

Leeds Studies in English

New Series XLIII

2012

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Leeds Studies in English

<www.leeds.ac.uk/lse>

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2012

It is difficult to be irritated with Anderson for long, however. His writing style is uneven and at times slapdash, but never lacks life, and his book may give the impression (long though it is) of being a rushed job, but it leaves no doubt as to his enthusiasm for his subject. And the enthusiasm is infectious. We may not agree with all his ideas and comparisons, but he has given us a wealth of comparative material on which to base our disagreements, and a stimulus to develop our own ideas on that basis.

RORY McTURK

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Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 2: From c. 1035 to c. 1300. Edited by Kari Ellen Gade, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages, 2. Turnhout: Brepols, 2009. cvi + 916pp. ISBN 978-2-503-51897-8. €140

The second of eight projected volumes to be published from the Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages project, itself published in two parts, *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas* is the companion to *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 1: From Mythic Times to c. 1035*, edited by Diana Whaley. The project aims to produce a new edition of the corpus of skaldic and runic poetry with English translations and relevant apparatus.

As in other volumes already published in the series, this volume contains much introductory material, including lists of abbreviations and of the sigla used in the volume, and a glossary of technical terms. The introduction includes an exhaustive discussion of the manuscripts and editions of the kings' sagas used in this project, a summary of metre and poetic diction, and biographies of kings and other dignitaries who are the subjects of the poetry. This material is useful and generally well laid-out, although I found the choice to order the biographies of kings alphabetically (by name) rather than chronologically (by reign) confusing, making the editor's summaries of royal succession and dynastic disputes unnecessarily complicated.

What is missing in the introductory material is a sense of the political and cultural context. Gade provides a somewhat cursory examination of the prose context of the kings' sagas, for the most part rehearsing an old discussion of the role of poetry to corroborate or verify the prose accounts of kings' sagas. She does suggest a further use for the poetry, in creating an official narrative for events subject to multiple points of view. However, she does not discuss the effect of political and cultural developments from the eleventh to thirteenth centuries on the style or function of the poetry that chronicled this period. Even her royal biographies have a very narrow focus, concentrating on the events described in the poems. As a result, they fail to contextualise these events within the history of Scandinavia or the rest of Europe. This lack is particularly jarring given that the poetry deals primarily with matters of high politics, from the battle of Stamford Bridge in 1066 and the First Crusade to the emperors of Byzantium.

In the realm of cultural history, this corpus provides fruitful evidence for the contact between Scandinavia and the rest of Europe. Three *lausavísur* from *Orkneyinga saga* in honour of Ermengarde of Narbonne, a prominent patron of courtly literature, point to the growing importance of courtly romance in the Norse-speaking world. As such, this corpus is a reminder that the period in question was a time in which the Scandinavian rulers looked increasingly southwards, and became firmly involved in the political and cultural developments of the high Middle Ages.

Reviews

The goal of the Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages project is to replace Finnur Jónsson's standard edition, *Norsk-isländske Skjaldedigtning*, with a modern edition of the skaldic poetry corpus. This edition attempts to displace Finnur's single, authoritative readings with fidelity to manuscript sources, as well as an awareness of the ambiguity and multiplicity of many of these sources. The edition is thus based on a thorough assessment of all known manuscript evidence, as well as a review of previous editions and commentaries. The project also includes a searchable electronic edition where further material, including manuscript images, is available. In its printed form, of course, the thoroughness of this editing project can become overwhelming to the non-expert. To take a straightforward example, the poetry is examined stanza by stanza, with appended translation and commentary; a broader readership might find it more helpful to be presented with entire poems. All in all, however, this edition is another fine product of a meticulous and painstaking editorial project, a remarkable achievement, and a testimony to the dedication of its editors.

ERIKA SIGURDSON

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Texts and Traditions of Medieval Pastoral Care: Essays in Honour of Bella Millett. Edited by Cate Gunn and Catherine Innes-Parker. Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2009. xx + 217pp. ISBN 9781903153291. £50

These thirteen essays dedicated to Bella Millett, aptly described by Derek Pearsall in his warm-hearted preface as a 'wonderful scholar' (p. xiv), are complemented by a list of publications by the dedicatee on pp. xv–xvii. In their equally warm introduction Cate Gunn and Catherine Innes-Parker refer to Millett's approach as 'magisterial, thorough and correct, yet acknowledging variations; never boastful but always respectful of her material; never assuming knowledge in her readers; but never patronizing' (p. 1). Anyone who has had the privilege of being associated with Bella Millett or of using her publications will easily endorse this view. In these publish-or-perish times when far too much is produced far too early without adequate time for the ripening of ideas or the full testing of hypotheses one is struck more by the quality and impact (to use a modern buzzword in its proper sense) of her publications than their quantity — though this is not unimpressive, either. Bella Millett has never shied away from the difficult or the intractable in her work, and many of us who share Pearsall's view of *Ancrene Wisse* as being 'one of the great achievements [...] of all English prose' (p. xiv) are grateful for the time and scholarly energy she has spent editing this and related works both in traditional and electronic modes. The contributions here largely succeed in continuing this tradition of exacting scholarship.

The essays are set out in a broadly chronological order and seek to reflect Millett's own interests as well as representing some of the best of the work being currently produced. Because the volume has a theme (even if sometimes loosely interpreted), it does not suffer from the usual problem that besets *Festschriften*, where well-meaning contributors produce material that has been lying about in their bottom drawers waiting for some opportunity to be published but bears no relation to the dedicatee. The book opens with E. A. Jones's '“Vae Soli”: Solitaries and Pastoral Care' and closes with Alexandra Barratt's '“Take a Book and Read”: Advice for Religious Women'. In between there is a wide range of material: 'Scribal Connections in Late Anglo-Saxon England' (Elaine Trehearne); 'Gerald of Wales, the *Gemma*