

or has obvious omissions" (p. 73). This includes, however, some indications of physical damage to R as well.

The Glossary (pp. 77-162) is supposed to contain all words except the common pronouns. **Hann** and **hon** are omitted, but **sá**, **sjá**, **þat** are listed (if the last, why not also **þetta**?). A dagger is set before words to indicate "specifically poetical" usage. Line references are, of course, very select, but some of the entries are fuller-- for example, the entry for **koma** contains 28 references and runs to 13 lines, that for **af** 49 references (also 13 lines). The Index includes some bibliographic references (e.g., to Anne Holtmark's **Studier i Snorres Mytologi under Loki**), as I have already noted, but also references to occurrences of the particular name in question in various poems of the Elder Edda, in **Heimskringla**, in Saxo Grammaticus, and so on.

This could be a very useful book. I have, for that reason, gone into quite a bit of "descriptive detail" in the preceding. Time and thought have obviously been spent on features which might prove helpful to the intended audience. Snorri is a master of style and often simply fun to read, and he merits as wide an audience as possible. It is, perhaps, unfortunate that selections from **Skáldskaparmál** could not have been included, but the work as it stands presents a certain unity. Increased size would certainly have meant increased price, and today books in general are too expensive to begin with. A welcome addition to our tools for the study of Old Icelandic.

Rites and Riots, Folk Customs of Britain and Europe. By Bob Pegg. Poole, Dorset, U.K.: Blandford Press, 1981. Pp. 140, bibliography, index. \$24.95, cloth.

Reviewed by Regina Bendix.

"New book describes the ancient roots of folk customs that flourish to this day," reads the headline of the publisher's accompanying letter to this richly illustrated book, thereby neatly exemplifying the position towards

customs often taken by the media and completely misrepresenting the author's own ambition. In Pegg's brief introduction, the endless nostalgia for the past in Western societies is described, and Pegg then proposes "to separate record from fantasy, believing that readers will find the resulting picture of human behaviour as rich and fascinating as any extravagant imaginings" (p. 8).

In the first chapter, "A Passage through the Wilderness," he outlines the development of folkloristic theories. In the later chapters, where the comments of antiquarians and newspapers about folk customs are extensively quoted, one can see the reflections of the theories. This leads Pegg to conclude that "first the antiquarian notes the custom. The information he has gleaned, not necessarily accurate, is then appropriated by the people taking part in the custom, who use it for their own ends, which may result in the modification or stabilization of the custom itself" (p. 140).

Pegg, a professional musician and freelance folklorist, unfortunately tries to accomplish too many things in one short book. Aside from critically evaluating the antiquarian's contribution to the present day popular concept of what a custom is all about, he also attempts to compare and contrast seasonal customs (chapters two and three), dance and drama (chapter four) and life cycle celebrations (chapter five) as they are found in Britain and on the European continent. Though he is certainly well qualified to present the British materials-- which provide the bulk of his examples-- he simply lacks the competence to summarily discuss the folk customs of Europe as a whole. His spurious continental examples are drawn largely from Frazer's **Golden Bough**, certainly not a representative source nor a current one, as are many of his British examples.¹

Overwhelmed by the massive amount of material, Pegg seems to have been at a loss in designing a uniform approach. He is personally fascinated with the question of what customs actually mean to custom bearers and is perfectly aware of how this question would need to be approached: "To produce even a tentative answer would involve immense scholarly labour and would also mean working at first hand for long periods with individual groups... and being familiar... with their means of earning a living, their social status,

and the relationships within each group, the social, political and economic histories of each region and country and so forth" (p. 98). One may then ask why he dedicates the largest part of his work to superficial and questionable comparisons, based almost entirely on written sources, if he is critical of this approach himself. The book is obviously conceived for a wide audience, evident in the lack of footnotes and proper attribution of quotations, as well as the pitifully brief bibliography which does not even cover all the works cited in the text. Pegg's noble attempt to correct the common misconception that all folk customs harked back to the dim, pagan past is diminished by his own incongruous approach. Furthermore, the publisher fails to grasp Pegg's point and advertises *Rites and Riots* precisely as what it is **not**, a book describing "the heritage of any people of British or European ancestry" and useful to "anyone who plans to travel to Great Britain or Europe" (the dates of most of the customs are not indicated).

The major strength of the book lies in its illustrations. Some of the photographs date from the turn of the century, and together with the recent color plates and the older engravings, visual variety through time and space is provided. *Rites and Riots* remains then one of the many "pretty picture books," which fail to provide further insights into the dynamics of customs and rituals. This is all the more regrettable, as Bob Pegg's promising ideas-- had they been granted more time to ripen-- would have made his book far more satisfying not only for the wider audience it is aimed at but also for the folklorist and historian.

NOTES

1. Sir James Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (London: MacMillan Publishers Ltd., 1907-15).

Familiar Mysteries: The Truth in Myth. By Shirley Park Lowry. Pp. x + 339, bibliography, index. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982. \$19.95 Cloth.

Reviewed by Eric Montenyohl.