

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,

Chapter 3 goes more in depth. The author discusses for example the role mothers and nunneries in Iceland played in the education of children. Guðrún Ingólfssdóttir provides numerous examples from various types of literature—both fictional and historical—of women reading, studying as well as owning books. As before, the author discusses these topics first with regard to the medieval period and then for the period between the Reformation and the eighteenth century. Lastly, Guðrún Ingólfssdóttir explores books specifically published for woman and common people and the approximate age at which Icelandic women learned to read. Not just in this chapter but throughout the entire volume, the author never shies away from remarking on research difficulties such as incomplete records, the loss of manuscripts over time, or possible historical inaccuracy of descriptions of women in literature. In Chapter 4, the author points out manuscripts owned by women and analyzes how they were used. The content analyses in this chapter allow for an interpretation of what the manuscripts say about the women who owned them, their worldviews, interests, and education. Chapter 5 provides examples of women writing. The author uses archaeological evidence, historical sources and literature to give an overview of accounts of women writing, for instance, runes, manuscripts, letters, and marginalia. An overall summary of the main findings follows the five core chapters. The main part of the volume concludes with acknowledgements, an English summary, and a bibliography. In an annex, Guðrún Ingólfssdóttir provides the reader with a helpful catalogue of Icelandic manuscripts from the Middle Ages through the eighteenth century owned or written by women, with the exception of manuscripts owned by non-Icelandic women, letter collections, or manuscripts preserving texts composed by women, which have all been excluded.

The volume is clearly aimed at an Icelandic audience, which is not only evident from being

published in Icelandic but also through the use of phrases such as “hérlandis” [in this country] or “formæður okkar” [our (Icelandic) foremothers]. Nonetheless, non-Icelanders alike can greatly profit from Guðrún Ingólfssdóttir’s study, gaining a better understanding of women’s roles in society, their worldviews and self-images as seen through their books and libraries. The author remarks that “Hildegard af Bingen hélt því fram að Guð hefði hvatt hana til að nota einfaldan rithátt þegar hún skrifaði vitranir sínar, skrifa ekki eins og karlmaður” [Hildegard of Bingen claimed that God had encouraged her to use a simple style of writing when jotting down her visions, not to write like a man] (p. 76). It would appear that Guðrún Ingólfssdóttir has taken the same advice to heart. Her style is easy to read, delightfully personal and engaging, lending itself to reach both a more generally interested lay readership as well as academic circles. Guðrún Ingólfssdóttir uses the image of the book as a mirror we look into to see ourselves as we are and as we ought to be. For the purpose of her book, she reverses this idea, focusing on the “image of women as reflected in their books” (p. 262). It is undeniable that Guðrún Ingólfssdóttir’s volume is a wonderful contribution to Icelandic manuscript studies as well as Icelandic women’s studies, to name just two possible benefactors, showing indeed that “the things our dear old ladies hoard” should not be overlooked.

Susanne Artbur

Janus Møller Jensen & Carsten Selch Jensen (red.), *Krig, korstog og kulturmoder i 1700-tallet* (Kerteminde: Østfyns Museer, 2016). 173 s.

Kulturmoder interesserer mange af os i disse år, hvor effekten af det 20. århundredes teknologiske sammenbinding af verden for alvor