

velopments together. While it could have benefitted from additional proofreading, this does not detract from the overall quality of the work, which is a valuable addition to the scholarly discourse. The analysis itself is holistic and interdisciplinary, and draws upon a variety of scholarship from different fields, including history, archaeology, numismatics, history of philosophy, and art history, to augment the author's reading of the primary source material. The end result is an overall excellent comparative study, and, in addition to its value as a scholarly work, its thorough treatment of quite a broad scope makes it well suited as didactic material, either as a general introduction to the Scandinavian High Middle Ages at undergraduate levels, or at more advanced levels as a case study on *Polity Consolidation*.

References

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Stefka G. Eriksen, *Oversatt litteratur i middelalderens Norge*, Oslo: Cappelen Damm akademisk 2024, ISBN 9788202753405, 298 pp.

This book deals with translations of medieval literature in Norway. Starting in the thirteenth century, a considerable literary cultural heritage was made available to the Norwegian elite of the time thanks to the many translations produced, primarily during the reign of King Håkon Håkonsson (1217–1263) but also during the reigns of his closest successors. The various kinds of literature made available through these translations are presented in the book, which also provides a picture of those who commissioned the translations, the translators, the readership and why these works often became so popular. There had, of course, been contacts between Norway and continental Europe also prior to the reign of Håkon Håkonsson, and these are addressed in a section on the Europeanisation of Norway. The author points out that the literary activities in Norway must be viewed in relation to writing milieus in Iceland, which is a reasonable starting point. All of this is covered in Chapter 1, which also contains a concluding section on writing, translation and reading in the Middle Ages.

In Chapters 2–11, ten different translations of French, Latin or German origin are presented. The first one is the Old Norse version of one of the best-known romantic stories of the Middle Ages, the legend of Tristan and Isolde, which is a translation of a French verse novel by Thomas d'Angleterre. Motifs from this legend subsequently appeared in many works of Old Norse literature. This is followed by an account of the novels of court poet Chrétien de Troyes, which in Norway appear as *Parcevals saga*, *Ivens saga* and *Erex saga*. French *lais* ['songs'] inspired *Strengleikar*, a collection of 21 short stories about kings, queens, knights and others, and their lives, love affairs, and intrigues, which the reader is acquainted with in Chapter 4. It is not known who

translated *Strengleikar* but there is good reason to assume that it was a clergyman. The following chapter treats of *Möttuls saga*, which belongs to the continental fabliau tradition, a tradition that thematises women's chastity and norms of marital loyalty and solidarity within the court. Next, the author discusses *Elíss saga ok Rósamundar*, which is based on an anonymous French *chanson de geste*. *Pamphilus Saga* stems from a popular Latin pseudo-Ovidian story on the art of love. Another text of Latin origin is a dialogue between personifications of courage and fear, *Viðræða æðru ok hugrekki*, which goes back to a collection of morality texts from the twelfth century, *Moralium dogma philosophorum*. Chapter 8 presents the Old Norse chivalry tale about Didrik of Bern, *Diðreks Saga*, which is of German origin but also includes older Nordic material about heroes such as Sigurd Fafnesbane. The next chapter is devoted to *Barlaams saga og Josaphats*, a story about the Indian prince Josaphat's meeting with God through the agency of the hermit Barlaam. This is originally a legend about the life of Buddha which over time was given a Christian guise and became very popular in medieval Europe. On pages 187 ff., there is a section well worth reading which aims to approach the sagas' medieval public through a detailed analysis of two of the main manuscripts. This section leaves one wanting more on this topic. *Alexanders Saga* exemplifies a branch of medieval literature dealing with stories of Greek and Roman mythology and history, including texts about the Trojan War (Chapter 10), while *Flóres Saga ok Blankiflúr* and *Partalopa Saga* represent another category of the translated literature which bears resemblances with both chivalry literature and hagiography; in this connection, the Swedish *Eufemiavisorna* (Chapter 11) naturally come to mind.

As can be seen, the survey presents many different literary traditions, genres, and discourses whereby the Norwegian courts and aristocratic circles who read these works were introduced to European continental literature that gave them insights into world history, and religious and chivalrous patterns. However, the translated texts were produced in a context of *lokalproduserte tekster* ['locally produced texts'] such as sermons, royal sagas, pedagogic literature, and administrative texts, as explained in Chapter 12. Chapter 13 provides an overall perspective of the translated literature. Lastly, the author attempts to trace the literary and cultural influence of these texts on later forms of storytelling, and discusses

hva denne nye forståelsen av norsk middelalderkultur og historie kan fortelle om oss selv, ikke minst hva grunnen kan være til at disse middelalderfortellingene lever i beste velstående den dag i dag, i en uendelig rekke av filmer, serier, spill och mange andre medier. (p. 252)

[‘what this new understanding of Norwegian medieval literature and history can tell us about ourselves, not least what the reason might be that these medieval stories are still very much alive, in an endless row of films, series, games and many other media.’]

However, the author's answers to these interesting questions are only very broadly formulated (p. 266).

The fact that information about content, thematic high points, stylistic charac-

teristics, tradition, and literary influences recurs in many of the individual chapters sometimes makes the presentation a bit mechanical and superficial. There are occasional astute observations in the book, but these tend to get lost in the broad presentation. Unfortunately, overall perspectives also tend to retreat into the background, even though some such perspectives are highlighted in the last chapter. The book is more of an encyclopaedia of the medieval literature treated, but as such it is a well-documented and well-informed work, not least in view of the 820 footnotes.

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Josef Eskhult (ed.), *Georg Stiernhielm. Linguistic Works. Volume 1. Phonology, Morphology, Semiotics, Sound Symbolism and Transformational Grammar and Semantics. Unpublished Manuscripts Edited with Introduction; Georg Stiernhielm. Linguistic Works. Volume 2. Etymology, Historical and Comparative Language Studies and Programme for the Renewal of the Swedish Language. Unpublished Manuscripts and Early Prints Edited with Introduction, Translation of De linguarum origine praefatio, and Reception Studies* (Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis. Studia Latina Upsaliensia 38:1–2), Uppsala: Uppsala University 2023, ISBN 9789151311036; 9789151311043, 561 + 544 pp.

The above two volumes are a critical edition of the linguistic works of George Stiernhielm (1598–1672). In the first volume, we are presented with this versatile scholar's texts on phonology, morphology, semiotics, sound symbolism, grammatical variability, and semantics, and in the second one, based on unpublished manuscripts, his texts on etymology and historical and comparative language research, as well as a programme for the renewal of the Swedish language. A great deal of research has been devoted to Stiernhielm's *Hercules*, for example by Hjalmar Lindroth, Axel Friberg, Bernt Olsson, Eva Melkas and Nils Ekedal. Stiernhielm's language theory and lexemes have also been the focus of studies by Carl Ivar Ståhle, and his rhetoric by the above-mentioned Bernt Olsson. Stiernhielm stands out as an intellectual giant of his time.

He was born as Göran Olofsson in Vika, Dalarna, the son of mine owner and bailiff Olof Markvardsson and his wife Karin Mattsdotter. After schooling in Uppsala, he departed on a decade-long educational journey to Germany where he pursued studies at the universities of Wittenberg, Greifswald and Helmstedt. His contacts with contemporary great Swedish scholars such as Johannes Bureus and Johan Skytte, as well as with language researchers and historians on the European continent, contributed greatly to his intellectual development.

Chapter 2 presents a well-informed account of other aspects of his fascinating official career, and a following chapter (pp. 83 ff.) treats of his prolific production of both published and unpublished works. The subsequent chapters (pp. 113 ff.) provide context by describing his language theories on the different levels of language and his grammatical-rhetorical theories. Here, Eskhult places Stiernhielm in a history of