

1731 och 1806. Det danska ostindiska kompaniet hade en än större volym med 222 laster anlända mellan 1732 och 1807. I kapitel två förklaras sedan tehandelns betydelse. Med relativt stora mängder silver i sina laster fick de svenska och danska handlarna viss fördel vid uppköp av te i Kanton, eftersom silver var starkt efterfrågat i Kina. Men det importerade teet konsumerades bara delvis av skandinaver. En stor del gick vidare till Nederländerna eller hamnade i Storbritannien som smuggelgod: "Gothenburg Congo" var en kategori av te som konsumerades av briterna och vars namn skvallrar om dess färdväg. I följande kapitel behandlas handeln med silke som i motsats till te inte var någon nyhet i Västerlandet utan varit en del av lyxkonsumtionen sedan länge. Det svenska kompaniet populariserade i själva verket silke bland bredare lager av befolkningen genom att föra in billiga silkestyper. Försök gjordes från svenska myndigheters sida att begränsa denna lyxkonsumtion medan den danska policyn var mer tillåtande. I det fjärde kapitlet förklarar till sist Hodacs hur skandinaviska vetenskapsmän och ekonomiska tänkare sökte efter möjliga produkter och substanser som kunde ersätta de kostliga kinesiska importvarorna. Experiment med färger för tyger var en del av bilden. Blåbär, enbär och nässlor hörde till förslagen på färggivare som skulle kunna göra asiatiska tyger umbärliga. En provinsialläkare från Norrköping bedrev en kampanj för att lansera lavar som färgmedel, förutom deras påstådda medicinska och ätliga egenskaper. Även om sådana försök inte slog väl ut visar de hur Kinahandeln långt ifrån att vara marginell var intimt förbunden med 1700-talets vetenskapliga nyfikenhet och ekonomiska politik.

Hodacs bok kastar nytt ljus på sedan gammalt kända förhållanden genom att den tar ett helhetsgrepp på konsumtion och ekonomiskt tänkande och studerar olika samhälleliga och geografiska nivåer. Att undersöka danska och svenska förhållanden i ett och samma sammanhang är också relativt nytt. Som ett stycke

globalhistoria förtjänar arbetet uppmärksamhet även om man kanske kunnat önska att den kinesiska änden av produktions- och distributionskedjan hade belysts mer. Någon läsfest är texten inte: långa partier består av redogörelser för i och för sig intressanta ekonomiska sammanhang men de kräver en del tid och eftertanke för att smälta. Att boken utkommer på engelska är värdefullt då den griper in i ett snabbt expanderande globalhistoriskt forskningsfält, men man får önska att en svensk version snart dyker upp.

Hans Hägerdal

Viðar Hreinsson, *Jón lærði og náttúruvísindisfræðingurinn* [Jón the Learned and the Virtues of Nature] (Reykjavík: Lesstofan, 2016). 760 pp.

Viðar Hreinsson's book *Jón lærði og náttúruvísindisfræðingurinn* is surely one of the handsomest books to appear in Iceland in the last year. Indeed, the book's designer, Ragnar Helgi Ólafsson, has been awarded for the cover and design of the book. Viðar Hreinsson is an Icelandic literary scholar who has written extensively on both medieval and post-medieval Icelandic literature. He is the general editor of *The Complete Sagas of Icelanders*, published in five volumes in 1997 and the author of a biography of the poet Stephan G. Stephansson published in two volumes in Icelandic in 2002 and 2003 (*Landneminn mikli* and *Andvökuskáld*) and in English (*Wakeful Nights*) in 2012.

Viðar Hreinsson has taken on a challenging task with this bulky book which is essentially the biography of Jón Guðmundsson lærði (the learned). He uses a large number of primary sources, both the writings of Jón lærði himself as well as several other manuscripts from a similar period. The book's content is divided into three sections as well as a prologue and epilogue, with each section marked by a beauti-

ful crimson page. The book moreover includes several maps and images that conform to the book's design.

The three main sections contain a number of chapters. Each subchapter begins with a short synopsis of the chapter's subject that serves as a guide for the reader who needs to travel far and near in the world of Jón lærði. Jón was born in 1574 in West-Iceland (Ófeigsfjörður). Not much is known of his upbringing, his parents were neither rich nor educated but Jón seems to have read the books that he could and observed his surroundings. He was fascinated by the nature and his writings show an admirable knowledge of rocks and plants, birds and other animals. Around 1645 he wrote a book on the natural history of Iceland, the first of its kind, called "Ein stutt undirrietting um Íslands adskilianlegar náttúru" and can be read in an edition by Halldór Hermannsson, from 1924.

The structure of Viðar Hreinsson's book is both biographical and cosmological. The author stays true to the biographical method by starting with Jón's first years and ending in his old age. At the same time Jón's life is continually contextualised by turning the focus to various other aspects that may have influenced his life and consequently his writing. This applies to influential medieval Icelandic works such as the Eddas and the encyclopaedic manuscript Hauksbók which we know Jón had access to at one point. But at the same time the writings and ideas of prominent foreign scientists like the astronomers Copernicus and Tycho Brahe are likely to have come across Jón's path, directly or through other works. By following this structure the author sometimes leads the reader through long digressions but overall this method is highly appreciative because sources on a person's whole life in the 17th century are often scarce and external material can broaden our understanding. When it comes to Jón the sources are indeed rich compared to most other Icelanders from the 17th

century but they are neither complete nor simple as it is often arbitrary what has been preserved and what not.

The book on Jón lærði is therefore no less a book on Icelandic literary, educational, political, and cultural history than a simple biography. It is for example highly useful in its detailed accounts of Jón's family and relatives, with numerous family trees included that help the reader to gain overview of the complicated family relationships that sometimes occur. There are certainly gaps in our knowledge of Jón's life and the author makes use of various evidence on circumstances in his closest environment to postulate what Jón may have been doing or where he was living. By expanding the horizon also from time to time beyond the Icelandic shoreline the author allows for a deeper understanding of the prevailing scientific and educational ideology and currents abroad that would have influenced learned men in Iceland at that time.

Many of the works by Jón lærði have been preserved in manuscripts, some written by him while others are copies. The author has studied these works carefully. Some he analyses in detail, like the poem *Fjandafala* (To Scare off Fiends), while other works are interwoven into the general discussion on Jón and his activities. Viðar Hreinsson approaches the manuscripts with the principals of the so-called new philology in mind, studying them in context of transmission with regards to the surroundings that nourished these manuscripts. The book is thus a valuable and a welcome contribution to the study of post-medieval manuscripts.

Jón lærði did not lead an ordinary, uneventful, farmer's life but at the same time he was neither an official nor a member of the church. He created his own path. He had disputes with prominent men and was suspected of sorcery. These are ingredients that are bound to spice every story and this book is no exception. In short, by writing on the details of Jón's life combined with a sea of informa-

tion on the world he belonged to in a crisp, at times poetic, style Viðar Hreinnsson has made a truly important contribution to the field of Icelandic literary studies. As the author states himself in the final words of the book, he has not exhausted the material or written the final word on Jón and hopefully this book may lead to more research on the age of Jón lærði. Nevertheless, the book is and will be for times to come an essential source on the 17th century in Iceland.

*Dórdís Edda Jóhannesdóttir*

Guðrún Ingólfsdóttir, *Á hverju liggja ekki vorar göfugu kellingar: Bókmenning íslenskra kvenna frá miðöldum fram á 18. öld* [The things our dear old ladies hoard: Literary culture of Icelandic women from the Middle Ages to the eighteenth century] *Sýnisbók íslenskrar alþýðumenningar* 20 (Reykjavík: Háskólaútgáfan, 2016). 352 pp.

As the subtitle of her book indicates, Guðrún Ingólfsdóttir examines women's literary culture in Iceland from the Middle Ages to the eighteenth century. The author has chosen 1730 as the end date for her study, the year in which Árni Magnússon died, i.e. a time by which many manuscripts had moved from private ownership into collections, due to the increased interest of scholars and collectors in the Icelandic literary heritage during the eighteenth century. The volume discusses books and manuscripts women in Iceland owned, read or copied to demonstrate how women used and were shaped by these books and the literature they contain.

The main title, *Á hverju liggja ekki vorar göfugu kellingar*, is taken from Halldór Laxness' *Iceland's Bell*. In the novel, the words are spoken by Arnas Arnæus, a character based on Árni Magnússon. It seems rather fitting, since Guðrún

Ingólfsdóttir indeed sheds light on "the things our dear old ladies hoard" (Halldór Laxness. *Iceland's Bell*. Transl. by Philip Roughton. New York: Vintage International, 2003, p. 23), which in the past have often been overlooked and underappreciated.

The book begins with a preface, in which the author talks about her upbringing, particularly the influence her mother and maternal grandmother had on her own interest in books. The introduction that follows outlines the objectives of the study, its methods and the materials that have been included. The book is divided into five chapters, each with several subdivisions as well as a summary. Chapter 1 is a case study, introducing the reader to literature and reading practices of common women in Iceland by using one detailed example: a miscellany (*syrra*) owned by Guðrún Jónsdóttir á Sandhólum from the Eyjafjörðurdistrict of northern Iceland. This woman lived during the late eighteenth century, technically later than the period studied otherwise in the book. Guðrún Ingólfsdóttir explains, however, that reading practices did not change that quickly and that the miscellany is, therefore, a good example to reconstruct the worldviews and self-image of women during the eighteenth century as well as their cultural background. Another reason for Guðrún Ingólfsdóttir's choice was that more sources were available regarding this common woman than for anyone else who fell within the scope of the research project. Chapter 2 provides an introduction to women's literary culture in Europe. It deals with women's literacy and education during the Middle Ages on one hand and from the Reformation to the eighteenth century on the other. Moreover, it discusses women's writing practices in Europe during these time periods. Chapter 3 deals with the same topics as Chapter 2, but focuses on Iceland. The information provided in Chapter 2 allows the reader to place the literary culture of Icelandic women within the European context. As is to be expected and welcomed,