

employed. An entry by John Considine, on Encyclopaedias and Dictionaries, reminds us of the Jesuit Maichael Pexenfelder, whose *Apparatus eruditionis* was first published in 1670 and subsequently reprinted throughout the eighteenth century. Even Leibniz envisioned a grand Encyclopaedia project – in Latin. Similarly, Johan Ihre, Johan Öhrling and other lexicographers used Latin when editing their Swedish and Sami dictionaries. Latin and the Enlightenment is the subject of a particularly compelling discussion by Yashmin Haskell, who effectively reassesses notions of Latin as a dead language of no relevance to progressive thinkers at the dawn of modernity. Although Haskell's examples are all from non-Nordic countries, their relevance appears self-evident. Other contributions that deconstruct the dead-language metaphor are entries on Conversational Latin: 1650 to the Present (by Milena Minkova); Latin Words to Music (Rudolf Rasch); Neo-Latin Drama (Jan Bloemendal); Pronunciation (Dirk Sacré); Diplomacy and Court Culture (Erik De Bom), *et cetera*.

The above-mentioned Hans Helander of Uppsala University has been influential in the Nordic countries, with his plea for the study of learned texts from the Scientific Revolution and Enlightenment periods, as a supplement to the widespread focus on imaginative literature (cf. his 'Neo-Latin studies: Significance and prospects', *Symbolae Osloenses*, vol. 76, 2001). Indeed, the vast amount of academic dissertations, pamphlets and journal articles that were produced in Latin during a time that most readers of this Yearbook will be familiar with, deserve better than being shaken off our common stock of sources by the tag 'latinlærdóm' (i.e. not-worth-reading). Nowadays, you no longer need to be a giant of Holberg's stature in order to have your Latin *opuscula* placed under scrutiny (although it helps, as witness the Holberg Project); also, less epitomized men such as the historian of the Viking World Tormod Torfæus (1636–1719), the Orientalist Andreas Nor-

relius (1679–1750) or the Finnish humanist Henrik Gabriel Porthan (1739–1804), to name only three examples, have attracted considerable interest from Neo-Latin scholars in recent years. You need not even be a man in order to be remembered for your Latin writings, as Jane Stevenson's seminal study on *Women Latin Poets* (Oxford, 2005) proves. Stevenson, moreover, is the author of several gender-problematizing entries in the book under review.

Becoming a Neo-Latin scholar is no easy task. With reference to the late Philip Ford, it requires 'a thorough grounding, both linguistic and literary, in classical literature, while at the same time being well versed in the vernacular literature and contemporary history of the countries on whose authors [one is] working' (Demmy Verbeke's entry on the 'History of Neo-Latin Studies', p. 917). Those patient enough to build the necessary skills, however, will have plenty of materials to explore and contexts to restore. *Brill's Encyclopaedia of the Neo-Latin World* is both an excellent guide for further research and an imposing statement of what has so far been achieved.

Per Pippin Aspaas

Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir (ed.), *Ættartölusafnrit séra Þórðar Jónssonar í Hítardal I–II*. Ritröð Stofnunar Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum 70 (Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum, 2008). 1,012 pp.

Genealogy is an ancient pursuit. In the most basic terms it revolves around human relationships and how people relate to one another, in the past and present. Its relevance to human society has been ever-changing, as it has journeyed from antiquity towards present times. In the not so distant past, genealogy could attach a man to heavy burdens and obligations. For instance, the duty of vengeance; or

perhaps the more likely scenario of having to support one's unfortunate kinsmen who had fallen upon hard times, perhaps through illness or poverty. And of course genealogy still very much governs the principles of inheritance law: the rights of a decedent's survivors to inherit property.

It appears, nowadays, that people conduct genealogical research more out of sheer interest and curiosity than pure or practical necessity: the stereotype being a greying elder, sitting in an archival reading room, rummaging through piles and heaps of documents, manuscripts and catalogues. And in more recent times the medical sciences have found ways to utilize and exploit the testimony of genealogy, particularly in the field of genetic diseases.

Genealogy has played an important role in Icelandic society for a millennium. This particular strain of knowledge had to be kept in an organized and accessible manner. And the necessity to preserve genealogical knowledge was, and has been, urgent. Fortunately, we (usually) relied upon parchment and paper to safeguard this particular part of tradition in our cultural history. The publication that I am about to discuss, *Ættartölusafnrit séra Þórðar Jónssonar í Hítardal*, which could translate as 'The Genealogical Anthology of Reverend Þórðar Jónsson in Hítardalur', is very much a product of the aforementioned tradition.

Reverend Þórður Jónsson (1606–1670) was, as his father before him, a pastor in the parish of Hítardalur, situated in the mid-west of Iceland. Before his pastoral appointment in Hítardalur, he studied at the University of Copenhagen, and became the first of his countrymen to formally attain the degree of *attestatus* in 1630. Reverend Jónsson was ordained in the same year and assisted his father in Hítardalur until 1633. The following year, Jónsson himself assumed the pastorate and served it until his death in 1670. He was an industrious man of learning, wise and well-informed, financially secure, and held in high regard among

his peers and other contemporaries. His most notable piece of work is the above-mentioned anthology. But before I discuss it, I would like to take a moment to introduce the scholar to which we, the seventeenth-century enthusiasts in Iceland, owe a debt of gratitude for researching and publishing Reverend Jónsson's *Genealogical anthology*.

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Grímsdóttir's publication consists of two volumes, 1,027 pages in total. Volume I contains Jónsson's *Genealogical anthology*, following a short introduction from the publisher. The introduction explains the preservation of the anthology, and the different manuscripts that have preserved this historical source. The spelling is modernized. That arrangement makes the text of the *Genealogical anthology* all the more readable and accessible. Jónsson's *Genealogical anthology* contains 18 chapters. Each chapter revolves around an individual (e.g. Bishop Jón Arason) or a family (e.g. Borgarætt, a family originating from the Borgarfjörður area in Iceland). Reverend Jónsson focuses his attention on the genealogy of Icelandic bishops in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as well as the most prominent families: the two often being very

much intertwined and closely connected, be it through blood, common interests, and the like.

Volume II contains a very extensive register, 270 pages to be exact, of persons and places that appear in Jónsson's *Genealogical anthology*, compiled by the publisher. Needless to say, this register is immensely useful. Volume II also contains a photographic section, dedicated to the different manuscripts on which the publication of Jónsson's anthology is based. A large section of this volume is dedicated to the publisher's research on Jónsson's anthology, as well as similar sources. Grímsdóttir's essay is both descriptive and analytical on Icelandic genealogical anthologies in general, as well as specifically on Jónsson's *Genealogical anthology*. It is insightful and speaks to Grímsdóttir's detailed research.

So, what does Reverend Jónsson's genealogical anthology tell us about Icelandic society in the sixteenth and, in particular, the seventeenth century? The text is far from being a dry and repetitive compilation of logs and registers of names in an arranged genealogical order. Instead, it is an interesting narrative that reflects the ethos of the period. And to some extent Jónsson's text is quite historiographical. The text can be seen and viewed upon as a contribution to social history, at least from Jónsson's viewpoint. His attitudes and sentiments towards individuals and families are usually apparent. The text is very revealing, and provides a valuable insight into the mindset of a member of the Icelandic elite in the seventeenth century. It also provides an insight into the upper echelons of Icelandic society in the period and how intimately intertwined they were, in respect to kinship, either through blood or marriage. In that respect, Icelandic society was virtually static and not very open to social mobility.

Jónsson's *Genealogical anthology* also uncovers the sheer density of the upper echelons' social network. He is rather occupied with the genealogy of Icelandic bishops in his time. Those individuals were of course closely related, or otherwise connected, to the leading

families in Iceland of his time, some of them being the forefathers of members of the ruling class. The last Catholic bishop in Iceland, Jón Arason (1484–1550) of Hólar diocese, was far from being celibate, fathering at least nine children, of whom six survived to adulthood. Grímsdóttir's publication contains Jónsson's chapter on Bishop Arason's history (vol. I, pp. 108–79). In the chapter on Bishop Arason, he weaves the narrative and genealogy together into one fabric. This method is the hallmark of his historiography.

To my mind, the publication of Reverend Jónsson's *Genealogical anthology* is a major contribution to Icelandic cultural history. As a practising historian/archivist and seventeenth-century enthusiast in Iceland, this publication is a very valuable addition to my armoury of tools. Jónsson's *Genealogical anthology* could best be described as a manual to Icelandic social networks in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It did not come as a surprise to me that Grímsdóttir's publication was nominated for recognition-award in 2009 by *Hagþenkir* (The Association of Non-fiction and Educational Writers in Iceland). The publication is not only an encouragement to seventeenth-century scholars in Iceland to undertake similar endeavours. It is also a stark reminder that we must keep on unearthing primary sources from the archives and bring them to the surface.

Gunnar Örn Hannesson

Guðný Hallgrímsdóttir, *Sagan af Guðrúnu Ketilsdóttur: einsögurannsókn á ævi 18. aldar vinnukonu*. Sýnisbók íslenskrar alþýðumenningar 16, eds. Davíð Ólafsson, Már Jónsson & Sigurður Gylfi Magnússon (Reykjavík: Háskólaútgáfan, 2013). 173 pp.

In this work the historian Guðný Hallgrímsdóttir pieces together from various