

been imported, studied, and transcribed in Iceland in copious quantities before vernacular texts were produced. As a specific instance of a possibly overlooked influence, he suggests that saga genealogies may have had biblical models. Marina Mundt's "Skiftende syn på *Njáls saga*" (208–22) offers a brief survey of scholarship and opinion concerning *Njáls saga*, beginning with the edition by Olaus Olavius (1772) and terminating with Sigurður Sigurmundsson's renewed speculation about authorship (1989). Complementing other chapters in this volume, she demonstrates the rich variety of approaches to this much-loved saga by singling out various well-known examples of aesthetic, historical, sociological, juridical, and theological criticism.

The volume is introduced with a succinct appreciation of the honorand's career and contributions to the field (particularly on the lexicographical front) and rounded off with a list of his publications. Overall, this is an attractive book with readable fonts, robust binding, and good paper stock. It is a pity that more effort has not gone into bringing about uniformity in format, for example in the bibliographies appended to chapters. Numerous misprints also appear, more than I can take space to itemize here. Special characters and accented letters (such as ý) have sometimes failed to convert correctly from the source files. In English- and French-language text the form of the apostrophe is often incorrect. Material could have been proof-read and bibliographical references checked more thoroughly. The chapter by Hermann Pálsson is evidently lacking the final few sentences. In Andersson's chapter the word "humor" (final sentence, 9) seems to have been erroneously replaced by the word "honor."

In conclusion, and despite these incidental blemishes, I can confidently say that this presentation truly honours its distinguished recipient by showing, implicitly as much as programmatically, how his forward-looking contributions to the interpretation of the sagas have influenced two generations of scholars and remain a living part of discussions at the present day.

Russell Poole

James E. Knirk (editor-in-chief), Helle Degnbol, Bent Chr. Jacobsen, Eva Rode, Christopher Sanders, and Þorbjörg Helgadóttir. *Ordbog over det norrøne prosasprog. A Dictionary of Old Norse Prose*. Vol. 2, *ban-da*. 1241 columns. *ONP 1–2: Nøgle // Key*. 190 pages. København: Den arnamagnæanske kommission, 2000.

The appearance of another volume of the *ONP* is an important event in Old Norse studies, and the most natural reaction of a reviewer should be one of joy and gratitude. Those who are familiar with the history of the *Oxford* (or *New*) *English Dictionary* will remember that reviews of every fascicle of this monumental work contained not criticism but surveys of the material published, surprise at the resurrection of unknown words and senses, and the impatient hope that the next fascicle (volume) would appear in the foreseeable future. The present dictionary, following upon the works of Cleasby-Vigfússon and Fritzner (Richard Cleasby and Guðbrandur Vigfússon, *An Icelandic-English Dictionary*, 2d ed. [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957]; Johan Fritzner, *Ordbog over det gamle norske sprog*, 4th ed. [Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1972–73]), cannot be so full of revelations, for Old Norse has been studied quite well, but it is significantly more complete and representative than its famous predecessors.

In volume 2, we find numerous heavy-duty words, especially verbs, *beiða*, *beita*, *benda*, *biða*, *biðja*, *bregða*, *brenna*, *bresta*, *brjóta*, *búa*, *byrja*, but also nouns: *barn*, *baugi*, *bók*, *bréf*, *bróðir*, *brún*, *búnaðr*, the adverb *braut*, etc. This dictionary has been conceived as a lexicographical tool rather than an encyclopedia of medieval Scandinavia. As a result, one sometimes learns more and sometimes less from it than from Cleasby-Vigfússon and Fritzner. This becomes clear from the discussion of a "culture word" like *berserkr* in the *ONP*. In Cleasby-Vigfússon, Guðbrandur Vigfússon speaks about the etymology of *berserkr*, rejects the gloss "bare-skin" (he interprets it as "bear-skin"), and refers to some of the

places in Old Icelandic literature where this word occurs. After having given an account of berserks and reproduced a few relevant passages, he goes over to *berserksgangr*. Modern users of his entry will have some trouble locating the editions cited in it, but, other than that, will learn all they need to know about berserks.

Fritzner is more reserved and stays within the bounds of a bilingual dictionary, though he, too, supplies a note on berserks' fury. He bypasses the issue of etymology (in other cases, he offers astute suggestions on word origins), quotes several examples from prose and poetry, and devotes a special short entry to *berserksgangr*. Fritzner does not cite secondary literature unless it illuminates the meaning of Old Icelandic words. At *berserkr*, his only reference is to Rudolf Keyser, *Nordmændenes religionsforfatning i hedendommen* (Christiania: C. A. Dybwad, 1847), for he distances himself from Keyser's interpretation of the name *Bjarnheðinn*. The treatment of scholarly literature is similar but less structured in Cleasby-Vigfússon. In the entry *berserkr*, for example, mention is made of the preface to Dasent's translation of *Gísla saga* (*Gisla Saga: The Story of Gísli the Outlaw*, trans. George W. Dasent [Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1866])

The *ONP* supplies a short bibliography of works dealing with berserks. Four authors have been included in the list: Reichborn-Kjennerud 1947, 139–51; Hans Kuhn, "Kappar og berserki," *Skírnir* 123 (1949): 98–113; Nils Lid, "Berserk," in *Kulturhistoriskt lexikon för nordisk medeltid*, vol. 1 (Malmö: Allhems Förlag, 1956), 501–3; and Peter Hallberg, "Imagery in Religious Old Norse Prose Literature: An Outline," *Arkiv för nordisk filologi* 102 (1987): 120–70, here 126. Reichborn-Kjennerud 1947 is missing in the key, which is a bit disconcerting (it should be Ingjald Reichborn-Kjennerud, *Vår gamle trolldomsmedisin*, vol. 5, Skrifter utgitt av Det norske videnskaps-akademi i Oslo, historisk-filosofisk klasse, 1947, no. 1 [Oslo: Jacob Dybwad, 1947]). But it is the choice of the titles that makes one wonder. Why just these four? Kuhn published a later version of his article in German ("Kämpen und Berserker," *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 2 [1968]: 218–27), and this version was

reprinted in his *Kleine Schriften* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1971), 2:521–31, which are easier to find in a college library than *Skírnir*, at least outside the Scandinavian countries. Hallberg's remarks on the use of *berserkr* in Christian writings may have been dispensed with. Höfler's entry "Berserker" in *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde*, vol. 2 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1976), 298–304, has every advantage over its counterpart in *Kulturhistoriskt lexikon för nordisk medeltid*. Finally, it is hard to imagine even the most cursory discussion of the word *berserkr* without reference to Erik Noreen, "Ordet bärsärk," *Arkiv för nordisk filologi* 48 (1932): 242–54. My point is not that the bibliography appended to the entry is incomplete. I believe it should have been left out altogether. The only references that serve their purpose in a dictionary like the *ONP*, as Fritzner's experience shows, are those pertaining to the form, transmission, and meaning of a word, insofar as the semantic analysis is not trivial. For example, at "bægja" (1086, in connection with labialization) we find mention of Per N. Grøtvedt, *Lydverket i lovhåndskrifter fra Borgartingslag, 1300–1350, med et tillegg om sørøstnorske diplomer*, Skrifter utgitt av Det norske videnskaps-akademi i Oslo, historisk-filosofisk klasse, 1938, no. 7 (Oslo: Jacob Dybwad, 1939), 94. However, it remains unclear whether Axel Kock, Adolf Noreen, or Marius Hægstad said anything useful on this form.

The tiny passage on secondary literature (p. 50 of the *Key*) runs as follows: "Under the heading *Litt.* there is a list [in the Danish version: 'et begrænset antal'] of secondary works that have had a significant influence on the writing of the entry; occasionally a work may also be mentioned with a view to general further reference, but no attempt is made to give a complete bibliography of all relevant comments in the scholarly literature. If a work is significant to one section of the dictionary article only, it may be mentioned there and there only." This is hardly a satisfactory explanation, for it matters little what sources "had a significant influence on the writing of the entry"; the reader is interested in a survey of opinion. Since neither completeness nor near completeness is

the editors' goal, a list of a few chance titles misleads rather than educates.

Three senses of *berserkr* are distinguished in the entry: (1) warrior with special qualities; (2) warrior, champion; (3) Saracen, person of foreign heathen descent. Usually the third sense is merged with the second. With regard to quotations (of course, not normalized), the *ONP* does not differ significantly from Cleasby-Vigfússon and Fritzner, except that it hardly ever offers the translation of the examples. At *berserksgangr*, which is compared with *berserkjagangr*, three set phrases are given: "ganga berserksgangr," "berserksgangr kemr á" (with the accusative), and "berserksgangr kemr at" (with the dative). Baetke also cites "berserksgangr ferr at" (with the dative) (Walter Baetke, *Wörterbuch zur altnordischen Prosaliteratur*, Sitzungsberichte der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, Philologisch-historische Klasse, Band 111, Hefte 1–2 [Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1965–68], 1:49). Can he not be trusted here? He is usually quite reliable.

To appreciate the true value of the *ONP*, one should look up some heavy-duty word like *dagr*. Fritzner distinguishes three meanings of *dagr*: (1) 'day as opposed to night' (*dagrinn birtist*); (2) 'lifetime' (*eftir sinn dag*); and (3) 'term, appointed time' (*taka dag* 'appoint the time [for some event]'). The fourth meaning 'light' is given with a question mark, and mention is made of *Dagr* as a proper name. In Cleasby-Vigfússon, division into senses is less convincing. There we find (I) 'the natural day' (an obvious starting point); (2) 'of different days' (*í dag, dag eftir dag*, etc.); (3) 'in pl. *days* in the sense of *times*' (*aðrir dagar, góðir dagar*, etc., including calendar days); (4) 'of the week days'; (II) 'a term' (*dagi*: only in compounds, e.g., *eindagi*; in I, compounds are also represented [*regndagr*, and the like]); (III) *Dagr* as a proper name. Leiv Heggstad, Finn Hødnebo, and Erik Simensen, *Norrøn ordbok*, 3d ed. of *Gamalnorsk ordbok* (Oslo: Det Norske Samlaget, 1975), follow Fritzner, while Baetke has only 'day' and 'lifetime'.

Division into senses is always partly arbitrary, save for the most obvious cases. Dictionaries of Modern English list between ten and thirteen meanings of *day*. The

*ONP* also gives twelve rubrics at *dagr*; the thirteenth is devoted to set phrases of the *góðann dag* type. Within each major rubric, there are minor ones. It is often hard to understand how they were arrived at, but thanks to the clever use of typographic resources (bold type, italics, underlining, indentation) the supports are visible, and despite the length of the entry, the reader does not get lost. The eye immediately catches the idiomatic genitive *dags*, the adverbial accusative *dag*, the phrases *allan dag(inn)*, *virkr dagr*, and all the others. The wealth of examples is remarkable, and the sentences chosen for inclusion are illustrative and informative.

The problem with the word *dagr* is that it does not have the multitude of meanings ascribed to it: only 'lifetime', 'the natural day', and 'term' are really different (cf. in English: "day and night," "in days of yore," and "she will have her day in court"). All the rest reflects usage (as in "the day of shame," "V day," "on a day like this," and so forth), and what is represented as various senses is actually an attempt to classify the situations in which *dagr* occurs. However, from the pragmatic point of view, when one deals with such words and especially with monstrosities like *bera* (thirty full pages, as opposed to eight allotted to *dagr*), the method favored by the editors of the *ONP* need not arouse the displeasure of the theoretically-minded lexicographers. Destroying barriers between rubrics is easier but not more convenient than creating them.

Volume 2 of the *ONP* is a worthy successor to the previous one: carefully planned and executed, extremely full, and, last but not least, printed and bound in an exemplary way, it has already become the main source of reference for the students of Old Norse and everyone interested in Old Norse literature.

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