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JOHAN SCHALIN

Scandinavian Front Umlaut Revisited and Revised

Schalin, J., doctoral research student, University of Helsinki. “Scandinavian Front Umlaut Revisited and Revised” *ANF* 132 (2017), pp. 5–73.

Abstract: To date, no analysis has adequately accounted for the attested distribution of front umlaut in Old Scandinavian. In this study attention is paid to unexpected outcomes that defy the generally accepted rules. In particular, the complications posed by *i*-umlaut are refined into an acid test against which existing hypotheses fail. A genuinely novel proposal is developed, based on the assumption that in prominent syllables contrast well into the umlaut period was upheld between descendants of Pre-Germanic (PreGmc) */e/ and */i/ respectively, even upon the Pre-Scandinavian raising of *e. Upon such raising the descendants of PreGmc */e/ had in all oral contexts evolved into a markedly fronted coronal vowel *ɪ, whereas in prominent syllables descendants of PreGmc */i/ had by default, with few exceptions, in a chain shift evolved into a non-umlauting dorsal vowel *ɨ. Given the assumption that a light second syllable within a main stressed bisyllabic foot was prominent, the two vowels *ɪ and *ɨ, active and inert as triggers for front umlaut respectively, could both have occurred in this position. By explaining their distribution in the lexicon, the notoriously intricate cruxes of *i*-umlaut may be neatly accounted for.

Key words: front umlaut, palatal umlaut, Proto-Scandinavian, Ancient Scandinavian, vowel systems, diachronic linguistics, historical phonology, phonological contrast.

SVERRIR JAKOBSSON

Narrating History in Iceland: The Works of Ari Þorgilsson

Sverrir Jakobsson, professor in medieval history, Háskóli Íslands, Reykjavík. “Narrating History in Iceland: The Works of Ari Þorgilsson”. *ANF* 132 (2017), pp. 75–99.

Abstract: In this article, the author discusses the historical writings of Ari Þorgilsson, known as the author of *The Book of the Icelanders* (ON. *Íslendingabók*). It is demonstrated that Ari wrote not only on the history of Iceland, but also on the history of the world, on the history of Norway, and the history of the Breiðafjörðr region, and the status and purpose of *The Book of Icelanders* must necessarily be subject to re-evaluation. It was not a solitary work but a part of a larger corpus. Once this has been established, the contents of the *Book of Icelanders* can and should be re-examined.

Keywords: Medieval historiography, world view, *historia gentium*, barbarian history, history of Iceland.

MATTHIAS EGELER

Constructing a Landscape in *Eyrbyggja saga*: the Case of *Dritsker*

Egeler, M., PD Dr., Institut für Nordische Philologie, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München. “Constructing a Landscape in *Eyrbyggja saga*: the Case of *Dritsker*”. *ANF* 132 (2017), pp. 101–120.

Abstract: This article discusses the account of the settlement of Þórsnes by Þórólfr Mostrarskegg as it is presented in *Eyrbyggja saga*, relating it to the question of the applicability of current thinking on landscape to the interpretation of Old Norse literature. While current approaches both to landscape in general and to the construction of the landscape of Þórsnes in *Eyrbyggja saga* in particular tend to emphasise the function of ‘landscape’ as a medium conveying existential ‘meanings’, a close reading of the literary landscape of Þórsnes in *Eyrbyggja saga* rather suggests that much of the literary construction of this landscape should be seen as consciously grotesque and intended to be understood as such by the saga’s contemporary audience. Central for this reading is an interpretation of the place-name *Dritsker* as meaning “Guano Skerry”. This translation is suggested by the lexical evidence but has been avoided by previous critics, who chose to adapt their interpretations of the place-name to the story told about it in the saga and thus missed an arguably central clue for the interpretation of the saga episode. Some thoughts are also offered on the reasons for why a thirteenth-century author, perhaps working in the monastery at Helgafell, might have chosen to present the past of this area in a purposefully grotesque fashion.

Keywords: *Eyrbyggja saga*, place-names, semantisation of landscape, spatiality, Old Norse religion.

MIKAEL MALES

Character, Provenance, and Use of the Icelandic Fifth Grammatical Treatise

Males, M., associate professor of Old Norse philology, University of Oslo. "Character, Provenance, and Use of the Icelandic Fifth Grammatical Treatise". *ANF* 132 (2016), pp. 121–138.

Abstract: This article argues that the short textual fragment today called the Fifth Grammatical Treatise (below 5GT) represents a kind of hybrid within Icelandic poetics, occupying a middle ground between the nativizing treatises, such as Snorri's *Edda*, and the Latinate ones, such as 3GT and 4GT. Like Snorri's *Edda*, 5GT uses vernacular rather than Latin terminology and it is not arranged according to principles canonized within the grammatical tradition, but the concepts it treats are alien to the vernacular tradition and belong in the sphere of Latin learning. The article also contends that the combined evidence of manuscript context and features within the text itself suggests that its author is Óláfr Þórðarson, nephew of Snorri Sturluson, or someone very close to him, and that Óláfr drew on 5GT in his composition of 3GT. This contextualization sheds further light on how 5GT fits into the evolving tradition of Icelandic poetics, not least because Óláfr is the person who took this tradition from a nativizing to a Latinate mode in 3GT. The attribution of 5GT to his intellectual milieu thus enables us to get close to the individuals who, after Snorri, developed the discourse on vernacular poetics in the thirteenth century. The translation of Latin texts that Óláfr undertook in 3GT may appear as the most straightforward way of transferring Latin learning into the vernacular. The intermediate, hybrid solution of 5GT, however, suggests that the nativizing mode held such a strong position in Icelandic intellectual circles that translation was the most, rather than the least, challenging solution for transforming local poetics into a theoretical discourse recognizable by European standards.

Keywords: Icelandic, grammatical treatises, poetics, skaldic poetry, Fifth Grammatical Treatise, Third Grammatical Treatise, Donatus, *Barbarismus*, Óláfr Þórðarson, Snorri's *Edda*.

BRITTA OLRİK FREDERIKSEN

Et par noter til de nordiske Jon Præst-tekster

Olrik Frederiksen, B., senior lecturer in Nordic philology, University of Copenhagen. "A few comments on the Nordic texts of Prester John's letter (*Jon Præst/Joan præst av Indialand*)". *ANF* 132 (2017), pp. 139–151.

Abstract: In his edition *Jon Præst* (1978) Allan Karker published the three critically relevant Nordic texts of Prester John's letter, a legendary fiction from ca. 1165: T (Danish, in Thott 585 8vo, ca. 1500), G (Danish, printed by Gotfred of Ghemen 1510), and U (Swedish, in Uppsala C 213, probably 1458). Karker argued convincingly that two translations from Latin were represented: one by T and another by G and U. At first, this article considers whether Old Swedish *sömare*/Old Danish *sømere*, a word of some significance for the interpretation of the textual relations, is only attested in the sense of 'packhorse', as regretted by Karker, or might also signify a person, 'carrier' or the like, which is closer to the Latin. Secondly, the article calls attention to a paragraph with almost identical contents at the end of each text. The paragraph is not discussed by Karker although it would seem to threaten his theory of two independent translations as far as it has no equivalent either in text or apparatus of the standard Latin edition (Zarncke 1879). An examination of Zarncke's description of 96 manuscripts known to him reveals, however, that a Latin parallel to the paragraph is found in Oxford, Bibl. Orielensis, II (late 12th century), rendering it likely that this agreement between the texts is due to their Latin exemplars rather than a shared Nordic ancestor. Finally, it is suggested that perhaps Latin variants not reported in Zarncke's Lachmann-like edition might also eliminate some minor barbs against Karker's interpretation.

Keywords: Prester John, *Jon Præst*, *Joan præst av Indialand*, *sømere*, *sömare*, textual criticism, method of scholarly editing, Friedrich Zarncke.

LOUISE FAYMONVILLE

Om variationen i Codex Thott 4 4:o – ett tolkningsförslag

Faymonville, L., PhD student in Scandinavian languages, Stockholm University. “On the variation in Codex Thott 4 4:o – a suggested interpretation”. *ANF* 131 (2017), pp. 153–178.

Abstract: This article examines the linguistic variation and paleographical phenomena in the 15th century Old Swedish manuscript Codex Thott 4 4:o. The manuscript contains the Pentateuch Paraphrase, the oldest known Bible text in the Swedish vernacular. A comparison between Cod. Thott 4 4:o and Codex Holm A1, the other remaining Old Swedish manuscript containing the Pentateuch Paraphrase, reveals significant linguistic variation even though the manuscripts are thought to share a common source. Cod. Thott 4 4:o has been considered the work of one person, an experienced scribe, albeit not always consistent in his actions. One of the most interesting features of Cod. Thott 4 4:o is that the linguistic variation vis-à-vis Cod. Holm A1 seems unevenly distributed. This seeming inconsistency of the Cod. Thott 4 4:o scribe also seems to somewhat correlate with paleographical phenomena. A combination of analyses of the linguistic variation vis-à-vis Cod. Holm A1 and the paleographical phenomena in Cod. Thott 4 4:o suggests that Cod. Thott 4 4:o could in fact be the work of two scribes with somewhat different work principles. Similar to Haukur Erlendsson in Hauksbók, one of the scribes of Cod. Thott 4 4:o frequently changes and adapts his material whereas the other scribe more often follows the source.

Keywords: scribe, Codex Thott 4 4:o, linguistic variation, paleography, scribal collaboration.

HANS JONSSON

Uppkomsten av betydelsen ’förstå’ hos verbet *förstå* och andra indoeuropeiska verb

Jonsson, H., professor emeritus, Lund. “The development of the meaning ‘to understand’ in Indo-European verbs”. *ANF* 132 (2017), pp. 179–192.

Abstract: *Förstå* is the central Swedish word for ‘to understand’. The verb is a loan from Middle Low German *vorstān* ‘to understand’, with counterparts in other West Germanic languages, German *verstehen*, Dutch *verstaan* etc. How a prefix in conjunction with the word for ‘to stand’ has given the meaning ‘to understand’ is by no means self-evident, and several different explanations have been suggested. Section 2 deals with the rise of the meaning ‘to understand’ in *förstå*, together with a discussion of a corresponding development in three other comparable prefixed verbs, Greek *ἐπιστάμαι*, Middle Low German *understān* (English *understand*) and Old High German *in(t)stantan* (Middle High German *en(t)stehen*). In the Greek verb the physical sense ‘stand beside something’, in *understān* the very similar ‘stand in the midst of something’ (not, as is generally believed, ‘to stand under something’) is the origin of the cognitive meaning ‘to understand’. In Old High German *in(t)stantan*, I explain the sense ‘to understand’ as a development from ‘by standing obtain something’. I also prefer explaining the rise of the sense ‘to understand’ in Middle Low German *vorstān* as a similar semantic process. In the analysis of the four prefixed verbs in section 2 it was found essential to acquire a grasp of the semantic development of ‘to understand’ in Proto-Indo-European verbs. Section 3 gives a survey of the semantic developments that have been found, broken down into twelve categories consisting of the “pre-meanings”, the basic senses of the verb or a secondary sense of it, which is the basis for the sememe ‘to understand’ in each category. In the categories 3.1–3.7 we find metaphorical processes (and similar developments) from the following pre-meanings: ‘grip, grasp with hands; acquire, come into possession of; ‘gather (and sort or order; separate, distinguish; ‘arrive at; ‘stand beside or in the midst of or in front of something; ‘technically or electrotechnically join’. Categories 3.8–3.12 involve a transfer of the sense impressions ‘hear’ and ‘see’ and the development from the cognitive ‘notice’ and ‘know’.

Keywords: to understand, sememe, semantic development, meaning, pre-meaning.