

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

sources the life story of the eighteenth-century Icelandic farm labourer, Guðrún Ketilsdóttir. The title reads in English ‘The Story of Guðrún Ketilsdóttir: A microhistorical study of the life of an eighteenth-century woman farm labourer.’ Along with a manuscript of her life story, as told in her own words, the book contains chapters on different facets of this peasant’s life from cradle to grave in an effort to shed light on the lives of farm labourers in general, and especially women, during this period. The book contains a number of photographs and helpful appendices.

Hallgrímsdóttir describes how the motivation for this study lies in her research on women’s autobiographical writing in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, during which she came across the manuscript of Guðrún Ketilsdóttir’s story. There are several versions of this story found in manuscript collections, and one printed version Hallgrímsdóttir mentions is from 1925. She classifies the story as autobiographical, even though it is clear Ketilsdóttir did not write it herself, but told it to the writer. Perhaps more attention to this detail might have been of interest here; i.e. implications for the interpretation of the text, when taking into account the relationship between the writer and the teller. (Brynja Þorgeirsdóttir points this out in her analysis of the autobiographical text and Guðný Hallgrímsdóttir’s work in ‘Upprís Guðrúnar Ketilsdóttur: Sjálfsmynd og sviðsetning í elstu, varðveittu sjálfsævisögu íslenskrar alþýðukonu sem áður var túlkuð sem gamansaga af flóni’, *Skírnir* 188, 2014: Autumn, pp. 381–409.) While searching for other versions of the manuscript, Hallgrímsdóttir notes that women are invisible in the manuscript records (p. 10), mainly because of the Icelandic National Library’s policy in the early twentieth century: one very much influenced by nationalistic discourse. It was clear to cataloguers and intellectuals at that time that what was of value in the collections was how the story of

Iceland was told; and in it women were very much marginalized and their texts commonly grouped under fathers, spouses, sons, or even grandfathers (p. 11). According to the catalogue then, very few texts by women existed; but, as Hallgrímsdóttir found out, they were there, albeit hidden under layers of national chauvinistic ideology. As Hallgrímsdóttir explains, not only were texts by women in this period few and hard to locate, they were also simply wrongly categorized. For instance, in one such listing Ketilsdóttir’s story was not listed under ‘biography’, but ‘folklore’ (p. 29), thus relegating it to a ‘lesser’ genre; a curiosity rather than an individual’s story of their own life. Hallgrímsdóttir also notes how the introduction to the only printed version contains many details on the woman’s life which are hard to substantiate – stories for which she has found no corroborating evidence – and seems a highly subjective interpretation of the text, rather than a historically accurate version of events.

Hallgrímsdóttir asks the question at the start of the work how a manuscript like this one can be read with the tools of microhistory in order to gain an understanding of events and individuals from the past (p. 30). Ketilsdóttir’s story itself is only four pages long (in this printed version), elliptical and at times impenetrable (pp. 35–38). Names are not explained, whether of individuals or places, nor any larger context. Following the text in this study is Hallgrímsdóttir’s biography of the woman. Guðrún Ketilsdóttir was born in 1759 into poverty, in a period of Icelandic history characterised by unusually cold weather and devastating volcanic eruptions, which caused incredible hardship. Hallgrímsdóttir goes on to surmise what she can of the woman’s story by using detailed church records and other available sources. This gives her an opportunity to discuss various aspects of a woman’s life in terms of her gender and her class, such as child-rearing, education, family relationships,

work environment, and general prospects. She is careful in keeping in mind questions of gender and class throughout her study, criticising existing research for lumping all women together, not differentiating between women from different classes, and therefore coming close to stereotyping the lot of women in this time period (p. 145).

Hallgrímsdóttir manages to trace Ketilsdóttir's life in a fair amount of detail, and her use of sources is often highly illuminating. One innovative reading of source material is how she uses a detailed list of items Ketilsdóttir and her siblings inherited from their parents to tell the story of the different needs and different lives the siblings lived, in a convincing reading of available records. The use of the primary source itself, i.e. Guðrún Ketilsdóttir's telling of her life story, can however be questioned, as the main research question of what this text can tell us about those times does not seem to be in the foreground, although the question is reiterated later in the work (p. 143). In a few instances Hallgrímsdóttir interrogates the text itself, for instance in analysing how Ketilsdóttir speaks of her employers. As Hallgrímsdóttir explains, she seems to have been a clever woman who did not feel subjugated to her masters (p. 105), not hesitating to speak out if she felt they deserved it. Hallgrímsdóttir also points out that one of the ways for ill-treated workers to get their own back was by speaking ill of bad employers (p. 140). Maybe if the text had been interrogated and examined further, the context in which it came about, its purpose and (despite everything) its longevity might be explained further. But overall this is not a close analysis of the manuscript itself, or an attempt at a detailed interpretation of this specific text. Rather, Guðrún's story is the spark, but other records and source materials are the main foundation for this study.

In this study a fairly comprehensive picture of the lot of a female farm labourer in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Iceland

emerges through careful interrogation of sources and available material. A more comprehensive reading and perhaps a more thorough and wide-ranging analysis might have emerged with (a) a closer analysis of the autobiographical text itself; and (b) a wider range of secondary material, for instance on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century autobiographical writing, women's autobiographical writing, and working-class autobiography, which have been studied in other countries, to put Guðrún Ketilsdóttir's compelling story into a larger context.

*Gunnþórunn Guðmundsdóttir*

Ruth Hemstad, *Propagandakrig: kampen om Norge i Norden og Europa 1812–1814* (Oslo: Novus, 2014). 561 pp.

Åren 1812–1814 tillhör de mer dramatiska i Europas och Nordens historia. Åren 1810–1812 gick Europa sakta mot den slutliga uppgörelsen mellan Napoleons Frankrike och Alexanders Ryssland. Sverige hade lidit nederlag mot Ryssland 1808–1809 och förlorat sin östra riksdel Finland. I krigets kölvatten skedde en statsomvälvning. Gustav IV Adolf störtades, en ny konstitution kom till och 1810 hade en ny kronprins, den före detta franske fältmarskalken Jean Baptiste Bernadotte under namnet Karl Johan, tagit över den reella makten i Sverige. Karl Johan hade en ny syn på den svenska utrikespolitiken som i korthet innebar, åtminstone på kort sikt, en acceptans av förlusten av Finland och insikten att Sverige med sina begränsade resurser måste söka fred med Ryssland. Det som kom att kallas 1812-års politik var en omläggning av den svenska utrikespolitiken mot att söka Rysslands stöd snarare än att se stormakten på andra sidan Östersjön som en arvfiende. Karl Johan försökte i den nya politiska situation som rådde i