

Helle Degnbol, Bent Chr. Jacobsen, Eva Rode, Christopher Sanders, and Þorbjörg Helgadóttir. *Ordbog over det norrøne prosasprog. A Dictionary of Old Norse Prose*. Vol. 1, *A-bam*. København: Den arnamagnæanske kommission, 1995. 906 columns.

Those who have studied the history of the *Oxford English Dictionary* will remember that its every fascicle was reviewed in journals all over the world, but the reviews were of a somewhat unusual type. Rather than discussing the merits and demerits of the dictionary, scholars summarized the material presented in its pages and expressed their gratitude to and admiration of the editors. Some suggested minor improvements, but the prevailing tone was one of adulation. Such unanimous friendliness is rare in the history of lexicography. Dictionaries are an easy target for criticism, and one notes with sadness that philologists tend to be sparing of praise when it comes to dictionary makers. For example, it is customary to treat Cleasby-Vigfusson's magnificent volume (Richard Cleasby and Gudbrand Vigfusson, *An Icelandic-English Dictionary*, 2d ed. [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957]) with sophisticated condescension (unreliable forms, fanciful etymologies, odd glosses). One of its first reviewers found only one redeeming quality in the entire work (save for its bulk), namely, that the authors treated *a*, *e*, *i*, and *o* separately from *á*, *é*, *í*, and *ó*. No one likes this dictionary except the public, and that is why it remained in print for more than a century.

To be sure, from time to time one runs into pronouncements like the following. "Sir William is a prince of lexicographers. His material is set out clearly and with great economy of space. The fullness of his illustrations is beyond all praise; rarely does one miss a familiar reference and then one can be pretty sure that the use in question has been illustrated from some other source. It is ungrateful work gleaning where Sir William has shorn" (Bruce Dickins on William A. Craigie's *Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue* in *Modern Language Review* 28

[1933]: 243) or "Such magnanimous praise has already been lavished on earlier editions that it is difficult to say more, yet the 'new, improved' *Collins-Robert* is indeed an even better product. Its clarity makes it a pleasure to consult, and the user's high expectations will rarely be disappointed. It is a thorough and scholarly work, the best of its kind, and deserves to hold its place as the market leader" (C.E.J. Dolamore on the *Collins-Robert French-English, English-French Dictionary* in *Modern Language Review* 89 [1994]: 745). But for each of such statements one can easily find a hundred that are sour, patronizing, or negative. It is my hope that the new *Dictionary of Old Norse Prose* will join the *Oxford English Dictionary* and receive the acclaim it deserves. In order to form an opinion about a dictionary, it has to be used a thousand times, but, as far as one can trust a cursory examination, the *Ordbog over det norrøne prosasprog* seems to be admirably full and clear.

Volume 1 is accompanied by a booklet entitled *ONP 1: Nøgle // Key* (122 pages). It contains an introduction in Danish and English called *Vejledning* and *User's Guide* respectively (1–47) and a list of corrigenda and addenda to the sigla and indices published in 1989. Experience made it easy to predict that such a list would be necessary (see my review in *Scandinavian Studies* 63 [1991]: 377–79), but its length (over fifty pages) is surprising. The editors explain in minute detail how they organized their entries. Prospective users of the dictionary may find it worthwhile to familiarize themselves with the table of contents of the *User's Guide* (28), which will be reproduced here.

I. Lemma

- A. The order of the articles
- B. Orthographic normalisation
- C. The cardinal form
- D. Two types of dictionary entry
- E. One article or more?
- F. The standard headword: main form, complementary form, special form
- G. Suffixes
- H. Details of inflection
 1. Nouns
 2. Adjectives
 3. Adverbs

4. Verbs
 - a) Strong verbs
 - b) Weak verbs
- II. Body
 - A. Structure
 1. Division according to sense/usage
 2. Syntactical/grammatical division
 3. Syntactical/grammatical division indicated by the double bar
 4. Registering of phrases
 - B. Syntagma brackets
 - C. Definitions
 1. Type of definition
 2. The relationship of the English to the Danish definition
 3. Introductory remarks
 4. Bynames & common nouns as proper nouns
 5. Division introduced by a star
 - D. Citations
 1. Selection of citations
 2. Rendering of the citations
 3. Individual translations
 4. Editorial comments
 5. Sigla
 6. Additions to the siglum
 7. Bare references
 - E. Variants, emendations & (corrective) manuscript readings
 1. Variants
 - a) Variant that is not the headword in the citation
 - b) Variant used as headword in the citation
 2. Emendations
 - a) An emendation that has no influence on the citation's headword
 - b) The citation's headword is the non-emending reading
 3. (Corrective) manuscript readings
- III. Tail
 - A. Compounds (**Comp.**)
 - B. Glossaries (**Gloss.**)
 - C. Secondary literature (**Litt.**)

Discussion of all these matters (choice of form, definition, etc.) would certainly be appropriate here, but it cannot be done without turning a review into a version of the *Key*. By way of compensation, I will quote in full one entry from the *Dictionary of Old Norse Prose*, Cleasby-Vigfusson, and Fritzner (Johan Fritzner, *Ordbog over det gamle*

norske sprog, 2d ed., 3 vols. [1883–96; reprint, including vol. 4, *Rettelser og tillegg*, by Finn Hødnebo, Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1972–73 (vol. 4, 1972)]). To save space, I have chosen a very short (and, consequently, uncharacteristic) entry without polysemy, but even this illustration will give some idea of the format of the new dictionary.

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ás·mundr *sb. m.* [; -ar] □

“*ásmund*” (*cf. propr. Ásmundr*), *et stykke jern (af bestemt størrelse/vægt/værdi) // piece of iron (of designated size/weight/value)*: cc. iarns oc lx. asmundar *DI VII* ([1504]: *AM 257 II*) 736¹²; lvkazt skvle viij^c j vigsbætivr epter fyrnefndan magnvs. ix stikvr klædes fyrir c. xij merkvr vax fyrir c. mælis-kietil fyrir c. ii tunnvir maltz fyrir c. j^c oc xx asmvnda fyrir c. oc svo virða penninga j hvort c sidan *DI VI* (*[1480–1494]>*AM 238^x*) 318¹⁴; at setia kaup hia utlenskum . . . iiij asmundar firir fisk *DI^{IX}* 518³⁶ (*y. isl. 1546*); xij alnum (*skal tíunda*) reka med vare (*skovl/spade med jernrand, cf. Blöndal varreka sb f. // shovel/spade with cutting-edge of metal*). og sie j iiij asmundar *Búal²A 22a³⁷*; Þetta innan gáttu . . . saluns áklæde .ij .x. asmundar .iiij. hardsteinar. ein jarnsleggia. ðx . . . *DI IX* (1525: *Sig*) 329⁹; *item: DI V* (*1475>*apogr^x*) 792¹; *DI VI* (*1488>*Lskjs 94 III^x*) 618²⁷; *DI VII* (1504: *AM 267 I*) 742²²; •*IslDipl* (1440) 346²⁹

Comp.: merkr-

Gloss.: *AJ; ClVSuppl; Fr4 ósmundar pl.; NO pl.; ÁBlM; (Bl)*

Litt.: *Falk 1914 1; SAOB^{XIX} osmund; Magnús M. Lárusson 1958 [Skírnir 132] 223; Hannerberg 1968 [KLNM 13] 43–45; Hannerberg 1968 [KLNM 13] 45–48*

Cleasby and Vigfusson 788

ásmundr, *m. a bar of Osmund iron*; c. ásmunda, 1440 *Dipl. iv.* 616. fjörutía ásmunda, 1475 v. 792; hundrað ásmunda, 1489 vi. 653; cc. járn og lc. ásmundar, 1504 vii. 742; j c. ásmundar, 1512 viii. 395.

Fritzner 4:273

°ósmundar, *m.pl. klumper av blåsterjern; skr osmond i eng toll-lister fra 1300-tallet, jvf DN XIX. Sørleie språkminner 27; jvf Falk W 1.*

A Dictionary of Old Norse Prose is incomparably richer than its predecessors, and this is its main virtue, rather than a spectacular increase in the number of words included. Fritzner translated everything into “Dano-Norwegian”; Guðbrandur Vigfússon used English glosses. Except when a word is absolutely straightforward (for instance, *akkeri* ‘anker // anchor’), the editors followed neither Fritzner nor Guðbrandur. Cf. *baðferð*: Fritzner — ‘Gaaen i Bad’, Cleasby-Vigfusson — ‘time for bathing’, *Dictionary of Old Norse Prose* — (1) ‘det at gå i bad // the act of bathing’, (2) *um baðferðir* ‘ved badetid // at bathing time’; *baðkápa*: Fritzner — ‘Kaabe, Kappe, som man kaster over sit Legeme naar man gaar af Badet’, Cleasby-Vigfusson — ‘bathing-cloak’, *Dictionary of Old Norse Prose* — ‘badekåbe // bathrobe’; *baðstofa*: Fritzner — ‘Badstue, hvori man tog Dampbad’, with the following addition at the end of the entry: “Under Navn af *baðstue* forefindes mængstedes i Norges Landsbygger et afsides fra Gaardens øvrige Bygninger staaende Hus, der anvendes til derpaa at tørre det Korn som skal males, og dels har en saadan Indretning, at det vilde være anvendeligt til Dampbad, dels har, skjønt kaldet Badstue, faaet en anden Indretning, som kun gjør det anvendeligt til Korntørring.” Cleasby-Vigfusson — ‘a bath-room’, with an explanation of a different type: “The time of bathing, as borne out by many passages in the Sturl. and Bs., was after supper, just before going to bed; a special room, *baðstofa* (*bath-room*), is freq. mentioned as belonging to Icel. farms of that time . . . The modern sense of *baðstofa* is *sitting-room*, probably from its being in modern dwellings placed where the old bathing room used to be. The etymology of Jon Olafsson [sic] (Icel. Dict. MS.), *baðstofa* = *bakstofa*, is bad. In old writers *baðstofa* never occurs in this modern sense, but it is used so in the Dropl. Saga Major: — *a closet, room*, in writers of the 16th century, Bs. ii. 244, 256, 504, Safn. 77, 92, 95, 96.” *Dictionary of Old Norse Prose* — (1) ‘badstue (særskilt bygning el. indbygget i gården) // steam bath, sauna (a separate building or a room in a farmhouse)’, (2) ‘spec. offentlig badstue/sauna // spec. public steambath/sauna’, (3) ‘opholdsstue som kan opvarmes // living-room that can be heated’.

It is evident that *A Dictionary of Old Norse Prose* prefers multiplying glosses (*baðstofa* is given three translations, each supported by examples) to comments of encyclopedic nature. This is its policy throughout, the idea being that a good gloss will make additional explanations superfluous. In Cleasby-Vigfusson, numerous phrases are translated even when they are nonidiomatic; for example, almost every word group occurring at *annarr* is translated there into English. In the *Dictionary of Old Norse Prose*, even “öl er annarr maðr,” though marked as a proverb (it is preceded by “þat er satt sem mælt er, at”), is left without a gloss (483.34–35). In this respect, the *Dictionary of Old Norse Prose* follows Fritzner, which, I think, is regrettable. Who can understand something like ‘öl er annarr maðr’ without some help? Lexicographers should be guided by a piece of conventional German wisdom: “Man kann sich den Leser nie dumm genug vorstellen,” and remember that (Old) Icelandic is a particularly difficult language. Fortunately, the editors are not consistent; thus, “legit hafa mér andvirki nær garði en” [I have had more important things to do than] (461.21–24) and quite a few others have been explained.

The authors of some dictionaries do not feel obligated to follow their own glosses. A classic example of such a dictionary is *Collins German-English, English-German Dictionary* (*Collins Deutsch-Englisch, Englisch-Deutsch Großwörterbuch*), by Peter Terrell et al., 2d ed. (Glasgow: Harper-Collins, 1991). For instance, under *rühren* (b) we find ‘touch sth’ and ‘touch on sth’; this meaning is illustrated by *daran wollen wir nicht rühren* ‘let’s not go into it’ and *rühret nicht daran!* ‘let us not dwell on that’. What is the use of glossing *rühren* with ‘touch (on)’ if some other variant always appears to be preferable? Would it not have been more logical to gloss *rühren* with ‘touch, touch on, go into, dwell on’? Other dictionaries give a limited but admittedly sufficient choice of variants in every gloss. The *Dictionary of Old Norse Prose* belongs to the latter type. Since the line between free word groups and mildly idiomatic phrases is tenuous, occasional last-minute additions are hard to avoid. Thus, the *Dictionary of*

Old Norse Prose glosses *ákefð* (1) so: 'vold-somhed, intensitet, styrke // violence, intensity, strength', but explains that *með ákefð* means 'with emphasis'; an explanation to this effect is embedded in a sentence dealing with rhetoric: "þa ær maðr talar mæð akæfð (*eftertryk // emphasis*) nockvra lvti" (222. 33–37).

It might perhaps be useful to employ a special symbol for idioms. Under *ár* 'oar' we find the phrases *draga árar*, *draga á árum*, *drepa árum í*, *falla við/á árar*, *falla til ára*, *fara undir ára*, and eleven more. Nearly all of them are free groups (*drepa árum í* 'put out the oars' — note that *í* is an adverb, most conveniently marked with an exclamation point: *drepa árum í [!]* — etc.), but *koma ár sinni fyrir borð* means 'get under way', so 'ply one's oars' (figuratively), and *róa áru* [e-rs] [fyrir e-m] means 'put (sby's) case (to sby)'. After the first of these the parenthesis *fig.* is given, the second is not marked at all (518.49–52, 519.14–18). But both are idioms of the type 'paddle one's own canoe' and 'put in one's oar', and if they were given in boldface italic type (using boldface roman for nonidiomatic expressions), their character would become immediately obvious.

Although *A Dictionary of Old Norse Prose* lists the scholarly literature pertaining to the headwords (which is wonderful), it makes no mention of their etymology. This was doubtless a correct solution. Guðbrandur Vigfússon and, less regularly, Fritzner comment on the origin of words, but today we have four etymological dictionaries of Icelandic, and scholars interested in derivations and the place of Icelandic in Germanic and Indo-European should turn to these books. Only in very few cases, as a matter of curiosity, a remark on etymology could have enlivened a gloss: cf. what is said in Cleasby-Vigfusson about *baðstofa* < **bakstofa*.

Volume 1 of *Ordbog over det norrøne prosasprog* is to be followed by eleven more. If every volume takes about five to six years to complete, even today's youngest students may not see the end of the project. This is perfectly all right, however: great dictionaries cannot be written fast, but then they stay forever.

Anatoly Liberman

Jenny Jochens. *Women in Old Norse Society*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995. 280 Seiten.

Old Norse Images of Women. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996. 342 Seiten.

Jenny Jochens legt hier zwei Bücher vor mit der Absicht, ein vollständiges Bild der Frauenüberlieferung in altwestnordischer Tradition zu bieten. Der erste Band enthält Beschreibungen geschichtlicher Frauen und ihrer Lebensumstände aus der sogenannten Freistaatzeit Islands (9.–13. Jahrhundert). Der zweite Band ist der Beschreibung von Göttinnen und heroischen (weiblichen) Gestalten gewidmet. Beiden Büchern ist gemeinsam, daß sie mit schriftlichen Quellen aus der Feder männlicher Verfasser — wie im Mittelalter üblich — zu rechnen haben.

Die Materialgrundlage für den ersten Band bilden in erster Linie die *Íslendinga sögur* und die *Sturlungasaga*. Daneben werden die große Rechtssammlung der Grágás und die norwegischen Provinzialrechte sowie die Konunga sögur herangezogen. Es geht der Verfasserin darum, diese Literatur (vor allem die *Íslendinga sögur*) als Zeugnis einer heidnisch-christlichen Kontinuität zwischen der Besiedlungszeit Islands, d.h. dem 9.–11. Jahrhundert, und der Zeit, in der die Quellen schriftlich fixiert wurden, dem 12./13. Jahrhundert, zu begreifen.

Das Buch ist in sechs Kapitel unterteilt; das Ergebnis der Untersuchung wird in einem Schlußkapitel zusammengefaßt, und daran anschließend folgt ein "Appendix". Da die Arbeit nicht nur Nordisten ansprechen will, ist zu empfehlen, diesen Appendix als erstes zu lesen. Die Verfasserin gibt darin einen Überblick über die von ihr benutzten Quellen und über den neuesten Forschungsstand. Auch hebt sie hier den Aspekt hervor, auf den es ihr bei ihren Untersuchungen ankommt: Wieweit spiegelt sich in diesen Quellen der Konflikt wieder, in den die Nordleute beim Übergang vom heidnischen zum christlichen Glauben gerieten? Sie stellt (wie in der derzeitigen Forschung besonders bei den Interpretationen der *Íslendinga sögur* wieder aktuell) die Darstellung der