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view, several fanciful suggestions for interpretations have previously been made in order to try to create meaning in the sequences that are hard to interpret: The texts have been seen as renditions of a foreign language or as songs, as ciphers, as the result of a dyslectic's attempts to inscribe etcetera. Bianchi states that this type of inscription—apart from the language—seems to be governed by the same textual conventions and utilises the same types of semiotic resources as other inscriptions, and “precisely through its imitative character [may] be said to reflect the norms and conventions that were largely prevalent in the written culture of the Late Viking Age” (p. 221). Bianchi's monograph deals with a traditional research material and approaches it from completely new points of departure. He contributes new perspectives in many respects and answers some questions, at the same time as new questions are gradually generated. In this way the thesis provides stimulating reading. The great task of describing the runestones' visual grammar in its entirety constitutes a future challenge, where Marco Bianchi's thesis will be an important starting-point.

Lars-Erik Edlund

lars-erik.edlund@nord.umu.se

Ann Blücker, *Juridiska – ett nytt språk? En studie av juridikstudenters språkliga inskolning* (Skrifter utg. av Institutionen för nordiska språk vid Uppsala universitet 79), Uppsala: Uppsala universitet 2010, ISBN 9789150621235; ISSN 00834661, 320 pp.

*Juridiska*—the designation of legal language use as it is conceived by someone outside or by a beginner (English *legalese*)—is focused on in

this thesis, which deals with writing, text response and linguistic norm communication in the law programme at Uppsala University. Besides text analyses the investigation contains ethnographic observations, interviews and inquiries, which together give the reader a multifaceted picture of the law students' linguistic training. Like most research on writing, the study is incorporated in a sociocultural framework, of which a description is provided. Methodological aspects are then discussed. The law education at the university is presented, and the reader is given an insight into what talks at a law seminar and the teaching practice are concretely like. The linguistic norms that are communicated through supervision and comments are presented (written language norm, general scientific norm, legal norm). A model in ten text levels for analysing teachers' comments is also accounted for. Teachers' comments illustrated on the basis of text levels are described and concretely discussed—there are comments on formalities, construction (e.g. concord), sentence structure, text structure and content. The choice of words and style are often dealt with in the teachers' comments; among other things there are comments on “unlegal tone,” colloquialisms, archaic features, value-laden words and figurative language. After concrete comments at different levels have been accounted for, there follows a chapter on “the art of commenting and the art of understanding comments.” This brings to the fore the fundamental need for the teacher to comment so that the message reaches the recipient and for the student to interpret the comments correctly. It is evident that a teaching practice implying that the student and the teacher do not meet

and can talk about the texts places great demands on the teacher's comments. The teachers' comments are often markedly brief and of a general nature. The thesis is rounded off by the author accounting for some reflections on writing pedagogy and trying to see the linguistic training from a plain language perspective and as socialization into a culture. The last section, which is about "claritas" and "puritas," provides a picture of the linguistic ideals that the education seems to strive for. Ann Blücker's thesis gives a complex picture of the linguistic training that the law students undergo, but it also conveys, more generally, important ideas about writing pedagogy.

Lars-Erik Edlund  
lars-erik.edlund@nord.umu.se

Matthias Egeler, *Walküren, Bodbs, Sirenen. Gedanken zur religionsgeschichtlichen Anbindung Nordwesteuropas an den mediterranen Raum* (Ergänzungsbände zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde. Herausgegeben von Heinrich Beck, Dieter Geuenich & Heiko Steuer. Band 71), Berlin & New York: De Gruyter 2010, ISBN 9783110246605; e-ISBN 9783110246612; ISSN 18667678, IX + 597 pp.

This voluminous book constitutes the revised version of Matthias Egeler's doctoral thesis presented at Oxford in the autumn of 2009. Its focus is on the half divine, often demonic female characters that meet dying people on the border between life and death, "Diesseits und Jenseits." They are represented by somewhat different characters in the European area as furies and Valkyries. The aim of the work is defined in this way: "Zum

einen will sie eine Darstellung des Charakters der Walküren in der alt-nordischen Literatur vorlegen, und zum anderen nach der Stellung dieses Charakters im weiteren Kontext der frühen europäischen Religionsgeschichte fragen" (p. 28). When a comprehensive view is taken in this way of empirical findings concerning cultures that are far apart and from widely different periods, one has to be observant of the methodological problems—how should possible similarities really be interpreted? Previous research has not always been very stringent, but Egeler is very observant on this point. The book documents sources in minute detail but also a vast number of data from secondary literature in a number of areas. First the Valkyries in the Nordic area are dealt with, then what is called *Bodb* in Old Irish and the possible counterparts in the Romano-British and Continental Celtic areas, including the Iberian; the considerations in these latter parts seem to be rather intricate. Then we can read about the soul attendant Vanth in the Etruscan tradition and finally Furies, Erinnyes, Harpies, Keres and Sirens from the Mediterranean area. It is fascinating to read about the many characters in the early European cultures, but it is striking that the source conditions differ greatly among the various areas. The sources from the Mediterranean area are older and more detailed, while the Nordic material is late and relatively sprawling. The most relevant section for our context concerns the Valkyries. The Valkyries, "die Wählerinnen der Schlachtentoten," their relation to death, the martial context in which they occur, their existence in the guise of birds and the sexual connotations that may be observed in connection with them in a later