

Apart from some blemishes like this, readers may find the book a convenient source of well-known facts (mostly in Danish) that are assembled together in English, for the first time. Each short chapter is fully referenced.

Having gone to all this trouble of giving references and indexing people and places it is a pity that no full bibliography is given. The abbreviations to the reference sources, or logograms, given at the beginning of the book are of little help to readers who might wish to consult the sources themselves. Any new edition should contain a fully referenced bibliography.

Anthony Jackson

G.V.C. Young: *The history of the Isle of Man under the Norse or Now through a glass darkly*. Manx-Svenska Publishing Co., 1981, 259 pp.

This history covers the period 800–1266 and is arranged chronologically in ten chapters together with 21 Appendices that mainly comprise genealogical tables.

The author is a lawyer and also happens to be the publisher of this work. Until recently, Mr Young was the Lego-Chronologer for the Manx Government and so is in a privileged position to assess the records of Man. However, the subtitle reflects the fact that we can only catch glimpses of the effect of Norse rule since not all is clear and the records are patchy, to say the least.

Young confesses to having adopted a legal approach to the evidence that mainly consists of annals and sagas. Given his profession there is nothing surprising in his stance, neither is there anything wrong in so doing. Indeed it is commendable to base one's theories on documentary sources.

Young's main thesis is that the term “*Sudreyer*” or “*Sudreys*” (in English) means “the Hebrides *and the Isle of Man*”. This hypothesis is quite well sustained and gives us an extended vision of these Norse provinces.

The ten chapters comprise 180 headed paragraphs in as many pages and it would not be too unkind to say that they correspond to 180 index cards! This suspicion is heightened by the frequent use of “To revert to ...” something previously mentioned—in an attempt to link up the cards. In other words, this account of the history of Man consists of discrete packets of information arranged, more or less chronologically, afterwards. This criticism draws attention to the fact that the book is not welded into a whole but simply consists of a series of separate points only loosely linked together.

It is vitally important with such an exposition that the dates are *absolutely* CORRECT. Thus misprints such as the death of Earl Thorfinn which is given as happening in 1045 (p.51) goes ill with the statement *on the same page* that Thorfinn went to Norway in 1050! More careful proof-reading is necessary.

Despite the awkwardness of presentation and the jerky style caused by the 'card index syndrome' this book does give us some perspectives of Man during an obscure part of its history. The bibliography is reasonable but it occasionally lacks dates and publishers.

Summing up, this book is a *useful* contribution to our knowledge of Man. The qualification is important because what Young has done is to present us with the basic information that *could* be used in a definitive history of Man – something that we sadly lack. This work is well illustrated and indexed: a necessary thing for a reference book.

Anthony Jackson

Robert B.K. Stevenson, Christian Sculpture in Norse Shetland, in *Fróðskaparrit* 28/29. Tórshavn. 1981.

It is difficult for many readers to consult this Faroese journal on any regular basis. When articles appear of direct relevance to the interests of the Scottish Society for Northern Studies, we would hope to print the synopsis which usually accompanies the article.

In this short paper Robert Stevenson deals with Pictish, Celtic and Anglo-Scandinavian Northumbria influences in Shetland during the later 9th – 11th centuries. Both synopsis and illustrations are reprinted from *Fróðskaparrit*.

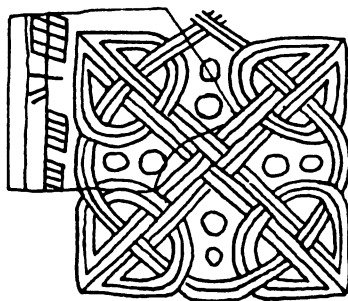


Fig. 1. *Reconstruction of design on carved fragment from White Ness, Shetland.*