that Sturla's subjectivity became a common thread in many of the papers, despite its not having been the main topic of the conference or the papers. (p. 248)

This observation also describes concisely many of the chapters in the present book, as should be clear from my discussion above. Sturla as the writer of narratives, reconstructions of memory rather than objective description is a central theme throughout the collection.

Above I mentioned the problems that editors of volumes based on conferences are confronted with. Should all papers from the conference be printed, do some of them not live up to the standards or are they perhaps not relevant for the theme(s) of the planned book? The editor can obviously choose not to include papers on these grounds, but it is always a difficult decision to take. From my presentation of the chapters it should be clear that I think the editors could perhaps have taken some more active decisions. It is, for example, not evident that the chapter on twelfth-century Eurasia has a place in this context, even if it is definitely an interesting chapter based on the author's earlier research.

Another problem that an editor encounters concerns the ordering of the chapters. The editors of the present volume have definitely made some choices here, and as soon as you make choices there are always other possible choices you could (and in the opinion of some should) have made. In my presentation I have ordered the chapters in what I think could have been a more logical way, where they in my opinion would have formed a more coherent unit.

The editors could perhaps have used the chosen undertitle of this volume, *Skald, Chieftain and Lawman*, to structure the collection. But this seems not to have been the case, and further, this title is not really representative of the chapters of the collection. The main focus seems rather to be on Sturla as the author of various kinds of literature, primarily *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar*, *Íslendinga saga* and *Landnámabók*, texts that are central to many of the contributions, but also *Magnús*

saga Hákonarsonar, the law *Járnsiða* and the lost encyclopaedic work attributed to Sturla. In the final chapter of the book Gunnar Harðarson points to the focus of many of the chapters on Sturla as an individual, his role as a subjective narrator and the status of his works as narratives rather than objective and descriptive works of history. Perhaps this focus should have guided the organisation of the papers in a similar way, as I suggest with my order of presentation?

There are in many cases obvious references between the chapters of the collection, but it is more or less only in Hans Jacob Orning's chapter that some of these internal references are made explicit (and Orning's references in themselves point to one obvious ordering of this chapter together with the ones by Theodore M. Andersson and Ármann Jakobsson as suggested above). Here the editors could have done some further work: a more explicit system of references between the chapters would definitely have been of great help for the reader of the book.

It is always the role of the reviewer to point to weak points in the work under review. When this is done, however, there should also be room for positive comments. The reading of this book has been highly rewarding to the present reviewer. The book as a whole provides many new insights into the work and life of Sturla Þórðarson and his time. It also presents new aspects of this work and introduces modern scholarship in the field of thirteenth-century textual culture.

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Dieter Strauch, *Mittelalterliches nordisches Recht bis ca. 1500. Eine Quellenkunde*, 2. völlig neu bearbeitete und erweiterte Auflage, Berlin & Boston: De Gruyter 2016 (Ergänzungsbande zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde. Herausgegeben von Heinrich Beck, Sebastian Brather, Dieter Geuenich, Wilhelm Heizmann, Steffen Patzold & Heiko Steuer. Band 97), ISSN 978-3-11-046618-8; e-ISBN (PDF) 978-3-11-046729-1; e-ISBN (EPUB) 978-3-11-046626-3; ISSN 1866-7678, XXXIX + 912 pp.

The first edition of this work, which was published in 2011, was dealt with in a review in *Journal of Northern Studies* [6], 2, 2012, pp. 115–117 where it was stated there that the volume constituted a great reference work. The book, both the first and now the second edition, provides a broad and well-informed description of the Nordic legal system from the Viking Age up to about 1500, and the different sources in which this system is found, not only in laws but also in other places. After a short description of the existing sources, the introduction gives an overview of the conditions in Norway, Iceland, Denmark and Sweden. It is followed by seven chapters where the conditions in different nations and areas are described in great detail. First of all, the Norwegian legal sources are accounted for, but also the conditions on the Faeroes (among others *Seyðabrævið* and *Hundabræv*), Orkney, Shetland (*Hjaltland*) and the Hebrides (*Sudreyar*), the Isle of Man and Ireland. The next chapter deals with Iceland and Greenland, among other things, the Allting and Grágás. The information available about Greenland conditions is also mediated. The third chapter deals with the Danish legal sources and covers the Zealand law, the Skåne law and the Jutland law, as well as the conditions in the Danelaw. The short Chapter 4 describes the traces that still exist of Normandy law, for example in terminology. The following chapter deals in detail with Sweden, and comprises more than 200 pages. Here one finds the Older and Younger Västgöta Law, the Östgöta Law and other Göta Laws, and furthermore the Uppland Law, the Södermanna Law, the Hälsinge Law, the Guta Law, the Bjärkö Law and the Visby Urban Law, among others. The Country Law and the Urban Law are also accounted for. A special section deals with *Um styrilse konunga ok höfðinga*. The conditions in Finland are treated in a special chapter, where fishing rights but also the Bjärkö Law are included. The

last chapter deals with Scandinavian law in Russia. The bulk of the second edition—although it is described on the title page as a “völlig neu bearbeitete und erweiterte Auflage”—naturally consists of the previous edition, but in some cases there are additions and new standpoints. As regards sources, one can see that Dieter Strauch has included special sections with material from runic inscriptions. One such section can be found early on in the introduction (p. 6). Throughout the book, there are sections about the testimony of runic sources, see pp. 172 f., 345 f., pp. 591 ff., but the runic material is also mentioned in other places where, as a legal source, it does not really contribute anything to the discussion. Research from recent years by Per-Axel Wiktorsson and Göran B. Nilsson is taken into consideration in the sections on the Västgöta Laws (pp. 379 ff.). The description of the Jutland law (pp. 307 ff.) in the previous edition has also been revised and in the preface to the second edition (p. IX) the most important revisions are stated. The book is concluded with an account of sources and literature that comprises almost 200 tightly printed pages. Throughout the book, its authors show good familiarity with quoted literature in different languages, but it is naturally difficult to cover everything that exists in this area. As regards for example the ethnic groups that lived in the medieval nations’ marginal areas, such as Birkarls and Kvenians/Kvens/Kainulaiset (pp. 604 ff.), the research situation might have been updated—among other things regarding the background to *kainulaiset* with reference to works by the Finnish etymologist Jorma Koivulehto, just to mention one single example—but it is naturally the case that what is marginal is more difficult to be familiar with. There are extensive person, place and subject indexes in the book, and of special interest here is the list in the subject index of important lexemes in the legal sources. The book has a considerable number of maps. Dieter Strauch’s *Mittelalterliches nordisches Recht bis ca. 1500* was an important work even in its first edition, and in this new edition it has been supplemented in some places and made up to date regarding the research situation. The work has a lasting value as a reference work on medieval Nordic history.

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Ditlev Tamm & Helle Vogt (eds.), *The Danish Medieval Laws. The Laws of Scania, Zealand and Jutland*, London & New York: Routledge 2016 (Medieval Nordic Laws), ISBN 978-1-138-95135-8, xiv + 349 pp.

As pointed out above in connection with the Guta law and the Guta saga, Routledge publishes translations into English of the oldest Nordic laws. The second volume in the series treats of the Danish laws, with Ditlev Tamm and Helle Vogt as translators and commentators. It contains translations of the Skåne law, Valdemar's Zealand law, Erik's Zealand law and the Jutland law, and the volume also contains the Skåne Church law and three short royal ordinances. In the introductory part of the volume, there is a broad description of Denmark around the year 1200 and of the role of the Church. The laws and the legal texts are described and the language of the laws and the translation of them are also dealt with. The last-mentioned section describes some of the problems connected with the translation work, not least the general problem of finding good English equivalents of Old Danish words. Among other things, it is mentioned that the translators have avoided translating *manbot* with 'wergeld,' which is used by law historians about *English* conditions, since it gives the wrong associations; instead they have chosen to translate it with 'man's compensation.' Various stylistic considerations are described by the editor, and among many other things it is pointed out that alliterations and pleonasm "may well be examples of a literary style, rather than a reflection of an oral tradition" (p. 17). Insightful accounts are given of what the laws can tell us about medieval life. This part of the introduction is extensive and highly worth reading. It is followed by the translations with introductions and commentaries. Regarding the Codex Runicus edition of the Skåne law, it is said that "[p]ossibly, the use of runes in the manuscript is merely a revivalist expression of a historical fascination" (p. 50), and this may well be the case. Of the Zealand laws, Valdemar's is older, while Erik's may be regarded as a kind of supplement. The latter caused special problems for the translator, since "[t]he law differs markedly from the other laws in its rugged language. Being full of long and tortuous sentences, it is quite a challenge to translate into readable English" (p. 153). In the last section of the book, there are word lists, both a commented word list based on English terms and one with Old Danish words translated into English. In the former list one finds, for example, the word *apple-children* (*Æplesbørn*), which is said to refer to "Children who are so young that they play with

apples” (p. 300), a word that is only found in the Skåne law (Ch. 50). The meaning is obvious—it is a matter of a minor child—but is it really related to playing with apples? Could not the word equally well refer to the child’s fresh complexion (which is compared to an apple)? Words like *belt-fine* (*Lindebot*), *food-ban* (*Matban*) and *Seizure* (*Nam*) also arouse interest. The comments given in connection with the translations are usually short, and one misses the broad commentary that is found in the edition of Guta law and Guta saga; see about this edition above. It is, however, fully understandable that the series editors have allowed individual editors to work in different ways. To tighten up the work too much would require far greater, perhaps insurmountable, efforts from the series editors, nor is it certain that all editors would tolerate very rigorous principles. I think that by allowing differences among the volumes, the series has chosen a practicable method.

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Per-Axel Wiktorsson (ed.), *Schacktavelslek med Äktenskapsvisan*, Stockholm: Sällskapet Runica et mediævalia; Centrum för medeltidsstudier, Stockholms universitet 2016 (Runica et mediævalia. Editiones 9), ISBN 978-91-88568-67-0, 126 pp.

This is an edition of two medieval texts, *Schacktavelslek* [‘the Chess set’] and *Äktenskapsvisan* [‘the Marriage Song’]. *Schacktavelslek* is versified political pamphlet reflecting the discussions in Sweden in the 1460s, while *Äktenskapsvisan* is a burlesque text dealing with the hardships of marriage. The editor’s introduction describes the characters and the manuscripts in which the texts are found. We are also told what the different chess pieces in the text represent: the king, the queen, the bishops (the judges), the knights, the rooks (high officials) and the pawns in different positions (farmers, smiths, butchers, merchants, physicians, innkeepers, guardians, folk musicians etcetera). It is noteworthy that the bishops are not mentioned in this connection. That *Äktenskapsvisan* has been included in the text is somewhat surprising. Wiktorsson thinks that it might be regarded as an example “regarding the queen’s tolerance and may be said to be a way of depriving the royal pair of a certain measure of courteousness” (p. 29). However, one may wonder *why* the

author of *Äktenskapsvisan* chose to do so. Special sections account for the authors that *Schacktavelslek* refers to, as well as the proverbs and material taken from the Bible. The carefully transcribed texts from AM 191 fol. (Codex Askabyensis) and RA, D 3 (Fru Elins bok), respectively, are placed in parallel with each other. It is noticeable that the text in RA D 3 ends with strophe 1504, whereas in AM 191 fol., it does not end until strophe 3322; “it seems as if the client (or the scribe) of RA, D 3 was only interested in the beginning of the work, where the higher classes are dealt with: king, queen, judges (bishops) and knights,” according to Wiktorsson (p. 24). The edition is exemplary, but it would have been valuable if the language of the texts had also been commented on. These late medieval texts would have been worth it.

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Per-Axel Wiktorsson, *Skrivare i det medeltida Sverige, 1–4*, Skara: Skara stiftshistoriska sällskap 2015 (Skara stiftshistoriska sällskaps skriftserie 82), ISBN 978-91-86681-26-5, 577 + 512 + 486 + 444 pp.

This work, which comprises more than 2,000 pages, is basically the result of a lifelong research interest on the part of the author, but concretely also of a research project that was implemented with support from Stiftelsen Riksbankens Jubileumsfond (‘the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation’) in the early 1990s. A substudy of scribes in the medieval Skara diocese was presented by the author in 2006. In the present study, the author tries to find out who were active as scribes in medieval Sweden. In total, no less than 935 scribes are listed here. Of these, 765 are named in volumes 1–3, the others in volume 4. In this painstaking identification process, the author naturally relies on previous research, but the final conclusions are the author’s own. The study is based on a survey of a large material. The extensive register of sources contains different types of manuscript material listed according to place and archive. Thus, it records a large number of parchment and paper letters at the National Archives in Stockholm, a few letters in the Nordic Museum and the National Historical Museum and a large material from Uppsala University Library, as well as material from Gothenburg’s Provincial Archives, the Cathedral Library and the Rogge Library in Strängnäs, Linköping’s Diocese and Provincial Library and a large number of other Swedish archives. Archives in the

other Nordic countries and Europe are also listed. The monograph starts with a brief survey of medieval Swedish palaeography, the development of writing, different styles, writing schools etcetera. One might have expected that the subject would have motivated the author to include some European perspectives. We still do not know what the alphabet designed by Archbishop Birger Gregersson in the late fourteenth century represented. Wiktorsson summarises earlier views, but alternative interpretations may also exist. How the individual manuscripts can be attributed to individual scribes is accounted for in a section in the introduction. On this point, there is naturally a degree of uncertainty, but there is also scope for safer attributions. Some documents contain the phrase *med egen hand* 'in my own hand' (or corresponding expressions) or first person *jag* 'I', and in these cases the scribe can probably be regarded as having been identified. At other times, when a clergyman has issued a letter in his own parish, Wiktorsson assumes that the clergyman is probably the writer, and the same is likely to be true when a clergyman writes a letter about his own estate or about private matters, a receipt etcetera. All these assumptions sound plausible. As regards notes on ownership, the identified owner of a certain book is assumed to be the writer. These criteria, together with a few others, are accounted for (pp. 27 ff.) and form the basis of a methodological section of general interest. In the 935 "scribes' articles" one finds, where available, the name of the scribe, information about diocese and activities and a list of the manuscripts attributed to the scribe in question. Moreover, with reference to different criteria, attempts are made to state *why* these sources can reasonably be related precisely to the scribe in question. The style used is described, but here the author has had to confine himself to the design of *g, w, æ, ø, y, -n, k* and *h*. Where available, language forms that characterise the scribes are accounted for, as is the way they write their name. One thing one observes is that the scribe's name is rendered in a normalised Swedish form. Thus *Hans Brask* is found (volume 2, pp. 42 f.) under *Johan Brask*, which is certainly a bit surprising. In volume 4, there are some indexes: first of different letter types, then of different word forms and finally of persons and places. The four volumes also render photographically letters produced by the scribes. In this work, we are given a valuable description of people in the Swedish Middle Ages, while at the same time we learn a great deal about how these persons wrote. The author, but also the editor, Skara Stiftshistoriska Sällskap, are to be congratulated on this scholarly work.

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