

Norway. The Library owns the manuscript of one of Scott's most successful children's stories, 'The Flying Table'. We have also acquired most of his novels in first editions. A recent purchase of rarity and interest is a copy of Caroline Schytte Jensen's privately printed song for her son's 50th Birthday.

During the exhibition it is planned to hold a Gabriel Scott evening, where aspects of his life and work will be presented with the help of dramatic illustrations performed by the Strathclyde University Theatre Group.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE FAROESE SAGA. Translated by G V C Young, O.B.E. and Cynthia R Clewer, B.A.(Hons), Belfast 1973.

The saga of the Faroe islanders deserves to be better known to English readers. There is much to admire in its salt-drenched pages. The story spans a period of thirty years on either side of the conversion. There is much discussion of the threat posed by the two Olafs, looking to Christianity to extend their power and enlarge their coffers. But the central figure in the saga is the memorable, complex and some ways, puzzling, Thrand.

According to the King of Norway, Thrand was "one of the worst people in all the northern countries", quite a claim to fame in a field offering strong competition. The saga follows his violent career from birth, through advancing age, failing strength and sight to a death from grief over the killing of his kinsmen. He is a thorough rogue as his red hair and freckled face would suggest, in sharp contrast to the decent Sigmund who has much in common with Olaf Tryggvason. Sigmund becomes Christian but Thrand resists conversion. In him are concentrated the reactionary forces of paganism. Threatened with a broad axe blade, he cynically conforms to save his life. "There are many creeds" says Thrand, "and they do not need to be identical in order to be right." The exploration of his character is a remarkable literary achievement.

The translation unfortunately, is less admirable. The authors content themselves with a very brief, and totally inadequate, introduction which baldly states that the translation is “free rather than verbatim” without any further explanation. The illustrations are deplorable, something of a cross between Asterix the Gaul and Noggin the Nog, horned helmets and all. Several of the tables seem pointless, for example the ‘genealogical table of Thorgrim the Evil’ contains precisely three names, Thorgrim and his two sons.

The freedom of the translation comes across in a sentence like ‘lizt Rafni fagrt silfrit’, literally ‘the silver shines bright to Urafn’, which becomes ‘Rafn liked the silver’. Here and in other places, one suspects that in using Carl Rafn’s 1832 edition of the saga, the translators’ eyes have occasionally strayed towards the ‘Faeroisk og Dansk Oversaettelse’. Translations are like Thrand’s creeds “there are many and they do not need to be identical in order to be right”, but the translator has an obligation to his text.

Ted Cowan.

NOTES

‘CHRONICLE OF MANN’

George Broderick and Brian Stowell have produced an edition of the *Chronicle of Mann*. They reproduce the Latin text together with an English translation and a translation into Manx Gaelic. The volume costs £3.75 and will be followed by a historical commentary on the chronicle. The same team has produced a Manx Gaelic map of the Isle of Mann and they are working on a long playing record of Manx traditional songs sung by Brian Stowell. Further information on any of the above projects can be obtained from George Broderick, ‘St Judes’, 25 Granby Road, Edinburgh EH16 5NP.