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the text editions referred to, which is gratefully noted, and in the comments there is information that facilitates the reading. The dictionary part, a *Minimalwörterbuch*, as it is called, contains words with grammatical information and German translation. In the part listing names, there are first different individual names, then collective names of ethnic groups, families, dynasties etcetera, then a section with “Bionym,” that is names of animals (such as the hell hound *Garmr*) and plants (the world tree *Yggdrasill*), place-names and finally so-called ergonyms (names of things, such as *Gjal larhorn* and *Brimir*). As we have seen, this textbook provides information about the manuscripts and the texts, which is good—it might even have included more of this material. I also think that the comments could have been even more generous and some more texts could have been provided with translations. But how useful a book like this is in the end will not be proved until it has been used in practice in concrete teaching situations. I gladly pass on the exhortation in the introduction—*Tolle lege, tolle lege!* [‘Take up and read!’].

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In this double issue of NOWELE a number of articles have been collected under the joint heading “Language and Literacy in Early Scandinavia and Beyond.” The introduction to the volume does not really account for any precise programme declaration, but one of the articles states that the contributors had been invited to participate in “methodische[n] Reflexionen zur Sprachgeschichte von unten, die für das Altgermanische/Altskandinavische relevant sind oder sein können” (p. 249). To some extent this provides frameworks, albeit wide, for the theme of the book. The two editors contribute an essay each. Michael Schulte examines systematically the early Scandinavian legal texts and argues that there are no convincing examples of a pre-literary metric composition of these laws. The study is interesting not least methodologically, for example in its discussion of how different stylistic features can be assessed. Robert Nedoma deals with personal names on fibulae produced in the period from about 200 to 700, and accounts for both spatial and socio-onomastic standpoints. Elmar Seebold’s essay “Typologische Chronologie der älteren nordischen Runen” leads us into a currently ongoing research discussion in the journal’s columns (cf. NOWELE vols. 56/57, 2009; vols. 60/61, 2011) Seebold argues among other things that the younger runic alphabet should be seen as a new use of the script, “[d]ie Entwicklung einer in wesentlichen Punkten neuen Kulturtechnik” (p. 147). An interesting literacy perspective on the runic inscriptions is found in Martin Hannes Graf’s article “Schrift, Sprache und was dazwischen liegt. Zur Materialität epigraphischer Schriftlichkeit der ältesten Runeninschriften.” We know fairly little, however, about the societal frameworks of the writing and use of writing—the convention—in this period. Lisbeth M. Imer writes about the dating and the spa-
Oliver Ernst’s and Stephan Elspaß’ article elucidates work with a history of language from below, and deals concretely with “althochdeutsche Glossen,” but the article has a more general theme than that. Peter Trudgill presents in his study of copulae “language-contact speculations in first-millennium England.” But the perspectives are widened even more; thus Theo Vennemann’s controversial thesis of a Mesolithic “Europa Vasconica” is discussed. Based on an interesting source material Jonas Wellendorf deals with pragmatic translations in the West-Nordic area. Anatoly Liberman’s article has the heading “A Short History of the God Óðinn,” but is in reality a voluminous study (80 pages) that in a many-sided way deals with the figure of Woden and the changes of it and the derivation of the name of the god. The article is reasoning and discusses previous investigations—made within different research paradigms—from different periods. This is very meritorious, since in the treatment of such a thoroughly studied subject as this it is necessary to understand why different results have been obtained in different “schools” in the search for the deity’s background and the basis of his name. Liberman’s contribution is in this way interesting from the point of view of methodology and history of science. In spite of the difficult subject the article is easily readable. As a whole this special issue of NOWELE is valuable for the reader as regards the elucidation of a number of current problems in the Germanic and Scandinavian research field. The value is enhanced not least by the accounts of source materials that are found in several places in the volume. An introductory editorial text would however have made it easier for the reader to see the theme of the volume even better.

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This impressive work in the area of Nordic legal history has been compiled by the researcher who must be regarded as the now most prominent expert on mediaeval Nordic law, Dieter Strauch. He is emeritus professor at the Institut für Neuere Privatrechtsgeschichte, Deutsche und Rheinische Rechtsgeschichte at the University of Cologne. This comprehensive book contains a broad and well-informed description of Nordic law from the Viking Age up to the sixteenth century, and of the different sources where this law is found, thus not only law but also records and literary sources. In an introductory part the source situation is depicted and the reader is given a more general conception of the influence of Christianity in Scandinavia—which naturally also has a bearing on the legal sources—and “Die Veränderbarkeit des Rechts,” where among other things Elsa Sjöholm’s controversial interpretations are refuted, after which the more specific conditions in Norway, on Iceland and in Denmark and Sweden are accounted for. Sweden is dealt with in the longest section, where among other things one can read about the devel-