

Andrea de Leeuw van Weenen, editor. *The Icelandic Homily Book, Perg. 15 4° in the Royal Library, Stockholm*. Íslensk handrit, Icelandic Manuscripts, Series in Quarto, Vol. 3. Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar á Íslandi, 1993. 232 pages, 206 plates, and diplomatic text-edition.

Sigurbjörn Einarsson, Guðrún Kvaran, and Gunnlaugur Ingólfsson, editors. *Íslensk hómilíubók: Fornar stólræður*. Reykjavík: Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag, 1993. 323 pages.

These are two very different editions of Stockholm, Royal Library, Perg. 15 4°, the Old Icelandic Homily Book, the oldest nearly complete Icelandic manuscript codex, now published for the first time in Iceland. The first, a two-colour facsimile edition with a facing diplomatic transcription, replaces both Theodor Wisén's edition of 1872 (printed in only 200 copies and now extremely rare) and the monochrome facsimile printed with an introduction by Fredrik Paasche as volume 8 of *Corpus codicum Islandicorum medii aevi* (København: Munksgaard, 1935). The second edition presents the homilies for the first time in a normalized text and is pitched at a general audience of Icelandic readers.

Andrea de Leeuw van Weenen's edition is based on her 1977 doctoral thesis for the University of Utrecht, and her preface documents in rather grim detail the laborious and protracted process of preparing the text for print. Her introduction is a slightly revised version of that in the dissertation, and like the thesis version provides an account of what is known of the history of the manuscript, a table of contents with notes on some identified sources and analogues for individual homilies, a full palaeographic description including a discussion of the vexed question of the number of hands (van Weenen inclines to the view, earlier held by Wisén, that there is only one), and detailed analyses of orthography and morphology.

The introduction also includes a rather sketchy and heterogeneous treatment of syntax (described on page 197 as "a haphazard collection of facts I happened to find when I was editing the text") and concludes with a section on the aim of the introduction (§ 6.3) which might better have been placed before rather than after the thing it describes.

Van Weenen warns us that, because of the prodigiously long gestation period between the thesis and the printed edition, her introduction "reflects the state of knowledge in 1976" and "coverage of publications since 1976 is . . . not systematic" (vi–vii). One misses, for instance, a reference to Britta Olrik Frederiksen, "Til englefa snittet i Gregors 34. evangeliehomilie i norrøn oversættelse," *Opuscula* 7, Bibliotheca Arnarnaeana 34 (København: Munksgaard, 1979), 62–93, in the catalogue of homilies and their sources (7, § 1.2, item 28). And the citation from "Jerome" at 7, § 1.2, item 3, is now attributed to Paschasius Radbertus (as the editor herself notes at 7, § 1.2, item 5; but for "CC 56C" read "CC Continuatio Mediaevalis 56C"). However, van Weenen has endeavoured to add some new material in this chapter (references to the relevant sections of Oddmund Hjelde's "Norsk preken i det 12. århundre: Studier i *Gammel norsk homilieboek*" [Oslo 1990, photocopy] are particularly welcome), and on the whole this section of the introduction gives a pretty clear picture of just how much work remains to be done on the Latin background of the homilies. Long ago, James Marchand suggested "that a search for parallels and a sober realization of the possibility of polygenesis ought to replace all searching for sources" ("Two Notes on the Old Icelandic Physiologus Manuscript," *Modern Language Notes* 91 [1976]: 505). While many might regard this position as extreme (since some parallels are more parallel than others), it is undoubtedly sensible to start by tracing commonplace analogues for sermons for which no one source has yet been identified. Thus, to look at a single example, for the Christmas homily listed as item 16 on page 9 (ms. 22r6–24r23), van Weenen notes "Source unknown, but some of the ideas also occur in Pseudo-Alcuin's 'De Divinis Officiis Liber' (PL 101.1173ff.)." This information appears

to be taken from Ian Kirby, *Biblical Quotation in Old Icelandic–Norwegian Religious Literature*, Rit 9–10 (Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar, 1976–80), 2:54n9, and Kirby is also careful to emphasize that Pseudo-Alcuin “is clearly not the source.” It is odd, however, that neither author refers to earlier investigations of the Latin background of the central section of the sermon — the enumeration and interpretation of the portents and events which occurred at the time of Christ’s birth. Mattias Tveitane included a discussion of this sermon in his “Irish Apocrypha in Norse Tradition? On the Sources of Some Medieval Homilies,” *Arv* 22 (1966): 111–35 at 123–25, as did James Marchand in his response to Tveitane, “The Old Norwegian Christmas Homily and the Question of Irish Influence,” *Arv* 31 (1975): 23–34 at 27–29. Marchand rightly criticized Tveitane for insisting on referring to a different Latin text, a Nativity piece in the ninth-century homiletic anthology edited by André Wilmart under the title “Catéchèses celtiques” (*Analecta Regimensia: Extraits des manuscrits latins de la reine Christine conservés au Vatican*, *Studi e testi* 59 [Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca apostolica Vaticana, 1933], 29–112 at 93–106 [99.17–100.56]) as “very nearly the exact source” for the sermon in the Icelandic Homily Book, and noted that both the Icelandic text and that in the “Catéchèses” “are simply fabricated from the usual *mirabilia* found in Christmas sermons” (Marchand 1975, 29). The homiletic tradition to which these two texts belong also includes, for instance, the Old Norwegian sermon which was the focus of Tveitane’s investigation (“De natiuitate domini sermo,” in *Gamal norsk homiliebok, cod. AM. 619 4º*, ed. Gustav Indrebø [Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1931], 31–35) and Vercelli homilies 5 and 6 (*The Vercelli Homilies and Related Texts*, ed. Donald G. Scragg, Early English Text Society, Original Series 300 [Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1992], 108–32; cf. J. E. Cross, “Portents and Events at Christ’s Birth: Comments on Vercelli v and vi and the Old English Martyrology,” *Anglo-Saxon England* 2 [1973]: 209–20), and Marchand cites numerous other, though more remote, analogues (1975, 27–28). At any rate, even in 1976 the background of the

Christmas sermon in question was known to be more complex than van Weenen’s brief note suggests. And the *mirabilia* account for only one part of the sermon. It might also have been noted, for instance, that the admonition to “look at the tombs of the wealthy” at ms. page 23v28–24r4 is an immensely popular homiletic theme which can be traced at least back to Caesarius of Arles (*Sermones*, ed. Germain Morin, editio altera, Corpus Christianorum, series latina 103–4 [Turnhout: Brepols, 1953], sermo 31, §2; cf. J. E. Cross, “Ubi sunt Passages in Old English — Sources and Relationships,” *Vetenskaps-societeten i Lund Årsbok* 1956, 23–44 at 38–39, and idem, “‘The Dry Bones Speak’ — A Theme in Some Old English Homilies,” *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 56 [1957]: 434–39). I am not suggesting that van Weenen could have been expected to document every such commonplace, only that much more work remains to be done filling in gaps of this kind, and van Weenen’s outline will no doubt provide a convenient starting point for such studies.

The heart of van Weenen’s edition is, of course, her diplomatic text. It is painstakingly accurate, and I have noticed no transcription errors in the pages I have checked. It is possible, however, to quibble with the odd piece of annotation in the apparatus. It seems to me overly pedantic to note, for instance, that while the Psalm quotations at 42v13 (Ps. 79.2) and 100r9 (Ps. 49.14–15) are attributed in the Homily Book to “dauid,” the verses in question are actually “by Asaph,” since the entire psalter (including those psalms said to be “by” or “for” or “of Asaph”) was routinely attributed to David throughout the Middle Ages. (See, e.g., Frank Leslie Cross and Elizabeth Anne Livingstone, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 2d ed. [London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1974], s.v. “Psalms, Book of.”) On the difficulty of interpreting the titles and other notes added to the Psalms see Otto Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament: An Introduction*, trans. Peter R. Ackroyd [Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965], 451–52.)

I am also inclined to disagree with her note on the problematic form “hálf” in the following passage (99r4–8): “Réiþe ranga.

ólund oc hatr [scolom vér fira]c afþui at réiþe bróþ oc staþvoþ. es hug[s]cote manz [sem aogn ága. en ef hon fóþe]c í [scape manz lenge. þa [ný]c hon í hálf. oc meiþer at hygle manzen]” [We must eschew unjust anger, spite and hatred, because sudden anger which is restrained is to the mind of a man like a mote to the eye, but if it is nursed for long in a man’s heart then it turns into a *háls*(?) and harms the man’s understanding]. Here van Weenen repeats the suggestion made by Stefán Karlsson (“Ögn og háls í hómilíu,” *Gripla* 4 [1980]: 135–37) that the word may be an error for *hasl* ‘hazel-tree’, with transposition of *s* and *l* (cf. “pílf” for “pífl” elsewhere in the ms.; see 96, §3.2.4.16 “<l>,” and Karlsson 137 and n9). As Stefán has pointed out, the passage in question alludes to Matthew 7.3–5 (or Luke 6.41–42): “Quid autem vides festucam in oculo fratris tui et trabem in oculo tuo non vides . . . eice primum trabem de oculo tuo et tunc videbis eicere festucam de oculo fratris tui” [And why seest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye; and seest not the beam that is in thy own eye? . . . cast out first the beam out of thy own eye, and then shalt thou see to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye] (Rheims-Douay Version). In the Icelandic sermon *festuca* is rendered by “aogn” (i.e. *ogn* ‘mote’), and since “hálf” must stand for *trabs*, it seems reasonable to assume that the form must represent a word whose primary sense is “beam.” It therefore does not seem unlikely that “hálf” is a corruption of *balc*, produced by misinterpretation of the bowl of an initial *b* in the scribe’s exemplar as the second leg of *h* (cf. 37, §2.10.1, “h”), and miscopying of final *c* as long *s*. Confusion of *b* and *h* is a very common scribal error (see, e.g., Wallace Martin Lindsay, *An Introduction to Latin Textual Emendation* [London: Macmillan, 1896], 84; Didrik Arup Seip, *Palæografi, B, Norge og Island = Nordisk kultur* 28B [Stockholm: Albert Bonnier, 1954], 16), and van Weenen notes (80, §3.2.4.9 “k”) that *c* is used finally instead of *k* “in 97% of the more than 5500 instances” of /k/ in final position and that examples of the opposite use of *c* for /s/ are also to be found in the Homily Book (95, §3.2.4.16). While Fritzner does not record the meaning “beam” for Old Icelandic *balkr*, this sense is

included in dictionaries of Modern Icelandic (Sigfús Blöndal, *Íslensk-dönsk orðabók* [Reykjavík: Þórarinn B. Þorláksson, 1920–24], s.v. “báلكur,” 4 “[*langur raftur*] et langt Stykke Træ”; Árni Böðvarsson, *Íslensk orðabók handa skólum og almennungi*, 2d ed. [Reykjavík: Menningarsjóður, 1983], s.v. “báلكur,” 4 “*langur raftur*”), and cognate *bjálki* is, in fact, the word most often used to render *trabs* in later Icelandic translations of Matthew 7.3–5 and Luke 6.41–42 (see Karlsson 136n5). It is also interesting to note that cognates of *balkr* are used in other medieval Germanic vernaculars in translations of the same biblical verses. *Balko*, for example, is the word used to render *trabs* in the Old High German translation of Matthew 7.3–5 in Tatian’s *Diatessaron* (*Tatian, lateinisch und altdeutsch, mit ausführlichem Glossar*, ed. Eduard Sievers [Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1872], 113, §39.5–6; cf. *Althochdeutsches Wörterbuch*, ed. Elisabeth Karg-Gasterstädt and Theodor Frings [Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1952–], s.v. “balko,” 1: “bildhaft: der ‘Balken im eigenen Auge’”); and the author of the Old Saxon *Heliand* retains the word in his adaptation of this passage (*Heliand*, ed. Eduard Sievers, Germanistische Handbibliothek 4, 2d ed. [Halle (Saale): Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses, 1935], Monacensis line 1706). In Middle English, cognate *balk(e)* is also commonly used to refer to the “beam in the eye,” and readers of Chaucer will remember, for example, Osewold the Reeve’s retort to the Miller: “He kan wel in myn eye seen a stalke, / But in his owene he kan nat seen a balke” (*Canterbury Tales*, in *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, ed. Fred N. Robinson, 2d ed. [Cambridge, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin, 1957], 55, lines 3919–20; cf. *Middle English Dictionary*, ed. Hans Kurath and Sherman M. Kuhn [Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1954–], s.v. “balk(e),” 3b “with ref. to Mat. 7.3–5”). If the proposed emendation of the form “hálf” at Homily Book 99r7 to *balc* is accepted, a new sense “beam” will have to be recorded s.v. “balkr” in the new Arnarnaganaean Dictionary.

There are remarkably few typographical errors in the edition considering the difficulty of the text. I have noticed a few trivial misprints (18 “existence” for “existence”; 144

“insofar as” for “in so far as”; 196 “way of grouping” for “ways of grouping”), and occasionally special characters have been accidentally omitted: the broken *l* which is transcribed *L* (see 37, §2.10.1 “l”) is missing on page 69, as is Greek uncial κ (see 37, §2.10.1 “k”) on page 193, and insular *v* (see 39, §2.10.1 “v”) on page 196.

A few Dutch-looking forms and odd samples of unidiomatic English also crop up: 9 “Salomo” for “Solomon”; 15 “de” for “the” (!); 166n13 “a synchronical” for “a synchronic one”; 167 “the coming up of” for “the development of” (?); 168 “etymological correct” for “etymologically correct”; 172 “the m of the 1st person pl. ending lacks” for “is lacking”; 172 and 188 “conjunctive” for “subjunctive”; 191 “paging and alignment” for “pagination and lineation,” and “digressing” for “diverging”; 195 “as long that it is possible” for “as long as it is possible,” and “a considerable amount of unemended words” for “a considerable number.”

Finally, Grafík hlutafélag and Jóhanna Ólafsdóttir deserve high praise for their excellent photographs. All in all, both Dr. van Weenen and Stofnun Árna Magnússonar á Íslandi are to be congratulated for producing an edition which will be indispensable for future study of the Old Icelandic Homily Book.

Íslensk hómilíubók: Fornar stólræður is, as I have already mentioned, a very different work from the Árnastofnun facsimile. It is really more a labour of love than a work of scholarship, as the tone of bishop Sigurbjörn Einarsson’s preface makes clear. Both he and his collaborators, Guðrún Kvaran and Gunnlaugur Ingólfsson, quote Jón Helgason’s impassioned contention that “in few works do the sources of the Icelandic language flow more pure than in this old book, and the Icelandic author who has not read it from cover to cover is hardly better prepared for his work than the priest who has neglected to read the Sermon on the Mount” (*Handritaspjall* [Reykjavík: Mál og menning, 1958], 16, cited twice: xvi n19 and xx; my trans.). As the editors observe, Jón was asking rather a lot of his countrymen as long as the Homily Book was available (or more likely unavailable) only in Wisén’s rare edi-

tion, and they express their hope that their edition will help to introduce the collection to a wider Icelandic audience.

The text is printed in a modernized orthography, though many Old Icelandic word-forms are retained in an effort to preserve “something of the archaic flavour of the text” [nokkuð af hinum forna blæ textans] (xviii). In their introductory remarks on editorial principles (xviii–xxi), Guðrún Kvaran and Gunnlaugur Ingólfsson catalogue some of the difficulties which a present-day Icelandic reader is likely to have with an Old Icelandic text. They also provide glosses of difficult words and locutions throughout the edition.

Íslensk hómilíubók is only a partial edition (see xvi–xvii). Some items in the collection are omitted either because they are not complete in the manuscript (like items 1 and 62 in van Weenen’s list of contents — though a single sentence from item 1 is adopted by Sigurbjörn as an epigraph, xvii), or on the grounds that similar subject matter is handled in other sermons in the anthology (like the Marian material in van Weenen items 3, 35–36, and 58, or the alternative ending for item 18 in item 50). The excerpts from *Stefáns saga* on ms. pages 80v and 94r–97r (van Weenen items 46 and 59) are also omitted, for a reason not specified in the preface.

Sigurbjörn’s introductory essay provides some general historical background, with remarks on the early history of preaching in Iceland, and on texts contemporary with the sermons in the Homily Book. However, neither in the introduction nor anywhere else in the edition is any information given about the Latin background of the contents of the collection, nor even any indication that a particular text is known to be a translation of a Latin work. Thus, for instance, on page 204, the translation of passages from Pseudo-Ambrose, *Acta sancti Sebastiani martyris* (van Weenen items 39 and 42) is given the rather nebulous title “[Stundlegt og eilíft]”. Similarly, on page 273, the version of the “instrumenta bonorum operum” from chapter four of the *Regula Benedicti* is identified merely as “[Boðorð Guðs]”. The innocent reader is not told that another translation of the same Latin source is to be found on pages 201–3 (van Weenen item 38), nor

indeed that the text is a translation at all. Scriptural citations are noted throughout the edition, although the references to biblical verses provided by van Weenen are generally fuller. On page 208, for instance, no reference is given for the verse “Grófu þeir gröf fyrir augliti mínu og féllu í sjálfir,” whereas van Weenen correctly identifies it as Psalm 56.7 (ms. 69r28).

The normalized (or rather modernized) text in *Íslensk hómilíubók* will undoubtedly be of use to those who are interested in reading the sermons and other texts in the collection, but who might be intimidated by a diplomatic edition. And it is certainly helpful to find related passages that are separated in the manuscript reunited in the new transcription (thus 3–4 “[Þjónusta kennimanna]” = van Weenen items 2 and 4; 114–19 “Epifania Domini” = van Weenen items 25 and 51; 204–8 “[Stundlegt og eilíft]” = van Weenen items 39 and 42). But the edition is on the whole less helpful than it might have been. Many repetitive and not very illuminating notes — *sanctus* glossed “heilagur,” *sicut* glossed “eins og” (“svo sem” would often fit better), *Dominus* glossed “Drottinn,” etc. — might well have been reduced in number or eliminated altogether. While the presentation of a “macaronic” text perhaps helps to preserve some of the “forn blær” of the original text, Latin terms such as these are almost invariably merely expansions of conventional abbreviations — *s̄cs*, *siċ*, *dñs*, etc. — which were meant to stand for their vernacular equivalents when used in a vernacular context (see e.g. Hreinn Benediktsson, *Early Icelandic Script*, Íslensk handrit, Icelandic Manuscripts, Series in Folio 2 [Reykjavík: The Manuscript Institute of Iceland, 1965], 94; Hans Bekker-Nielsen, “The Use of *rex* in *Íslendingabók*,” in *Studies for Einar Haugen*, ed. Evelyn Scherabon Firchow et al., *Janua linguarum, series maior* 59 [The Hague: Mouton, 1972], 53–57 at 54; Fred C. Robinson, “Latin for Old English in Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts,” in *Language Form and Linguistic Variation: Papers Dedicated to Angus McIntosh*, ed. John Anderson, *Amsterdam Studies in the Theory and History of Linguistic Science* 15 [Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1982], 395–400). Certainly in a normalized edition intended for the

general reader a phrase like “*sicut Dominus mælir*” (found twice, for example, on page 23, beside “svo sem *Dominus mælir*”) might have been silently changed to “svo sem Drottinn mælir” without annotation or embarrassment. (The hazards of monotonous annotation are illustrated at 252n19 where the note for *sanctorum* is confused with one of the ubiquitous redundant glosses of *ekki*: “ekkert.”)

Freeing up space at the foot of the page might also have left room for more helpful commentary where it was needed. One wonders, for instance, what sense an Icelandic reader will make of the phrase “snýst hun í háls og meiðir athygli mannsins” (discussed above) on page 292, when neither Stefán Karlsson’s suggested emendation nor any other is adopted, and no note on the crux is provided. (Cf. Stefán’s note: “lítið virðist bæta úr skák þó að orðinu ‘háls’ sé léð merkingin ‘hnaeki’, eins og Fritzner gerir í orðabók sinni, þar sem hann tilfærir setninguna” [Karlsson 135 and n2].)

Íslensk hómilíubók: Fornar stólræður is not a scholarly edition, and one should perhaps not criticize it for not being what it was never intended to be. However, it reminds us that students of the Old Icelandic and Old Norwegian homilies are still a long way from having an edition of these texts which bears comparison with, say, John C. Pope’s *Homilies of Ælfric: A Supplementary Collection*, Early English Text Society, Original Series 259–60 (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1967–68). We still need a fully annotated edition of the Old West Norse homilies, one which collates or prints parallel texts of all the extant versions of each sermon, and one in which all known sources and analogues are identified.

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