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Reports from the Book Fair are almost a constant feature at qualitalk. The search among the 7384 exhibitors from 106 countries was especially convenient this year due to a new app. Already from home you could on your PC pull up the app, and highlight booths and events as a favorite. Hot spots for free Internet access were installed on the exhibition: In fact, I received an email about the exhibition from the USA containing questions about my impressions. Here they are!

Chris Silenka

Frankfurter Buchmesse 2011

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SÖGUEYJAN ÍSLAND
BÓKASÝNINGIN Í FRANKFURT
HEIDURSGESTUR 2011

Fabulous Iceland – Guest of Honour at the Book Fair in Frankfurt:
Genuine Icelandic writing led to the pavilion of the country, where pictures of Icelanders reading at home were on display on huge canvases. At the times when the sagas were written manually or later printed by hot metal typesetting, specific letters gave no problem. But today, in order to write fluently in Icelandic on the computer keyboard it needs the Icelandic special letters Þ / þ, / and other keys.



Books: created in the brain, composed on a keyboard, read from paper at 99%, still!



The Icelandic keyboard incorporates special keys for the Icelandic language,; some of the letters were use in other Scandinavian countries as well. Please have in mind the effort for twohundredthousand ? computers on the island. 318236 inhabitants at the settling day 1. December 2010 tendency growing .

decodeunicode
digitally registers letters and signs from the whole world. Relevant printed publication: Johannes Bergerhausen and Siri Poarangan: decodeunicode Verlag Hermann Schmidt Mainz 656 pages, 68,00 Euro.

* InDesign by ADOBE is a versatile and elaborated layout program, which is used to produce this publication, too.

The Book Fair is not simply a place for literature but covers the entire spectrum of production and distribution, whether tangible or virtual. At the moment the German book market sells less than one percent of the titles for the electronic readers, but a rapid grow is foreseen.

More than 30 products of e Book readers are now on the market, said Nino Satta of Reemers Publishing Services in his lecture about e Publishing using InDesign Data*. Page proofs, footnotes, tables are major obstacles for e Book readers no product up to now is performing well in all areas. Therefore one should »optimize« the make up of the layout of InDesign Data for the worst case.

The best marks got Apple's iPad. The advantage of e Books lays in the additional content e.g. searching for up to date surveys, doing calculations or watching videos.

When it comes to writing and translating on a computer, the spread of publications depends very much on an easy access to the letters specific to a distinct language. Apple Users take advantage of this function ever since this personal computer hit the market, thanks to Steve Jobs and the menu option »Show keyboard on the menu.« My German keyboard is set up to deal with Japanese and Hebrew in characters in QWERTY Layout, too. What a marvellous feature! For users of Windows machines, swapping languages doesn't seem to be as easy as for Mac people. Therefore I have to remember to substitute diphthongs in my German text when I write some of my acquaintances because they use Windows and complain that their system doesn't generate the German

Umlaut; instead they see cryptic signs. A few Germans are now even routinely skipping Ä/ä, Ö/ö, Ü/ü and ß altogether because they often communicate with English speaking people. But that way, the appearance of the German text looks rather odd, and in combination with the New German Orthography often quite confusing is *Busse* now standing for *Busse* buses, or *Buße* penance, fine ?

Ideally the layout of the keyboard contains the special characters and glyphs instead of having to type a combination of strokes the *bucky*, as it was called in olden times of the personal computer. A choice has to be made when buying the hardware, among it the keyboard. The virtual soft keyboard which can be modified on iPod, iPad and similar devices, is another solution. For example, the Latin alphabet can be displayed in QWERTY, QWERTZ and AZERTY mode.

Many African countries have been unable to create an appropriate alphabet to express their languages; this hampers them particularly now in this digital age. Instead of creating their own appropriate one, they just took over the writing system of their then colonial masters. No wonder that literature in Akan, Hausa, Swahili etc. is difficult to write down adequately on a computer.

How much do we then have to admire the tiny Iceland with its huge tradition in writing! It was said during the Book Fair at one occasion, that Iceland has no relics from the past apart from literature no mediaeval castles, no churches not even prehistoric bones just written heritage.□

The Sagas – Island's Power

Iceland as Guest of Honour at the Frankfurt Book Fair has taken full advantage of this opportunity by presenting its gigantic treasure of literature. The project »Fabulous Iceland« opened the door to the international book market. On average, the book market in German speaking lands contains more than 40 percent of translated works of foreign authors, avidly received by an open minded public. Many Eastern European authors benefited from such an openness after the Communist Empire collapsed in 1989. After their works were published in German translation, interest in their works increased greatly in other foreign language countries. Consider this: The huge market of books in English outside of North America, Australia, New Zealand and the British Isles these books may also be distributed in India and parts of Africa does not include more than three percent of work translated from other languages. It will be interesting to see how the next Guest of Honour

New Zealand will benefit from its status in Frankfurt 2012

Kristján B. Jonasson, head of the Association of Icelandic Book Publishers, spoke of the many international opportunities opened by the "Fabulous Iceland" presentation in Frankfurt.: »A whole new situation has arisen with respect to the international rights trade. We received countless inquiries from international publishing houses during the Book Fair.« Especially, publishing companies from the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovenia were highly interested in Iceland's literature. Even inquiries from India and Malaysia came in. Kristín Steinsdóttir, author and Chairwoman of the

Icelandic Writers' Union, was also happy about the new possibilities in the wake of the presentation: » For Icelandic authors the Guest of Honour appearance has opened a door to the whole world.« Kristof Magnusson spoke on behalf of the group of German Icelandic translators that have been working ceaselessly on the great number of Icelandic works appearing on the German market for the past one and a half years. Kristof, whose translated works in the past year include sections of the Icelandic Sagas,



said: »This autumn, the writers of Iceland succeeded in narrating their version of Iceland – an Iceland of stories that is much larger than the actual surface area of the island.«

Sagas in modern translation

The »Institut für Skandinavistik der Goethe Universität Frankfurt« Institute for Scandinavian Studies at Goethe University in Frankfurt had focused its research for many years on medieval Nordic tales and has many years of experience in that field.

The Book of Edda

An Installation on display at the Icelandic Pavilion. The passed down scripture is based on a song book and a poetry textbook from the 13th century.

Right prior to the opening of the Book Fair a new German translation of 40 Iceland Sagas were published by Fischer Verlag, scientifically supported by Prof. Julia Zernack. Over the centuries, the sagas played a vital role in maintaining the cultural and national identity of Icelanders, and far

their time«, said the Ms. Zernack.

Outside Iceland, Nordic myths are better known than the sagas: Stories about the Æsir deities Thor and Odin, the apples of goddess Idun promising eternal youth, the creation of the world out of the primeval giant Ymir, and the downfall at Ragnarök; about the Nibelungen and many more.

Ms. Zernack pointed out: »The Nordic mythology and epic poems were passed down almost entirely by Icelandic writings from high medieval times even if this material is claimed to be Germanic.«

Two popular stories, both bearing the name Edda, are seen as the key texts. One is a manuscript from around 1270; the other a handbook from the twenties of the 13th century, said to be composed by the politician, historian and mythographer Snorri Sturluson, as well as the songs »The Prophecy of the Seeress« *Völuspá* and »Brynhilds Hell Trip« *Helrei Brynhildar*, or prose works such as »Gylfis Deception« *Gylfaginning*. Since the mid 18th century, and especially under the influence of Richard Wagner's »Der Ring des Nibelungen« Nordic mythology has been continually kept in our lives, through music, visual arts, literature, film and lifestyle. □



Sigurur Gudmunsson, formerly sailor onboard of *Goðafos*. He looks at the slides from World War II showing Horst Koske and himself. He met the radio operator of the submarine which sank his ship for the first time on 12. October 2011 at the occasion of the presentation on the book *Goðafos*.

beyond the territory of Iceland the sagas are now highly valued as the country's »classical« literature. Originating in the 13th and 14th century, they tell of the first centuries of Icelandic history. They describe the settling by the influx of people from Norway in the late 9th and early 10th century. The sagas report about the newly established communities, their social life and the relation with the Norwegian king, how power should be shared and wealth distributed. »As a matter of fact, the events during the so called saga time approximately from 870 to 1050, is really a reconstruction done about two to three hundred years later, to fit the anonymous authors' steeped in High and Late Medieval concepts interpretation of the ideological needs of

WW II: The Sinking near Reykjavík of a Passenger Ship by a German Submarine

»Only one cup of distilled water per day«, that was the ratio German seamen received on board of submarines. »I used the water for cleaning my teeth,« tells the only still living survivor Horst Koske, formerly radio operator on U 300, to the journalist of the Iceland TV Station, »I wanted to feel



Horst Koske, former *Funkmaat* at the German submarine U 300, listens emotionally to the actor *Joach im Król*, who reads excerpts from the newly published book »*Goðafoss*«.

Goðafoss by Óttar Sveinsson, Stefan Krücken, Ankerherz Verlag, 192 pages, with many historic pictures, 29,90 Euro.

at least a tiny bit of body care. Other wise we only had to do with salt water for washing.«

The 86 year Horst Koske came face to face for the first time with Sigurður Guðmundsson, a sailor rescued from the Goðafoss, at the occasion of the presentation of the book on the sinking of that vessel. Both men were deeply moved as they met in the Icelandic pavilion.

The small Icelandic passenger ship Goðafoss was on her way back from

New York when she was hit by two torpedoes close to Reykjavík on November 10, 1944, 13:02 local time, and sunk rapidly. 42 people died, only 18 were rescued. The German submarine U 300 returned safely, this time. Later, its commander, Oberleutnant zur See lieutenant Fritz Hein, perished together with eight other of his seamen due to a British attack on U 300, February 22, 1945, in Atlantic waters, west of Cadiz, off shore Cape Vincent; he was 26 years old. □

The lure of the Icelandic pavilion with its truly fabulous atmosphere rendered complete justice to its motto »Fabulous Iceland«. I spent such a long time there just reading, that I had no real desire to complete my usual tour around the Book Fair.

En passant, I became aware of an author's reading: it was an old gentleman. I started to listen to him, listened with more and more interest, because he talked about things I had come across after the war, as a child: I saw children of my age, mostly girls, who had a plaster reaching over the hip. The poor creatures with spread legs because of her cast were pushed around in prams. I later learned that for months, they had to be kept in their cast. This ordeal was out

lined by the orthopedist Ewald Fettweis M.D. in his book »I also could help«. In his reading at the publisher's booth, the now 84 year physician from Aachen, a German city close to the Dutch border, described his way of treatment of hip luxation of toddlers. His method was influenced by reports about mothers in some countries who carry their babies close to the body. The defect of hip dysplasia is almost completely cured on its own when the baby spent most of its time in a sitting squatting position, which peaked his interest. In countries where the children are carried that way, the much feared dislocation of the hip joints is virtually unknown.

Dr. Fettweis' new method was rejected by influential professional col

Strolls

Side Notes from the Book Fair

Caution !

The »Frankfurter Verlagsgruppe Holding AG August von Goethe« is a pseudo-publisher for authors willing to pay for of their writings.



Winner of the Peace Prize
Boualem Sansal 62 in Frankfurt at the Book Fair 2011.
 Foto: Fernando Baptista
 © Frankfurter Buchmesse

leagues; as it turned out later, for ideological reasons. The then Pope of orthopedists advocated during his earlier career during the Nazi era that early childhood hip dysplasia should be considered a hereditary disease classifying thereby the child as »racially unsound«, and, most often, to be destroyed. Cliques from the Third Reich still active in the medical community after the war remained fairly influential in the fledgling German

Federal Republic and sabotaged for a long time Dr. Fettweis' gentle therapy. His book is an accounting of his efforts... for its publication he probably had to pay the publisher a lot of money. □

»I could also help Memories and Confessions of a German orthopedist«
 Ewald Fettweis, Frankfurter Literaturverlag August von Goethe,
 Paperback 10,80 Euro

The Peace prize of the German book trade is awarded in the Paulskirche Paul's Church = meeting Hall for the first German Parliament in 1848 traditionally at the conclusion of the Book Fair. Literature scholar Peter von Matt introduced the work of Algerian **Boualem Sansal**. The award winner, formerly engineer, was employed by the Algerian Ministry of Industry in a managerial position until his was sacked in 2003.

The ceremony was broadcast live on radio and television; the audience was excited about the voice Sansal. And so what? The announcement amen that the winner will hold his speech of acknowledgment in French, »... *we will*

translate the course immediately.« There fore the audience on the loudspeakers did not even get the slightest chance to perceive Sansal acoustically. His voice was immediately switched off for the simultaneous translation.

Such Provincialism hurts much especially since one can assume that those who were watching on Sunday afternoon, the transmission from Paul's Church would have preferred the French tone and read along when needed the German subtitles. But does Greater Germany really need to listen to the original speech as much smaller countries are used to e.g. little Denmark? □

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 Foto: Martina Pipprich, Mainz

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