8–10 mm betragen (statt cm); Seite 48 muß es Gleichgratköper (statt -körper) heißen, richtig Seite 53 und 54; in Kapitel 8 wird Odins Speer falsch als "Gugnir" (statt Gungnir) angeführt, sein Ring heißt Draupnir, nicht "Draupni", und der Titel der eddischen Spruchsammlung "Hávamál" (87) sollte deutsch besser als "Die Sprüche (oder: Reden) des Hohen" (d.h. Odins) wiedergegeben werden. Die von der Verfasserin — offensichtlich aus Felix Genzmers Eddaübersetzung — übernommene Bezeichnung "Das alte Sittengedicht" ist eine moderne Titelgebung, die sich überdies nur auf die ersten ca. 70–80 Strophen — je nach Abgrenzung durch die Übersetzer — der insgesamt 164 Strophen umfassenden Sammlung bezieht.

Das Einleitungskapitel enthält erfreulicherweise auch einen kurzen Abriß der Forschungsgeschichte (17–20). Hier werden zwar unter anderem die verschiedenen Geldgeber und fördernden Institutionen genannt, von der "Norddeutschen Rundfunk A.G." 1930 bis zur "Krupp v. Bohlen und Halbach Stiftung" 1979 und der Trägerschaft der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft; die Übernahme der "Schirmherrschaft" über die Grabung durch den "Reichsführer SS" und das Engagement des "SS-Ahnenerbes" in den Jahren nach 1934 bleiben jedoch bedauerlicherweise unerwähnt (vgl. Herbert Jankuhn, *Die Ausgrabungen in Haithabu 1937–1939* [Berlin: Ahnenerbe-Stiftung Verlag, 1943], 10). Ein deutlicher Hinweis auf Schwierigkeiten, die nicht nur im Umgang mitfrüher, sondern auch mit jüngerer Vergangenheit auftreten können.

Ein entscheidender Einwand gegen Hildegard Elsners Leistung ist das nun freilich nicht; ihr Buch bietet für die angesprochene Zielgruppe gründliche und sachkundige Informationen über den Gegenstandsbereich, und es kann darüber hinaus auch gut in weiter gefaßten Zusammenhängen — etwa im Schul- oder Hochschulunterricht — als erste Einführung in die zentralen Fragestellungen der Haithabuforschung sowie in deren bisherige Ergebnisse verwendet werden.

Hartmut Röhn

Judith Jesch. *Women in the Viking Age*. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1991. 239 pages.

Given the upsurge of interest in the study of women as literary types and historical figures, and in feminist theory and archaeology, it seems almost inconceivable that no general work on women in the Viking Age, nor in medieval Scandinavia, has been written in English in recent years. Judith Jesch is to be congratulated, not only for perceiving this lack, but also for producing a book which goes such a long way towards satisfying the many differing requirements which her readers will be seeking to fulfill. Delimiting the Viking Age strictly to the period between 800 and 1100 concentrates the mind wonderfully on that evidence which does exist from the period, and distinguishes very clearly between contemporary and later sources. The evidence for women's activities and roles: archaeological finds, runic inscriptions, foreign chronicle accounts, representations in sculpture, myth, in eddic and skaldic poetry, and in Snorri, is reviewed chapter by chapter. The final chapter is a retrospective look at Viking women as depicted in the family sagas. This may sound as if the modus operandi is movement from the trustworthy to the less reliable, but Judith Jesch heads off any such supposition early in the introduction: "This arrangement may seem to imply a hierarchy of sources, from the 'reliable' and concrete evidence of archaeology to the 'unreliable' romantic mythologizing of the Icelandic sagas. There is certainly a continuum and the different sources give different types of information about the Viking Age, but I do not necessarily subscribe to the view that 'only archaeology can reveal the truth'" (4–5).

The book's great strengths lie, first, in exactly this interdisciplinary approach to Viking studies, and, secondly, in the up-to-date summaries of archaeological and epigraphic evidence. These, and the extensive bibliographical references, will make the book indispensible, especially to those who mainly work only in one area of the discipline. The chapter on foreign sources reveals

a considerable breadth of reading and judicious historical probing of the value of such sources. There is a welcome use of Arab and Russian chronicle material, in addition to the familiar accounts of Viking atrocities from outraged churchmen. The well-known, lurid account of Ibn Fadlan is thus set off against the adventures of the flirtatious Al-Ghazal and the redoubtable Olga of Kiev, told with copious quotation from original material.

Judith Jesch states at the outset that she is omitting consideration of evidence about women's lives from the laws and the konungasögur. She is no doubt wise to leave out legal evidence, given its lateness and Christian content. The loss of the konungasögur is regrettable however; there may not be an enormous number of notable women in *Heimskringla,* but the consideration of figures like Sigríðr in stórráða, to name but one, might have been more germane to forming a historically accurate view of Viking women than the discussion of Saxo's legendary warrior women. I should also have welcomed some investigation of wisdom poetry, a genre with a peculiar relationship to the actual. *Hávamál* is cited as evidence for the importance of memorial stones (48), but discussion of the positive evaluations both the "gnomic poem" and *Loddfáfnismál* make of women's intellectual capacities might have counterbalanced the emphasis which the book—inevitably—places on the physical and material.

An absence of new and startling conclusions and totally incontrovertible facts may be sensed as the reader progresses through *Women in the Viking Age.* This is not to fault the book, but results inevitably from the paucity of evidence. The conclusions which are reached: that Viking women did travel with their men, that they took part in trade, that they could commission rune-stones, that they may temporarily have experienced some degree of new freedom with Christianity emerge as persuasively argued and soundly based. It remains difficult to form a clear picture of a typical, individual woman's life — there is no verbal equivalent to the kind of reconstruction in the Viking museum in Jorvik. It is only from the sagas that any sense of the psychological constitution of these women can possibly be gleaned, as Judith Jesch is understandably wary of falling into the essentialist trap of assuming that Viking women were in most senses "like us."

The book is amply illustrated with beautifully reproduced and apposite pictures; thus it seems ungenerous to regret the absence of maps, bar one Europe-wide map showing Viking trade routes (110), but given the broad appeal of the book, I suspect not every reader will instantly know where Kaupang is, nor indeed be sure how to find out.

Judith Jesch strikes a difficult balance between writing for the informed general reader and the knowledgeable scholar with remarkable success. There is an absence of footnotes and impedimenta which encourages accessibility, but brief end-notes refer the reader to other works, and there is an extensive bibliography, making no concessions to the reader who reads only English.

Carolyne Larrington