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Nordiskt Runnamnslexikon (review)

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Book Reviews

NORDISKT RUNNAMNSLEXIKON. By Lena Peterson. Femte reviderade utgåvan. Uppsala: Institutet för språk och folkminnen, 2007. Pp. 345. SEK 250.

The English version of the title (given in the abstract on p. 4) of this handsomely bound volume is *Dictionary of Proper Names in Scandinavian Viking Age Runic Inscriptions*, which explains the absence of names from the oldest runic inscriptions. The book is unusual in that it is presented as the fifth revised edition of the dictionary, although it is the first printed edition after four versions that had appeared on the Internet (www.nordiska.uu.se/forskn/samnord.htm).

The dictionary consists of four parts: Names of viking-age persons (pp. 15–270), Names of mythical figures (pp. 305–6), Names of central figures of Christianity and saints (p. 307), and Place names (pp. 310–35). In the introductory material, there are remarks on the material included and its arrangement and the manner of citation of inscriptions (for the key to the citation forms of these inscriptions, the user is understandably referred to the Internet version).

In the introductory material to the Names of viking-age persons (pp. 11–13), it is noted that there are ca. 1,880 entries. These are listed under “en normaliserad runnordisk form, som i möjligaste mån tar hensyn till de faktiskt belagda formerna [a normalized Rune-Nordic form which to the extent possible takes into consideration the actually attested forms].” One easily sees the necessity for such normalized forms when one surveys the actually occurring runic forms, e.g., (nom. sg.) **ofahr**, **ofaigr ofaigr**, **ofaigr**, **ufagr**, **ufaih**, **ufaihr**, **ufaigr ufaigr**, **ufaka**, **ufagr**, **ufakrs**, **ufhigr**, **ufihr**, **ufik**, **ufikr**, **unfaigr**, **yfaigr** (pp. 171–72), all of which are listed under the normalized form *Ófeigr*, corresponding to OSw *Ofegh*, *Ovagh*, OWN *Ófeigr* ‘destined for long life.’ The normalized runic form is reconstructed with the help of attested Old Danish, Old Swedish, and Old West Nordic evidence, but as we see from the above example, the bias is toward the West Nordic forms, although the vast majority of the runic forms are East Nordic. This might be taken to be an indication of a certain inferiority complex on the part of Swedish and Danish researchers, but actually it indicates to me that these scholars have not reached agreement on reasonable East Nordic normalizations and the actual phonological system behind the myriad forms of the runic inscriptions. Establishing the relationship between the orthographic and phonological systems is undoubtedly a daunting task (see, e.g., E.H. Antonsen, *Runes and Germanic Linguistics*, Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2002, pp. 303–13), but to my mind it is a necessary one. Nevertheless, the work under consideration here bears witness to the tremendous effort expended to produce it. It presents scholars of runic studies with a truly invaluable tool.

One question which bothers me somewhat is the actual meaning of the statement that the normalized forms are derived “to the extent possible” from the actual runic attestations. How else can one establish normalizations?

The individual entries contain an indication of the grammatical form, corresponding forms in Old Danish, Old Swedish, and Old West Nordic, all the known attestations of the runic name in its various incarnations in transliterated form, followed by indications of the source(s) and brief bibliographic references when

called for. If the name consists of identifiable parts, these are also listed separately and the various combinations in other names are listed. In addition to the dictionary itself, there are also twenty Frequency tables (pp. 271–87) and a Reverse alphabetic listing of names (pp. 288–96). There follows a list of Untranslated items (pp. 297–303). All in all, this is a very respectable research tool which will prove to be of inestimable help to future scholars.

The one remaining question is when will the Institut för språk och folkminnen add an appendage covering the names of the older, Northwest Germanic runic inscriptions. This would not be nearly so difficult as the tremendous effort required to produce the present work, but of great value in comparing and contrasting the two corpora, in addition to perhaps bringing a little more certainty into our understanding of the latter corpus.

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THE LOST VELLUM KRINGLA. BIBLIOTHECA ARNAMAGNÆANA, VOL. 45. By Jon Gunnar Jørgensen. Translated from the Norwegian by Sian Grønlie. Copenhagen: C. A. Reitzel, 2007. Pp. xxviii + 369, 2 plates. SEK 250.

The Lost Vellum Kringla, begun twenty years ago, has its origins in plans conceived at the University of Oslo to produce a new critical edition of *Heimskringla*, a collection of kings' sagas commonly attributed to Snorri Sturluson. A member of the research team, Jon Gunnar Jørgensen undertook transcription work and text-critical analysis and was subsequently awarded a doctoral stipend to examine *Kringla*, the chief manuscript. The dissertation, which was completed in 1999, comprised a Norwegian version of the present study as well as an edition of *Ynglinga saga* based on *Kringla*. According to Jørgensen, "[n]o major alterations have been made in the translation as compared with the Norwegian original. The structure of the book is the same, the conclusions are unchanged, and there are no substantial additions or omissions" (p. viii).

In his introduction, Jørgensen explains the aims of his study: "to shed some light on the lost vellum of *Heimskringla* known as *Kringla*" and, more specifically, "to examine the transcripts of *Kringla* in order to find out how they can best be used to reconstruct the original text" (p. 1). He points out that "[t]he text of *Kringla* is fundamental to our knowledge of the collection of sagas known as *Heimskringla*. The transcripts of *Kringla* have often been used in editions, but a systematic and critical reconstruction of the text has not yet been carried out. A reconstruction of this kind is a necessary precondition for a new critical edition, if the witnesses discussed here are to be used correctly" (pp. 1–2).

Following a brief discussion of the contents of *Heimskringla*, the transmission of the work, the names "Kringla" and "Heimskringla" in chapter 1 ("Introduction"), Jørgensen gives in chapter 2 ("The History and Provenance of Kringla") an overview of the earlier history and use of *Kringla* after its arrival in Bergen in the sixteenth century until its destruction in the Copenhagen fire of 1728. He proceeds in chapter 3 ("Contents and Transmission") to settle the matter of the original contents of *Kringla*, demonstrating that the manuscript contained all three of the main parts of *Heimskringla* (that is, the story of the kings preceding Saint Óláfr Haraldsson, the saga of Saint Óláfr, and the history of the succeeding kings down to Magnús Erlingsson) as well as *Skáldatal* and possibly the prologue