Introduction

THINKING of medieval Icelandic literature, one of the first associations that comes to mind is probably the famous saga form, which has its origins in the twelfth century and blossomed in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Even though this form of literary production is usually associated with the medieval period, the writing of the sagas did not stop with the end of the Middle Ages, as Icelanders continued to produce sagas throughout the early modern period and all the way into the twentieth century.¹ This long life of saga literature, entertaining generations of Icelanders, makes the saga into a truly timeless literary form. However, it is not the sole Icelandic literary form to have stood the test of time. Rímur (sg. ríma), a form of Icelandic secular poetry (metrical romances), have an almost equally long history – spanning from the fourteenth century onwards – even though their popularity as a research subject is nowhere near that of sagas.² What

¹ For an introduction to saga literature see, for example, publications by McTurk (2005), Clover and Lindow (1985), and Stefán Einarsson (1961). On post-medieval saga-production, see, for example, works by Driscoll (1997; 2006; 2012; 2017). One could even say that the saga form, if not strictly practised today, has influence on modern literary landscape, delivering inspirations for works such as Halldór Laxness’ novel Gerpla and Einar Káraason’s novels Övinafagnaður and Ofsi.

² For a detailed overview of rímur see the publications by Björn K. Þórolfsson (1934), Craigie

Gripla XXXII (2021): 257–288
is well known to literary historians of Iceland, but perhaps escapes the attention of non-specialised audiences, is that these two forms, sagas and rímur, coexisted in the literary landscape of Iceland for many centuries, and various stories travelled freely between them, changing forms from prose to verse and back.³

The phenomenon of poetry-based prose and prose-based poetry existed in medieval and early modern Iceland across all genres of Icelandic literature, but when it comes to certain genres, such as, for example, legendary sagas (fornaldarsögur), the fact that many sagas have poetic counterparts can be considered a key characteristic. At the same time, the number of studies devoted to this phenomenon has traditionally been relatively low. Researchers tended to focus either on the prose manifestation of the story or on its metric manifestations, rarely engaging in a discussion of the relationship between subsequent literary manifestations of the same story or the process of adaptation per se. Similarly, younger adaptations of older narratives were usually ignored, due to their secondary position in relation to their older and more original counterparts. Luckily, our understanding of Icelandic literary production from a diachronic perspective is expanding, as this attitude has been changing in the past few decades, with studies by, among others, Peter Jorgensen (1990; 1997), Aðalheiður Guðmundsdóttir (2001), and Philip Lavender (2020).

Among the narratives that have an extremely rich transmission and adaptation history is a story of Hrómundur, son of Gripur (or Greipur), which exists in many literary manifestations created at different periods of time, in different styles and genres, and in different languages. The story of Hrómundur used to exist in one form or another in the Middle Ages, as according to Þorgils saga og Haflíða — a part of the thirteenth-century Sturlunga compilation — Hrómundar saga was recited at the wedding feast in Reykhólar in the year 1119 to entertain the wedding guests (Brown, ed. 1952, 17–18; Brown 1946–53; Foote 1953–57). The contents of that story may have been to a certain extent different from what we know from extant adaptations dealing with the same material, since some of the episodes...
present in the known manifestations are not mentioned in Þorgils saga og Hafliða (cf. Kölbing 1876, 185; Andrews 1912, 396–97; Björn K. Þórólfsson 1934, 354; Holtsmark 1961, 314–18; Jesch 1984, 96–97). Similar material is utilized in the Scandinavian ballads: in the Danish Rigen Rambolt og Aller hin stærke, Ungen Ranild (Grundtvig, ed. 1853, 1:358–74), and Ramund (Nyerup and Rahbek, eds. 1813, 4:334–40), the Norwegian Ramund den unge (Landstad, ed. 1853, 189–95), and the Swedish Ramunder (Arwidsson, ed. 1834, 114–20).

So far, only a fraction – mostly the medieval fraction – of the rich transmission and adaptation history of this story has been the subject of scholarly investigation, mainly due to the saga’s relevance for the discussion of the origins of legendary sagas as well as the modes of their composition and performance in the medieval period. Scholars focused on the lost saga of Hrómundur and its medieval metric adaptation in the form of rimur, while the post-medieval adaptations have been less interesting for scholarship. This resulted in sparse knowledge of the long-lasting and fascinating transmission history of the story of Hrómundur in prose and verse, which has been present in the cultural landscape of Scandinavia in one form or another for almost a millennium; with the most recent adaptation of the story being in a form of a metal song performed by a Faroese Viking Metal band (Kapitan forthcoming).

The present study focuses on the Icelandic tradition of the story of Hrómundur, which includes the medieval metric manifestation of the story called Griplur, or Hrómundar rimur Gripssonar (Simek and Hermann Pálsson 2007, 130), a seventeenth-century prose manifestation of the story called Hrómundar saga Greipssonar (17HsG) (Simek and Hermann Pálsson 2007, 196), a late eighteenth- or early nineteenth-century prose manifestation also called Hrómundar saga Greipssonar (19HsG) (unmentioned in the secondary literature), and a nineteenth-century versification called Rímur af Hrómundi Greipssyni (RHG) composed by Sigfús Jónsson from Klungurbrekka (Finnur Sigmundsson 1966, I:262). While the older versions of the story are well known to scholarship and are available in multiple editions and translations, the younger versions remained unknown until very recently, and no edition of these texts yet exists.4 The present

4 Griplur have been edited twice by Finnur Jónsson (1896; 1905–22); they were most likely composed in the second half of the fourteenth century, but the earliest known manuscript
study is a first attempt to reveal the relationships between four versions of the story of Hrómundur in Icelandic, two sagas and two sets of *rímur* – which appear to be very closely related – with the main aim of identifying the influences present in the younger saga of Hrómundur, which has hitherto remained unknown, and the younger *rímur* of Hrómundur, which have hitherto been rather sparsely treated in the scholarly literature. The possibility of the influence of the lost *rímur* of Hrómundur composed in the years 1775–77 by Benedikt Gröndal (Finnur Sigmundsson 1966, I:263) is also taken into consideration, but since no witness of this work survives, the possible influences remain purely hypothetical.

The present study is organized into five analytical sections, each devoted to relationships between different manifestations of the story. The first section looks at the relationship between the older saga and the medieval *rímur*. The second, third, and fourth sections are focused on the younger saga and its relationship to the older saga and the medieval *rímur*. Finally, the fifth section examines the sources of the younger set of *rímur* of Hrómundur. The main findings of these five sections are summarized in the last section of this article, where their relevance and perspectives for future research are outlined.

The Relationship between *17HsG* and *Griplur*

The relationship between the two oldest extant versions of the story of Hrómundur, *17HsG* and *Griplur*, has been a matter of scholarly discussion for over a century now. Eugen Kölbing (1876, 182) suggested that the *rímur* dates to the late fifteenth century. The seventeenth-century saga is the only prose manifestation of the story of Hrómundur known to scholarly discourse. It was first edited by Biörner (1737) and later included in Rafn’s (1829–30) edition of the *fornaldarsögur*. The existence of the younger set of *rímur* of Hrómundur has been registered in *Rímnatal* (Finnur Sigmundsson 1966, I:262), but no edition of their text yet exists. The younger prose adaptation of the story, which is preserved exclusively in nineteenth-century manuscripts, has remained unknown to scholarship until very recently (Kapitan 2018). There is also a post-medieval metric adaptation called *Hrómundar kvæði Gripssonar*, which was published by Andrews (1911) and later Jón Helgason (1979, 173–79) but is not included in this analysis, as according to Andrews’ (1911, 540–44) observations of the differences between kvæði and the *rímur*, the relationship between them cannot be established with certainty using the method applied in this study. Andrews (1912, 397) seems convinced that the kvæði were composed based on the *rímur*, while Áðalheīður Guðmundsdóttir (2014, 5–6; 2018, 26) does not exclude the possibility that they are based on the lost saga.
and the saga are independent of each other and that both can be traced to the lost medieval saga of Hrómundur. This idea was rejected by Andrews (1911), who considered the saga to be derived from the rímur. Similarly, the editor of the rímur, Finnur Jónsson (1905–22, 409–10), commenting briefly on the discrepancies between the saga and the rímur, also concluded that the saga is based on the rímur (Finnur Jónsson 1907, 333–34; 1923, 2:802–03). Kölbing’s interpretation was, however, revived by Hooper (1930, x–xi; 1934, 56), who believed that the seventeenth-century saga is based on the lost saga, with certain interpolations from the rímur. This was in turn rejected by Brown (1946–53), who provided the most convincing evidence in favour of Andrews’ interpretation. Today, Brown’s interpretation is widely accepted in the literature, for example by Jesch (1984; 1993).

Brown, in her study, focused on verbal similarities between the saga and the rímur, in order to demonstrate that the saga is secondary to the rímur. The examples of alliteration preserved in the saga that originate from the rímur are convincing evidence of the relationship, for example: “Stattu á fætr stúrulaust ... skrið þú af stóli, skálkrinn latr, skilinn frá ǫllu happi” in the rímur corresponds to the saga’s “Stattu stuðnungslaust á fætur aprtr ... Skriðdu af stóli, skálkr argr, sviðtr ǫllu fé” (Brown 1946–53, 73). This example, however, is taken out of context and gives the reader a false impression of the extent of the similarities. The contents of stanzas III:24 and III:25, which Brown used as an example of alliteration, are significantly repositioned in the saga, and there is a large amount of text between the two, on which Brown chose not to comment (the order of the stanzas is discussed further in this section). Brown also generally did not comment on the particular manuscripts preserving the rímur, making her study satisfactory only to a limited extent. In that sense, Andrews’ analysis is more detailed, as he takes into account the readings of manuscripts included in the variant apparatus of Finnur Jónsson’s edition. Based on three textual variants, Andrews concluded that the saga is more closely related to the branch of the Griplur tradition that includes Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek Cod. Guelf. 42.7. Aug. 4to, and Reykjavík, Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum AM 146 a 8vo.5 Based on the

5 On manuscripts preserving Griplur, see Kapitan (2020). The very same interpretation of the relationship between 17HsG and Griplur as that proposed by Andrews was presented by Björn K. Þórólfsson (1934, 353) in his short discussion of the relationship between the saga and the rímur, but it is most likely directly borrowed from Andrews.
transpositions of the stanzas in the saga, however, Andrews suggested that the saga is based on a different branch of the *rímar* tradition to any of the existing texts of *Griplur*.

If we consider that the order of stanzas is genealogically informative for establishing relationships between texts in prose and verse, the analysis of the transpositions does not allow any conclusion other than the one suggested by Andrews, that the saga is based on an independent tradition of *Griplur*. A good point for comparison of the order of the stanzas is the fight between Práinn and Hrómundur, because the order of the stanzas describing this episode in various texts of the *rímar* is different.

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**17HsG**

“Rígap þú fær var blauðr, oc takþu suerþped apræð af mier ef þu þorur”

Draugur mælti: “Þad er einginn fremd aþ bera suerþ á mic vapnlausann, helldr vel ec reina afl vit þik oc glýmo”

Hromund kastar þá suerþino, oc treiste afli sýno. Práinn sá þetta, oc leiste ofann ketil sinn er hafþi uppi

Funi mikill var i millom fóta hanz. enn ketel-lenn fullr af bukom

Hromundur mælti: “skrýtta of stóli skálkr argr, suipþr aulu fie” (2v:2–10)

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**Griplur III**

28. “Ríga þú þér í rúmi blauðr, Ragari en nokkuð kvendi, sæktú að mér svatr og dauðr, sverð er burt úr hendi.”

26. “Fremd er engi að fella mig með fránnum hjalta-vendi; eg vil reyna afl við þig, ef ekki er vætta í hendi.”

27. Hrómund kastar hrotta þá, handa afli treysti, Práinn var glaðr, er þetta sá, þungan ketillinn leysti.

5. Funi var millum fóta hans, fullr ketill af búkum; ásjón hefr hann einskis manns jafnt og segir af púkum

25. “Hugrinn þinn er harla flatr” Hrómund talar af kappi, “skrð þú af stóli, skálkrinn latr, skilinn frá ðólu happi”
Based on the verbal similarities between the saga and the rimur, the following order of stanzas in the third ríma lying behind the saga can be proposed: 28, 26, 27, 5, 25. The proposed order does not follow any of the known texts of the rimur (cf. Kapitan 2020), which suggests a separate branch of the Griplur tradition. Therefore, it seems safe to assume that the saga was based on some other branch of the rimur tradition than those extant today. Moreover, we might be tempted to follow Andrews’ (1911, 539) lead that 17HsG is actually based on the lost Griplur, which used to be preserved in AM 603 4to – a manuscript preserving a number of defective rimur in which Griplur were registered in the early eighteenth century but which disappeared sometime during the late eighteenth or early nineteenth (Kapitan 2018, 164–67). This hypothesis is impossible to prove, but if the prose adaptation of Bragða-Ölvis saga in AM 601 b 4to, whose transmission history appears to be closely related to that of Hrómundar saga, turns out to be based on the version of Bragða-Ölvis rimur preserved in AM 603 4to, we could entertain a hypothesis that it was also the case with Hrómundar saga.6

At the same time, we need to consider whether the verbal similarities between particular stanzas of the rimur and the text of the saga deliver sufficient evidence to assume that there was a separate “version” of the rimur behind the saga and whether it is not possible that the saga-writer freely adapted the text of any of the versions of rimur into the prose style without paying too much attention to the order of the stanzas. The answer to this question depends on our understanding of how an early modern saga-writer worked. Did the saga-writer have a manuscript(s) of rimur at hand when they converted the verses into the prose, or did they write the story down from memory? If the story was written down from memory, then the transpositions of stanzas would be more natural than if the story was based on the written text of the rimur. There is not enough comparative material to allow us to draw a conclusion about this matter, but I will come back to the problem of stanza order later in the section devoted to the younger saga and its relationship to Griplur.

Without identifying any specific branch of the Griplur tradition, it is

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6 Teresa Dröfn Njarðvík is currently researching the transmission of Bragða-Ölvis saga and related rimur. Her work will provide valuable insights into the question of the relationship.
safe to agree with previous scholarship that 17HsG is based on the medieval rímur.

The Relationship between 17HsG and 19HsG

The hitherto unknown Hrómundar saga Greipssonar (19HsG) is four times longer than the seventeenth-century saga (17HsG) and contains a number of motifs and episodes which lie outside the Hrómundar saga tradition. Since these episodes, often originating in the romance tradition, do not help to establish whether 19HsG uses 17HsG, they will not be discussed here. Instead, this section focuses on some differences in the structure, style, and contents of these two narratives in order to illustrate how they treat the same material.

Already at the very beginning of the story, clear differences in the structure and style of 19HsG can be observed in comparison to 17HsG. The two sentences that open the saga in AM 601 b 4to (henceforth A601), the best-text manuscript of 17HsG, correspond to a whole paragraph in British Library Add 11,109 (henceforth B11109), the oldest manuscript of the younger saga known to date. The difference lies not only in the length of the introduction but also in its style and structure, especially regarding the details concerning particular characters.

From the opening of A601, we learn that there was a king in Denmark named Ólafur, who was the son of Gnoðar-Ásmundur, and that there were two retainers in Ólafur’s army, the brothers Kári and Örnúlfur, who were great warriors. The introduction in B11109 is much more verbose, and from it we learn that Ólafur was one of the petty kings in Norway, not Denmark, and that he was generous and brave; that Ólafur had two sisters, Dagný and Svanhvít, who were exceptional women; and that there were two retainers in Ólafur’s army, the brothers Bildur and Vóli, who were deceitful and evil.

The only thing these two passages have in common is the name of the king, Ólafur, who in A601 is the son of Gnoðar-Ásmundur, while in B11109 his father is not mentioned at all. In B11109 the evil brothers

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7 An introductory study to the nineteenth-century saga and its multiple innovations has been presented elsewhere, see Kapitan 2021.
8 All references to 17HsG use loci from A601, while all references to 19HsG use loci from B11109.
Bildur and Vóli are introduced at the beginning of the saga, while in A601 the saga-writer introduces them later in the text, after Hrómundur and his family have been introduced. Moreover, Ólafur’s sisters are not introduced until they play a role in the narrative (chapter 3 of A601). In B11109, on the other hand, most of the characters are introduced right at the beginning of the story, while Kári and Örnúlfur are not introduced until they are supposed to play a role in the narrative (chapter 2 of B11109). When they are introduced in chapter 2, Kári is presented as Hrómundur’s foster-brother and a prow-man in Ólafur’s army, who was very strong, etc. (B11109, f. 107r:13–16). This change is peculiar, and it is uncertain why the saga-writer decided to introduce Bildur and Vóli first, instead of Kári and Örnúlfur, since Kári and Örnúlfur appear already in chapter 2, while Bildur and Vóli are not mentioned until chapter 7 of B11109.

From a structural point of view, it seems more logical either to introduce both pairs of characters immediately before the episodes in which they play a role, or to consistently introduce all characters at the beginning of the story. The saga-writer of 19HsG, however, chose a hybrid of these two approaches, which allows us to hypothesize about the intentions behind these changes. First, at the beginning of the story, the saga-writer introduces all characters who could be considered the saga’s main characters, such as King Ólafur and related characters, and Hrómundur and related characters. Then, over the course of the story, the saga-writer introduces the secondary characters immediately before the episodes in which they play a role. For example, as mentioned previously, Kári and Örnúlfur are introduced in chapter 2, as is Hröngviður, while Máni is presented in chapter 5, etc. Taking into consideration this transposition, we can assume that, in the saga-writer’s view, Bildur and Vóli were more important for the story than Kári and Örnúlfur. Bildur and Vóli are main characters of the saga, while Kári and Örnúlfur are not. This can be explained by the role the two pairs of brothers play in the saga. Kári’s role is to die, and his death is supposed to prompt Hrómundur into killing Hröngviður, while Bildur and Vóli reappear in most of the main episodes: they do not want to enter Þráinn’s mound, they kill Hrómundur’s dog Hrókur, they defame Hrómundur at Ólafur’s court, and finally, Hrómundur fights Vóli at the frozen lake Vänern after the battle with the Swedes.
The saga-writer is, however, not consistent in his practice of introducing secondary characters. The kings of Sweden, both called Hálfdan, are mentioned in chapter 5 although they do not play any role in the narrative until chapter 9. This might be a borrowing from the rímur, where the Swedish kings are already mentioned in stanza II:16. The relationship between the saga and the rímur is treated in the next section.

As the opening of the saga shows, one of the striking differences between 17HsG and 19HsG is the level of detail and description provided in the two sagas. The main characters in 19HsG are frequently introduced with a short description involving a few adjectives, to give the reader background information on the characters; on the other hand, no — or very sparse — descriptions are provided in 17HsG, aside from the crucial features of the characters which are communicated using more-or-less fixed expressions, such as “hermenn miklir” to describe Kári and his brother. This is also true for our main hero, Hrómundur.

17HsG

Þó var Hrómundr fyrir þeim aullom. hann kunni eigi at hrædast, hann var augsna fagr, háribarr, oc herþamíkill, mikill oc stercr, lýktíz miöc Hróki möþr faþr sýnom (1r:9–11)

19HsG

(Hrómundur) var eldst þeira bræþra oc hinn frægasti maþr at hreysti oc öllom fræcleica, sva hann bar langt af mónnom þar í bygg-gpõm, þeir bræþr allir voro af allþýþo kallaþir Hrócar, því þeir voro af Hrócs ætt qvomnir. Hrómundr var bjártr á hár, hýr í tilliti, en snar í augom, breiþr á herþar oc stormenni at vexti, hann gaf sic alldrei fyrir und eþr ákomó, oc vit enga æþru var hann kéndr; þeir bræþr hans voro oc allir miclir menn til allra mannburþa (106v:27–107r:6)

As the example above illustrates, there are clear stylistic differences between these two sagas when it comes to descriptions of characters. While 17HsG is more laconic and to some extent closer to the traditional saga style — characterized, among other things, by brief descriptions of characters (Finnur Jónsson 1923, 2:303–35) — 19HsG is more verbose and may reflect the stylistic preferences of late eighteenth- or early nineteenth-century audiences.

9 Notice the difference in the name Hálfdan in 19HsG for Halldingur of 17HsG and Haddingur of Griplur.
Another important feature of 19HsG is that the saga-writer introduces greater logic to the narrative compared to 17HsG, not only by presenting events in a particular order but also by making minor changes to the descriptions of the characters. For example, in 19HsG, the saga-writer introduces Kári as a foster-brother of Hrómundur instead of presenting him just as one of the king’s retainers. This minor alteration gives an indirect explanation of why Hrómundur wants to avenge Kári’s death when Hröngviður kills both Kári and Örnúlfur. This is explicitly brought up in the saga in chapter 3, which describes Hrómundur’s conversation with King Ólafur, during which Hrómundur tells the king that he and Kári were friends and foster-brothers (B11109, 108v:27–109r:6). This entire conversation between Hrómundur and Ólafur is missing from 17HsG, and its sources are unknown. On the one hand, Hrómundur could equally well just decide to avenge Kári without any conversation with the king; because Kári has already been introduced as Hrómundur’s foster-brother in chapter 2 of 19HsG, there is no need to repeat this information. On the other hand, the repetition increases the dramatic mood of this episode, so it serves as a stylistic improvement on the saga.

The discrepancies between 17HsG and 19HsG when it comes to episodes related to Kári do not end here. The description of Kári and his brother’s first meeting with Hröngviður and his followers also delivers evidence of a quite different style in the two narratives.

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**17HsG**


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**19HsG**

The more laconic description in 17HsG does not describe the potential opponents of Kári as Vikings (“at vícíngar neinir séo hino meginn Eyarinnar”), nor does it mention Kári reciting verses about the ships (“Kári settist niþr oc qvaþ margar vísr af ágæti scipana”). Both these details appear only in 19HsG and are actually borrowings from Griplur, as will be demonstrated in the following section.

The Relationship between 19HsG and Griplur

Just as it is difficult to establish the relationship between 17HsG and 19HsG without using evidence from Griplur, it is equally difficult to discuss the relationship between 19HsG and Griplur without using evidence from 17HsG. As is presented in the next section, the most convincing clues for the relationship between 19HsG and Griplur are provided by the episodes which appear only in these two manifestations of the story and are absent from 17HsG. At the same time, we can assume that if the saga-writer of 19HsG used Griplur directly, we would be able to observe some trace of alliterations or rhymes in the prose text, originating from the rímur. While there are numerous examples of alliterating word pairs, upon closer examination, it appears that some of them also appear in 17HsG, and they are therefore not necessarily signs of a direct borrowing from the rímur. The alliteration of three words in one sentence that appear in the rímur but not in 17HsG would be more convincing evidence for direct borrowing, but I have not identified such an example.

There are, however, other strong indications that the saga-writer utilized rímur directly, even though they adapted the poetic language to the narrative form very skilfully, not leaving many traces of poetic influence. These include the following borrowings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Griplur</th>
<th>19HsG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>breiðr um herðar, bjartr á hár, bliðr og snarr í augum (I:19)</td>
<td>bjartr á hár, hýr í tilliti, en snar í augom, breiþr á herðar (107r:3–4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ertu fretkall flatr og aumr og faðir ins illa Kára (I:56)</td>
<td>þú mant vera þinn ölukko fretkarl, faþir Kára (109r:13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ekki ertu sem menskur maðr (III:36)</td>
<td>ecki erto mennscr maþr (113r:3–4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>og blæði úr hverju sári (I:44)</td>
<td>þó mér blæþi or hvorjo sári (107v:19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hófuðlaus allur herrinn stóð (VI:25)</td>
<td>allr herinn yþar stóþ hófotlaus (127v:15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gálgi merkir gamlan hest (VI:33)</td>
<td>gamall oc latr hestr merkir gálga (128r:11)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
While the first three examples belong to episodes which are present in both 17HsG and 19HsG, the following three examples do not have counterparts in 17HsG and are present exclusively in 19HsG and the rímur. Based on these verbal similarities, we can assume that there is a direct influence from Griplur on 19HsG.

In order to determine which branch of Griplur tradition might have served as the basis for 19HsG, it is useful to compare the order in which certain elements of the story are introduced. The comparative analysis of 19HsG and Griplur reveals extensive repositioning of the contents of the stanzas in relation to all known manuscripts of Griplur. For example, in 19HsG, the contents of stanza III:51 are narrated before the contents of stanza III:50 as follows:

Griplur

III:50. “Svó hef eg lengi loðað á fé
og lifað í haugi mínunum,
ei er gott, þó góðir sé,
gripum að treysta sínum.

III:51. Garprinn jafnt og sjálftum sér
sverði þessu trúði,
nú skal verða að meini mér
Mistilteinn inn prúði.”

19HsG

Þá mælir Þráinn: “gjæfo munr varþ nú
meþ ockor, at þú náþir sverþi míno,
oc ætraîþi ec þat aldrei, at þú, minn
góþi Mistilteinn! mundir mér at meini
verþa, oc er þvi alldrei gott at treysta á
gripi oc gersemar sínar, oc sannast þat
nú á mér” (114r:11–15)

Similarly, the contents of stanza I:44 are placed between the contents of I:36 and I:37 in 19HsG (107v:14–25), the contents of stanza III:24 are placed after III:34, and the contents of III:33 after III:36. This suggests that the saga-writer may have worked with some “version” of the rímur other than the one we know today. At the same time, it seems equally possible that the saga-writer of 19HsG intentionally did not follow the order of the stanzas, but rather was focused on narrating the events in a logical and stylistically pleasing way, with little regard for the order of the rímur. Finally, it is not improbable that the saga-writer actually utilized orally transmitted material. An oral account would also explain some of the misunderstandings occurring in 19HsG, especially regarding the confusion in the direct speech discussed further on in this article.
The Relationships between 17HsG, 19HsG, and Griplur

As mentioned earlier, there are many episodes in 19HsG which do not appear in 17HsG. The sources of some of these episodes are unknown, or lie outside of the Hrómundar saga tradition, but others can easily be traced to Griplur. This section presents only a sample of three (of many) episodes that suggest 19HsG is dependent on Griplur. Moreover, based on a comparison of 19HsG with 17HsG and Griplur, this section delivers some evidence that 19HsG is most likely also dependent on 17HsG.

The first and most obvious example of 19HsG being dependent on Griplur is the episode in which Hrókur is killed by Bildur and Vóli. As observed in previous scholarship, according to 17HsG, Hrókur was a man, but according to Griplur he was a dog (Andrews 1913; Jesch 1984). It happens that in 19HsG Hrókur is also a dog, which suggests 19HsG’s dependence on Griplur.

**Griplur**

IV:4. Grundi hét einn góður þegn, gefr hann honum með prýði og megn rakka þann er heitir Hrókr; hann var baði snarpr og klókr.

IV:5. Hrómund gaf honum hring með gull, – hundins þótti launin full-eyrir vegr og aðra sjau, er það meir en verðin tvau.

IV:6. Vissi þetta vóndur trúðr Vóli kall, er ei var trúðr, drepr hann þann inn dýra hund, dragnáz til á náttarstund.

**17HsG**

Hann gaf einum manni, þeim er Hrókur hiet eitt sinn, gullhring góðann er vó eyri. Þad fieck Vóli aþ vita, oc drap Hrók á náttartýma enn tók hringinn (3r:18–20)

**19HsG**

þar haði Kóngr vetseto með hyrþ sínna, þann vetr, hjá Burgeis nockrom, hann var Gnúdi kallaþr, hann gaf Kóngi marga góþa gripi oc sva mön-nom hans; hann gaf Hró-mundi einn racka, sem var sva vel viti borinn, sem maþr, oc skjótr sem ör, oc hit mesta gersemi var hann, sá var Hrókr kallaþr. Hrómundr gaf Gnúþu aprt ágætann hring af betsta gulli, oc var talat at hann væri or haugi Þráins, oc vóg vit íj mercr sylfors; þessa gjof öfundaþi Vole hyrþmaþr Kóngs, hann kémor at
It is clear from the comparison above that the saga-writer of 19HsG had access to some version of the story in which Hrókur was a dog, and Griplur are the only known manifestation of the story that contains this information. Moreover, in Griplur Hrókur is “bæði snarpr og klókr,” and in the saga he is “vel viti borinn, sem maþr, oc skjótr sem ör,” so the message that Hrókur was a great dog is clearly delivered in both adaptations — regardless of the fact that 19HsG is substantially more verbose and descriptive than Griplur. The omitted part in the citation from B11109, indicated by “[…]”, describes the hunting trips that Ólafur organized and the qualities of Hrókur as an outstanding hunting dog. It is unknown where this description came from, but it is certain that neither Griplur nor 17HsG could be its direct source, as they do not mention any hunting trips.

Even though 19HsG presents Hrókur as a dog, there are also discrepancies between Griplur and the saga when it comes to the value of the dog. In Griplur stanza IV:5, Hrómundur gives a man named Grundi – from whom he received the dog – a golden ring which weighs one mark — double the dog’s price (“eyrir vegr og aðra sjau, er það meir en verðin tvau”) — but in 19HsG the golden ring weighs two marks of silver (“hríng af betsta gulli, oc var talat at hann væri or haugi Þráins, oc vóg vit ij mercr sylfors”). This may be the result of a misunderstanding of the poetic language of the rímur, as in 17HsG the value of the ring is also corrupted: here the golden ring weighs only one ounce (“gullhring góðann er vó eýri”). If we assume that both 17HsG and 19HsG had access to the same version of Griplur, this case can indicate that the poetic language of the rímur was sometimes difficult to understand for the seventeenth- and nineteenth-century scribes. At the same time, we cannot exclude the possibility that the source text of 19HsG, or the tradition on which 19HsG is based, had already introduced
the change and that it has nothing to do with the poetic form of Griplur. Given the chronology of these adaptations, the latter explanation seems more likely.

The second example confirming the hypothesis that 19HsG is utilizing Griplur can be found in the episode when Kári and Örnúlfur go ashore to check whether there is anyone on the other side of the island, as described in the section devoted to the relationship between 17HsG and 19HsG. As previously mentioned, in 17HsG there is nothing about reciting any verses, while in 19HsG Kári is impressed by the magnificent ship of Hröngviður and recites some glorifying verses about the excellence of his fleet (“oc qvaþ margar vísr af ágæti scipana”). The potential opponents of Kári in 19HsG are also called vikings (“at vícíngar neinir séo hino meginn Eyarinnar.”), while 17HsG is silent about them. The explanation for both can be found in Griplur, where the corresponding passage reads:

I:27. Þið skuluð ganga þvert yfir ey
þengill talar við Kára,
vita ef hittið vikíngr fley
og vaxi kífið sára.

I:28. Kári og Órnólf kanna land,
klæði og vöpn sín fengu,
þeir hafa skjöld og skygðan brand,
skjótt yfir eyna gengu.

I:29. Herskip náðu sex að sjá
sjáfar-hömrum undir,
skreyttur dreki lá skeiðum hjá,
skorinn á margar lundir.

I:30. Kári réð að kalsa skæðr
og kveðr þá vísur margar
“hverr er þann að høldum ræðr?
– hafi þig allir vargar.”
These stanzas contain information about both the act of reciting verses (I:30:2) and calling the opponents vikings (I:27:3). Even though there is no information in *Griplur* regarding the subject matter of the recited verses, *19HsG* most likely borrowed the fact of reciting verses from the *rímur*, while the information that the verses were about the ships must be the saga-writer’s own invention. Another example of borrowing from *Griplur* is the passage in *19HsG* which informs us that Kári and Örnúlfur take their weapons with them when they go on the island (“taca þeir braþr vapn sin oc ganga á land upp” 107r: 25), which must be a borrowing from stanza I:28:2, as there is no mention of weapons in *17HsG*.

The hypothesis that *19HsG* depends on *Griplur* can be also supported by the example found in the sequence of prophetic dreams that Blindur presents to the Swedish king. Even though Blindur’s dreams are difficult material for comparison, as there is no clear logical pattern behind the ways they are presented and interpreted, there are still clear discrepancies between *17HsG* and *19HsG*, some of which can be explained by borrowings from the *rímur*. The dreams in all the manifestations of the story are presented following a consistent pattern: first Blindur gives an account of his dream, and then the king provides his interpretation of it. In both sagas, however, this pattern is disrupted when the sixth dream is presented. There is no interpretation of this dream. Instead, immediately afterwards, another dream is presented.

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*Griplur*

VI:17. “Kómu úr norðri kolsvört ský með klær og vængi bjúga og með þenna breiða þy burtu gjördi að fljúga.”

VI:25. “Dreki þinn leiz mér færðr á flóð, flaut í báru miðri, höfuðlaus allur herrinn stóð í heitu vatni niðri.”

*17HsG*

“Siötta sinn dreimde mik,” segir Blindur “aþ mier þótti koma af landi suört ský. med klóm oc vængiom oc flugu brott med þic kongr.”

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*19HsG*

“Sá er hinn sjötti draumr minn,” segir Blindr “at ec sá kolsvört ský qvoma or norþri, þau hóbþo klær oc bjúga vængi, þau flugo burto meþ þic, oc ec vissi ecki hvaþ af ýþr varþ, --No corresponding text--
As presented in the example above, in 17HsG two dreams are narrated one after another without any explanation or interpretation, while in 19HsG three dreams are merged. The dream about the king’s ship has no counterpart in 17HsG, but it corresponds to VI:25 in Griplur, which supports the argument for the hypothesis that Griplur were used as a source of at least this part of the text in 19HsG.

In the dream sequence we can also find evidence that 19HsG is dependent on 17HsG. If we focus on the order of the dreams and their interpretations, there are multiple examples that demonstrate that 19HsG presents dreams in the same order as 17HsG, and that the dreams are not preserved in this order in any known manuscript of Griplur. For example, the dream about the king’s falcon being featherless (stanza VI:23) in Griplur is interpreted by the king as a prophecy of men coming to his country with weapons and his irritation about it (VI:24). In both 17HsG and 19HsG, however, the same dream is interpreted to mean that a storm will come over the king’s country and shake the castle (which corresponds to stanza VI:10:1–2). In 19HsG the interpretation is further extended by the information that the king himself will be sitting by the fire, and this originates in Griplur (VI:10:3–4). If we wanted to reconstruct the order of the stanzas that
give an account of Blindur’s dreams in the rímur presumably underlying 19HsG, we would assume the following order: 7–9, 22–23, 10, 15–16, 21, 24, 19–20, 17, 25, 11–13, 27, 29, 31, 30, 32–33. With the exception of the position of stanza 30 (after VI:31) and the omission of VI:25, the order is the same in both 17HsG and 19HsG, which may be interpreted as further evidence that the saga-writer of 19HsG had access to 17HsG.

There are also some textual variants which 19HsG shares with 17HsG against Griplur, suggesting a close relationship between 17HsG and 19HsG. For example, in Griplur we learn that Ólafur, together with his fleet, stopped by Elfarsker, where the fight with Hröngviður took place: “Heldu nú fyr Nóreg austr nifungs menn á ferjum, loðnings herr á lægir traustr legz að Elfarskerjum” (I:25). 17HsG, however, corrupts the name Elfarsker to Úlfasker: “Eytt sinn hiellt olafr konungr, austur fyrir noreg med her sinn, oc hielldo aþ Vlfaskerium” (1r:13–14), and the same corruption can be found in 19HsG: “sva Kóngr hlaut at halda austr til Svíþjóþar, oc at eino qveldi sigldo þeir undir Eyar þær er Ulfaskér heita” (107r:19–20). This does not seem to be a potential place for polygenetic variation to appear, as the place name Elfarsker is frequently attested in other fornaldarsögur, including but not limited to Örvar-Odds saga (Rafn, ed., 1829–30, II:187), Sörla þattur (Rafn, 1829–30, I:395), and Þorsteins saga Víkingssonar (Rafn, ed. 1829–30, II:441), while no mention of Úlfasker is known to me beyond these two sagas of Hrómundur. Thus, it would be less surprising if the name Úlfasker was changed to Elfsarker, rather than the other way around; therefore, it is likely that 19HsG is borrowing from 17HsG.

Shared textual variants between 17HsG and 19HsG against Griplur can also be found in the episode of the first meeting between Kári and Hröngviður, when one of them tells how long he was in the battle. In Griplur we read:

I:35. “Kant að segja Kára þú, kappinn, það er vér beiðum, hversu lengi hafi þér nú hernað plágað á skeiðum?”

I:36. “Sextigi lét eg seggjum hætt sumur í stála hjaldri; og svó margar mútur grætt minkan fekk eg aldri.”
As this passage demonstrates, in *Griplur* the number sixty is given,\(^7\) while in *17HsG* and *19HsG* we find information about sixty battles and the thirty-three years of a military career:

**17HsG**

Hraungviðr mælti: “Ek hefi heríaþ sumar oc vetr, i xxxiij ár, oc háþ lx orustur, oc feinget jaðnan sigr”

(1r:21–22)

**19HsG**

Kári qaþst ecki kunna því at hrósa. “en í xxxiij vetr hefi ec i vícíngo verit, oc margt sjéþ oc heyrt, eþa vilto leggja til atlógo vit mið?” Hraungviðr mælr “á morgun skalto sanna þat, at ec skal ecki undan-teljast.” Kári mælir “þat þykist ec sjá, at fáa muni á þinn fund fýsa, því ec hefi LX sinnom einvig haldit”

(107v:11–15)

We can assume, therefore, that the number thirty-three is borrowed from *17HsG* into *19HsG*. There is, however, some discrepancy between the sagas. In *17HsG* (and also in *Griplur*, at least in Finnur Jónsson’s reading of them) it is Hröngviður who fought sixty battles and never lost, but in *19HsG*, for some unknown reason, it is Kári. Did the saga-writer intentionally merge *17HsG* and *Griplur* and then change the meaning? This seems unlikely, as the text of *17HsG* is fairly straightforward. Therefore, we should allow for the possibility that this reading is a result of a double layer of misinterpretation, for instance through the lost *rímur* of Hrómundur composed in the years 1775–77 by Benedikt Jónsson Gröndal (1762–1825) or through oral tradition.

A similar explanation can be given to other episodes in which it is difficult to determine whether the saga-writer of *19HsG* misunderstood *Griplur* or whether they intentionally changed the meaning of the story. It is especially frequent with direct speech, where it seems as if the saga-writer frequently confused which character is saying which stanzas. For example, stanza II:59 of *Griplur* is spoken by Vóli: “Oss mun (blossa) brugðið við (kvað báru spennir) – tveir eru meir en tuttugu þrennir – trǫll ef ǫllum þessum rennir,” but in *19HsG*, it is paraphrased and put into Þráinn’s mouth: “Þráinn mælir fleyri sóctu mic heim forþom, þegar Lxij menn veitto mér ásteyting meþ ráni oc róti á hús kofa minom, oc fengo þeir lítit til ábata” (112r:3–6). *17HsG* reproduces the contents of this stanza

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\(^7\) It is problematic to determine whether the number in *Griplur* refers to sixty battles (Sextigi stála hjaldri), sixty years (Sextigi sumur), or sixty men killed (lét sextigi seggjum).
following *Griplur*, with the exception of the corruption of the number of men: “Volí qvad Einginn mvnþi vilia giefa lýf sitt wit þui, ero hier nu lx. manna, oc man troll þetta òllum dauþa veita” (2r:12–13).

Direct speech also seems to be confused in the episode of the fight between Þráinn and Hrómundur. According to Finnur Jónsson’s interpretation, stanzas III:41–42 of *Griplur* are spoken by Hrómundur, followed by stanza III:43 spoken by Þráinn, but *19HsG* merges the two and the contents of both stanzas are narrated in Hrómundur’s direct speech. 

There is a remarkable discrepancy between *17HsG* and *19HsG*; this suggests that this part of *19HsG* is more likely to be directly based on *Griplur*, which the saga-writer interprets quite differently from the *17HsG*. However, the striking similarity between *17HsG* and *19HsG* in using the phrase “nú skal ég rífa þig kvikan í sundur” (now I shall tear you apart alive), does not allow us to exclude the possibility that the saga-writer actually had access to both *17HsG* and *Griplur* and made a conscious choice regarding the readings they wanted to include in the saga. In the same manner, we cannot exclude the possibility that some now lost, intermediate
version of the story (e.g. Gröndal’s lost *rímir*) influenced the story at some earlier stage and that this may be reflected in the younger saga.

The Relationship between *Rímur af Hrómundi Greipssyni* and the Rest of the Tradition

Even though at the time of the composition of *Rímur af Hrómundi Greipssyni* (*RHG*) the younger *Hrámundar saga* (*19HsG*) was already in circulation, there are strong indications that the *rímir* were based on *17HsG*, not *19HsG*. None of the additional episodes that are present in *19HsG* and absent from *17HsG* have their counterparts in *RHG*. This is strong evidence that *19HsG* could not have been used as the basis for *RHG*. If that had been the case, at least some of the episodes would probably have made their way through to the *rímir*, even if the *rímir*-poet was determined to abridge the narrative. There is also no evidence for *RHG* using *Griplur* to any extent, even in instances where *Griplur* clearly preserve a more logical version of the story. In light of the lack of evidence for any direct relationship between *RHG* and *Griplur* or *19HsG*, the last pair of texts that need to be discussed here is *17HsG* and *RHG* as well as the relationship between them.

As previously mentioned, *RHG* have never been edited. By being preserved in a single manuscript (Lbs 825 8vo), they have also remained mainly outside the scope of existing scholarship. Davíð Erlingsson (1987, 391) suggested, however, rather intuitively, that “a poet retold the story in *rímir*, perhaps using as his source the prose tale printed by Rafn which had as its basis the early *rímir*, though I cannot prove this.” The evidence presented in this section confirms Davíð Erlingsson’s assumption regarding the relationship between *17HsG* and *RHG*. Moreover, this section not only presents the evidence for the general relationship between these two adaptations but also determines which particular branch of the saga tradition was the basis of the *rímir*.

There are multiple passages that strongly suggest that the *rímir*-poet relied exclusively on *17HsG*, as for example in the case of the misunderstanding regarding Hrókur, who is Hrómundur’s dog but who in *17HsG* is a man. *RHG* reads as follows:
4. Garpur klókur geds um flet,  
gaf baug einum manni  
þessi Hrókur þegnin hét,  
þundar jök sá tíðum hret.

5. Voli sódi sóma spar  
seggin drapum grímu  
hríning góda burtu bar,  
bjódur glóda þángs valla.  
(III:4 & III:5 (9r:17–9v:1))

It is clear from the clauses “gaf baug einum manni” and “Hrókur þegnin hét” in RHG that Hrókur is a man rather than a dog, and that the object of Vóli’s jealousy is a golden ring, not the dog – the misunderstanding introduced in 17HsG – indicating that RHG are dependent on 17HsG.

Further verbal similarities between 17HsG and RHG serve to confirm this interpretation of the relationships between these two adaptations. In RHG II:40–41, Hrómundur asks Þráinn how many men he defeated in duels, and Þráinn answers that it was 124 men. This is a clear borrowing from 17HsG, because both 19HsG and Griplur refer only to a hundred duels. Additionally, in 19HsG we read about the killing of twenty-four kings “xxiv Konga hjó ec til bana meþ því” (114r:18), which is omitted in other adaptations.

Another similarity between RHG and 17HsG can be found in the following stanza (RHG, II:42), in which Þráinn tells Hrómundur that he and Semingur, the king of Sweden, were competing in sports: “okkar gjördum ágætar íþróttirnar reina” (stanza II:42, 8v:3–4). This closely resembles “reindom ockar i þrótter” in 17HsG (A601, 3r:7), but neither Griplur nor 19HsG refer to íþróttir (sports) in a direct way.

Finally, there are also two stanzas which allow closer identification of the source of RHG. In stanza 51 in the third fit we read: “Frækna Helga fylgia réð frilla sem hét Lara illsku velgja otargeð álptar belg hún klæddist með” (12r:14–16). Similarly, in the first stanza of the fourth fit: “Þar nam farast þulins knör vid þagnar kletta sem hún Lara dauð nam detta” (13v:2–4). In both stanzas of RHG Helgi’s mistress is called Lara (or Lára), while in 19HsG, Griplur, and the majority of the manuscripts preserving 17HsG,
the name of the mistress is Kára. The only part of the tradition of 17HsG in which Helgi’s mistress is called Lára is the text-sub-group A3 (Kapitan 2018). Text-sub-group A3 includes the manuscripts that are based on Rafn’s printed edition of the saga. RHG’s composition post-dates the publication of the edition, so there is a fair likelihood that the edition served as the basis for the composition of the rímur. It is, however, impossible to determine with high certainty whether the text of RHG was based on the printed edition or on one of the manuscripts derived from it.\footnote{There are multiple manuscripts derived from Rafn’s printed edition; see Kapitan (2018, 109–25).}

Discussion and Conclusion

Through comparative analysis of textual and structural similarities and differences between four manifestations of the story of Hrómundur in prose and verse in the Icelandic language, the present study aimed to reveal the relationship between these manifestations, primarily to cast light on two previously marginalized versions of the story, the younger saga (19HsG) and the younger set of rímur (RHG). While the influences on RHG are fairly straightforward, the sources of the younger prose adaptation are quite difficult to identify with certainty and open up many possibilities for interpretation.

The seventeenth-century saga of Hrómundur (17HsG) is certainly based on the medieval rímur Griplur, and it can be seen as a sort of summary of the contents of the rímur. The practice of preparing summaries of rímur in the early modern period is well attested in the literature, but as the present study has demonstrated, this summary is not completely true to its sources, as it is not free of misunderstandings. For instance, the case of Hrókur, a dog or a man, is a good example of such a misunderstanding which survived all the way to the literary descendant of 17HsG, i.e. the younger rímur of Hrómundur (RHG).

RHG establish a reliable versification of the story presented in 17HsG, as they preserve all the corruptions of 17HsG without altering anything. RHG are most likely based on Rafn’s printed edition of the saga, or some edition-derived manuscript, as they reproduce an error on the part of the saga’s editor. The name of the mistress of Helgi in RHG is Lára, which is
an innovation in Rafn’s edition and is preserved only in the edition-derived manuscripts. No relationship between *Griplur* and *RHG*, nor between the younger saga and *RHG*, can be proven based on the verbal similarities and the contents of the subsequent adaptations. Therefore, they must be independent of each other.

The sources of *19HsG* appear to be more complicated to reveal. Despite the extensive amplifications in *19HsG* whose sources lie outside of the *Hrómundar saga* tradition and the numerous changes on the level of the style, structure, and content, in many cases, *19HsG* is a better saga than *17HsG* in terms of its narrative coherence. The present study has shown that the materials originating from both *Griplur* and *17HsG* are present in *19HsG*, but it is uncertain whether the saga-writer of *19HsG* based the story on a written account (or accounts) of *Griplur* and *17HsG*, or whether they committed the story to writing from memory. The saga-writer seems to have consciously used both sources and in some cases provided additional details originating from *Griplur* which are omitted in *17HsG*, as for example an additional dream of Blindur based on stanza VI:25. In other cases, they chose to follow *17HsG* against the *rímur*, as for example in the occurrence of the place name Úlfasker in both sagas but not in *Griplur*. It is equally possible, however, that the saga-writer had a written account of only one manifestation of the story and supplied additional information from another manifestation from memory. Finally, we cannot exclude the possibility that *19HsG* is actually based on the lost *rímur* by Benedikt Jónsson Gröndal (1762–1825), meaning that the merger of *Griplur* and *17HsG* would have taken place before *19HsG* was committed to writing; nevertheless, we do not have any means to prove or disprove this hypothesis as this intermediate text is lost.

This scenario, involving an intermediate step in the tradition in the form of the lost *rímur*, could explain some of the corruptions present in *19HsG* that we are unable to explain using the evidence at hand. An example of this is the number of years of military experience that Hröngviður or Kári had. It is somewhat easier to imagine that the saga-writer of *19HsG* used as the basis for the story a set of *rímur* in which the information from *17HsG* and from *Griplur* was already merged, rather than imagining that they sat with two competing accounts of the story, one in verse and the other in prose, and created a hybrid of the two. The intermediate
step seems to be the best explanation we can give in this case, unless we are ready to assume that the saga-writer of 19HsG was either interested in reconstructing the lost saga of Hrómundur, and therefore treating both accounts as equally valuable, or that they were just trying to write a good, entertaining story — which they certainly achieved — and therefore did not necessarily see one version as superior to the other and in some instances freely chose which version of the events to follow.

Based on the evidence at hand, the relationships between the four Icelandic manifestations of the story of Hrómundur can be illustrated in the form of a stemma as presented in Figure 1. The dotted lines in the stemma represent uncertain or disputable connections, as we lack strong evidence to prove their existence.

The comparative analysis of Hrómundar saga and related materials allows us to ask further questions about the general practice of adaptation from one medium to another in Iceland. Why did someone convert rímur into prose in the first place? Why were some of the rímur converted into prose more than once? Was it because of a lack of access to the prose

Figure 1: The relationships between four versions of the story of Hrómundur in Icelandic.
version in a particular area, because of a dislike of their poetic form, or because of the need to simplify the poetic language and deliver an easily accessible story to a less sophisticated audience? A comparative analysis of a wider array of rimur-based narratives is needed in order to enable us to draw general conclusions and answer these questions, but the present study hopes to deliver a meaningful contribution to this discussion.

The present study is the first in-depth analysis of the relationships between extant versions of the story of Hrómundur in Icelandic which illustrate the multi-layered process of the transmission and adaptation of medieval literature in the post-medieval period. This study not only casts light on this particular tradition, but it also contributes to the broader discussion of Icelandic literature from a diachronic perspective and especially the process of adaptation from one medium to another. It shows that throughout centuries, a medieval story could entertain generations of Icelanders who were willing not only to transcribe one of its versions but also to engage with its contents on a more creative level. Over the years, the story, like a snowball rolling down a hill, accumulated various influences which became so strongly interconnected that at times it becomes impossible to separate the individual narratives that influenced the story, just as it is impossible to separate the individual snowflakes that were picked up by the rolling snowball.

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SUMMARY

Hrómundur in Prose and Verse: On the Relationships between Four Versions of the Story of Hrómundur Greipsson

Keywords: Hrómundar saga Greipssonar, Griplur, legendary sagas, rímur, transmission history, intertextuality

The present study examines the transmission history of the story of Hrómundur Gr(e)ipsson in Icelandic. Its focus lies in the investigation of textual relationships between four works dealing with the story of Hrómundur: two in metric from, Griplur and Hrómundar rímur Greipssonar (RHG), and two in prose, the seventeenth-century saga (17HsG) and the younger, hitherto unknown saga, possibly originating in the nineteenth-century (19HsG). The study concludes that the saga-writer of 19HsG most likely utilised both Griplur and the older saga to create a coherent story of Hrómundur. Alternatively, they based their adaptation on a now lost intermediate version of the story that already merged the accounts
of the *rimur* and the saga, as elements from both older adaptations can be found in the younger saga. Furthermore, the study concludes that the younger set of *rimur* (RHG) are derived from the printed edition of the seventeenth-century saga, as the editorial error of C.C. Rask, the saga’s editor, appears in the poem.

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