



GRIPLA





# GRIPLA

RITSTJÓRI  
JÓNAS KRISTJÁNSSON

I



REYKJAVÍK  
STOFNUN ÁRNA MAGNÚSSONAR  
1975

STOFNUN ÁRNA MAGNÚSSONAR Á ÍSLANDI  
RIT 7

*Prófarkalestur og skrár:*

EINAR G. PÉTURSSON EIRÍKUR ÞORMÓÐSSON  
KOLBRÚN HARALDSDÓTTIR SIGURGEIR STEINGRÍMSSON  
SVERRIR TÓMASSON

© Stofnun Árna Magnússonar á Íslandi 1975

PRINTED IN ICELAND  
STEINHOLT HF

## FORMÁLI

RIT það sem hér hefur göngu sína mun birta ýmsar ritgerðir og minnisgreinar um íslensk fræði, og einnig vísindalegar útgáfur stuttra texta eða brota. Í Árnastofnun falla einlægt til rannsóknarefni af ýmsu tagi sem eru of viðalítil til að birtast ein sér, og er hagkvæmt að safna þeim saman í bindi. Ætlunin er að Gripla komi framvegis út einu sinni á ári, 12–14 arkir í hvert sinn.

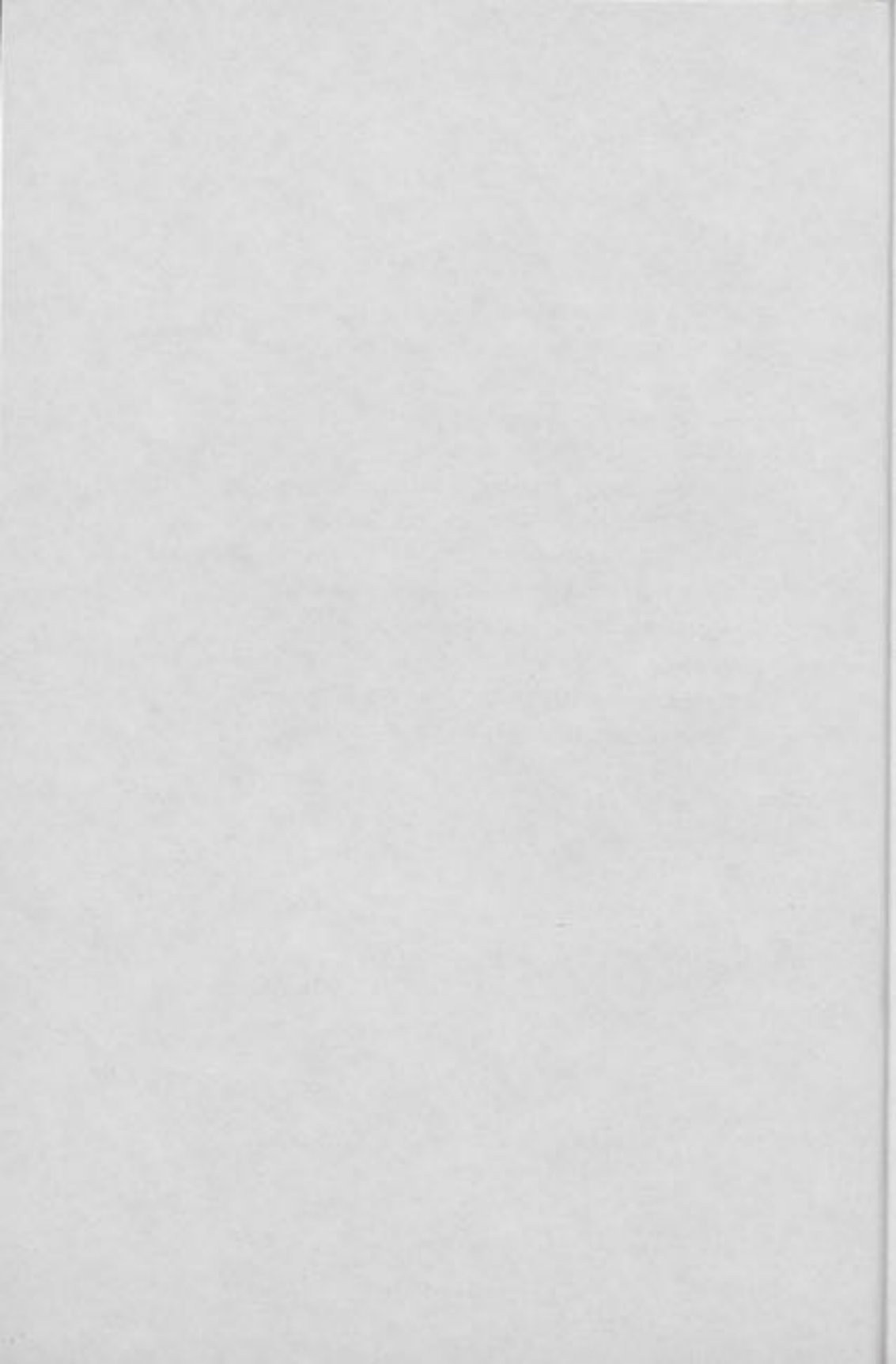
Fimm af tíu ritgerðum þessa fyrsta bindis voru fyrir öndverðu erindi flutt á alþjóðþingi um íslenskar fornsögur sem haldið var í Reykjavík 1973. Aðal-tungumál þess þings var enska, og fyrir því ber meira á ensku í þessu fyrsta bindi Griplu heldur en síðar má vænta. En þegar kominn var slíkur kjarni ritgerða um fornsögur okkar, þótti vel hafa að auka við fleiri greinum um sama efni, og má segja að fyrsta árbókin sé helguð fornsögunum. Væntanlega munu handrita-rannsóknir og textarýni skipa meira rúm í næstu árbókum, í samræmi við ætlunarverk Árnastofnunar. Þó mun Gripla aldrei verða ein-skorðuð við afmörkuð svið íslenskra fræða.

Ritið er heitið eftir glötuðu handriti sem á sautjándu öld bar þetta nafn, vafalaust vegna þess að efni þeirrar bókar hefur verið gripið úr ýmsum áttum.



## EFNI

Davíð Erlingsson: Illuga saga og Illuga dans	9
Rory W. McTurk: The Extant Icelandic Manifestations of Ragnars saga loðbrókar	43
Jónas Kristjánsson: Íslendingadrápa and Oral Tradition	76
Óskar Halldórsson: Sögusamúð og stéttir	92
Paul Schach: Antipagan Sentiment in the Sagas of Icelanders	105
Régis Boyer: Paganism and Literature: The So-called 'Pagan Survivals' in the samtíðarsögur	135
Kurt Schier: Iceland and the Rise of Literature in 'terra nova'	168
Ólafur Halldórsson: Rímur af Finnboga ramma	182
Helgi Guðmundsson: Rúnaristan frá Narssaq	188
Helgi Guðmundsson: The East Tocharian Personal Pronoun 1st Person Singular Masculine: A Case of Pronominal Borrowing	195
<i>Handrit</i>	202
<i>Visnaupphöf og viðlög</i>	202
<i>Nafnaskrá</i>	203





DAVÍÐ ERLINGSSON

## ILLUGA SAGA OG ILLUGA DANS

### I. UM VIÐFANGSEFNIÐ

FÆREYSKI, norski og danski dansinn um kappann Illuga<sup>1</sup> er kveðinn um sama söguefni sem er í Illuga sögu Gríðarfóstra.<sup>2</sup> Dansinn er talinn ortur út af sögunni í þeirri mynd sem hún er varðveitt, eða því sem næst. Sú var niðurstaða Knuts Liestøls í rannsókn sem birtist í tímaritinu Syn og Segn, 1910, en sú grein varð síðar með óverulegum breytingum kafli í bók hans Norske trollvisor og norrøne sogor, 1915.<sup>3</sup> Við niðurstöðu Liestøls hefur ekki verið hróflað síðan, enda hefur sagan ekki verið gefin út né rannsökuð sérstaklega á þessu tímabili.

Liestøl bar vandlega saman frásagnarefni dansins og fornaldarsögunnar. Hann taldi að rekja mætti til fornaldarsögunnar öll helztu atriði í efni dansins, og einnig ósamkvæmni í einstökum gerðum hans. Skoðun hans var sú að eðlilegt væri að söguefni þróaðist í átt til einföldunar við munnlega sagnaskemmtun. Í staðinn fyrir nokkuð flókna efnisskipun sem tíðkast í fornaldarsögum yrðu einfaldari og alþýðlegri ævintýraminni ríkjandi í dönsum um sömu efni.

Í þessu viðhorfi, sem mótaði rannsóknaraðferð Liestøls, fólst sú hætta að ekki yrði tekið nægilegt tillit til þess hve ólíkar þessar tvær tegundir bókmennta eru í eðli sínu. Sá sem kannar afstöðu fornaldarsögu og danskvæðis um sama efni, verður að gæta að ólíkri hefð og takmörkunum hvorrar greinar um sig. Mismunur á efni og efnisskipun getur að nokkru ráðizt af ólíkri hefð og skemmtunarhlutverki tegundanna. Miklu torveldara er að koma margbrotnu söguefni fyrir í dansi

<sup>1</sup> Føroya kvæði, nr. 18 (I, 428–434); Danmarks gamle Folkeviser, nr. 44 (II, 94–102, IV, 820–823, X, 41–42); Norske Folkeviser (Landstad), nr. 2 (bls. 22–28); K. Liestøl og M. Moe, útg., Folkeviser, endurútg. O. Bø og S. Solheim í ritsafninu Norsk folkediktning (Oslo 1958), nr. 21 (I, 121–126).

<sup>2</sup> Fornaldar sögur Norðurlanda, útg. C. C. Rafn (Kaupmannahöfn 1830), III, 648–660.

<sup>3</sup> Syn og Segn XVI (Oslo 1910), 269–286; Norske trollvisor og norrøne sogor (Kristiania 1915), bls. 92–109.



en lausamálssögu. Og á hinn bóginn má fullyrða að ef gera ætti fornaldarsögu úr dansi, yrði að jafnaði að auka efni við og breyta efnis skipun á ýmsa lund, til þess að sagan yrði fullgild í sínum flokki. Einfaldara efni í dansi en í sögu þarf því ekki að vera vísbending um þróun frá flóknari framsetningu sama efnis í lausamálssögu, nema það sannist með öðrum rökum að skyldleikanum sé þannig háttað. Um efalausar sannanir af því tagi er naumast að ræða í rannsókn Liestøls, en á hinn bóginn bendir ýmislegt til að skyldleikinn gæti verið með öðrum hætti en hann gerði ráð fyrir.

Það veikir einnig trúna á niðurstöðu Liestøls að hún virðist ekki reist á sérlega náinni athugun fornaldarsögunnar. Þegar að er gáð kemur í ljós að um uppruna og þróun söguefnisins má ýmislegt ráða af samsetningu sögunnar. Erindi þessara blaðsíðna er í fyrsta lagi að birta nokkrar athuganir um gerð Illuga sögu, en í öðru lagi að benda á merki bundins máls í texta hennar. Á grundvelli þessara athugana verður síðan að endurskoða niðurstöðu Liestøls. En lítið verður skeytt um að gagnrýna röksemdir hans í einstökum atriðum.

Bók Liestøls er heildarrannsókn á sambandi dansa og fornaldarsagna. Eins og kunnugt er, telur hann að danskveðskapur um efni fornaldarsagna muni hafa verið sérnorsk bókmenntagrein í upphafi, en síðan hafi hún borizt frá móðurlandinu til Færeyja.<sup>4</sup> Frá Íslandi séu ekki kunnir neindir dansar af þessu tagi,<sup>5</sup> enda hafi rímur þar gegnt sama hlutverki. Liestøl telur um tylft fornaldarsagna, sem dansar eru í efnislegum tengslum við,<sup>6</sup> en þessi tengsl eru með ólíku móti:

\*Stundom ligg visa tett upp til söga, so at ein kan skyna at visediktaren maa ha kjent söga mest i same form som den me no hev, t. d. Illuga saga Gríðarfóstra og Hrómundar saga Greipssonar. Andre sogor kann me slutta mindre um, t. d. Orvarodds saga, Hervarar saga og Ragnars saga; men set me innaat einannan alle dei vitnemaali som visone gjev, so skynar me at diktaren i alle fall maa ha kjent hovuddragi i heile söga, og det hender at ein kan timja serskilde sogeformer.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Tilvitnað rit, bls. 226 o. áfr.; um heimkynni dansanna sjá og stutt yfirlit Svale Solheim í greininni Færgysk-norsk í folkevisediktinga, Fróðskaparrit XVIII (Tórs-havn 1970), 297-306. Solheim endurvekur athygli á þeirri skoðun, að Færeyjar muni eiga mikinn hlut í sköpun dansa, meiri en Liestøl hyggur.

<sup>5</sup> Tilv. rit, 226-227.

<sup>6</sup> Tilv. rit, 232.

<sup>7</sup> Tilv. rit, 236-237.

Þegar litið er yfir allt þetta efni kemur í ljós, að Illuga saga virðist vera eina fornaldarsagan þar sem orðafarstengsl eru til stuðnings öðrum rökum um skyldleika fornaldarsögu og danskvæðis, eina sagan þar sem þess er að vænta að textasamanburður (auk athugana á sögu-efni) geti leitt til aukinnar vitneskju um tengsl þessara bókmennta-greina. Hrómundar saga er t. d. aðeins til í gerð sem samin er eftir rímum, og 'serskilde sogeformer' benda óneitanlega í aðra átt en til hinna rituðu fornaldarsagna. Vafalaust hafa dansaskáld oft farið eftir öðrum sögugerðum en þeim sem skrifaðar voru á bækur á Íslandi.

Mjög erfitt er að ákveða aldur dansa með nokkurri vissu, og er því eðlilegt að Liestøl reyni að finna tímasetningarrök í sambandi dansa við kunnar fornaldarsögur. En hér reynist erfitt að finna traustar viðmiðanir, því að fornaldarsögurnar 'hev livt lenge, og lange tider gjekk fleire utviklingsformer jamsides . . .' Um Illuga sögu tekur hann upp hina gömlu skoðun um aldur hennar, að hún sé líklega frá því um 1300, og hann áfítur dansinn ekki geta verið mjög miklu yngri, því að miklar breytingar séu um garð gengnar í elztu uppskriftinni, sem er frá því um 1550.<sup>8</sup>

Engar knýjandi ástæður eru til að telja aldur hinnar rituðu fornaldarsögu svo háan. Að vísu mætti hugsa sér, að einhver aldursrök fyndust í máli og stíl, en það hefur ekki verið rannsakað. Illuga saga er ekki varðveitt í neinu safnhandriti fornaldarsagna frá miðöldum. Mætti vænta þess að hún hefði verið tekin með í eitthvert slíkt safn, ef hún hefði þá verið kunn. Elzta handritið, AM 123 8vo, er að vísu á skinni, en eigi að síður er það naumast miklu eldra en frá því um 1600.<sup>9</sup>

Í efni og byggingu sögunnar bendir ekki heldur neitt sérstakt til háa aldurs. Helzta efni sögunnar er á þessa leið:

Hetjuefnið Illugi elst upp í koti skammt frá kóngsgarði. Hann verður vinur kóngssonarins, og er tímar liða fara þeir saman í vikingaferð. Með þeim í ferðinni er Björn, ráðgjafi kóngsins, en hann er viðsjáll og andsnúinn Illuga í hvívetna. Á heimleiðinni lenda þeir í hrakningi, og rekur þá norður í tröllheima á Gandvíkurströnd. Þá eru þeir eldslausir, svo að til vandræða horfir, Björn heitir á Illuga að sækja eld, svo að mennirnir krökni ekki úr

<sup>8</sup> Tilv. rit, 245.

<sup>9</sup> Sjá K. Kátund, Katalog over den arnamagnænske håndskriftsamling, II (1894), bls. 403.

kulda, en sjálfur er hann verst á sig kominn. Illugi fer og finnur eld í helli hjá Gríði tröllkonu. Gríður er afar ljót, meðal annars forkunnar illa nefjuð, en ungmærin Hildur, sem Illugi hittir í hellinum hjá Gríði, er afbragðs fögur, og verður hann gagntekinn af þrá til hennar. Síðar kemur í ljós að þær eru mennskar mæðgur og kóngadætur í álögunum vondrar stjúpu. Illugi verður að vinna það til eldsins að mæla þrjú sannyrði. Það tekst svo að Gríður lætur sér líka, en síðan segir hún að hann skuli sænga hjá Hildi í nótt, úr því að honum lítist betur á hana en sig. Þrisvar um nóttina kemur Gríður æðandi, rykkir Illuga fram á stökk og hótar að drepa hann með saxi miklu og biturlegu, en Illugi hræðist ekki hið minnsta. Með þessu hugrekki sínu leysir Illugi mæðgurnar úr álögunum, og verður frásögnin um þau saga í meginsögunni. Nú leyfir Gríður að Hildur fari með Illuga og gefur þeim gjafir. Nótt eina þar á eftir finna menn á skipinu Björn ráðgjafa dauðan, og hefur Gríður drepit hann fyrir það að hann taldi Hildi trélla ættar. Þegar heim kemur, kvænist Illugi Hildi, og kóngssonurinn fóstbróðir hans gengur að eiga Signýju móður hennar, sem í álögunum nefndist Gríður.

Þetta er stutt saga. Aðalinntak hennar er viðskipti Illuga við Gríði og það sem þeim er tengt: *sjóhrakningurinn — eldsleysið — eldsleitin — sannyrðasögnin — skyndibrúðkaupið við Hildi — líflátshótanir Gríðar — lausn kvennanna úr álögunum — heimför — brúðkaup*. Í inngangi sögunnar er sagt frá uppvexti Illuga, vinfengi hans og kóngssonarins, og manndómsraun þeirri sem móðir Illuga leggur á hann áður en hann fær að fara í leiðangurinn. En þetta efni snertir ekki kjarna sögunnar, og má því leggja það til hliðar, þegar efni fornaldarsögunnar og dansins er borið saman.

Í dansinum er frásagnarefnið einfaldara og skipan þess önnur, en þó er munurinn ekki meiri en svo að hægt er að gera grein fyrir höfuðatriðum hans í eftirfarandi tveimur minnisgreinum:

1. Í dansinum er tröllkonan raunverulegt tröll, en ekki mennsk kona í álögunum. Hildur er ekki dóttir hennar, heldur fangi.

2. Markmið leiðangursins, að finna kóngsdótturina, kemur skýrt fram í dansinum. Kóngurinn faðir hennar er þar leiðangursstjóri, en söguhetjan og einhver Björn eru meðal manna hans. Í sögunni er markmið leiðangursins allt annað (víking), og tilgangur sjóhrakningsins er auðvitað ósagður. Mennirnir lenda á slóðum Gríðar af eins konar tilviljun.

Þessi skipun í dansinum verður til þess, að tilgangurinn með komu Illuga í hellinn er tvöfaldur (eldsheimt, meyjarheimt). Uppfyllingun



beggja markmiðanna er hlaðið saman í eitt atriði frásagnarinnar. Við þennan smíðargalla sleppur Illuga saga, vegna þess að sjóhrakningurinn á sér auðvitað engan tilgang, sem sagður sé fyrirfram.

## II. TEXTATENGL

Þó að sama söguefni komi fram í tveimur textum, er alls ekki víst að þeir séu tengdir beinum eða sannfærandi tengslum. Báðir gætu t. a. m. verið runnir frá munnlegri sögn og henni svo ólíkri að sameiginleg textasérkenni kæmu engin í ljós. Ólíkt bókmenntalegt form stuðlar að hinu sama. Um fornaldarsögur og dansa um sömu eða skyld frásagnarefni hagar hvarvetna svo til, að textaskyldleiki milli þeirra verður ekki sannaður með orðafarstengslum, enda þótt skyldleiki söguefnisins kunni að vera efalaus. Að þessu leyti er söguefnið um Illuga undantekning. Sérkennileg sameiginleg atriði í orðafari dansins og sögunnar sýna að báðir þessir textar eiga rót sína að rekja til sama fortexta. Er þá annaðhvort um rittengsl að ræða (forrit), eða að ósvikult minni hefur varðveitt slík atriði úr munnlegri frásögn í einhverri mynd. Hér skulu nú sýnd þrjú slík samkenni í orðafari Illuga sögu og Illuga dans.

1. Þegar Gríður birtist í fyrsta sinn, lýsir Illuga saga hinu herfilega útliti hennar. Eitt einkennið er *enni bratt*. Hið sama kemur fram í norska dansinum, að vísu ekki í lýsingu skessunnar, heldur í sannyrðum Illuga um hana: *enna heve du bratt*.<sup>1</sup> Þetta sérkennilega atriði<sup>2</sup> (bæði í orðafari og útliti) virðist hljóta að vera leif sameiginlegs fortexta.

<sup>1</sup> Eftir texta Læstøls, tilv. rit, bls. 95, v. 17; samsvarandi er í öðrum prentuðum textum.

<sup>2</sup> *Ennisbrattur* kemur fyrir sem Óðinsheiti í Óðinsnafnaþulu (varðveittri í AM 748 II 4to og AM 757 a 4to) í tengslum við Snorra Eddu, sjá útg. Finns Jónssonar í Den norsk-islandske Skjaldedigtning IA, 682, þulur, jf. — *Ennisbrattur* er lýsingarorð í færeyskri gátu, um bát, pr. hjá V. U. Hammershaimb, Færøsk Anthologi I (København 1891, STUAGNL XV), 324. Í orðasafninu er orðið þýtt: með stejl, flad pande. Einnig má geta þess, að Jón Ólafsson frá Grunnavík tilfærir orðið *ennisbrattur* í orðabókarverki sínu (AM 433 II<sup>2</sup>, fol., undir brattur) og skýrir: qui frontem habet arduam vel acclivem.

2. Illugi segir við Gríði í sannyrðunum, að hún sé *svo svört að gólfið sé fagurt hjá henni*. Dönsku uppskriftirnar af dansinum nefna allar gólfið í bústað tröllsins í þess háttar samhengi, að í því er fólgin samanburður við útlit tröllsins, enda þótt sá samanburður sé hálf-sagður, en ekki fullsagður. Sjá nánar um þetta í kaflanum um sannyrðin. Tilnefning gólfsins og samanburður skessunnar við það er svo sérkennilegt smáatriði, að það ber vitni hinu sama og *enni bratt*.

3. Fyrsta sannyrði sögunnar er: *Hellir þinn er hár ok breiður, at ek hefji eigi séð hús meira né sterkara*. Fyrsta sannyrði norska dansins er: *Aaren din æ i hynno brei, / du skipar utivi hann elli*. Hér er því sama lýsingarorð, *breiður*, á nákvæmlega sama stað í sögunni og dansinum. Það bendir fastlega til textasambands.

Lítum nánar á þessar setningar. 'Aaren din æ i hynno brei' er vísuorð. 'Hellir þinn er hár ok breiður' væri líka óaðfinnanlegt vísuorð, en að vísu einnig eðlilegt laust mál, þannig að vísuorðsformið sannar ekkert um upprunann. Orðið *breiður* gefur ástæðu til að ætla að setningin öll hafi upphaflega verið hin sama. Sannyrðin eru einmitt þess háttar frásagnarkjarni, að ætla mætti að þau brengluðust síður en flest annað.

Liestøl segir: 'Dei tvo fyrste sanningane er dei same i saga og visa.'<sup>3</sup> Það er þó deginum ljósara að orðin 'Hellir þinn er hár ok breiður' merkja ekki hið sama og 'Aaren din æ i hynno brei'. Norska vísuorðið verður naumast þýtt á aðra lund en: arinninn þinn er í horni (eða hyrnum, hyrnunum?) breiður. Viðfangsefnið hellir er allt annað en arinn. Breytingar hafa orðið í dansinum eða í sögunni, sbr. orðið *breiður*. Er þá eðlilegt að reyna að grafast fyrir um þær. Að öðrum kosti er fullyrðing Liestøls röng, og þær líkur sem leiðir af orðinu breiður villa ein.

Það erindi Illuga að fá eld kemur skýrt fram í þeirri vísu dansins sem fer næst á undan sannyrðinu. Þegar hér er komið er því eldurinn efst í huga þess sem kveður dansinn. Þess vegna fellur orðið *aare* undir grun. Sannyrði í dönskum uppskriftum af dansinum hafa verustað skessunnar að viðfangsefni, en ekki eldstæði hennar, og koma að því leyti heim við Illuga sögu. Færeyskar uppskriftir hafa engin sannyrði. Sagan (og dönsku uppskriftirnar) mun því hafa varðveitt hið upphaflega. Viðfangsefni fyrsta sannyrðisins mun hafa verið hellirinn,

<sup>3</sup> Liestøl, tilv. rit, bls. 103.

en ekki arinninn. Breytinganna er að leita í norska dansinum. Um leið og athyglin beinist að orðinu *aare*, verður auðskýrt hvernig það muni hafa komizt inn í dansinn.

Eftir að lýsingarorðið *hár* hafði vikið úr sessi fyrir sænsku myndinni *hög* í norsku<sup>4</sup> og þannig misst merkingargildi sitt (var orðið tor-skilið), hefur annað orð, líkt hinu fyrra að hljóðum og hljómi, en í hugmyndartengslum við rikjandi hugsun dansins á þessum stað (eldur), átt greiða inngöngu: *hár* > *aare*. Eftir að *hár* varð merkingarlaust, hafa menn sjálfsagt haldið áfram að syngja það á sínum stað, þar til að því kom að einhver legði nýjan skilning í hið óljósa orð í samræmi við hugsun samhengisins. Breytingin hefur því í eðli sínu verið leiðrétting og eins konar alþýðuskýring.

Hellirinn hefur því verið viðfangsefni fyrsta sannyrðisins, og Illuga saga hefur varðveitt það í upphaflegri mynd en norski dansinn.

Þessi atriði sýna að sagan og dansinn eiga rót að rekja til sameiginlegs texta, og gerð fyrsta sannyrðisins minnir á að hann gæti hafa verið í bundnu máli.

### III. SAMSETNING SÖGUEFNISINS

Sögn þriggja sannyrða er minni, sem allvíða kemur fyrir.<sup>1</sup> En eina frásaga önnur, þar sem sannyrða er krafizt fyrir eld, er í síðari norðurfararsögu Þorkels aðalfara í Danasögu Saxa hins málsþaka. Er því ástæða til að athuga þá sögu nánar. M. B. Landstad<sup>2</sup> gerði sér ljósa grein fyrir því, að þessi frásögn Saxa væri í ætt við frásagnarefni dansa, sem fjalla um hetjuferðir norður í tröllheima. Í norska dansinum um Ásmund flagðagæfu<sup>3</sup> er Þorkell aðalfari beinlínis nefndur til ferðarinnar. Sá hluti ferðasögu Aðalfara, sem hér skiptir máli, er efnislega á þessa leið:<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Sjá G. Indrebø, Norsk målsoga (Bergen 1951), bls. 261, sbr. bls. 185.

<sup>1</sup> Minni H505.1; sjá skrá S. Thompsons, Motif-Index of Folk Literature, III, Copenhagen 1956, og I. M. Boberg, Motif-Index of Early Icelandic Literature (Bibliotheca arnamagnæana XXVII, Hafnæ 1966).

<sup>2</sup> M. B. Landstad, Norske Folkeviser (Christiania 1853), 45–50.

<sup>3</sup> Listøfl, tilv. rit, bls. 16, v. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Sjá latínutextann í útg. J. Olrik og H. Ræder, Saxonis Gesta Danorum, 8. bók, XV, 2–6. Þýð. má benda á hjá P. Herrmann, Die Heldensagen des Saxo Grammaticus I (Leipzig 1901), bls. 394–395, eða J. Olrik, Saksnes Danesaga, Oldtid og ældste Middelalder (2. útg., København 1925), 444–446.



Þorkell aðalfari og menn hans sigla norður til tröllabeims til þess að finna Útgarða-Loka. Þeir lenda í hrakningi og verða eldslausir á ókunnri strönd, neyðast til þess að éta hrátt og verða veikir af. Loks sér Þorkell, hvar glyttir í eld á lengdar. Hann setur gimstein í siglutoppinn, til þess að rata aftur, og heldur af stað. Hann fer mjóan stíg og kemur að þröngum helli, sem hann gengur einn inn í, og er nú lýst íbúum og húsakosti á þessum stað. Þarna eru fyrir tvö tröll<sup>5</sup> með hornnef, eða nef eins og löng horn, og notuðu tröllin þau til þess að skara öllu tiltæku á eldinn, til þess að halda honum lifandi. Dyrnar voru ljótar og dyrastafirnar rotnir, veggirnir ataðir skarni, loftið skitugt og gólfíð ornum stráð, svo að bæði augu og hug hlaut að klíga við. Þorkell biður um leiðsögn til heimkynnis Útgarða-Loka, en verður að vinna það til að mæla þrjú sannyrði. Það tekst Þorkatli svo að tröllin eru ánægð. Síðan biður hann um eld, og verður nú að segja önnur þrjú sannyrði. Að því búnu fær hann eldinn, og heldur áfram ferð sinni.

Á því getur víst ekki leikið vafi, að hér er sama söguefnið og kemur fram í Illuga dansi, og í öðru lagi í Illuga sögu Gríðarfóstra. Frásagnarpósturinn hjá Saxa er byggður upp af nokkrum skýrum atriðum bundnum saman í lítt hagganlega atburðarás. Atriðin eru þessi:

- Sigling norður í tröllheima,
- eldsleysi til meins,
- eldur sést í fjarska,
- hetjan fer að leita eldsins,
- hann finnur eldinn í helli hjá tröllum,
- tröllin krefjast af honum sannyrðasagnar, áður en hann fái eldinn. Síðan fer hann leiðar sinnar.

Beinum nú fyrst athyglinni að dansinum án þess að taka fornaldarsöguna með í reikninginn. Í Illuga dansi koma fram öll atriðin a–f úr frásögn Saxa og í óbreyttri röð. Þar er þannig notaður sami frásagnar-

<sup>5</sup> Tröllin eru hér nefnd *aquill*. Hjá Saxa kemur það orð aðeins fyrir á einum stað öðrum, í upptalningu yfirnáttúrlegra vera (2. bók, II, 2, tilv. útg., bls. 40,3). Í báðum tilvikum þýðir J. Olrik *aquili* með 'Svartalfer' og styðst þá ljóslega við lýsingarorðið *aquilus*, dökkur, en það er mjög sjaldgæft orð. En í orðasafninu við tilv. útgáfu *Gesta Danorum* er nafnorðið *aquilus* skýrt: *nomen avis monstruosi*. Hér eru tvær ólíkar skýringar á ferðinni, því að ekki mun kunnugt um þá hugmynd, að (svart)álfar séu í fuglslíki. Mætti láta sér detta í hug, að fyrir Saxa hafi vakað lýsandi tröllsheit á borð við Arinnesja (og hafi hann tengt það við fuglsheitð *örn*, *ari*, lat. *aquila*) samtímis hugmyndinni um eldskörungsnefið (*arin-nef?*), sem skýrt kemur fram í lýsingu hans. Þetta er ekki annað en tilgáta, en um leið má minna á, að hendur Gríðar eru sem *arnarklær* í Illuga sögu.

póstur um ferð sem leiðir til fundar við tröll sem heimta sannyrði fyrir eld. Hvaða efni hefur dansinn fram yfir þetta? Því er fljótsvarað. Það er saga kóngsdóttur í haldi hjá trölli, og um föður hennar og hetjuna í leiðangri til þess að frelsa hana. Þetta er einfalt ævintýri um 'den burtstolne kongsdotteri', það efni sem Liestøl gerði ráð fyrir að hefði í dansinum troðizt að á kostnað upphaflegra frásagnarefnis úr Illuga sögu Griðarfóstra.<sup>5a</sup> Slíkt ævintýri<sup>5b</sup> gæti naumast verið einfaldara en svo að atburðarás þess væri byggð upp af eftirfarandi atriðum:

- (x) Ferð hetjunnar að leita rændu kóngsdótturinnar,
- (y) hann finnur hana í valdi trölla eða annarra óvætta,
- (z) hann bjargar henni frá þeim,
- (þ) heimför, — og líklega
- (æ) brúðkaup hetjunnar og kóngsdótturinnar.

Í þessum tveimur söguþráðum, a-f hjá Saxa og frumdráttum ævintýrisins x-æ, eru saman komin öll aðalatriði frásagnarefnisins í Illuga dansi. Aðeins eitt atriði dansins fer í bága við þetta: það að kóngurinn fer sjálfur í leitarleiðangurinn. Í ævintýrinu fer hetjan venjulega ein síns liðs.

Af þessu má ætla að söguþráður Illuga dans sé undinn saman úr 1) ferðasögu í tröllheim, þar sem sannyrða er krafizt fyrir eld, og 2) ævintýri um frelsun rændrar prinsessu. Nánari athugun einstakra atriða styður þessa niðurstöðu. Út frá a-f og x-æ má nú fá gleggri hugmynd um samsetningu sögurásar dansins í heild með því að setja efnið upp á þennan hátt:

Frásögn Saxa: a—b—c—d—e—f

Kóngsdóttursagan: x—y—z—þ—æ

Förin (a/x) og fundurinn við tröll í helli (e/y) sem hafa eld (e) eða kóngsdóttur (y) á valdi sínu eru tvö atriði sem koma fyrir í báðum sögunum. Þau gera kleift að fella þær saman í eina sögu, og þau ákveða um leið á hvern hátt samsteypan verður. Með snertiatriðunum a/x og e/y hlaut niðurstaðan að verða: a/x—b—c—d—e/y—f—z—þ—æ. Það stendur heima, að í þessari táknað er felst fullgilt efniságríp þeirrar sögu sem sögð er í Illuga dansi.

<sup>5a</sup> Sjá tilv. rit hans, bls. 104–107.

<sup>5b</sup> Sjá ævintýraskrá Aarnes og Thompsons, *The Types of the Folktale* (Folklore Fellows Communications, nr. 184, Helsinki 1961), nr. 300 o. áfr.



Það er höfuðatriði í skoðun Liestøls að ævintýrisefnið um rænda kóngsdóttur í dansinum hafi þrengt sér að og komið í staðinn fyrir samsettara efni fornaldarsögunnar sem dansinn sé runninn frá. Hér á eftir verður sýnt, að ævintýrisefnið um frelsun rændrar kóngsdóttur er í rauninni einnig að finna í fornaldarsögunni, enda þótt það sé að mestu horfið vegna breytinga á sögunni. Athugun Liestøls um muninn á efni dansins og fornaldarsögunnar í þessu mikilsverða atriði er því röng. Ævintýrisefnið er í raun og veru jafnríkt í báðum. Upptök villunnar virðast hljóta að hafa verið þau að líta á fornaldarsöguna sem fasta stærð, en ekki sem söguefni í mótnun. En í öðru lagi tók hann ekki tillit til hliðstaðunnar í Aðalfarasögu. Úr því að kóngsdóttur-ævintýrið er engu ríkara í dansinum en í fornaldarsögunni, væri gagnslaust að ræða frekar um þá skoðun Liestøls að muninn á dansinum og sögunni megi að einhverju leyti skýra með streitu milli eldra og yngra söguefnis. Þann mun, sem er, verður að skýra á annan hátt. Enn greinilegra verður þetta í ljósi þeirrar niðurstöðu, að frásagnar-efni dansins sé að uppruna samsteypa tveggja sagna. Það segir sig sjálft, að sem hlutar samsteypu eru allir frumpartar hennar jafn upphaflegir, hvað sem líður raunverulegum aldri þeirra í sagnaheiminum.

Með samsteypuna í huga má nú líta á annað. Það er talsverður galli á frásögn dansins að erindi Illuga í helli skessunnar er þar tvöfalt. Erindi leiðangursins í heild er björgun kóngsdótturinnar, en erindi Illuga í hellinn er eldsheimt, og báðum þessum erindum lýkur hetjan í einu lagi með heimsókninni til skessunnar. Liestøl áleit þessa mismíð vera afleiðingu af þeirri streitu, er hin yngri kóngsdóttursaga hefði troðizt upp á eldri söguna, þar sem hetjan fann prinsessu og móður hennar í álögum líkt og af tilviljun (fornaldarsagan). Samkvæmt því sem áður er sagt stentz þetta ekki á þann hátt sem það var hugsað, því að bæði söguefnin (eldsheimtarsaga, kóngsdótturbjörgun) eru jafn upphafleg í samsteypunni. Samsteypan sjálf veitir hér alveg fullkomna skýringu. Annað erindið er úr kjarna kóngsdóttur-sögunnar (y), hitt er kjarni eldsheimtarsögunnar (e), og bæði hlutu þau að haldast í hinni samsteypu sögu. Tvöfalt erindi og tvöföld erindislok eru því upphafleg í frásögn Illuga dans (e/y). Smíðagallinn verður þannig að sannfærandi röksemd um að athuginin um samsteypuna sé rétt. Á hinn bóginn vitnar það alls ekki um upphafleik fornaldarsögunnar að þessarar samsetningarskurfu gætir þar ekki. Ill-

uga saga sleppur við hana vegna þess að sá tilgangur að bjarga kóngsdóttur er ekki sagður fyrirfram. Það leiðir af hefð slíkra skemmtisagna, að menn fara í viking til þess eins að afla fjár og frægðar. Önnur erindi eru óþörf. En í rauninni er erindi Illuga í helli Gríðar tvíþætt alveg eins og í dansinum.

Í framhaldi af þessum athugunum um söguefnið í dansinum er nú rétt að beina athyglinni að fornaldarsögunni. Aðalatriðum mismunarins á söguþræði þeirra er áður lýst (sjá bls. 12–13). Mest ber á milli í tveimur hlekkjum sögukeðjunnar, þ. e. í sambandi við leiðangurinn/sjóhrakninginn (a/x) og í sambandi við fund og frelsun kóngsdótturinnar. Hér má líta fyrst á hið síðara. Er þá heppilegt að athuga hlutverk Gríðar tröllkonu út frá þeirri spurningu hvort upphaflegra sé, að hún sé mennsk kona í álögum eins og í sögunni (Signý) eða hreinræktuð tröllskessa eins og í dansinum.

Með hugrekki sínu leysir Illugi Signýju kóngsdóttur, móður Hildar kóngsdóttur, úr þeim vondu álögum að vera tröll norður í Gandvík. Samt verður þess ekki vart í sögunni að tröllshamurinn falli af henni eða hún breytist á nokkurn annan hátt við lausn sína. Öðru nær. Tröllseðlið hefur hún eftir þetta, þegar hún hengir Björn ráðgjafa við siglurá um nótt, og var það þó varla 'kvennaverk'. Lesandi verður ekki annars var en Signý–Gríður hafi haft Gríðarnefið óbreytt, þegar hún varð drottning fóstbróður Illuga í lok sögunnar.

Hildur fer með Illuga heimleiðis úr hellinum, en hvers vegna slæst Signý ekki í förina með þeim, úr því að hún var mennsk kona, laus úr álögum, og móðir Hildar? Það kemur sér heldur illa í sögulokin, því að þá neyðist höfundurinn til að láta hana birtast aftur á fjarlægum stað alveg skýringalaust, þegar hún á að fara að ganga í hjónaband. Þá er eins og henni skjóti upp úr jörðinni.

Þessa missmið alla virðist ógerningur að túlka nema á einn veg: Í efnisheimild fornaldarsögunnar hefur skessan ekki verið neitt annað en tröllskessa. Því hefur höfundur breytt. Álagasagan öll er viðbót hans<sup>6</sup> og einnig vitaskuld gifting Signýjar, samkvæmt hinu algenga

<sup>6</sup> Álagaminnið (M411.1.1) er af algengri íslenzkri tegund, með gagnálögum, en líkur benda eindregið til að þessi gerð áлага sé orðin til vegna áhrifa frá keltneskum sögum. Sjá E. Ó. Sveinsson, Verzeichnis isländischer Märchenvarianten (Folklore Fellows Communications, nr. 83, Helsinki 1929), bls. xxx–xxxiii; E. Ó. Sveinsson, Um íslenzkar þjóðsögur (Reykjavík 1940), bls. 217 o. áfr., en sérstaklega bls.

giftingaæði í sögulokum slíkra skemmtisagna. En þegar hann greindi frá síðustu skiptum Illuga og skessunnar í Gandvík, hefur honum láðst að taka tillit til eigin breytinga og hann kemur upp um sig með misræminu, sem af því leiddi. Hann hefði þurft að gera fleiri breytingar til þess að skila sögunni brotalausri.

Þess vegna hefur Hildur ekki heldur verið dóttir hennar. Hún er mennsk kona og hefur því verið fangi skessunnar. Um þetta atriði hefur efnisheimild Illuga sögu haft hið sama og dansinn. Það er því harla ótrúlegt að dansskáldið hafi farið eftir Illuga sögu.

Nú er eftir að athuga hitt atriði mismunarins. En í rauninni leiðir af því sem nú hefur verið sagt, að tilgangur sjóhrakningsins í sögunni hafi verið frelsun prinsessunnar, alveg eins og erindi leiðangursins í dansinum. Spurningin er aðeins, hvort þetta markmið hafi verið dulið í efnisheimild Illuga sögu (eins og nú er í fornaldarsögunni) eða hvort það hefur komið fram beinlínis eins og í dansinum. Þessi munur skiptir í sjálfu sér ekki miklu, því að áheyrendur tröllasagna vissu, að villa, þoka eða ofviðri sem kemur á ferðamenn á sjó eða landi er nokkuð skýr vísbending um að funda við vættirnar sé að vanta. Af þeim fundum leiðir svo venjulega aðalefni slíkra sagna. Í samræmi við þessa hefð er markmiðið skilið í Illuga sögu, enda segir þar að þær mæðgur hefðu haft marga gesti, sem ekki báru gæfu til að leysa þær úr álögunum og létu lífið fyrir. Eiginlegur efnismunur er þetta ekki. Það er hugsanlegt að markmið ferðarinnar hafi verið sagt berum orðum í efnisheimild Illuga sögu, og að höfundur hennar hafi breytt út af því til samræmis við hefð ævintýra þar sem menn hitta tröll af 'tilviljun'. Þess er einnig að gæta að ungar hetjur í viking hafa í sögum ekki annað markmið ferða sinna en afla sér fjár og frægðar. En um þetta verður þó ekki fullyrt.

Nú er komið að því atriði í mismuninum, að dansinn hefur kónginn og Illuga (og Herebjönn) í leiðangri að leita prinsessunnar, en fornaldarsagan hefur þá fóstbræður, Illuga og kóngssoninn, en einnig

220-223; E. Ó. Sveinsson, *Celtic Elements in Icelandic Tradition*, Béaloideas 1957 (Dublin 1959), bls. 19-20; Á. Lagerholm, *Drei Lygisögur* (Altnord. Saga-Bibl. XVII, Halle 1927), bls. lviii-lxiii, en þar er gott dæmasafn. Þessi gerð álagaminnisins er lítið sem ekki kunn á Norðurlöndum, sbr. þó Liestøl, tilv. rit, bls. 202 o. áfr.



Björn ráðgjafa, í vikingaferð og sjóhrakningi. Hvort ætli sé upphaflegra?

Í því viðfangi er heppilegt að huga fyrst að hlutverki Bjarnar ráðgjafa. Utan fornaldarsögunnar kemur hann ekki fyrir nema í norska dansinum, en þar er hlutverk hans mjög lítið og torskilið: Illugi segir skessunni, að hann sé sendur að *'hente bjartan ellen, / fyr Herebjønn su paa Grøi'*.<sup>7</sup> Nú er þess að gæta, að í dansinum er það ætíð kóngurinn sem sendir hetjuna eftir eldi, og norski dansinn er ekki undantekning. Er því mótsögn í honum, ef svo er skilið, að Herebjønn hafi sent Illuga. Ef til vildi mætti sleppa við hana með því að gera ráð fyrir, að Herebjønn hafi verið verst á sig kominn af kulda af þeim öllum, sbr. Illuga sögu. En ekki er sú skýring sennileg. Eru nú tveir kostir eftir til að skýra mótsögnina. Í fyrsta lagi gæti Björn verið upphaflegur hvatamaður eldsheimtarinnar eins og í fornaldarsögunni, sem þá væri upphaflegri í þessu atriði. Þetta kæmi heim við hugmyndir Liestøls um þróun efnisins í dansinum út frá fornaldarsögunni. Kóngurinn hefði tekið við hlutverki Bjarnar, og umgetning Herebjønns í norska dansinum væri leif hins upphaflega. Liestøl hefur þó ekki túlkað hlutverk Björns á þennan hátt<sup>8</sup> og hefur að líkindum séð ástæðu til varúðar. Í öðru lagi gæti Björn verið einhvers konar aðskotapersóna, einna helst úr öðrum dansi.<sup>9</sup> Í því tilviki hlyti kóngurinn að teljast upphaflegur hvatamaður eldsheimtarinnar. Ástæða er því til að líta nánar á þennan Björn ráðgjafa í Illuga sögu.

Honum er frá upphafi lýst sem illmenni, og sýnist hlutverk hans í

<sup>7</sup> Landstad, tilv. útgáfa, v. 15; texti Liestøls, tilv. rit, v. 14.

<sup>8</sup> Tilv. rit, bls. 102.

<sup>9</sup> Í sambandi við þá skýringarleið má minna á, að dönsku uppskriftirnar E og F af Illuga dansi hefjast á vísunni: Buch och Björn och Ellffuer Stien, / flere kand ieg icke neffne, / di lader byge saa haar en knar, / till Grønneland sate di steffne (E, v.1, DgF IV 820). Þessi vísa er úr dansinum um Gönguhrólfr (Rolf Gangar, Gongurólvar, Rosmer), sbr. DgF nr. 41, C, v.1 (Vedel). Í færeyskum uppskriftum heita félagar hetjunnar Ódnarbiörn og Illgerðsteinur (sjá Fýroya kvæði nr. 29). Vísur máttu auðveldlega berast milli dansa um sviptuð efn, sjá t. d. Liestøl, tilv. rit, bls. 53–54. Nöfn persóna gátu einnig farið á flakk. Þorkell aðalfari í dansinum um Ásmund flagðagæfu er þess háttar slæðingur. Í Gongurólvsdansinum færeyska er Ódnarbiörn sá af félögum hetjunnar, sem síðast króknar úr kulda (af eldsleysi) á norðurslóðum, en Gongurólvar einn kemst til tröllabyggða. Þannig er greinileg líking með aðstöðu Björns ráðgjafa og Ódnarbiörns. Líkingin nægir þó ekki til þess að álykta meg, að þeir séu upphaflega sama persónan.

fyrstu varla vera annað en hafa horn í síðu hetjunnar. Þess háttar vondur ráðgjafi er einhver hin algengasta persóna í yngri fornaldar-sögum og ævintýrum.<sup>10</sup> En kóngurinn treystir honum og vill ekki sleppa syni sínum og Illuga í víking, nema hann fari með þeim. Síðan kemur að því norður í Gandvík að mennirnir eru að farast úr kulda. Þá er það Björn sem sendir Illuga af stað í eldsleitina, hótar að drepa hann nema hann komi með eldinn, en lofar í sömu andráníni að gefa honum 'hring þenna, er ek held á', ef honum takist förin.

Í Illuga dansi (öllum gerðum) lofar kóngurinn þeim manni dóttur sinni eða öðrum góðum gjöfum, sem sæki eldinn/dótturina. Í færeyskum uppskriftum lofar kóngurinn hringgjöfum. Í dansinum er það kóngurinn, sem sér eldinn á lengdar, en í sögunni er undirskilið að Björn viti í hvaða átt eldsins sé að leita.

Loforðið um hring og eldssýnin eru tvö tengslaatriði er sýna, að Björn hefur það hlutverk í sögunni, sem kóngurinn hefur í dansinum. Með því er hlutverk Björns orðið tvíþætt: annars vegar er illmennishlutverkið, en hins vegar kóngshlutverkið. Bæði eru þau varla samhaf í einni persónu, enda kemur Björn næsta einkennilega fyrir sjónir í sögunni. Þegar hann hótar að drepa Illuga, talar illmennið í honum, en þegar hann lofar honum hring, talar hann konunglega. Þetta er vandræðalegur sambærðingur, sem varla er upphaflegur. Hann lítur út fyrir að vera verk höfundar sem tengt hefur saman hið algenga minni um vandan ráðgjafa og brot af hlutverki kóngsins í efnisheimild sinni. Illuga saga mun því vera samin eftir frásögn, þar sem kóngur hefur sent hetjuna eftir eldi, og um leið segir sig sjálf að kóngurinn hafi verið forstjóri leiðangursins.

Aðalbreytingin hefur verið sú, að hið algenga fóstbræðraminni<sup>11</sup> er sett í söguna, en þá er auðvitað ekki lengur rúm fyrir kónginn í ferðinni. Slíkir fóstbræður hafa engan yfir sér, nema í hæsta lagi ráðgjafann sem sendur er með til eftirlits, en er þó hálfgerð hornreka. Partar af hlutverki kóngsins hafa þó lifað breytinguna af og verið tyllt á vonda ráðgjafann.

<sup>10</sup> Minni K2298. Lykill að dæmasafni eru tilvísanir I. M. Boberg, tilv. rit.

<sup>11</sup> Minni P311 (Sworn brethren), P312 (Blood-brotherhood), sbr. einnig P273 (Foster-brother). Sjá tilvísanir I. M. Boberg í tilv. riti, einnig t. d. A. Olrik, Forsøg paa en Tvedeling af Kilderne til Saksens Oldhistorie, ÅNOH 1892, bls. 59-63, og Å. Lagerholm, Drei Lygisøgur, bls. xxix.

Vondi ráðgjafinn og fóstbræðralagið eru tvö minni, sem líklega eru viðbót höfundar við söguefnið í þeim tilgangi að gera úr því fram-  
bærilega fornaldarsögu.

Úr því að Björn (Herebjönn) kemur fyrir bæði í norska dansinum og fornaldarsögunni, hlýtur hann að hafa borizt í hendur Illugasögu-  
höfundi með söguefninu, og umgetningin um hann í norska dansinum er vitni um tengsl sögunnar og dansins. En samkvæmt því sem nú hefur verið rakið, virðist hlutverk hans í efnisheimild Illuga sögu hafa verið lítið eða jafnvel vafasamt, en höfundur fornaldarsögunnar hefur þá gert miklu meira úr því með sambræðslu minnisins um vandan ráðgjafa og brota af upphaflegu hlutverki kóngsins. Verður því ekki fullyrt, að frásögn efnisheimildar fornaldarsögunnar um Björn hafi verið öllu fyllri eða greinilegri en hin undarlega tilnefning Herebjönns í norska dansinum. Að öllu þessu athuguðu lítur því helzt út fyrir að Björn sé aðskotamaður í söguefninu; annað eins hefur getað slæðzt milli dansa um svipuð efni.<sup>12</sup> Þess háttar slæðingur er miklu sennilegri og algengari í dönsu en t. d. í rímum eða lausamálssögum.

Mismunurinn á söguþræði fornaldarsögunnar og dansins hefur nú verið skýrður í helztu atriðum. Sú mikilvæga niðurstaða er fengin, að *Illuga saga Gríðarfóstra sé í aðalatriðum samin upp úr frásögn með sama atburðapræði og er í dansinum*. Enda þótt nokkuð skorti ef til vill á fulla sönnun þess að kóngurinn prinsessuafaðir hafi verið for-  
stjóri leitarleiðangurs í efnisheimild fornaldarsögunnar, og þótt fram-  
færsluréttur Björns í sögunni kunni að vera eitthvað sterkari en hér þykir sennilegt, haggar það niðurstöðunni ekki að verulegu ráði. Mestu varðar að Gríður var tröll, en síðan leiðir af eðli sögunnar að markmið sjóferðarinnar/hrakningsins hefur verið að frelsa kóngsdótturina, sem hún hafði í haldi. Og ef niðurstaðan um Björn er rétt, er hún vísbending um, að efnisheimildin hafi e. t. v. ekki verið lausamálssaga.

Til viðbótar skal nú lítið á tvö atriði, sem einnig varpa ljósi á sam-  
band sögunnar og dansins.

Hið fyrra er eldssýnin, sem lítið vottar fyrir í fornaldarsögunni. Þó segir Björn Illuga, að hann skuli 'róa yfir fjörð þenna'. Í því felst að Björn viti hvar eldsins sé að leita. Segja má að eldssýnin sé hér nálega horfin, en ummerki hennar eru þó alveg efallaus. Eldssýnin er nauð-

<sup>12</sup> Sjá bls. 21, nm. 9.



synlegt atriði sögurásarinnar bæði hjá Saxa og í dansinum (danska EF og norska gerðin). Þar er minnið greinilega í upphaflegri mynd. Hvers vegna ætli það sé nálega horfið í Illuga sögu? Út frá niðurstöðunni um Björn ráðgjafa skýrist þetta sjálfkrafa. Það hefði verið fullkomið brot gegn siðareglum hetjuævintýra ef hinn vondi maður hefði fundið það sem félagar hans þurftu til að halda lífinu. Illmennið í Birni virðist hafa komið í veg fyrir að hann tæki við kóngshlutverkinu öllu, enda þótt sumu af því væri tyllt á hann.

Hið síðara er nef Gríðar. Tröllunum tveimur í Aðalfarasögu Saxa er lýst með þessum orðum:

*duos eximie granditatis aquilos conspicatur, corneis naribus contracta, quæ fors obtulerat, igni nutrimenta præstantes.*<sup>13</sup>

Tröllin hafa hornnef, eða nef eins og horn, sem þau nota til þess að skara öllu tiltæku á eldinn.<sup>14</sup> Í Illuga dansi ríkir hvarvetna sama hugmyndin um nef tröllsins og hjá Saxa. Skessan er sírótandi í eldi sínum með nefinu, enda þótt ekki sé minnt á horn í því sambandi. Eina undantekningin frá þessu er norska sannyrðisnefnan 'Nasann hev du som nautefjosi',<sup>15</sup> en eldskörungshugmyndin er þó skýr annars staðar í sama dansi. Þetta nef er miklu stórkostlegra en nef Gríðar í Illuga sögu, þótt það sé bæði mikið og ljótt. Í sögu Saxa og í dansinum birtast ýkjur tröllasögunnar ómildaðar, en í Illuga sögu er þeim stillt í hóf, líklega í samræmi við smekk höfundarins. Mynd nefnsins í dansinum og hjá Saxa hlýtur að vera upphaflegri.

Eldssýnin og tröllsnefið eru vottar þess, að dansinn og Saxi standa saman um upphaflegri mynd efnisins, en í Illuga sögu hafi verið breytt frá henni. Þar er sagan á síðara stigi þróunar og orðin bóksaga.

Eftir þetta kemur ekki til mála að hugsu sér dansinn sprottinn frá fornaldarsögunni. *Dansskáldinu væri fullkomin ofátlun að hafa fært bæði aðalatriði og aukaatriði í söguþræðinum aftur til upphaflegra sagnsögulegs horfs.*

Þessar athuganir hafa verið fróðleg kynnisferð í smíðju fornaldarsöguhöfundarins. Sýnt hefur verið hvernig hann hafi notað atburðarás samsteyptu ævintýrasögunnar, aukið hana algengum og vinsælum minnum og gert sérstakan inngangskafila um æsku hetjunnar, svo að

<sup>13</sup> Útgáfa Otríks og Ræders, bls. 244<sup>26-27</sup> (XV, 4).

<sup>14</sup> Sjá bls. 16, nm. 5.

<sup>15</sup> Texti Liestøls í tilv. riti, v. 17.

sagan stæðist formkröfu tegundar sinnar. En sums staðar hattar fyrir á samskeytum, og ekki hefur hann gætt fyllstu samkvæmni. Ósamkvæmni og samskeytaskurfum fornaldarsögunnar má þakka það, að athuganir á samsetningu hennar hafa leitt til vitundar um að hún er óupphaflegri en dansinn.

Um skyldleikann standa þá aðeins tveir kostir eftir: Annaðhvort hefur söguhöfundurinn farið eftir dansinum, og þá ef til vill eitthvað heillegri en hann er nú varðveittur í nokkurri einni uppskrift, eða fornaldarsagan og dansinn eiga sameiginlega efnisuppsprettu eða forrit. Í síðara tilvikinu væri heldur tækilegra að gizka á lausamálsfrásögn en kveðskap annan en dansinn. Um rímur af Illuga er ekkert vitað, nema um þær sem ortar eru út af efni fornaldarsögunnar.

Áður en reynt verður að leita svars við þessu, er vert að athuga sannyrðin nokkru nánar. Þau eru mikilvægt atriði í söguefninu og nokkuð algengt minni í fornum sögum, en á Íslandi munu þau ekki kunn nema í Illuga sögu og ævintýri einu,<sup>16</sup> sem runnið mun frá sagnsafninu *Gesta Romanorum*.<sup>17</sup> Sannyrði eru þess háttar kjarni í frásögnum, að ætla má að þau séu allföst í formi og minna háð breytingum en margt annað.

Efniságrip kunnra sannyrðasagna er prentað í Íslenzkum ævintýrum,<sup>18</sup> og má vísa til þess. Einnig er sama efni í styttri mynd í riti P. Herrmanns um Danasögu Saxa.<sup>19</sup> Hér nægir að taka fram, að Saxi og söguefnið um Illuga eru ein um það, að sannyrði eru sögd til þess að fá eld. Annars er minnið yfirleitt þannig, að maður bjargar sér úr lífsháska (frá gálganum) með sannyrðasögn, og mun það vera upphaflegra. Fyrstu tvö sannyrðin (af sex) hjá Saxa eru að viðfangsefni hin sömu sem hin tvö fyrstu í fornaldarsögunni og norska dansinum. Þetta eru sannyrðin um bústað tröllanna og nef þeirra.

Sannyrðasögur eru vel kunnar í danskri sagnaleifð,<sup>20</sup> og í dönskum

<sup>16</sup> H. Gering, útg., *Islendzk Ævintýri* (Halle a. S. 1882–1884) I, bls. 244–245, ævintýri nr. LXXXIV. Sbr. II, bls. 179–185.

<sup>17</sup> Gering, tilv. rit, II, 180.

<sup>18</sup> Gering, tilv. rit, II, 180–185.

<sup>19</sup> P. Herrmann, *Die Heldensagen des Saxo Grammaticus*, II (Leipzig 1912), bls. 297 o. áfr., sjá sérstaklega bls. 600–601.

<sup>20</sup> Í fyrsta lagi er frásögn Saxa, sem tekin er upp í *Compendium Saxonis*, sjá útgáfu M. Cl. Gertz, í *Scriptores minores historiae danicæ medli ævi* (København 1917–18), I, bls. 334–335. Þaðan er efnið að öllum líkindum komið í dönsku rím-



uppskriftum Illuga dans má finna afbrigði sannyrða, sem benda til sambands við aðrar danskar sannyrðasögur.<sup>21</sup> Meiri hluti allra sannyrðasagna hefur síðasta sannyrðið á þessa lund: *sleppi ég nú héðan á*

krónikuna, sjá útgáfu H. Toldberg, *Den danske rimkrønike I* (København 1961), bls. 75–77, línur 2330–2400, sbr. E. Jørgensen, *Historieforskning og Historieskrivning i Danmark indtil Aar 1800* (København 1931), bls. 14–15 og 56–59. Í öðru lagi er frásögn Hleiðrarkróniku um Snæ kóng, Rauð bónda og Hlé jötun í Hlésey, en sú saga er eldri á bók en Gesta Danorum. Efníð er: Snær sendir Rauð forsending til Hlés. Rauður gengur í bergið til jötunsins og ber upp erindið, sem hann var sendur, að fá spá Hlés um dauðdaga Snæs. Hlé heimtar fyrst þrjú sannyrði af Rauð. Með þeim leysir Rauður líf sitt, og Hlé fagnar honum nú vel. Snær verður síðar lúsbitinn til bana samkvæmt spá jötunsins. Sjá *Chronicon Lethense* í útgáfu M. Cl. Gertz, tilv. rit, I, bls. 50–51, sbr. þýð. J. Orlíks í *Krøniker fra Valdemars-tiden* (København 1900–1901), 18–19. Sögnin kemur síðar fram í *Gesta Danorum* þa danskæ, og í *Sagnkrønike i Stockholm*, sjá útg. M. Lorenzen, *Gammeldanske Krøniker (STUAGNL XVIII)*, bls. 12–13 og 199–201. Um aðrar danskar sögur með sannyrðæfni sjá samantekt Köhlers í *Íslenzkum ævintýrum II*, 179–185.

<sup>21</sup> E-gerð danska dansins hefur: Aldrig war ieg udi dit hus, / som ieg vilde nødiger gieste. Þetta stendur miklu nær Saxa en bústaðar-sannyrðið í norska dansinum og Illuga sögu. Saxi hefur: [aldrei sá ég] . . . locum, quo minus libenter degerem. Hliðstætt er í *Compendium Saxonis*: Nunquam vidi locum, in quo minus libenter manerem. Tvö fyrstu sannyrðin eru um sama efni hjá Saxa (og í *Compendium*), Illuga sögu, Illuga dansinum norska, og í dönsku E-gerðinni. Og í rimkrónikunni koma þau fram í þessari mynd: Ieg aldrig stemmer næser saa

nogher handhe menneskæ owæ.

Aldrig wor ieg oc nogher stedh gesth

som ieg willæ nødiger wære (Tilv. útg.,

línur 2367–70). Nefs-sannyrðið er hér frábrugðið Saxa (og *Compendium*) en í fullu samræmi við danska E, sem hefur: en slemer niere ieg aldrig saa, / end du roeder med i brande. Og andstætt því sem við á um bústaðar-sannyrðið, á þetta samræmi ekki upptök sín í latínutexta, heldur virðist það sýna tengsl dansins og rimkrónikunnar óháð latínuforriti. Fullvíst þykir, að í rimkrónikunni gæti áhrifa frá dönsnum. Sjá um þetta J. Brøndum-Nielsen, *Om rimkrøníkens sprogform og tilblivelse* (København 1930), sérstaklega bls. 95–96; H. Toldberg, *Den danske rimkrønike og folkeviserne*, í *Danske Studier* 1958, bls. 5–45; einnig O. Holzapfel, *Folkeviserformler i Den danske rimkrønike*, DS 1968, bls. 94–97. Vissir hlutar krónikunnar bera merki dansamáls í stíl og orðafari, þ. á m. ferðarsaga Aðalfara. En ekki hefur verið bent á tengsl við ákveðna dansa, og skal því vakin athygli á því hér, að línurnar hér á undan, sérstaklega 2367–68, eru úbending um tengsl við Illuga dans. Einnig er rétt að nefna hér bústaðar-sannyrðið í danska F: álder saa jeg en laver' Hus, / der tycker' Tække war o. Það kemur heim við Hleiðrarkróniku: [Rauður sagðist] nunquam spissiores vidisse se parietes parietibus domus illius, sbr. einnig gerðir þeirrar sögu á dönsku og sænsku, sem getið er í nm. 20.

*burt, mun ég aldrei aftur koma* e. þ. u. l. Þessi og líkar hugsanir koma fram í sannyrðunum hjá Saxa, og kemur frásögn hans fyrir sjónir líkt og milliliður milli evrópskra sannyrðasagna og söguæfnisins um Illuga.

SANNYRÐIN í Illuga sögu eru á þessa leið:

hellir þinn er hár ok breiðr, at ek hefi eigi séð hús meira né sterkara; svá er ok nefit á þér mikit, at ek hefi eigi séð meira skrípi, enn þú ert, ok svá svört, at fagurt er gólfitt hjá þér, ok aungva hef ek ámáttligri séð enn þik, ok víst er dóttir þín fegri, ok ykkar hefi ek séð mestan mun, ok svá munu allir segja, er ykkur sjá.

Sannyrðin ættu að vera þrjár einingar, þrjár staðhæfingar skýrt markaðar hver frá annarri og hver sér um efni. Þannig hefðu sannyrðin í Illuga sögu efalítið orðið, ef höfundur hennar hefði búið þau til sjálfur. En eins og sjá má, eru þau grautarleg. Staðhæfingarnar eru í rauninni margar og tengdar hver við aðra á ýmsan veg. Af þessu má ráða ósjálfstæði höfundar gagnvart heimild, sem hann hafi fylgt að meira eða minna leyti.

Sé nú reynt að finna þrjár inntakseiningar í stykkinu, mætti það að vísu takast. Í heild eru sannyrðin um: 1. hellinn, 2. ljótleik Gríðar, 3. fegurð Hildar borinnar saman við móður sína. En þá er aðeins litið á höfuðatriðin og sleppt því sem segir um nef Gríðar og gólfið í samanburði við hana. Um nefið og gólfið eru þó sérstakar staðhæfingar. Þegar stykkið er litað sundur eftir efnisatriðum, og um leið tekið tillit til setningaskipunar, verður niðurstaðan á þessa lund:

1. hellir þinn er hár ok breiðr, at ek hefi eigi séð hús meira né sterkara;
2. svá er ok nefit á þér mikit, at ek hefi eigi séð meira skrípi, enn þú ert,
3. ok svá svört, at fagurt er gólfitt hjá þér,
4. ok aungva hef ek ámáttligri séð enn þik, ok víst er dóttir þín fegri, ok ykkar hefi ek séð mestan mun, ok svá munu allir segja, er ykkur sjá.

Það er: 1 er um hellinn, bústað Gríðar, 2 er um nef hennar, og við er tengd ályktun um skripisbrag hennar. 3 er um hið svarta litarast Gríðar í samanburði við gólfið. 4 hefst með nýrri staðhæfingu um ljótleik Gríðar, og við hana er tengd yfirlýsingin um fegurðarmun

þeirra. Ef til vill mætti þó taka orðin 'ok aungva hef ek ámáttligri séð enn þik' með nr. 3, en það breytir raunar litlu.

Þegar reynt er að skilja á milli sannyrðanna, þ. e. efnisatriðanna, getur niðurstaðan varla orðið önnur en þessi. Það vitnar um ósjálfstæði eða trúleik höfundar við heimild að sannyrðin skuli vera fjögur, þar sem hann vissi að þrjú áttu að vera. Má því ætla að atriðin hafi verið (orðin) fjögur og ekki skýrt mörkuð í heimildinni.

Nú má líta á dansinn. Úr því að allar gerðir hans eru þróunarfbrigði frá sama frumtexta, má taka öll sannyrði allra uppskriftanna til samanburðarins við söguna. Þau sem eru sameiginleg sögunni og einni eða fleiri gerðum dansins, hljóta að eiga upptök sín í sameiginlegu forriti þeirra.

Samsvörunina má í höfuðatriðum lesa af töflunni hér á eftir. Í færeyiskum uppskriftum eru engin sannyrði. Með því er hið tvöfalda erindi úr sögunni, en efnid um leið orðið fátæklegra. Í Noregi er aðeins hægt að tala um eina gerð dansins. Enda þótt uppskriftir séu margar, eru þær allvel samsaga.<sup>22</sup> Athugun lesbrigða úr óprentuðum uppskriftum hefur ekki leitt neitt í ljós, sem máli skiptir í því sem hér er rætt um. Athugagreinararnar um einstök sannyrði, sem koma á eftir töflunni, sýna nánar, hvernig samsvöruninni er háttað. Svigar eru settir um vafaatriði. Í DaE eru sannyrðin tvenn (2 sinnum 3). Tilvitnun framan skástriks bendir til fyrri lotu, en aftan þess til hinnar síðari.

## SANNYRÐI

Ill. s.	Da A	Da B	Da C	Da D	Da E	Da F	Norski dansinn
1.					v. 21/	v. 12	Liestøl, v. 16 Landstad, v. 17
2.					v. 20/	v. 13	Liestøl, v. 17 Landstad, v. 18
3.	v. 13	v. 15	v. 10	v. 8	(v. 21)/v. 28		
4.	v. 14	(v. 15)		(v. 8)		v. 12	Hefur verið, en er glatað.

<sup>22</sup> Allar norskar uppskriftir, er Liestøl hafði að styðjast við, 'samstavast godt, allvisst i dei fyrste tri fjordepartar av visa'. Liestøl, tilv. rit, bls. 92, sbr. Syn og Segn XVI (1910), 269.



1. Um þetta sannyrði er nokkuð rætt áður (sjá bls. 14–15). Sagan geymir upphaflegri mynd þess en norski dansinn. Auk þess er það í tveimur uppskriftum dansins frá Danmörku, E og F, sem báðar bera merki norsks uppruna.<sup>23</sup> Dönsku E og F eru þó hvorki alveg samhljóða innbyrðis né koma sannyrði þeirra orði til orðs heim við Illuga sögu eða norska dansinn.<sup>24</sup> Samt er af þeim að ráða, að upphaflegt viðfangsefni fyrsta sannyrðisins hafi verið bústaður tröllsins, fremur en arinninn.

2. Sömu þrjár uppskriftir dansins hafa sannyrði um nef skessunnar. Saga Saxa sýnir, að þetta hlýtur að vera upphaflegt í söguefninu (sjá bls. 24).

3. Allar dönsku uppskriftirnar, nema F, nefna gólf skessunnar í nánnum tengslum við staðhæfingu um ljótleika hennar. Tilfæra má sem dæmi Da A 13:

Pendingenn legger þaa guoldett (líkl. villa f. guolfett) ströð,  
och gulditt skiennar y wraa:  
du est selleff den liedieste throld,  
ieg nogen tid med þgenn suo.

Nokkur orðamunur er í hliðstæðum vísnum annarra uppskrifta, en efnið er alls staðar hið sama: Gólfíð er stráð peningum, gull glitrar í horni eða á vegg, en sjálf ertu andstyggilegasta tröll, sem ég hef augum litið. Í vísunni er fólgin samanburður á skessunni og umhverfi hennar. Illuga saga minnst ekki á peninga eða gull á þessum stað. Hugsunin í samanburðinum: *svá svört, at fagurt er gólfít hjá þér*, er því önnur. Samanburðurinn er fólgin í samhengi dansvísunnar, en sagður berum orðum í Illuga sögu.

Ósennilegt virðist, að dansskáld hefði tekið hinn beina og heldur grófa samanburð í Illuga sögu og snúið honum upp í skáldlegan leik að andstæðum, þar sem samanburðurinn felst aðeins í andstæðunum, en er ekki sagður (gólfíð skín af gulli — sjálf ertu leiðasta tröll). Hins vegar mælir ekkert á móti því, að hinn einkennilegi samanburður fornaldarsögunnar væri klunnaleg tilraun til endursagnar hins sama. Lausamál getur ekki tekið við slíkum andstæðuleik úr skáldskap. Hvað hefði þá verið til ráða nema að skýra samhengið á annan hátt, segja berum orðum það sem fólst í samhenginu? Líklega hefði lausa-

<sup>23</sup> Sjá DgF IV (1883), 820, X (1933–1958), 41.

<sup>24</sup> Sjá bls. 26, nm. 21.

málshöfundu líka þótt talið um gull og peninga óhæfa ein. En þá mátti gera Griði svo svarta, að jafnvel venjulegasta gólf þætti fagurt hjá henni. Hvað sem því líður, virðist dansvísan Da A 13, og ssv. í öðrum uppskriftum, svara til þriðja sannyrðis sögunnar, ef orðin um ljót-leika Griðar ('ok aungva hef ek á máttligri séð enn þik') eru talin með.

4. Þetta sannyrði kemur fram í Da ABDF, og í norsku gerðinni má ráða að það hafi eitt sinn verið.<sup>25</sup> Í Da ABD er vísan Da A 13 endurtekin með tilbrigðum í síðara helmingi. Da A 14 er þannig:

Her legger penge paa gulditt ströd,  
och gulditt skener paa wegge:  
du est ett vskiellig chreattur,  
i omfruer skulde icke huoss theg legge.

Í Da B 15 er síðari helmingurinn:

alt est du saa leed en troid,  
i omfruer skalt du aldrig gille.

Þetta er ólíkt Illuga sögu, enda hefur tröllíð nú skipt um kyn. Hins vegar hefur Da F 12:

Älder saa jeg saa led en Troid,  
der skønneren Jomfru kund' faa.

Hér er fegurðarsamanburðurinn greinilegri, og hefur hann haldizt þrátt fyrir kynskipti tröllsins. Hið sameiginlega inntak sannyrðisins í sögu og dansi er þá ljóst, og verður að ætla það upphaflegt. Einnig sést hér hið sama og um þriðja sannyrðið; það sem er hálfsgagt eða fólgíð í samhengi í dansinum, er fullsgagt í sögunni. Það bendir til að samhengi dansins sé upphaflegra, og að munurinn stafi af breytingu til próstils. Þegar frá eru tekin:

- a) enna heve du bratt
- b) . . . kjæften som bikkjetryne.
- c) mine augo er skarpe i haus  
dine som fuði pá svine
- d) aldrig hørde mand it feyere naffn,  
end kalde paa Iesum Christ.<sup>26</sup>

koma ekki fram í dansinum nein sannyrði, sem ekki svara til sannyrða í sögunni. Í Illuga sögu er sérstök lýsing skessunnar, þar sem

<sup>25</sup> Liestøl, tilv. rit, v. 18, sbr. bls. 103.

<sup>26</sup> a) Liestøl, tilv. rit, v. 17, b) Landstad, NF, v. 19, c) Landstad, NF, v. 19, d) danska B-uppskriftin, v. 14.

drepið er á ýmsa líkamshluta og önnur útlitsatriði. Vott hins sama má sjá í ýmsum dansuppskriftum, þar sem skessunni er lýst við fyrstu sýn, en þá er eldskörungsnefið dregið fram. Nefið er upphaflegt viðfangsefni sannyrðis, og því eðlilegt að sannyrðin drægju að sér fleiri slík atriði (*abc*), er tölu sannyrða var ekki lengur gætt vandlega, en þess var naumast að vænta í danskvæði. *abc* gætu verið úr lýsingu skessunnar, eða lastmæli úr annarri átt,<sup>27</sup> *d* er sjálfsgagt síðari viðbót. Þegar þessi atriði eru talin frá, er samsvörun dansins og sögunnar um sannyrðin svo fullkomin sem framast má vænta. Athugunin sýnir, að tala og inntak sannyrðanna í fornaldarsögunni muni vera óbreytt frá sameiginlegum fortexta hennar og dansins. Hin ranga tala, grautarhátturinn í framsetningu, en einkum gerð 3. og 4. sannyrðis, — allt yrði þetta miklu skiljanlegra með því að gera ráð fyrir efnisheimild fornaldarsögunnar í bundnu máli náskyldu dansinum, ef til vill dansinum sjálfum.

#### IV. KVEÐSKAPARLEIFAR Í SÖGUTEXTANUM

Úr því að dansinn er ekki kveðinn út af fornaldarsögunni, eins og álitid hefur verið, verður að leita annarrar skýringar á skyldleikanum. Einfaldasta lausnin væri að snúa myndinni við og telja söguna samda af efni úr dansinum. Sitthvað bendir til að svo *kunni* að vera, en óræk sönnun liggur ekki á lausu. Að því leyti sem séð verður, hefur frásagnarefni efnisheimildar fornaldarsögunnar komið heim við frásöguþráð dansins. Björn ráðgjafi og það sem komið hefur í ljós um sannyrðin yrði skiljanlegra, ef efnisheimild fornaldarsögunnar hefði verið bundið mál, helzt danskvæði. En í fyrsta lagi verður ekki tekið þvert fyrir að til kunni að hafa verið annar kveðskapur um Illuga, ef til vill rímur. Og í öðru lagi gæti hafa verið til lausamálssaga, ef til vill með einhverjum vísum. Slík saga gæti annaðhvort hafa verið efnisheimild dansins eða verið runnin frá honum. En þegar orðafarstengslin eru höfð í huga, virðist sú skýring tækilegust sem gerir ráð fyrir fæstum óþekktum stærðum.

<sup>27</sup> b og c eru sýnilega í ætt við vísu, sem er tilfærð við orðið *hóþfri* í Ordsamling fraa Robyggjelaget fraa slutten av 1600-talet, útg. af T. Hannaas í *Ældre norske sprogminde II* (Kristiania 1911), sjá bls. 25.



Óefanleg sönnun þess að sagan sé runnin frá dansinum fæst ekki nema sýna megi skýra leif eða leifar danstextans í sögutextanum. Á slíku eru mjög litlar líkur. Dansaháttur er ekki harðsnúinn bragur, og sögumaður yrði að hafa staðið slælega að verki til þess að skilja eftir slík ummerki. Eins og varðveizlu dansa er háttað, væri það líka einstök tilviljun, ef nægilega mikið stæði óhaggað í danstexta til þess að sýna slík tengsl. Og á hinn bóginn eru skýrustu merki bundins máls svo óeðlileg í lausu máli, að þau mundu verða skammlíf nema texta- varðveizla væri trúrri en vant er um skemmtisögur í handritum.

Texti Illuga sögu kemur hér og þar óeðlilega fyrir sjónir. Á nokkrum stöðum vaknar sú hugmynd að kveðskapur hafi vakað í huga þess sem samdi. En erfitt er að ná handfestu á slíku efni. Á tveimur stöðum eru bragarmerkin þó svo greinileg, að varla verður um villzt. Skulu þeir nú athugaðir nánar.

## 1.

Um sjóferðina, fyrsta atriði hins sameiginlega söguþráðar dans og sögu, er nokkuð löng lýsing. Hún er lauslega sett saman, ruglingsleg, og mikið ber þar á endurtekningum sem ekkert erindi sýnast eiga í lausamálsfrásögn, þar sem einn atburðurinn rekur annan. Efnið er ekki margbrotið. Það er þetta: Mennirnir hrekjast fyrir stormi norður í haf, fá við ekkert ráðið, en bera sig þó vel. Þeir koma að lokum í nánd við land (Gandvík), fara að beita seglum til þess að bjarga sér, og að síðustu rekur þá upp í vík eina og halda öllu heilu. En sagan segir þetta í lengra máli:

At hausti vill Sigurðr heim halda, ok þá rekr á storm mikinn; tók þá skipit at gánga of mikit, rekr þá norðr í haf; herti seglit, svá hélt við rif, tekr nú hvert band at slitna; þeir sjá hvergi landa til; sjórin tekur nú at ókyrrast, ok gjörði svá stóran storm, at inn rann á bæði borð, en svá voru þeir allir hraustir, sem á þessu skipi voru, at engi talaði aðruorð. Skipit tekr nú mjök at leka, ok standa allir í austri 8 dægr;

skip rekr langt norðr í haf í vík þá, er Gandvík hét. Þeir herða þá seglit með sterku bandi, ok fá nú stóe áföll, svá búið var við at brjóta skipit; flestir voru þá móðir. Því næst sjá þeir land, þat var björgum lukit; síðan rekr upp skipit í eina vík, héldu þeir heilu skipi ok mönnum.

Hér eru sett skil í miðju stykkinu til hægðarauka. Á þeim stað verða skil í efni frásagnarinnar. Fyrir þau rekur skipið stjórnlaut í

átta dægur, en eftir þau eru mennirnir komnir í Gandvikursjó og farnir að reyna að ráða ferðinni sjálfir.

Nú blasir við, að fjórir orðstaðir, sem fram koma fyrir þessa aðstæðnabreytingu, eru endurteknir í síðari hlutanum, en þó þannig, að orðfæri er vikið lítilsháttar við:

1. *rekr þá norðr í haf / skip rekr langt norðr í haf*
2. *herti seglit . . . / Þeir herða þá seglit . . .*
3. *tekr nú hvert band at slitna / . . . með sterku bandi*
4. *þeir sjá hvergi landa til / Þvínæst sjá þeir land*

Aðalorðin (reka norðr í haf, herða segl, band, sjá land) eru hin sömu á báðum stöðum, en breytingar í orðalagi og samböndum spegla breytt viðhorf, breyttar aðstæður. Í 2 og 3 koma fram skáldlegar andstæður. Fyrst herðir vindurinn seglið 'svá hélt við rif', síðar herða mennirnir það sjálfir 'með sterku bandi'. Fyrst sjá mennirnir hvergi land, síðar sjá þeir land. En þessar andstæður njóta sín alls ekki í lausamálinu. Þar verður of langt á milli. Of margt og sumt merkingarlítið skilur í sundur það sem á að fljóta samferða inn í vitund ábeyranda.

Sumt sem hér er sagt á naumast heima í sagnastíl. Þegar sagt er: *herti seglit, svá hélt við rif* ætti að vera óþarft að bæta því við að hvert band tók að slitna. Og þegar seglið er hert til siglingar, nær naumast nokkurri átt að geta þess sérstaklega, að þetta sé gert með sterku bandi. Því væri sleppt í venjulegum sögustíl, en væri það eigi að síður haft með, mundi fremur notað eitthvert annað orð en band, sem þar að auki stenzta varla í eintölu í slíku sambandi. Fyrra staðinn með band má verja, því að þar er fleirtölumerking (hvert band).

Það væri að vísu ekki óhugsandi í lausu máli að hrakningsfrásögn skiptist í tvennt á þennan hátt, fyrir og eftir landkenning. En þessi endurtekning orðstaða og hið skáldlega andstæðuspil á alls ekki heima í prósa. Það verður naumast skýrt með öðru en efnisheimild í bundnu máli í dansastíl, því að í eiginlegum rímum kemur slíkt naumast fyrir. Í dönsu ber hins vegar mikið á leik að endurtekningum, og rímorð eru oft látin endurtaka sig. Þegar hugsað er til orðastaðarins með *land*, sem lokleysuorðið *band* fer skammt á undan á báðum stöðum, verður næstum óhjákvæmilegt að geta sér þess til að þau hafi rímað saman í vísu, sem hafi verið endurtekin með einhverjum breytingum. Rímið mundi skýra hina ómögulegu eintölu á síðara staðnum.



Sjóhrakningslýsingin hlýtur því að vera gerð eftir dansvísu. Þótt ekki sé nú hægt að telja þær eða gera sér nákvæma hugmynd um innihaldið, er þó ljóst um hvað þær voru, og að notaðar voru endurtekningar og andstæðnaleikur til skáldlegra áhrifa.

Ef eitthvað vottaði fyrir þessari sömu lýsingu í einhverri af uppskriftum dansins, mundu nú frekari vitni um upptök fornaldarsögunnar þykja heldur lítils verð. En svo vel er ekki. Í flestum gerðum dansins er siglingin nefnd, en hvergi er nein sérstök siglingarlýsing. Að vísu má benda á, að sú lýsing hefði alltaf verið sérstakur póstur í dansinum og tengsl hennar við frásagnarefnið svo lausleg, að sagan hefði einskis misst þótt hún félli burt. Og hætt er við að slíkir póstar hafi stundum orðið út undan hjá kvæðamönnum sem rauluðu fyrir mismunandi pennagreidda fornfræðinga áður fyrr. En það breytir nú engu. Hins vegar er hliðstæð siglingarlýsing í dansi af sama efnisflokki, dansinum um Göngu-Hrólf, sem einnig er ber að því að hafa lánað Illuga dansi (annað) efni.<sup>1</sup> Aðeins brot þessa dans er varðveitt í Noregi, en siglingarlýsingin er varðveitt í færeysku gerðinni. Þar er sagt frá illviðri sem hrekur hrausta drengi norður í Tröllabotn, og einstök atriði, orð, og jafnvel rímorð minna á lýsinguna í Illuga sögu. Hér er ekki rúm til að taka þessa lýsingu upp, en sjá FK I 583–625, einkum A-gerðina v. 17–24 og C 21–26, en einnig hinar uppskriftirnar. Í C hefjast allar vísur lýsingarinnar á 'Tá var veður á sjónum hart', sbr. endurtekningarnar um veðrið í Illuga sögu. Mikið er gert úr hraðri siglingu (t. d. C 22: 'Ísland var sum fuglur á sjón, / teir liðu út frá londum') sbr. 'tók þá skipit at gánga of mikit'. A 20: '. . . aldan breyt í bæði borð, / allvæl dugdu dreingir' sbr. 'inn rann á bæði borð' og orðin um hreysti leiðangursmanna í sögunni: 'engi talaði æðruorð.' A 20: '. . . hurrar í hvörjum streingi', A 23: '. . . togini gingu sundur' sbr. 'tekr nú hvert band at slitna'. Þannig mætti halda áfram.

Lífkingin vitnar um skyldleika siglingarlýsingar Göngu-Hrólfsdansins færeyska og þess kveðskapar sem Illugasöguhöfundur hefur stuðzt við,<sup>2</sup> en í færeyska dansinn vantar þó þann andstæðnaleik sem glögg merki eru um í sögunni. Mætti því ætla að vísurnar að baki Illuga

<sup>1</sup> Føroya kvæði, nr. 29, Norske Folkeviser (Landstad), nr. 5, Danmarks gamle Folkeviser, nr. 41. Sjá bls. 21, nm. 9 hér að framan.

<sup>2</sup> Í siglingarlýsingunni í Sörla rímum (II, v. 4–12, Rímnasafn (Finns Jónssonar) II, København 1913–22, bls. 89–90) eru einnig ýmis orð og atriði hin sömu. Þar er

sögu hafi verið betri kveðskapur í sömu grein. Þó má vera að tímans tönn og þróun færeyska dansins í sífelldri notkun valdi nokkru um þennan mun. Hugsanlegt er að sams konar siglingarlýsing hafi verið bæði í Illuga dansi og Göngu-Hrólfis dansi, eða að sami pósturinn hafi getað átt jafn vel heima í báðum og gengið á milli, þegar sungið var á samkomum. En ekki er ástæða til að ætla að höfundur Illuga sögu hafi tekið siglingarlýsingu úr annarri átt en það efni sem hann gerði sögu sína um. Lýsingin hefur líklega verið viðloðað söguefninu, er hann kynntist því. Með öðrum orðum: Lýsingin mun hafa verið partur af Illuga dansi, en þó vantar herzlumuninn að það geti talizt fullvíst.

## 2.

Í lýsingu Gríðar tröllkonu eru kveðskaparmerkin enn auðsærri:

honum þótti sem hríð eða hregg staði úr nösum hennar; horinn hékk ofan fyrir munninn, hún hafði skegg, ok sköllótt um höfuðit, hendr hennar voru sem arnarklær, en ermar báðar brendar, en sá stakkr, er hún var í, tók henni eigi lengra enn á lendar á bakit, en allt á tær í fyrir; augu hennar voru græn, en ennit bratt, eyrun féllu víða; engin mátti hana kalla friða.

Án breytinga eru niðurlagsorðin þessi vísa:

augu (hennar voru) græn, en ennit bratt,  
eyrun féllu víða;  
engin mátti hana kalla friða.

Með eilítið meiri ihlutun mætti hugsa sér aðra sams konar vísu í orðunum þar á undan:

hendr hennar voru sem arnarklær,  
en ermar báðar brendar,  
stakkrinn tók eigi lengra enn á lendar.

En auk friða: víða og brendar: lendar eru í stykkinu einnig hugsanleg rímorðin hregg: skegg og arnarklær: tær, sem verða útundan með þessu móti. Svo mörg rímorð kæmust tæplega fyrir í lýsingunni, ef hún hefði verið í vísu með þessum bragarhætti. Það er heldur ekki öruggt, að bragarháturinn hafi verið þessi. Einhverjar breytingar sögumanns hafa getað villt sýn um hann, enda þótt sýnilega sé hér bundið mál á ferðinni. Þetta er efalausasta bragarleif í sögunni, en þó væri vitaskuld

*herða bönd, hertu segl svo hélt við rif, o. fl.* Allar þessar lýsingar virðast vera skyldar.

vonlaust verk að reyna að yrkja vísurnar upp eftir textanum. Úr danskvæði hefur þetta ekki verið tekið, ef rétt er til getið um bragarhátinn. Hátturinn virðist ekki gera vart við sig fyrr en um 1600, og þá eingöngu í viðlögum.<sup>3</sup> Hefur þá Gríðarlýsingin verið í viðlagi? Sú hugmynd er heldur ótrúleg. Lítur því frekar út fyrir að höfundur sögunnar hafi fengið hana úr annarri átt en siglingarlýsinguna. Gríðarlýsingin veikir því fremur en styrkir trúna á, að siglingarlýsingin sé fengin úr Illuga dansi.

Ýmsir fleiri staðir eru í textanum, sem álitlegt gæti verið að telja leifar bundins máls, en erfiðara er að ná tókum á þeim en siglingarlýsingunni, sem er skýrasta danskvæðismarkið á sögunni, og Gríðarlýsingunni, sem er og verður gáta á marga lund. Skal því málið ekki lengt með því að telja fram og ræða slíka staði.<sup>4</sup>

Segi nú einhver, að afkárabragur siglingarlýsingarinnar sé hlutdræg ímyndun lesandans, má láta afritara sögunnar í handritum vitna um, að skyn þeirra um eðlilegan eða óeðlilegan frásagnarstil hefur verið svipað skyni þess, sem nú hefur lesið Illuga sögu. Hið sama má gera við lýsingu Gríðar. Um hana mætti láta sér detta í hug, að bragarleifin væri komin til við einhverja breytingu eða viðbót.

<sup>3</sup> Elztu örugg dæmi munu vera í Vísnaðókinni 1612. Mesta fjöldi viðlaga með þessum bragarhætti og svipuðum er að finna í safni Jóns Samsonarsonar, Kvæði og dansleikir II (Reykjavík 1964), bls. 161–282. Bragarháturinn hlýtur að hafa verið kunnur sönghátur um 1600, en ógerningur að álykta, hve miklu eldri hann kann að vera. Hugsanlegt er, að vísan *augu . . . friða* hafi verið útklykking lýsingar í bundnu máli, en það sem á undan fór hafi verið með öðrum bragarhætti. Með því móti kæmst fleiri líkleg rímorð í rímstöðu. En dansbragar hefur það þá alls ekki verið.

<sup>4</sup> Þó er freistandi að drepa á endurtekna og lokleysulega samfylgd orðanna *skjótt-dóttur*, Fas. III, 653<sup>20</sup> og 654<sup>20-21</sup>. Endurtekin samfylgd orða án þess að efni sambendisins krefjist þess er ekki einkenni á eðlilegu lausamáli og bendir því til texta í endurtekingastil (dansabragur). Ekki er þó að ætla, að þessi orð hafi rímað saman. Í öðru lagi verður að nefna endurtekinguna *mitt hitt ógrliga sax / þitt hitt ógrliga sax* (656<sup>5</sup> / 657<sup>20-22</sup>). Þessi mynd ákveðins greinis í hvorugkyni mun ella vera litt kunn í íslenzku, ef ekki ókunn með öllu, enda þótt hún sé rétt færayska. Sú hugsun vaknar að *hitt* kunni að vera villa í útgáfunni, þó að endurtekingin virðist mæla á móti því. Athugun leiðir og í ljós að hér er um að ræða prentvillu eða ef til vill misheppnaða tilraun til fyrningar. Í handriti því sem lagt er til grundvallar útgáfunni í Fas. III, AM 123 8vo, stendur greinilega *hid* á báðum þessum stöðum.



Ég hef athugað lýsingarnar tvær í tiltækum handritum<sup>5</sup> og ekki fundið nein merki annars en þær séu upphaflegar í textanum. Flestöll lýsingaratriðin eru hvarvetna með, í einhverri mynd. En í þessum tveimur stykkjum eru afritarabreytingar meiri en annars í textanum, og sýnir það, að mönnum hefur ekki þótt stillinn eðlilegur. Sem dæmi um þróunina má taka báðar lýsingarnar eftir AM 582 4to frá 17. öld.

1. Ad hauste vill Sig: heim halda, rekur þá li storm mikinn so ofbiria verdur, og rekur þa nordur um haf, herder nu so li seglinn ad hieilt vid rife, sijdann tekur hvort band ad slitna, sia þeir nu hvorge til landa enn inn rennur li bædi bord, kemur nu leke li skipid so aller standa nu j austre 18 daga binda þeir seglinn nu med sterkum bondum og fa stor ifoll so jafnan li vid skipbroti og eru þeir flester uppgiefner Nu sia þeir land fyrer stafne likast sem j hamra sæe og rak þar inn skipid j eina vijk, enn þeir hieildu heilu skipe sijnu og monnum.

Skilin milli hinna tveggja hluta eru horfin; ástands-breytingin við komuna í Gandvíkursjó úr sögunni. Orðastaðirnir 1–4 eru varðveittir í því máli, er svarar til fyrra hlutans, en allir ögn breyttir. Í því, er svarar til síðara hlutans, eru aðeins staðirnir 3–4 varðveittir, svo og partur af 2 (binda segl í stað herða segl). Í orðastað 3 er flt., bönd í stað band, og er það viðunanlegra, en merking sambandsins er enn óljósari en fyrr. Aðrar endurtekningar hafa og horfið. Af texta AM 582 4to einum mundi víst fáum hugkvæmast hann væri í ætt við kvæði.

2. þotti honum sem hagl og hrijd stædi vr vitum hennar, horinn hieck ofann li munninn, hun hafdi skiegg mikid og kollhettu li hofdi, hendur hennar voru sem arnarkler, brinnar sem bik, augun græn, ennid helbläitt, eyrun fiellu um vangana, sa stackur er hun var j tók ei leingra enn li lendar [vantar í: li bakid, e. þ. u. l.], enn j fyrer li tær ofann, einginn villdi hana frijda kalla.

Röð lýsingaratriða er nú orðin önnur en í AM 123 8vo, augu-enni-eyru koma hér á undan staknum. Loka-athugasemdin er þó hin sama að merkingu. Í staðinn fyrir brenndar ermar koma hér 'brinnar sem bik', en það er ekki ólíklegur mislestur að ermar verði 'brinnar' (fljóta-skrift). Hugmyndartengsl eru og frá þessu til hins helbláa ennis, sem

<sup>5</sup> AM 169 d fol., AM 193 d fol., AM 203 fol., AM 298 4to, AM 363 4to, AM 582 4to, AM 591 g 4to, AM 592 a 4to, AM 949 e 4to, Rask 30, Rask 35, — Lbs 152 4to, Lbs 1572 4to, Lbs 2152 8vo, JS 408 8vo.

eitt sinn var bratt, en ekki blátt. Öll merki bundins máls mega heita horfin.

Breytingarnar staðfesta dóminn um hið óeðlilega í frásagnarhætti þessara tveggja pósta.

#### V. LOKAORÐ

Að lokum má draga saman helztu niðurstöðurnar og bæta við fáeinum athugasemdum.

Samanburður við síðari norðurfararsögu Þorkels aðalfara hjá Saxa leiðir í ljós, að frásagnarefni Illuga dans er sett saman úr tveimur söguefnum á þann hátt að rétt er að tala um *samsteypu* úr: 1) sögu um siglingu til tröllheima, eldsleysi og fundi við tröll sem krefjast sannyrðasagnar fyrir eld, og 2) ævintýri um rænda kóngsdóttur, sem hetja finnur hjá trölli, frelsar og kvænist síðan.

Athuganir á efni og samsetningu Illuga sögu leiða til þeirrar niðurstöðu að hún sé samin upp úr söguefni, sem í öllum meginatriðum hafi haft sömu atburðarás og hin samsteypa frásögn dansins. Þar sem á milli ber í sameiginlegum efnisatriðum (eldssýnin, nef skessunnar), má sýna fram á að dansinn hafi efnið í upprunalegri mynd en sagan. En þar sem sagan er alveg sér um efni (fóstræðraminnið, álagasagan, vondur ráðgjafi), sýnir það sig að þetta muni vera viðbætur við og breytingar á upphaflegra söguefni.

Hér er komið að mikilvægustu niðurstöðu rannsóknarinnar: *Dansinn geymir söguefnið í upphaflegri mynd en fornaldarsagan. Dansinn getur því ekki verið ortur á grunni fornaldarsögunnar.* Dansskáldinu hefði verið ógerningur að endursemja söguefnið til upphaflegra horfs út frá fornaldarsögunni. Niðurstaða Knuts Liestøls um skyldleika sögu og dans, sem varð mikilvæg stoð fyrir hugmyndir hans og annarra um samband fornaldarsagna og dansa,<sup>1</sup> getur því ekki verið rétt.

Eftir stendur þá vandamálið um á hvern annan veg tengslunum sé háttað. Orðafarsatriði sýna að með dansinum og sögunni er ekki aðeins söguefnissamband, heldur einnig textatengsl. Innri gerð og tala sannyrðanna í sögunni, svo og Björn ráðgjafi, sem einnig kemur fyrir í norska dansinum (Herebjønn), yrðu miklu skiljanlegri efnisatriði

<sup>1</sup> Sjá hve efunarlaust niðurstaðan er sett fram og hvernig hún er höfð til hlíðsjónar þegar fjallað er um önnur slík rannsóknarefni í bók Liestøls, *Den norrøne arven*, Oslo 1970, bls. 61 o. áfr.

með því að gera ráð fyrir efnisheimild í bundnu máli, einna helst dansi. Auk þess sem áður segir um söguefnið, leggjast því þessi atriði á þá sveif, að efnisheimild fornaldarsögunnar hafi verið dansinn. Ekki er hægt að ábyrgjast, að ekki hafi verið til annað kvæði (rímur?), eða að ekki hafi verið til lausamálsfrásögn um Illuga, ef til vill með einhverjum vísum. En eins og söguefnistengslum Illuga sögu og Illuga dans er háttað, er eðlilegasta og einfaldasta lausnin sú, að telja helztu atriði fornaldarsögunnar fengin frá dansinum, og að þau atriði hafi orðið grunnurinn sem sagan var reist á. Þessi skýring hefur þann kost að gera ekki ráð fyrir neinu, sem ekkert er vitað um.

Óefanlegar sannanir liggja ekki á lausu, og verður að setta sig við það. Slíkar sannanir gætu ekki verið fólgnar í öðru en því að sýna fram á leifar af texta dansins í texta sögunnar. En það væri ótrúlegt að sagan hefði verið svo slapplega samin og textarnir svo trúlega varðveittir, að kostur væri á slíkum sönnunum.

Þó stappar undarlega nærri vitnisburði til úrslita, þegar sýnt er fram á að sjóhrakningslýsing sögunnar hljóti að vera samin eftir vísum í dansastíl um sams konar efni. En sá galli er á þessu, að ekkert slíkt er nú í Illuga dansi í neinni uppskrift (glatað?). Aðrar bragleifar í sögunni koma hér ekki að haldi. Lýsing Griðar ber að vísu vott um kveðskap, en ekki er að sjá að það hafi verið dans.

Sönnun fæst því ekki að sinni, en athugun sögunnar og dansins hefur komið greinarhöfundinum á þá skoðun, að fornaldarsagan muni að meginefni vera samin eftir dansinum. Fátt er alveg nýjar fréttir. Hér verður ekki undan því skotizt að minna á, að S. Grundtvig taldi Illuga sögu sprotna frá fornu kvæði, sbr. inngang hans að danska Illuga dansinum í Danmarks gamle Folkeviser. En að öðru leyti kemur skoðun hans rannsókninni ekki við.

Um leið og sýnt hefur verið fram á, að eldri niðurstaðan um skyldleika Illuga sögu og Illuga dans geti ekki verið rétt, er eina fornaldarsagan sem tengd er dansi með skýrum orðafarstengslum fallin úr þeim flokki sagna sem taldar hafa verið efnisheimildir dansa. Af því verða þó ekki dregnar ályktanir um samband annarra sagna og dansa, því að hvert söguefni er rannsóknarefni út af fyrir sig. En þetta gefur samt ástæðu til að vænta fréttu, ef aðrir hlutar rannsóknarsviðsins 'fornaldarsögur og dansar' væru teknir til endurskoðunar.

Ekki er ofsagt, að tímasetningar dansa eru óvissar. Handrit Illuga



sögu eru því miður svo ung, að niðurstaðan er til einskis gagns að þessu leyti. Elzta uppskrift dansins er eldri. En á hinn bóginn gefur niðurstaðan til kynna, að dansar um norræn yfirmáttúrleg efni hafi naumast verið jafn ókunnir á Íslandi við lok miðalda og ætla mætti af þögn ritaðra heimilda um þá.

### SUMMARY

THIS article reviews the problem of the relationship between the fornaldarsaga and the ballad about Illugi Gríðarfóstri, kappen Illugjen. In 1910 Knut Liestøl reached the conclusion that the ballad must be based on the fornaldarsaga in its present or a similar form.

The inter-relationship of fornaldarsögur and 'trollvisor' is a field of study in which facts are hard to establish. It was therefore natural that Liestøl's conclusion became a rather important fixed point in the formation of his and other's opinions on these matters in general.

This is not a detailed summary of the article. Much is left out. But it is hoped that the following brief re-statement in English of its main findings may be of use to some readers.

There is no doubt that the fornaldarsaga and the ballad are made of the same story-matter. In their development of this material, however, they differ in some important points. Contrary to previous opinion which has accepted the saga as the earliest of the two, these differences are here found to show that the ballad gives us the story closer to its original form and that in comparison the version of the legend in the fornaldarsaga is clearly derivative.

Saxo Grammaticus' account of Þorkillus' (Þorkell aðalfari's) second journey to the magical North is of key importance in this connection. It contains the story of the 'three truths' which the hero has to utter to giants that dwell in a cave in return for the fire needed by his companions. This tale, which is one of the elements in the Illugi legend, helps us to see how the ballad and the saga are constructed. The Illugi legend appears to be a combination of two different tales grafted on to each other: 1. The tale of the fire and the three truths. 2. A simple folktale about the rescuing of a princess from a giantess who keeps her in captivity. The essential features of these two tales in combination constitute what amounts to a correct synopsis of the story told in the Illugi ballad.

As to the fornaldarsaga, a critical look at its composition, particularly the ways in which it differs from the ballad, produces further evidence for the conclusion that the simpler tale of the ballad is the (more) original one and that the more complex tale of the fornaldarsaga must be derived from it.

The most important single point of difference between the two concerns the giantess. In the ballad she is nothing but the monster-captor of the princess. In the *fornaldarsaga* the same giantess is herself a princess suffering under the spell (*álög*) of a wicked stepmother, and the fair one is her own daughter. The inconsistencies of the *fornaldarsaga*'s account of the giantess *Griður* and her daughter *Hildur* reveal beyond doubt that the *álög*, and the tale within the tale which tells how the *álög* was imposed on them, must have been added on to the same basic story as in the ballad.

An examination of other differences, such as the one concerning the sworn brother-hood of *Illugi* and the prince, and the one concerning the evil counselor (*Björn*), points the same way. *Álög*, sworn brothers and an evil counselor are common motifs likely to be used to expand and alter the story, giving it the appearance of a (*fornaldar*) saga.

If the *fornaldarsaga* had been the source of the ballad, as has been assumed, the ballad poet could not conceivably have changed the story back to a more original form. The relationship between the two is therefore of another kind. Either both have a source in common, or the *fornaldarsaga* is simply derived from the ballad. Although neither of these alternatives can be safely excluded at this stage of knowledge, there are positive indications in favour of the latter. Such indicative criteria are arrived at i.e. by a close comparison of the contents of the three truths in the ballad and the saga, and by analysing the curiously inconsistent role of the evil counselor in the saga. This person, named *Björn*, must be the same as *Herebjörn* in the Norwegian ballad. Since there is no evidence of the existence of a third piece of literature (distinct from both the ballad and the saga) about *Illugi*, it is more plausible to assume that the saga drew its matter from the ballad. This would make understandable the saga's confusion regarding the contents of the truths and its inconsistencies in the role of the counselor.

At this point the student is reminded of *Tantalus* when he finds certain traces of poetic diction in the prose of *Illuga saga* without being able to identify them as belonging to the ballad.

The marks of verse either transliterated or at least remembered by the saga-writer when he was forming the work can be seen in at least two passages. First, in the description of the difficult voyage before the sworn brothers reach *Bjarmaland*, one finds clear traces of the repetitive style of ballad verse. Later, the description of *Griður*'s ugly appearance is marked by a metrical original, but this seems to have been of a different kind. In its extant versions the ballad does not contain any passages corresponding to these. It may be mentioned that such passages would not have been strictly necessary for the structure of the tale. Also it may be said that it would seem less likely that the saga-writer used or was distracted by verse about other matters while in the process of forming his story of *Illugi*. But this is mere speculation. We have found that certain, apparently unidentifiable passages in verse must have been hovering in the mind of the saga-writer, and perhaps he made conscious use of them. With regard to the present problem of ballad-saga relationship these traces of verse yield no new evidence.



Consequently the sum of this re-examination of the relationship between the saga and the ballad of Illugi remains: The ballad cannot be derived from the saga. On the contrary, it is probable that the saga-writer used the ballad as his main source and expanded its tale with common story-matter to make a fornaldarsaga of it.

THE EXTANT ICELANDIC MANIFESTATIONS  
OF RAGNARS SAGA LOÐBRÓKAR<sup>1</sup>

## I

IN a stimulating contribution to *Einarsbók*, the *Festschrift* for Einar Ólafur Sveinsson published in 1969, Bjarni Guðnason discussed the interrelationship of the extant Icelandic manifestations of *Ragnars saga loðbrókar*, and the relationship of *Ragnars saga* to *Völsunga saga*.<sup>2</sup> While his view of these two subjects may not be entirely acceptable in every respect, as I shall hope to show in this paper, it nevertheless provides a wholly satisfactory framework for discussion. In this paper I shall review Bjarni's arguments, criticizing some of them and developing others, and will tentatively present a view of the textual background to *Ragnars saga* differing somewhat from his, but also profiting from it in several ways. In this way I shall hope to provide the basis for a short discussion, in the second and final part of this paper, of Bjarni's approach to the interrelationship of the

<sup>1</sup> The first part of this paper (i.e. up to p. 64) is a somewhat revised version of a paper delivered in Reykjavík at the Second International Saga Conference on Monday, August 6, 1973, under the title 'The principal Icelandic versions of the story of Ragnarr loðbrók'. I am grateful to Mr. J. A. B. Townsend and Dr. R. M. Perkins, both of University College, London, for making a number of valuable suggestions while I was preparing this part of the paper; and to Professor Bjarni Guðnason of the University of Iceland, Reykjavík, Mr. Alfred P. Smyth, now of the University of Kent at Canterbury, and Dr. Marina Mundt of the University of Bergen, all of whom, in contributing to the discussion following the delivery of my paper at the Conference, also made valuable suggestions of which I have done my best to take account in this revised and enlarged version. With regard to the second part of this paper, which has been prepared since the Conference, I am grateful for advice and criticism to Professors Bo Almqvist and Alan J. Bliss, and to other members of the Interdisciplinary Seminar in Medieval Studies at University College, Dublin, with whom I was privileged to discuss a number of problems. What errors remain are, of course, entirely my own.

<sup>2</sup> Bjarni Guðnason, 'Gerðir og ritþróun Ragnars sögu loðbrókar' in *Einarsbók. Afmæliskeðja til Elnars Ól. Sveinssonar, 12. desember 1969* (1969), 28-37.

extant Icelandic manifestations of *Ragnars saga* in the light of some criticisms of this approach made recently by Lars Lönnroth in a review of *Einarsbók* published in *Medieval Scandinavia* (1971).<sup>3</sup> In this discussion I shall attempt to show that, whatever the limitations of Bjarni's approach may be, it most certainly does not deserve the particular criticisms levelled against it by Lönnroth.

As Bjarni points out, *Ragnars saga* is preserved principally in two texts which differ from each other in various ways, and are contained in the parchment manuscripts Ny kgl. sml. 1824 b, 4to and AM 147, 4to.<sup>4</sup> The differences between these two texts of the saga will be discussed in detail later in this paper. Narrative passages dealing with Ragnarr loðbrók and his sons are also to be found in Arngrímur Jónsson's sixteenth-century Latin work *Rerum Danicarum Fragmenta*, based on the lost *Skjöldunga saga*,<sup>5</sup> and in the so-called *Ragnarssona þáttur*, which is contained in *Hauksbók*.<sup>6</sup> According to Bjarni, both *Skjöldunga saga* and a version of *Ragnars saga* were among the *þáttur's* sources.<sup>7</sup> In addition to *Ragnars saga*, Ny kgl. saml. 1824 b contains *Völsunga saga*, which immediately precedes *Ragnars saga* in the manuscript, and a number of stanzas from *Krákumál*, which immediately follow it.<sup>8</sup> The story of *Ragnars saga* is linked to that of

<sup>3</sup> See *Medieval Scandinavia*, 4 (1971), 175-81.

<sup>4</sup> The two texts have been edited, together with the 1824 b text of *Völsunga saga*, in Magnus Olsen, ed., *Völsunga saga ok Ragnars saga loðbrókar*, *STUAGNL* (1906-08). Both *Völsunga saga* and *Ragnars saga* have also survived in a number of paper manuscripts which, however, ultimately derive from 1824 b, as Olsen, VII-X, and Guðnason (1969), 29, point out.

<sup>5</sup> See Jakob Benediktsson, ed., *Arngrimi Jónæ opera latine conscripta*, I, *Bibliotheca Arnarnagana*, IX (1950), 358-59, 464-66. On the extent of the indebtedness of this work to *Skjöldunga saga*, see Benediktsson, ed., *Arngrimi . . . opera . . .*, IV, *Bibliotheca Arnarnagana* XII (1957), 107-17; Bjarni Guðnason, *Um Skjöldunga sögu* (1963); and Jakob Benediktsson's review of the latter work in *Íslenzk tunga*, 4 (1963), 136-51.

<sup>6</sup> See Finnur Jónsson, ed., *Hauksbók* (1892-96), 458-67, and pp. XCI-III of his introduction.

<sup>7</sup> See Guðnason (1969), 30.

<sup>8</sup> Olsen did not include *Krákumál* in his edition of *Völsunga saga* and *Ragnars saga*, except insofar as he printed those parts of it which he was able to read in the 147 text. For bibliographical information relating to *Krákumál*, see *Islandica* V (1912), 36-39, and *Islandica* XXVI (1937), 61-62.



*Völsunga saga*, and is made to form a reasonably logical sequel to it, through the person of Ragnarr's second wife, Áslaug, the daughter of Sigurðr Fáfnisbani and Brynhildr Buðladóttir. It is not clear from the state in which the 147 text of *Ragnars saga* has been preserved whether *Völsunga saga* preceded *Ragnars saga* in that manuscript as well as in 1824 b, but it does seem likely that the *Ragnars saga* which is reflected in 147 was preceded by a *Völsunga saga*, since reference is made in the course of the 147 text of *Ragnars saga* to the meeting of Sigurðr and Brynhildr and the birth of Áslaug, in a manner which seems to assume an awareness on the reader's part of the events in question.<sup>9</sup> Bjarni sets out to answer the following questions: Did *Völsunga saga* and *Ragnars saga* exist independently of each other, before being joined together in the manner reflected in the two principal extant texts of *Ragnars saga*? Which is the older, *Völsunga saga* or *Ragnars saga*? In short, what is the precise nature of their relationship? Since *Völsunga saga* has been preserved only in connection with *Ragnars saga*, as is shown by the two principal extant manuscripts of the latter, and as the *Völsungsrímur* also indicate,<sup>10</sup> there is no textual evidence to suggest that *Völsunga saga* ever existed independently of *Ragnars saga*. This leads Bjarni to a discussion of the question of whether *Ragnars saga* ever existed independently of *Völsunga saga*; and this is the starting-point for the central part of his paper, in which he seeks to establish the exact nature of the *rittengsl*, as he calls them, or literary relations,<sup>11</sup> between the various extant manifestations of the story of Ragnarr, his wife Áslaug (also called Kráka or Randalín) and his sons. Leaving aside for the moment Lönnroth's objection that 'the task would appear hopeless considering the fact that Ragnarr was one of the most popular legendary heroes in Old Norse tradition',<sup>12</sup> I shall now go on to examine in some detail, and hopefully to develop in some respects, the way in which Bjarni sets about his allegedly hopeless task.

His first move is to compare and contrast the *Ragnars saga* preser-

<sup>9</sup> See Olsen, LXXXVI and 180.

<sup>10</sup> See Guðnason (1969), 30, and the references given in his eighth and ninth footnotes.

<sup>11</sup> This term will be discussed later in this paper (see p. 66 below).

<sup>12</sup> See *M. Scan.* (1971), 178.



ved in 1824 b with *Ragnarssona þáttur*. This latter, after relating in a form much briefer than the corresponding part of 1824 b the story of Ragnarr's slaying of a serpent in Gautland, goes on to refer to a saga of Ragnarr in the following words:

... ok for þat sva sem segir i sogv Ragnars konvngs at hann feck síþan Þorv borgarþiort ok síþan lagþiz hann i hernað ok frelsti allt sitt ríki.<sup>13</sup>

Which *Ragnars saga* is the one so referred to? After a cursory reading, it might be thought that the compiler of *Ragnarssona þáttur*, who may well have been Haukur Erlendsson,<sup>14</sup> had before him a version of *Ragnars saga* similar or identical to the one reflected in 1824 b, and simply made an abstract of it for the relevant parts of the *þáttur*. According to Bjarni, however, this cannot be the case, partly in view of certain differences between the story of Ragnarr's slaying of the serpent as it is told in the *þáttur*, and the same story as it is told in 1824 b, and partly also in view of other differences between the *þáttur* and 1824 b in later sections of the two works. Since the differences between those parts of the two texts which deal with the serpent-story<sup>15</sup> are not listed by Bjarni, the most important of them may be noted here. In 1824 b, Herruðr is simply a powerful jarl in Gautland; in the *þáttur* he is said to be a jarl in the service of Ragnarr. In 1824 b his daughter, Þóra, receives the serpent as one of her father's daily presents to her; in the *þáttur* she receives it as a *morgingjöf*. In 1824 b the serpent is made to lie on gold, the amount of which increases underneath it as the serpent itself grows in size and ferocity; in the *þáttur*, on the other hand, while the serpent grows large and fierce much as in 1824 b, no mention is made of gold. An important difference, to which attention has recently been drawn by Marina Mundt's

<sup>13</sup> See *Hauksbók*, 458.

<sup>14</sup> See Guðnason (1969), 30.

<sup>15</sup> See *Hauksbók*, 458, ll. 6-31 and Olsen, 116, l. 13-121, l. 29. It may be pointed out here that 1824 b differs from the *þáttur* in referring to the serpent at one point as a *lyngovmr*, a word which A. Edzardi, in the preface to his revised edition of von der Hagen's translation of *Völsunga saga* and *Ragnars saga, Völsunga - und Ragnars - Saga* . . . , 2. Auflage (1880), XXXVIII-IX, listed together with other stylistic features as indicative of the influence of *Piðriks saga* on these two sagas.

article on the dragon-fight in *Ragnars saga*,<sup>16</sup> is the fact that we have no account in the *þáttr*, as we do in 1824 b, of Ragnarr being identified as the slayer of the serpent through the discovery of his spear-point in the serpent's body. Mention is made of a spear in the *þáttr*, to be sure, but there is no story there, as there is in 1824 b, of the spear-point becoming disconnected from the spear-shaft in the course of Ragnarr's fight with the serpent, and being later identified as belonging to him. It may also be pointed out, for what it is worth, that the serpent rises up and breathes poison onto Ragnarr in the *þáttr*, but does not do either of these things in 1824 b.

The more important of the remaining differences between the two works have been listed by Bjarni, and are very briefly as follows: in the *þáttr* Eysteinn, king of the Swedes, is called Eysteinn beli and is a tributary king of Ragnarr's, whereas in 1824 b he has no nickname,<sup>17</sup> is a friend of Ragnarr's, and rules independently. In the *þáttr* the two sons of Ragnarr by Þóra borgarhjörtr, Eirekr and Agnarr, the former of whom desires Eysteinn's daughter Borghildr, are defeated in battle by Eysteinn after unsuccessfully trying to make him tributary to themselves, rather than to Ragnarr. In 1824 b, on the other hand, they invade Sweden after the friendship between Eysteinn and Ragnarr has broken up as a result of Ragnarr's abandoning his idea of marrying Eysteinn's daughter, who is here called Ingibjörg. In the *þáttr*, Ívarr beinlausí, one of Ragnarr's sons by Áslaug, founds the city of York, and wins the loyalty of the English chieftains without apparently making them any material offer, whereas in 1824 b he founds London, and wins the support of the strongest men in England by giving them large amounts of gold and silver. From differences of this kind, and from the fact that, in his view, the 1824 b and 147 texts of *Ragnars saga* both seem to differ from *Ragnarssona þáttr* in showing the influence, in style and subject-matter, of *Völsunga saga*

<sup>16</sup> Marina Mundt, 'Omkring dragekampen i Ragnars saga loðbrókar', in *Arv*, 27 (1971), 121-40. Mundt sees this feature as indicative of the influence of *Tristrams saga* on *Ragnars saga*.

<sup>17</sup> In the 147 text of *Ragnars saga*, on the other hand, Eysteinn is given the nickname 'beli' in the verse which corresponds to verse 19 of the 1824 b text. See Olsen, 183, 9r, l. 26; p. 144 and p. 208.

and *Piðriks saga*,<sup>18</sup> Bjarni concludes that the *Ragnars saga* which underlay the *þáttur* was considerably different from either of the versions of *Ragnars saga* reflected in 1824 b and 147.

Bjarni's next step is to compare and contrast with each other the texts of *Ragnars saga* preserved in these two manuscripts. It is at this point that his treatment of his subject becomes rather disappointingly unspecific, though the general outlines which he offers show the way to a specific conclusion. As Bjarni points out, the text of *Ragnars saga* in 147 has been exceedingly poorly preserved. Magnus Olsen, who edited it together with the 1824 b text of *Völsunga saga* and *Ragnars saga* in his edition of 1906–08, was able to read only scattered portions of the text. The printed portions, since he was able to read the text only fragmentarily, are seldom extensive and often do not even run to whole sentences. Much may nevertheless be learnt from a close study of the 147 text of *Ragnars saga*, as Olsen and Bjarni both realized. The 147 text of *Ragnars saga* seems to begin, as Olsen has shown, with what corresponds to chapter II in the 1824 b text of *Ragnars saga*—that is, with Ragnarr's slaying of the serpent and the winning of Þóra, rather than with the chapter dealing with Heimir and Áslaug.<sup>19</sup> This latter seems to form the opening chapter of *Ragnars saga* according to 1824 b,<sup>20</sup> but was treated by early editors of *Völsunga saga* as the final chapter of *Völsunga saga*.<sup>21</sup> According to Olsen at least, the 147 text of *Ragnars saga* comes to an end on the recto of the leaf numbered by Olsen for editorial pur-

<sup>18</sup> See Guðnason (1969), 31. This is a somewhat simplified version of a view advanced by Edzardi, XXVI–XXXIX and XLIII–IV (footnote). Edzardi pointed out striking parallels in wording between *Völsunga saga* and *Ragnars saga*, and also drew attention to parallels between these two sagas and *Piðriks saga*. Edzardi nevertheless admitted (XXX) that *Völsunga saga* and *Ragnars saga* differed markedly from each other in style; and his examples of parallels between *Piðriks saga* and *Ragnars saga* were by no means as plentiful or as striking as those he gave of parallels between *Piðriks saga* and *Völsunga saga*. In my opinion, the state of the 147 text of *Ragnars saga* does not permit us to speak in any way confidently of traces of the influence of *Piðriks saga* in that text.

<sup>19</sup> See Olsen, LXXXVI.

<sup>20</sup> See Olsen, LXXIX.

<sup>21</sup> See, for instance, the editions of Rafn (*Fornaldarsögur Norðrlanda*, I, 1829) and Bugge (*Norrøne Skrifter af sagnhistorisk Indhold*, II, 1865).



poses as 19.<sup>22</sup> This page, 19 recto, which is evidently the one which Olsen found easiest to read, contains, among other things, a quotation from Sigvatr Þórðarson's *Knútsdrápa* about Ívarr having the blood-eagle cut on Ella's back,<sup>23</sup> a statement about Ívarr becoming king over part of England, a mention of his being reputedly responsible for the death of King Edmund, and finally, the following statement: 'loðbrokar synir foru víða með hernáði vinnu Englandar vestur ok suðr víðanar stadar.' Olsen's view that this is the point at which the saga comes to an end is presumably based partly on a consideration of the 147 text of *Ragnars saga* in relation to the accounts of Ragnarr and his sons in the *þáttur*<sup>24</sup> and in Arngrímur's *Rerum Danicarum Fragmenta*,<sup>25</sup> and partly on the fact that the sentence just quoted brings the writing on 19 recto to an end very slightly higher up the leaf than is the case with the other leaves in this gathering.<sup>26</sup>

A comparison of the 1824 b and 147 texts of *Ragnars saga*—taking into account, of course, the fragmentary state of the latter text—very soon reveals that they resemble each other closely; in parts, as Olsen pointed out, they are virtually word for word the same. It is grossly misleading, at least as far as these two texts are concerned, to speak of 'the glaring differences between the written sagas', as Lönnroth does in his review of *Einarsbók*.<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, as Bjarni quite rightly points out, there are certain important differences between these two texts, and his list of these differences can, I think, be developed in several ways. In the first place, while it is quite true, as Bjarni suggests, that both these texts of *Ragnars saga* are linked to *Völsunga saga* through the person of Áslaug in the manner described earlier, there is no evidence that the *Ragnars saga* reflected in 147 was linked to *Völsunga saga* in precisely the same way as the one reflected in 1824 b, i.e. by means of a separate chapter dealing with Heimir and Áslaug. The only clear-cut evidence of a link with

<sup>22</sup> See Olsen, LXXXVI, and 193–4.

<sup>23</sup> The surviving verses of *Knútsdrápa* have been edited by Finnur Jónsson, *Den norsk-íslandske Skjaldedigtning*, AI (1912), 248–51, and BI (1912), 232–34.

<sup>24</sup> See *Hauksbók*, 464, and the remarks made below, pp. 71–72, on the chaptering of *Ragnarssona þáttur*.

<sup>25</sup> See *Arngrími . . . opera . . .*, I, 359 and 466.

<sup>26</sup> See Olsen, 194, footnote to l. 23.

<sup>27</sup> See *M. Scan.* (1971), 178.



*Völsunga saga* that we have in 147 is a fragmentary passage seeming to correspond almost word for word to the one in 1824 b in which Áslaug refers to the meeting of Sigurðr and Brynhildr on Hindarfjall, and her resultant birth.<sup>28</sup> Another point made by Bjarni which requires some development is that the 147 text of *Ragnars saga* is, in comparison with the 1824 b text, 'kjarnyrtari og styttri',<sup>29</sup> that is, pithier, shorter, less wordy. Since Bjarni gives no examples in support of this view, a list of references to those corresponding passages in the two texts which illustrate the generally pithier nature of the 147 text may be given here. This list will serve the twofold purpose of confirming Bjarni's rather sweepingly made point that 147 is the more economically worded of the two texts, and of helping to show, by virtue of the close similarities to each other of the corresponding passages, how closely these two texts of *Ragnars saga* resemble each other. References are to the page and line numbers in Olsen's edition.

	1824 b	147
1	119, 8-13	176, Bl. 1r, 2-4
2	125, 26-27	178, Bl. 3r, 25-26
3	127, 21-22	179, Bl. 3v, 26
4	127, 22-24	179, Bl. 4r, 1-2
5	128, 28-30	179, Bl. 4v, 1-2
6	129, 9-10	179, Bl. 4v, 5-6
7	129, 25-26	180, Bl. 4v, 16-17
8	135, 3-11	180, Bl. 6v, 4-8
9	138, 8-10	182, Bl. 7v, 7-8
10	138, 17-18	182, Bl. 7v, 16-17
11	142, 5-8	182, Bl. 8v, 16-18
12	143, 22-144, 17	183, Bl. 9r, 23-24
13	149, 10-11	184, Bl. 11r, 3
14	149, 15-18	184, Bl. 11r, 6-7
15	151, 26	185, Bl. 12r, 5-6
16	151, 32-33	185, Bl. 12r, 10-11
17	152, 1-2	185, Bl. 12r, 11-12
18	152, 6-8	185, Bl. 12r, 14-15
19	152, 13-14	186, Bl. 12r, 20

<sup>28</sup> See Olsen, 180-81, and the footnote to 6v, ll. 1-9, indicating the corresponding passage in the 1824 b text.

<sup>29</sup> See Guðnason (1969), 31.

20	152, 16-22	186, Bl. 12r, 22-24
21	160, 1-25	190, Bl. 16r, 1
22	? 161, 13-14 (Reported speech)	? 190, Bl. 16r, 9-10 (Direct speech)
23	? 164, 4-5 (Reported speech)	? 191, Bl. 17v, 2-3 (Direct speech)
24	165, 5-8	192, Bl. 17v, 24
25	166, 19-20	192, Bl. 18v, 3-4
26	167, 8-9	192, Bl. 18v, 19-20

For the sake of completeness, a list may now be given of references to those relatively few corresponding passages in which the 1824 b text seems to be pithier and less wordy than the 147 text:

1	123, 8-9	178, Bl. 2v, 1-2
2	124, 18	178, Bl. 3r, 1
3	125, 30	179, Bl. 3v, 2
4	128, 30-129, 1	179, Bl. 4v, 2-3
5	144, 28-29	183, Bl. 9v, 2
6	149, 26-27	184, Bl. 11r, 12-13
7	151, 18-19	185, Bl. 12r, 1-2
8	151, 22	185, Bl. 12r, 3
9	161, 1-2	190, Bl. 16r, 1-2
10	161, 3-5	190, Bl. 16r, 3-4
11	161, 11	190, Bl. 16r, 8-9
12	164, 5-6	191, Bl. 17v, 3
13	166, 18-19	192, Bl. 18v, 2-3

Certain other important differences between these two texts—most of which have been pointed out by Olsen and Bjarni—may also be noted here. The chaptering of the 147 text of *Ragnars saga* differs considerably from that of the 1824 b text,<sup>30</sup> and there are fewer *lausavísur* in the 147 text than there are in the 1824 b text.<sup>31</sup> It is altogether likely that the last three chapters of the 1824 b text, which contain, among other things, a somewhat awkward rounding off of the story of Ragnarr's sons, an exchange of verses between two warriors, and some verses spoken by a *trémaðr*, were not present in the version of the saga reflected in 147.<sup>32</sup> On the other hand, certain

<sup>30</sup> See Olsen, XC-XCI.

<sup>31</sup> See Olsen, XCIII, footnote 1.

<sup>32</sup> Altogether likely, that is, if it is accepted that the 147 text of *Ragnars saga* comes to an end at the bottom of 19 recto, as Olsen thought; see the references given in notes 22 and 26 above.

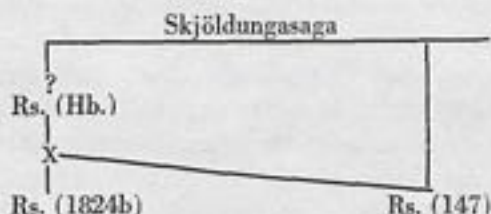
stanzas of *Krákumál*, part of which, as I pointed out earlier, immediately follows *Ragnars saga* in the 1824 b text, are made in the 147 text to form a part of the saga; they would seem to be placed there in the mouth of Ragnarr—not altogether inappropriately, though their subject-matter is for the most part extraneous to that of the saga—as he dies in the serpent-pit.<sup>33</sup> As regards the *lausavísur* of *Ragnars saga*, the 147 text often yields readings which seem closer to the verses in their original form than the readings of the 1824 b text, which latter, as far as the verses are concerned, is at times exceedingly corrupt.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, the differences between the two texts become markedly greater towards the end of the saga, where the 147 text shows greater similarities, in Bjarni's opinion, to the account of Ragnarr and his sons in *Skjöldunga saga*—as this is reflected in *Ragnarssona þáttur* on the one hand, and Arngrímur's Latin version of the story on the other—than to the 1824 b text of *Ragnars saga*. It is certainly true that the verbal similarities at this stage of the narrative between the 147 text and the *þáttur*, the most important of which have been listed by Olsen in the preface to his edition,<sup>35</sup> become so striking at one point that the phrase 'the glaring differences between the written sagas' hardly seems to have very much validity even in the larger context of the three extant manifestations of *Ragnars saga* in 147, 1824 b, and *Ragnarssona þáttur*. Nevertheless, the fact that there are differences between these various extant manifestations, even if the differences in question are not exactly glaring ones, should, of course, at all times be remembered. Bjarni summarizes his view of the textual history of *Ragnars saga* in the following stemma:

<sup>33</sup> See Olsen, 187–89, and the footnotes indicating the strophe-numbers in *Krákumál*. The contents of *Krákumál* have been summarized and discussed by G. Storm in his *Kritiske Bidrag til Vikingetidens Historie* (1878), 196–200, and by P. Herrmann in his *Erläuterungen zu den ersten neun Büchern der dänischer Geschichte des Saxo Grammaticus, zweiter Teil . . .* (1922), 627, ff.

<sup>34</sup> This may be illustrated by reference to Olsen's explanatory notes on those verses which 1824 b and 147, and less often *Hauksbók*, have in common. See Olsen, 195 ff.

<sup>35</sup> See Olsen, XCI–III.





In this stemma, which Bjarni sees as conjectural, no mention is made, rather surprisingly, of Arngrímur's accounts of Ragnarr and his sons in *Rerum Danicarum Fragmenta*, which Bjarni must surely regard as an important extant manifestation of the part of *Skjöldunga saga* relevant to his stemma.<sup>36</sup> The chief reason for the question mark at the end of the line leading from *Skjöldunga saga* to the version of *Ragnars saga* lying behind *Ragnarssona þáttur* in *Hauksbók* seems to be that the nature of the relationship between *Skjöldunga saga* and the oldest *Ragnars saga*, as Bjarni calls this version, is in his view uncertain.<sup>37</sup> Since neither *Ragnarssona þáttur* nor the relevant part of Arngrímur's text reproduces *Skjöldunga saga* without alteration, however, as Jakob Benediktsson has shown,<sup>38</sup> and since it is chiefly in outlines rather than in details of the story that the *þáttur* and Arngrímur are in agreement,<sup>39</sup> it is doubtful how far *Skjöldunga saga* ought to be given a definite place in the stemma at all. Since Bjarni expresses in his remarks on the stemma the view that the 147 text of *Ragnars saga* contained narrative material descending from *Skjöldunga saga*, 'whether or not an intermediate link is in question' ('hvort sem um millilið er að ræða eða ekki'),<sup>40</sup> another purpose of his question mark, we may

<sup>36</sup> See Guðnason (1969), 31, footnote 14. Bjarni regards Arngrímur's accounts of Ragnarr as derived from *Skjöldunga saga* and from a version of *Ragnars saga* somewhat like the one reflected in 1824 b.

<sup>37</sup> Guðnason (1969), 32: 'Erfitt er að gera sér grein fyrir tengslum *Skjöldungas.* og *Rs.* elzta.'

<sup>38</sup> See *Arngrími . . . opera . . .*, IV, 113, 260–62.

<sup>39</sup> See Axel Olrik, 'Skjöldunga saga i Arngrim Jonssons udtog', in *Aarbøger for nordisk Oldkyndighed og Historie*, II, 9 (1894), 83–164, pp. 147–49.

<sup>40</sup> Guðnason (1969), 32.



assume, is to allow for the possibility of the material from *Skjöldunga saga* reaching the 147 text of *Ragnars saga* if not directly, or through an intermediate link on the direct line, then by way of *Ragnarssona þáttir* and X. Nevertheless, one feels that the right-hand downward line ought to be rather more tentatively drawn—not least in view of the close verbal similarities, pointed out by Olsen, between the *þáttir* and the 147 text of *Ragnars saga*.<sup>41</sup>

Bjarni's stated reason for introducing X into the stemma is that the versions of *Ragnars saga* reflected in 1824 b and 147 'can hardly have direct literary relations with each other' ('geta naumast haft bein rittengsl').<sup>42</sup> By this Bjarni presumably means that, in view of the differences between the versions as they are reflected in the texts, and in spite of their similarities, neither one of them can have directly influenced the other, and that a common source, X, must therefore be assumed for them both. Now since, in Bjarni's expressed opinion, 147 had a 'more original' ('upprunalegri') text than 1824 b, in addition to the material inherited from *Skjöldunga saga*,<sup>43</sup> it would seem to be obvious that, unless he is using the adjective *upprunalegur* in a sense not exclusively textual, Bjarni regards X as more faithfully represented in 147—for all its fragmentary state—than in 1824 b. This impression is somewhat upset, however, by a sentence following on soon afterwards from the ones already quoted, in which Bjarni writes as follows: 'We assume that there was very little difference between X and the 1824 b text, as 147 testifies' ('Gert er ráð fyrir litlum muni á X og Rs. í 1824 b, eins og 147 ber vitni um').<sup>44</sup> The first half of this very unclear sentence momentarily gives the impression that in Bjarni's opinion the 1824b text and X were virtually identical; and if this were the case it would mean, of course, that the shorter, pithier text of 147 would have to be explained by the view that abridgement took place at some point on the line leading from X to 147. The second half of Bjarni's sentence, however, 'as 147 testifies' ('eins og 147 ber vitni um') suggests the meaning that the 1824 b text of *Ragnars saga*

<sup>41</sup> See the reference given in note 35 above.

<sup>42</sup> Guðnason (1969), 32.

<sup>43</sup> Guðnason (1969), 32.

<sup>44</sup> Guðnason (1969), 32.

was similar to X only to the extent of the features which it shares with the 147 text. Why, then, does Bjarni emphasize the likeness of 1824 b to X, rather than that of 147 to X? Is he now trying to say that he regards 1824 b and 147 as textually equidistant from X? In other words, is 1824 b supposed to differ as little in its own way from X as 147 does in its? It is only fair to say that this seems unlikely, partly in view of the remark referred to earlier about 147 having a 'more original' text than 1824 b, and partly in view of some remarks made by Bjarni later in his paper, where he describes the version of *Ragnars saga* reflected in 1824 b as the one which has 'undergone most development' ('tekið . . . út mestan þroska'), and fits *Ragnars saga* into a pattern represented by certain other *fornaldarsögur* which have survived in texts reflecting more than one version, and which show that, where two versions are in question, the older version tends to be shorter, less 'late' in style, and less bulky than the younger one.<sup>45</sup>

It is unfortunate that Bjarni does not commit himself to a more clearly-defined conjecture as to the nature and form of X, since he gives it a particularly important place in the textual history of *Ragnars saga*. It was most probably in X, he claims, that the episode of Kráka was first introduced, and it was also in connection with X that *Völsunga saga* was composed. *Völsunga saga*, according to Bjarni, was composed as an introduction to X by the author or redactor of that version of *Ragnars saga*, who linked the two sagas together through the person of Áslaug, and made of them what is in effect one long saga of the Völsungar, culminating in the story of Áslaug, who is arguably more the heroine of what we now call *Ragnars saga* than Ragnarr is its hero.<sup>46</sup> It may be mentioned in passing that Bjarni hardly allows here, as de Vries does in his long article on the West Norse tradition of the Ragnarr-legend, for the possibility that the Kráka-episode may have existed in the version of *Ragnars saga* reflected in *Hauksbók*, though in a form less developed than what we find in 1824 b and 147.<sup>47</sup> It should at all events be made clear that

<sup>45</sup> Guðnason (1969), 37.

<sup>46</sup> Guðnason (1969), 32, ff.

<sup>47</sup> Jan de Vries, 'Die westnordische Tradition der Sage von Ragnar Lodbrok', in

*Ragnarssona þáttur*, while it does not mention the name Kráka, knows of Áslaug, 'er svmir kalla Randalin, dottor Sigvrðar Fafnis bana ok Brynilldar Bvdla dottor'.<sup>48</sup> This need not mean, of course—in spite of what A. Edzardi<sup>49</sup> and Mundt<sup>50</sup> seem to think—that the compiler of *Ragnarssona þáttur* knew of a linking of *Völsunga saga* with *Ragnars saga*; it only shows that he knew of the idea that Ragnarr became the son-in-law, through marrying Áslaug, of Sigurðr Fáfnisbani, and since he refers to a *Ragnars saga* in the *þáttur*, as we have seen,<sup>51</sup> it is possible that his source for this notion may have been that *Ragnars saga*. More immediately relevant to Bjarni's views on the relationship of *Ragnars saga* to *Völsunga saga*, however, is de Vries's doctoral thesis on the Faroese ballads, published in 1915. de Vries devotes a special section of his long chapter on the Faroese *Ragnars tättur*, or ballad of Ragnarr, to a discussion of the relationship between *Völsunga saga* and *Ragnars saga*, and reaches conclusions quite different from those of Bjarni.<sup>52</sup> His starting-point is the view expressed by Mogk in his literary history of 1904 that *Völsunga saga* was in all

*Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*, LIII (1928), 257–302; see pp. 293–94. See also p. 167 of Jan . . . de Vries, *Studiën over Færöische balladen* (1915).

<sup>48</sup> See *Hauksbók*, 459.

<sup>49</sup> See Edzardi, XLIII–IV.

<sup>50</sup> See Mundt, p. 123. de Vries (1928), 284–90, argues convincingly that the genealogical linking of the family of Ragnarr with that of Sigurðr could well have pre-dated the linking of *Völsunga saga* with *Ragnars saga*, and was assisted (a) by the fact that Ragnarr, like Sigurðr, was regarded as a serpent-slayer, and (b) by the name of Ragnarr's son by Áslaug, Sigurðr ormr-í-auga. The similarity of Ragnarr's death in the serpent-pit to that of Gunnarr in chapter 39 of *Völsunga saga*, and the presence of the motif of the jealous huntsman in Roger of Wendover's version of the Loðbrók-legend and in chapter I of *Völsunga saga*, are probably also to be explained in terms of early interaction between legends about Ragnarr loðbrók and legends about the Gjúkungar and Völsungar, rather than in terms of one written work influencing another. On the former point, see Jan de Vries, 'Die historischen Grundlagen der Ragnarssaga Loðbrókar', in *Arkiv för nordisk filologi*, XXXIX (1923), 244–74, p. 252; on the latter, see Grant Loomis, 'The Growth of the Saint Edmund Legend', in *Harvard Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature*, XIV (1932), 83–113, pp. 92 ff, and Grant Loomis, 'Saint Edmund and the Loðbrok (Lothbroc) legend', *ibid.* XV (1933), 1–23, pp. 1–6.

<sup>51</sup> See p. 46 above.

<sup>52</sup> See de Vries (1915), 188–206.



probability written as an introduction to *Ragnars saga*.<sup>53</sup> Against this, de Vries argues principally that if *Völsunga saga* had been written as an introduction to *Ragnars saga*, the author of *Völsunga saga* would not have included in it, as he does, material which is quite unrelated to Ragnarr loðbrók, such as the stories about Helgi Hundingsbani and Jörmunrekr.<sup>54</sup> Even if Áslaug is regarded as the true protagonist of *Ragnars saga*, and the two sagas together are regarded as a single long *Völsunga saga*, as Bjarni would have it, it has to be admitted that, in its use of material not directly related to the dynastic theme, *Völsunga saga* differs somewhat from *Ynglinga saga* and *Skjöldunga saga*, both of which Bjarni sees as possible models for the long *Völsunga saga* he posits.<sup>55</sup>

de Vries goes on to develop quite convincingly a view which takes as its starting-point a consideration with which Bjarni agrees, namely that *Ragnars saga* originally existed independently of *Völsunga saga*. If this is accepted, says de Vries, then it has to be admitted that Chapter II of the 1824 b text of *Ragnars saga* shows every indication of marking the original beginning of the saga. This chapter, which deals with Ragnarr's slaying of the serpent in Gautland, begins in true saga-fashion with the following sentences: 'Heruþr het iarll ríkr ok agetr a Gautlandi. Hann var kvongadr. Dottir hans het Þora,'<sup>56</sup> etc. Chapter I of this same text, on the other hand, begins in a manner which presupposes a knowledge on the reader's part of certain of the characters and events of *Völsunga saga*, and does not tie up logically with events dealt with in subsequent chapters of *Ragnars saga*. The content of this first chapter may be briefly summarized as follows: Heimir of Hlymdalir, the foster-father of Brynhildr Buðladóttir, receives the news that Sigurðr and Brynhildr are dead. Heimir, who is also the foster-father of Brynhildr's three-year old daughter by Sigurðr, Áslaug, now resolves to save the latter from all possible future harm. He hides her with some treasure in a skilfully made harp, sets out with her on a long journey, and eventually arrives in Norway,

<sup>53</sup> See Eugen Mogk, *Geschichte der norwegische-isländischen Literatur*, 2. Auflage (1904), 843.

<sup>54</sup> See de Vries (1915), 188-89.

<sup>55</sup> See Guðnason (1969), 35.

<sup>56</sup> See Olsen, 116.

where he lodges at the farm of Spangarheiðr, the home of Áki and his wife Gríma. These two kill Heimir for his riches, and finding the child Áslaug proceed to rear her in conditions of great poverty as their own daughter, giving her the name of Kráka. There is, of course, little direct connection between these events and those of the next three chapters, in which Ragnarr kills the serpent in Gautland, marries Þóra and has two sons by her, and resumes the life of a warrior after Þóra's death. In chapter V, however, where Ragnarr meets Kráka and where we should expect to find some explicit reference to the events of Chapter I, the narrative style suggests that the whole set-up at Spangarheiðr, including Kráka, is being introduced to the reader for the first time. This may be illustrated by such sentences as the following: 'Hann kemr skipum sinum . . . i haufn eina litla, enn þar var bęr skamt þadan, er het a Spangarheide . . .'; '. . . þa hitta þeir einn mann at male, ok er þat kerling . . .'; '. . . ok a ek mer dottur þa, er . . . heitir Kraka . . .'<sup>57</sup> The 147 text of *Ragnars saga* seems to share at least the first two of these three sentences with the 1824 b text.<sup>58</sup> It is hardly too much to say that this chapter, and the subsequent parts of *Ragnars saga* dealing with Ragnarr and Áslaug up to the point at which she convinces Ragnarr of her true identity, may be quite comfortably read in the 1824 b text without reference to the events of Chapter I. *Hardly* too much, because there is a brief reference to Heimir at one point in this part of the saga,<sup>59</sup> and also because, if Chapter I is left out of account, the reader's natural ques-

<sup>57</sup> See Olsen, 122.

<sup>58</sup> See Olsen, 177.

<sup>59</sup> See Olsen, 128, 11. 6-7. Áslaug is here speaking to Áki and Gríma, saying 'I know you killed Heimir, my foster-father, and to no-one (engum manni) do I have more reason to feel ungrateful than to you.' The fact that Olsen, 179, footnote to 4r, line 9, discerned the words -ungum monnum (corresponding to 'engum manni?') in this part of the 147 text, which he found otherwise illegible at this point, does not necessarily suggest that the first half of the sentence—the part dealing with Heimir—was present in the 147 text. The 147 text in the (to Olsen) partly legible lines (Olsen, 179, 4r, 1-4) immediately preceding this illegible patch seems to differ quite markedly from the corresponding section of 1824 b (Olsen 127, 22-128, 1), partly in being less wordy; and Kráka has, of course, reasons other than the murder of Heimir for feeling ungrateful to Áki and Gríma—not least the fact that she, the daughter of Sigurðr and Brynhildr, is made to do the work of a kitchen-maid, as the 147 text (Olsen, 178, 2v, 4-6) makes clear.

tion as to *how* Áslaug got to Spangarheiðr in the first place is left unanswered. On the other hand, if these latter considerations, and Chapter I, are disregarded, a greater effect of suspense is achieved from the point in the saga at which Kráka's beauty is contrasted with the ugliness of her supposed mother, Gríma, up to the point at which she reveals her true identity to Ragnarr. Two interesting facts, one of which was briefly mentioned earlier, may be noted at this stage. One is that, as far as can be gathered from the poor state of the 147 text of *Ragnars saga*, this text began with what corresponds to Chapter II in the 1824 b text;<sup>60</sup> and the other is that, in the Faroese *Ragnars táttur*, which de Vries regards as derived from a version of *Ragnars saga* older than either of the versions reflected in 1824 b and 147,<sup>61</sup> we find a version of the Kráka-story in which Kráka, who is supposedly the daughter of an old man called Haki, reveals herself to Ragnarr as the daughter of Sigurðr and Brynhildr, without any explanation being given, at any stage of the ballad, of how she came to be living with Haki.<sup>62</sup> The Faroese *Ragnars táttur*, it may also be noted, begins with the story of Ragnarr's serpent-fight—with events, in fact, which correspond to those of Chapters 2–4 in the 1824 b text of *Ragnars saga*. I am not concerned here to examine de Vries's view that the Faroese *Ragnars táttur* goes back to an older *Ragnars saga*, but simply to point out that, provided the *Ragnars táttur* has been reasonably accurately preserved, we may assume that its singer and its hearers were not disturbed by the absence of an explanation of how Áslaug came

<sup>60</sup> See the reference given in note 19 above.

<sup>61</sup> See de Vries (1915), 148 and 179. de Vries (1928), 296, regards the version of *Ragnars saga* reflected in 147 as a combination of the one reflected in 1824 b and of *Ragnarssona þáttur*.

<sup>62</sup> See the variant texts of *Ragnars táttur* printed in N. Djurhuus and Chr. Matras, eds., *Føroya kvæði . . .* (1951–63), 215–43. It must not be thought that the early history of Áslaug was unknown to Faroese tradition. On the contrary, it is told briefly in the Faroese ballad of Brynhild (Djurhuus/Matras, 201–203) how she was set afloat on the sea shortly after her birth, and there is evidence for the former existence of a lengthier account of her life-story in a Faroese song now lost, see de Vries (1928) 287–88, for documentation. Furthermore, the Faroese *Gests ríma* or *Ásla ríma*, which in content closely resembles chapter I of the 1824 b text of the saga, probably derives ultimately from the version of the saga reflected in that text. See de Vries (1915), 182–88, and Djurhuus/Matras, 244–47.



to be living under the name of Kráka in the humble company of Haki. They were presumably satisfied, as the audience of an Icelandic saga could possibly also be, with the dramatic effect of suspense leading up to Kráka's eventual revelation of her true identity.

In the Faroese *Ragnars túttur*, Áslaug reveals her identity to Ragnarr when he expresses his disbelief, after seeing her in the fine clothing he offers her, that Kráka can be a mere farmer's daughter.<sup>63</sup> In 1824 b, on the other hand, as is well-known, she declares herself to him after learning by magic of Ragnarr's secret plan to leave her, since he believes her to be of low birth, and to marry Ingibjörg, the daughter of King Eysteinn of Sweden.<sup>64</sup> The reasons for this difference have been carefully analysed by de Vries, who believes that the *Ragnars túttur* preserves the older form of the Kráka-story, and who agrees with Bjarni in regarding *Ragnarssona þáttur* as representative of a *Ragnars saga* older than the one reflected in 1824 b.<sup>65</sup> According to de Vries, this older *Ragnars saga* was more concerned, as the *þáttur* indicates, with the sons of Ragnarr than with Ragnarr himself. In the younger *Ragnars saga*—which for the moment we may regard as the one reflected, in different ways, in 1824 b and 147—the author or redactor evidently wished to bring Ragnarr more into the foreground than in the older version. One way of doing this was by presenting Ragnarr as being on better terms with his sons Eirekr and Agnarr, who in the *þáttur*, it will be remembered, tried unsuccessfully to oppose their father by making Eysteinn tributary to themselves rather than to Ragnarr.<sup>66</sup> In 1824 b, on the other hand, Eysteinn and Ragnarr fall out as a result of Ragnarr's abandoning his idea of marrying Eysteinn's daughter, and Eirekr and Agnarr are then made to invade Sweden for reasons which are not made at all clear in the text, but which would seem to be connected, like Ragnarr's estrangement from Eysteinn, with the latter's daughter. In the *þáttur*, of course, Eirekr had wished to marry Eysteinn's daughter, and had been offered her hand in marriage by Eysteinn after being defeated by him in battle. Since now, in 'the younger *Ragnars saga*', the two brothers are being pre-

<sup>63</sup> See Djurhuus/Matras, 222, stanzas 95–97.

<sup>64</sup> See Olsen, 132–37.

<sup>65</sup> See the references given above in note 47.

<sup>66</sup> See p. 47 above, and *Hauksbók*, 459–60.

sented as allied with their father rather than opposed to him, a reason must be found for Ragnarr's friendship with Eysteinn breaking up. This cannot be that Eysteinn refused him the hand of his daughter, however, since the *þáttr*—and presumably the older *Ragnars saga* from which it draws—is clear that Eysteinn was willing to offer her in marriage. Hence arises the notion of Ragnarr's plan to leave Kráka for the seemingly more nobly-born daughter of Eysteinn, and of the insult done to Eysteinn and his daughter when he abandons this plan as a result of finding out Kráka's true identity. de Vries also speaks in this connection of the skill with which the author of *Ragnars saga* adapts the Kráka-story to its new environment in Chapters 5 and 6 of the 1824 b text, and raises the question of whether the person responsible for these various changes, most of which, it may be added, seem to be common to the 147 and 1824 b texts of the saga,<sup>67</sup> was the same person as the one who linked *Völsunga saga* to *Ragnars saga*. I hope to give a 'yes-and-no' answer to this question in the remarks with which I shall now conclude the first part of this paper.

The conclusions of this part of the paper must be regarded as highly tentative, not least because of the poorly preserved state of the 147 text of *Ragnars saga*.<sup>68</sup> This text may be regarded as reflecting a version of *Ragnars saga* older than the one reflected in 1824 b, as Bjarni seems to hint; this version may be called X. The X-version was linked to *Völsunga saga*, as we must surely conclude from Ás-laug's reference to the meeting of Sigurðr and Brynhildr in connection with her birth, but not necessarily by means of an introductory chapter about Heimir and Ás-laug; at the X-stage of the descent, we may suggest, *Völsunga saga* was brought to an end, as it is in 1824 b and

<sup>67</sup> See Olsen, 177–82, and the footnotes pointing out the corresponding passages in the 1824 b text. For the argument outlined in this paragraph, see de Vries (1915), esp. 193 ff.

<sup>68</sup> I am grateful to Dr. Jónas Kristjánsson of Stofnun Árna Magnússonar, Reykjavík, and to Professor Jonna Louis-Jensen of Det Arnamagnæanske Institut, Copenhagen, for informing me—the former on the basis of photographs, and the latter on the basis of an inspection of the manuscript itself, that, in the part which is primarily relevant to the argument outlined in this paragraph (Olsen, 179, 4r, see under note 59, above), the 147 text is just as difficult to read now as when Olsen edited it, if not more so.

in recent editions of *Völsunga saga*,<sup>69</sup> with the story of Hamðir and Sörli, and *Ragnars saga* was made to follow it as a sequel, beginning, as we may gather from the text of 147, with the story of Ragnarr's serpent-fight in Gautland. There was an element of inconsistency in this arrangement in that no explanation was given as to how Áslaug came to be living at Spangarheiðr as the supposed daughter of Áki and Gríma, but this was hardly more serious than the inconsistency involved in allowing Ragnarr to recite in the serpent-pit certain stanzas from *Krákumál* dealing with events not mentioned elsewhere in either *Ragnars saga* or *Völsunga saga*,<sup>70</sup> and it had the great advantage of providing an effect of suspense from the point in the saga at which the reader, like Ragnarr's *matsveinar*, begins to wonder whether the fair Kráka really can be the daughter of the hideous Gríma. 1824 b, on the other hand, represents a later stage of the descent, and reflects the work of a redactor with authorial pretensions who felt that *Völsunga saga* and *Ragnars saga* needed to be more firmly cemented together, and therefore composed the chapter about Heimir and Áslaug. His version of the saga may be called Y. This redactor, or *Kompilator* as de Vries calls him, will have added to *Völsunga saga* the reference to Áslaug in that saga,<sup>71</sup> and the brief reference to Heimir, already referred to, in the part of *Ragnars saga* dealing with Ragnarr's wooing of Kráka;<sup>72</sup> he will have regarded *Krákumál* as an

<sup>69</sup> See Olsen's edition, and R.G. Finch, ed., *The Saga of the Volsungs* (1965).

<sup>70</sup> See the references given above in note 33. A further inconsistency becomes apparent in the 147 text if it is accepted that Olsen, XCII and 189, is correct in taking the words immediately following the end of *Krákumál* in that text as referring to Ragnarr's death, by analogy with *Hauksbók*, 463, 10, since a few lines further on in 147 Olsen found he could read some words which seem to form part of the first of the two verses which, according to the 1824 b text, were recited by Ragnarr in the serpent-pit. This would mean that in the 147 text Ragnarr would have died after completing his recitation of *Krákumál*, but was nevertheless sufficiently alive to recite verses a few lines further on—unless, of course, the later verse-passage was included in a passage of reported speech. Inconsistencies of this kind, which will have prompted the Y-redactor of *Ragnars saga* to exclude *Krákumál* from his text of the saga, are on a par with those which prompted him to add the chapter dealing with Heimir and Áslaug, and indeed tend to support the view that this chapter was not present in the X-version of the saga.

<sup>71</sup> See Olsen, 69, ll. 3-4.

<sup>72</sup> See note 59 above.



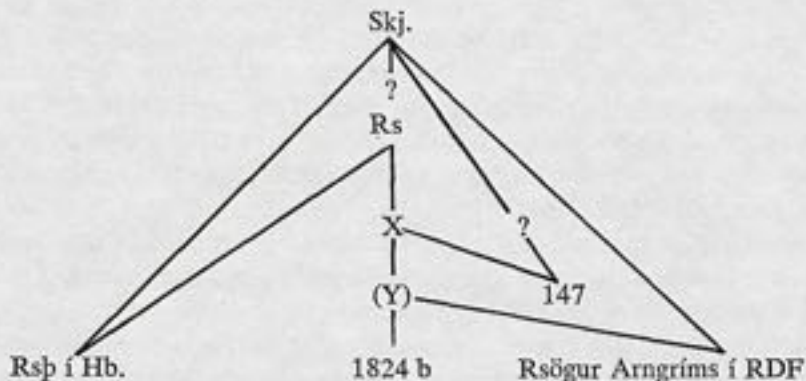
independent work, and removed it from the text of the saga; and will have made the end of *Ragnars saga* less chronicle-like and more romantic, removing the quotation from Sigvatr Þórðarson's *Knútsdrápa*, and generally blurring the political outlines of this part of the story.<sup>73</sup> The last three chapters of Y, and the insertion of the 28th and 29th *lausavísur*, with the few lines of prose introducing them, must methodologically be regarded as the work of this compiler.<sup>74</sup> The advantages of this view are that it allows for the possibility of *Völsunga saga* and *Ragnars saga* having originally been independent works, and it does fuller justice than Bjarni does himself to his fine distinction between what may now be called the X and Y versions of the saga. It will be evident by now that this view of the tradition owes a great deal to Bjarni's and de Vries's contributions; it differs from Bjarni's, however, in leaving open the possibility that *Völsunga saga* may originally have been independent of *Ragnars saga*, and from de Vries's in that it sees the X-version of *Ragnars saga* as older than the Y-version, whereas de Vries regarded 147 as reflecting a combination of

<sup>73</sup> This may be illustrated in particular by a comparison of those passages from 147, *Hauksbók* and 1824 b which have been selected for numerical comparison later in this paper; see p. 22 below.

<sup>74</sup> See Olsen, 160, ll. 3–25. de Vries (1928), 296, who sees the 1824 b text as reflecting a version of the saga older than the one reflected in 147, nevertheless regards these verses and lines as interpolated. On the possibility that certain material in 1824 b, including material from *Þiðriks saga*, was added by an interpolator after *Völsunga saga* and *Ragnars saga* had been joined together by means of the linking chapter, see also Per Wieselgren, *Quellenstudien zur Völsungasaga* (1935–36), III, 351–52. Wieselgren does not allow, however, as this paper does, for the possibility that the two sagas were joined together otherwise than by means of this chapter. If it is accepted (cf. note 18 above), that no traces of the influence of *Þiðriks saga* are discernible in the 147 text of *Ragnars saga*, then it may be assumed that the Y-redactor was responsible for those traces of its influence which are found in 1824 b. If, on the other hand, it is found that 147 does show the influence of *Þiðriks saga*, then we must assume that the X-redactor is primarily responsible for the marks of its influence in the 147 and 1824 b texts, and that those traces of the influence of *Þiðriks saga* which Edzardi, XXXVIII, thought he could find in chapters 1 and 19 of the 1824 b text of *Ragnars saga*, are to be attributed not to the direct influence of *Þiðriks saga*, but to the influence of the X versions of *Völsunga saga* and *Ragnars saga* on those passages which were added by the Y-redactor.

the Y-version of *Ragnars saga*, as it may now be called, and *Ragnars-sona þátr.*<sup>75</sup>

Bjarni's stemma may thus be tentatively re-drawn as follows:



## II

I should like now, in the second and final part of this paper, to consider Bjarni's arguments—to which my own, as I have already said, are largely indebted—in the light of some criticisms made of them recently by Lönnroth. In the review of *Einarsbók* referred to earlier—parts of which have already been quoted in the course of this paper—Lönnroth criticizes Bjarni's contribution on the grounds, first, that the differences between the 'written sagas' dealing with Ragnarr loðbrók and his spouse are too 'glaring' to merit Bjarni's fitting them into a stemma 'by assuming various "lost written versions" as intermediate links between the still extant texts', and secondly, that 'Bjarni Guðnason fails to consider the possibility that some of the versions may be completely unrelated [*sic*] and based independently on oral tales'. He draws attention to the development of Áslaug's character noticed by Bjarni in the various extant manifestations of the older and younger *Ragnars sögur*, and claims that this is 'symptomatic of a general trend in the thirteenth century to romanticize the older heroic legends'. 'Perhaps', he concludes, 'Bjarni Guðnason would have been able to make an even more interesting analysis

<sup>75</sup> See de Vries (1928), 296.

of this general trend if he had been somewhat less devoted to his traditional philological problems of *ríttengsl*—problems that do not really merit the tremendous efforts Icelandic scholars have made to solve them.<sup>1</sup> Later in the same review, after summarizing and discussing Hallvard Mageröy's contribution to *Einarsbók*,<sup>2</sup> Lönnroth claims, reasonably enough, that Mageröy has 'shown the way to a more scientific appraisal of the relationship between different versions than the ones we normally find in studies of the saga'. Less reasonably, however, he immediately goes on to raise the question of whether 'Bjarni Guðnason would have assumed *ríttengsl* for all the stories about Ragnarr loðbrók had he used Mageröy's method'.<sup>3</sup> Before this question can be in any way answered, it will be necessary to explain Mageröy's method.

Mageröy's chief purpose is to attempt to establish more reliable criteria than those offered by Liestøl in his *Upphavet til den islandske ættesaga* (1929) for determining whether the differences between surviving texts of the same story are to be explained in terms of 'oral' or 'written' variation.<sup>4</sup> An acknowledgement of 'oral variation' between such variant texts depends on the view that these texts are more or less accurate, mutually independent records of variant oral versions of the story in question; the similarities and differences between them must therefore be explained by reference, primarily, to features which experience and experiment show to be characteristic of aural memory and oral communication. An acknowledgement of written variation between the surviving texts, on the other hand, depends on the view that these texts are more or less direct reflexes of scribally inter-related variant written versions of the story in question; the similarities between them must therefore be explained in terms of the scribal inter-relationship of these variant written versions; while the differences between them must be explained by the conclusion that the scribe, redactor or author of at least one of the texts or prototypes of texts

<sup>1</sup> See *M. Scan.* (1971), 178.

<sup>2</sup> Hallvard Mageröy, 'Eventyrvariantar og sagaversjonar', in *Einarsbók*, 233–54.

<sup>3</sup> See *M. Scan.* (1971), 180.

<sup>4</sup> See Mageröy, 233–34, and the English translation of Liestøl, *The Origin of the Icelandic Family Sagas* (1930), 35 ff. See also T. Andersson, *The Problem of Icelandic Saga Origins* (1964), 131 ff.



has in some way departed, for conscious or unconscious reasons, from the version which formed his written source—whether by conscious or unconscious omission or alteration, or by conscious addition, or by a combination of all or some of these. It is to the scribal interrelationship of the variant written versions of a saga or story that the Icelandic word *rittengsl* often refers,<sup>5</sup> though Mageröy in fact uses the Norwegian term *litterær skyldskap*, meaning 'literary relationship'.

Mageröy compares with each other the two members of each of a number of folktale variant pairs, that is, thirty-four pairs of Icelandic folktale variants, and twenty pairs of Norwegian folktale variants.<sup>6</sup> As far as can be ascertained, the two variants in each pair are recorded independently of each other from oral tradition. The purpose of the comparison is to find out, initially, how many words the two variants in each pair have in common, and then to calculate the percentage of words in common in relation to the total number of words in each of

<sup>5</sup> Special caution must be counselled here. The way Lönnroth, a Swede writing in English, uses the Icelandic word *rittengsl* may suggest that it has acquired something of the status of a technical term. It should be noted, however, that the word is used in at least two rather different senses. In his *Ritunartími Íslendingasagna* (1965), 92, Einar Ól. Sveinsson writes: 'Með orðinu *rittengsl* er átt við, að söguritari sýni í riti sínu þekkingu á eldra rituðu verki. Vera má, að hann noti hið fyrra verk vísitandi, hitt má líka vera, að hann hafi orðið fyrir áhrifum þess án þess að vita af. Verið getur, að hann hafi það liggjandi á borðinu hjá sér, en líka getur verið, að hann hafi einhvern tíma áður lesið það eða heyrt það lesið. Enn fremur er hugsanlegt, að hann hafi skráð inntak þess eða inntak kafla úr því, og styðjist nú við það inntak, en ekki verkið sjálft. Allra þessara möguleika verður að gæta, þegar reynt er að ákveða *rittengsl*.' Bjarni Guðnason and Lars Lönnroth, on the other hand, seem to be using the word in some such narrower sense as 'the scribal interconnection that exists between two or more works or versions of a work or passages in those (versions of) works, when each link in the chain of connection has involved a copyist, redactor or author having the older work or version before him as he writes.' It is in this latter sense that I have understood their use of the word. This is not to say that Einar's conception of *rittengsl* is not a useful one (cf. his *Um Njálu*, 1933, 100 ff., 153–55); on the contrary, despite T. Andersson's strictures (*op. cit.*, 95 ff.) it can be extremely helpful in a context rather different from the present one, viz. in the study of borrowed elements in a given saga. I owe this observation to Dr. R. M. Perkins.

<sup>6</sup> The Icelandic variants are selected from among those listed by Einar Ólafur Sveinsson in his *Verzeichnis Isländischer Märchenvarianten, Folklore Fellows Communications* No. 83 (1929), and the Norwegian ones from those listed by Reidar Th. Christiansen in his *Norske eventyr, Norske folkeminne* II (1921).

the two variants. As a result of this procedure, Mageröy finds that the number of words in common seldom exceeds 33½% of the total number of words in either of the two variants, and that when it does exceed this figure, the circumstances are exceptional—either the tale is of the chain-tale type, in which the element of regular and rhythmical repetition is likely to give rise to a greater similarity of wording between variants than would be found between variants of other types of tale,<sup>7</sup> or—as happens in one case—one of the two variants, the one containing a percentage of words in common *higher* than 33½%, is exceptionally short (comprising only 66 words) in comparison with the other (comprising 224 words).<sup>8</sup> A brief comparison of certain sections of variants of the Norwegian popular legend about Knut Skrad-dar, which Mageröy also carries out, shows that the number of words in common between these sections of variants does not exceed 33½% either.<sup>9</sup>

Mageröy then points out that, in view of the freedom which writers of medieval texts often felt in relation to their exemplars, surviving texts of scribally interrelated written versions of a saga may sometimes show, in parts, few, if any similarities. It is always possible in theory, therefore, that extensive differences between surviving texts reflect written rather than oral variation. The pairs of folktale variants examined by Mageröy nevertheless suggest, in his view, that in the case of short narratives at least, oral variation is a possible alternative to written variation where the number of words shared in common by the surviving saga-texts is limited to roughly one-third or less. If the surviving texts or parts of texts have more than roughly one-third of the words in common, on the other hand, it is likely that they reflect scribally interrelated written versions of a saga or story, and thus provide examples of *litterær skyldskap*, or *rittengsl*, particularly if the texts in question can be shown to have in common many series of more than six words in sequence, and several whole sentences.<sup>10</sup> Mageröy then goes on to calculate the percentages of words in com-

<sup>7</sup> See Mageröy, 237, 240.

<sup>8</sup> See Mageröy, 244.

<sup>9</sup> This is based on the variants of the legend printed by Liestøl in his *Norske ættesogor* (1922), 169–82.

<sup>10</sup> See Mageröy, 247–48.

mon between comparable passages in the M and K texts of *Bandamanna saga* on the one hand, and in the A and C texts of *Ljósvetninga saga* on the other, and finds that, since these percentages are only in a few cases lower than 33⅓%, and are often far above that figure, the passages in question point to a literary relationship between the variant texts in the case of either saga. Of the pairs of passages so examined, the longest consists of one passage of 569 words in the M text of *Bandamanna saga* measured against one of 477 words in the K text, and the shortest consists of one passage of 152 words in the A text of *Ljósvetninga saga* measured against one of 133 words in the C text.<sup>11</sup>

We may now apply this method of Mageröy's to the extant manifestations of *Ragnars saga*, as Lönnroth suggests Bjarni should do. I use the expression 'extant manifestations' rather than 'variant texts' since, if *Hauksbók* is to be included in the investigation, it should be remembered that *Ragnarssona þáttr* in *Hauksbók* is not a text of *Ragnars saga*; it refers to a 'saga of king Ragnarr', as we have seen,<sup>12</sup> gives what is presumably a summary account of certain events in that saga, and contains certain verses which most probably were also contained in that saga.<sup>13</sup> If Bjarni's stemma is on the right lines, and if mine is correct, we should expect the verbal correspondences to be greatest between the 147 and the 1824 b texts. We should also expect the verbal correspondences between *Hauksbók* and either of these two texts to be considerably less than those which they share with each other, but greater between *Hauksbók* and 147 than between *Hauksbók* and 1824 b. In choosing passages for comparison I have deliberately excluded, for the purpose of comparing the 147 and 1824 b texts, passages which contain verses or references to verses, and passages involving a marked degree of repetition, rhythm, or alliteration, such as those enumerating the conditions under which Kráka is to visit Ragnarr in chapter 5 of the 1824 b text.<sup>14</sup> The reason for this is

<sup>11</sup> See Mageröy, 249 ff.

<sup>12</sup> See p. 46 above.

<sup>13</sup> The verses in question are those corresponding to nos. 11, 13, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 in the 1824 b text, see *Hauksbók*, 460-62, and Olsen's commentary, Olsen, 203 ff.

<sup>14</sup> See Olsen, 124, ll. 9-11. Kráka is to visit Ragnarr 'neither clad nor unclad, neither fed nor unfed, neither alone nor accompanied by man'.



that if, as Lönnroth suggests as a possibility, the variant texts are based independently of each other on oral tales, then the verbal correspondences between them are bound to be especially marked in verse-passages or passages dependent on verses, or in passages of a markedly repetitive, rhythmical or alliterative type, since such passages, as is well-known, survive longer and more easily in oral tradition than ordinary prose.<sup>15</sup> My reasons for using passages which do contain a verse when I compare a passage from *Hauksbók* with one from 147, on the other hand, will be made clear at the appropriate moment.<sup>16</sup> I have followed Mageröy's example in counting as 'words in common' all words which occupy the same or a closely corresponding contextual position in the two texts compared, and which, while basically the same, may sometimes differ from each other in case, number, mood or tense. Also included are variant derivative forms of the same word, and words forming an element in a compound.<sup>17</sup> By 'legible words' in the 147 text I mean all those words which Olsen was able to read in their entirety, and those words in which he found enough letters discernible for it to be obvious from his text which words are in question. The expression 'theoretical legible total in 1824 b' refers to the number of words in the relevant section of the 1824 b text which gives the same percentage of the total number of words in that section as the actual total number of legible words gives in relation to the estimated total number of words in the corresponding section of 147.<sup>18</sup> The estimated total number of words in each section of 147 has been arrived at by multiplying the average number of words per legible line in the whole of the 147 text of *Ragnars saga* by the total number of lines in each section.<sup>19</sup> Three passages have been

<sup>15</sup> Mageröy, 237, 240, 252, shows that he has taken this into account, also, in his remarks on folk-tale variants of the chain-tale type and on parallel passages in the A and C texts of *Ljósvetninga saga*.

<sup>16</sup> See pp. 72-73 below.

<sup>17</sup> See Mageröy, 238-39.

<sup>18</sup> The percentage of words in common in relation to the 'theoretical legible total' in 1824 b is comparable to the percentage of words in common in relation to the actual total number of legible words in the relevant section of 147.

<sup>19</sup> It was found that the average number of words per legible line in the whole of the 147 text of *Ragnars saga* was 12.8. The first of the three passages from 147 chosen for comparison covers 26 lines of 2r and 16 lines of 2v (see Olsen, 177-78),

chosen for comparison—one from near the beginning of the saga, one from near the middle, and one from near the end. The first deals with Ragnarr's voyage to Norway, the arrival of his *matsveinar* at Spangarheiðr, their conversation with Gríma, their first sight of Kráka, and their report to Ragnarr; the second deals with the slaying of the cow Sibilja by Ívarr and the defeat of Eysteinn, the conquest of Vífilsborg by Ívarr, Björn, Hvítserkr and Sigurðr, and their arrival in Lyngbarði (147) or Lúna (1824 b); and the third deals with the battle between Ragnarr's sons and Ella and the events leading up to it, from the point at which Ívarr, after amassing support for himself in England, sends to Denmark for his brothers.

- (1) Olsen 177-78, 2r,1-2v,17, corresponding to Olsen 122,1-124,4

Total no. of legible words in this section of 147	88
Estimated total no. of words in this section of 147	538
Total no. of words in common with corresponding section of 1824 b	78
Total no. of words in this section of 1824 b	600
'Theoretical legible total' in this section of 1824 b	98
Percentage of words in common in this section of 147	87%
Percentage of words in common in this section of 1824 b	80%

i.e. 42 lines.  $42 \times 12.8 = 538$ . The second covers 11r, which had 28 lines (see Olsen, 184, second footnote to 11r), 11v and 12r, in a part of the text, that is, where the average number of lines per page is 26-27 (see Olsen, LXXXVI). Now since Olsen found 11v totally illegible (see Olsen 185) and since in his view 'at least one line' had been cut away at the top of 12r, on which he found 24 lines discernible (see Olsen 185-86, and 185, second footnote to 12r) we may assume that 11v had 27 lines, and that 12r had 26. This gives us a total of 81 lines in this section.  $81 \times 12.8 = 1037$ . The third section covers 18v and 19r, down to half way through line 7. Olsen's footnotes to these two pages (Olsen, 192-93), show that one line, at least part of which is relevant to our purpose, is missing from the top of 18v, on which he deduced there was a total of 24 lines, and that 'at least one line' is missing from the top of 19r—which otherwise, however, he found legible. If we assume that 2 lines are missing from the top of 19r and add these to the 24 of 18v, we then have 26 lines to multiply by 12.8, which gives 333; to this we add the 78 words which Olsen could read in the remaining relevant lines of 19r. Answer: 411. The fact that in the second and third sections of 147 the estimated total should turn out to be slightly greater than the actual total in the corresponding sections of 1824 b need cause no surprise; it was shown earlier, p. 51, that in a fair number of instances the 1824 b text is somewhat less wordy than the 147 one.

(2) Olsen 184-86, 11r,1-12r,24, corresponding to Olsen 149,7-152,22	
Total no. of legible words in 147	315
Estimated total no. of words in 147	1037
Total no. of words in common with 1824 b	237
Total no. of words in 1824 b	1022
'Theoretical legible total' in 1824 b	310
Percentage of words in common in 147	75%
Percentage of words in common in 1824 b	76%
(3) Olsen 192-93, 18v,1-19r,7, corresponding to Olsen 166,17-167,27	
Total no. of legible words in 147	172
Estimated total no. of words in 147	411
Total no. of words in common with 1824 b	108
Total no. of words in 1824 b	407
'Theoretical legible total' in 1824 b	170
Percentage of words in common in 147	63%
Percentage of words in common in 1824 b	64%

These figures show that, in the three passages of *Ragnars saga* chosen for comparison, the two texts of the saga more than fulfil Mageröy's requirements for an acknowledgement of literary relations between saga-texts. The two members of each of the first two pairs of passages have two-thirds of the words in common; while the two members of the third pair have well over half the words in common. Space does not permit me to discuss here the merits and demerits of Mageröy's method; I simply wish to answer the question, raised by Lönnroth, of whether Bjarni would have assumed *rittensl* for the extant stories of Ragnarr loðbrók if he had used Mageröy's method. The answer in the case of 147 and 1824 b is that he certainly would have done; the figures listed here in no way conflict with Bjarni's views.

We certainly cannot expect the correspondences between *Hauksbók* and either 147 or 1824 b to be as striking as those indicated by the figures for 147 and 1824 b in relation to each other. Not only is *Ragnarssona þáttr* in *Hauksbók* not a text of *Ragnars saga*, as has already been pointed out;<sup>20</sup> it is also very much shorter than either the 1824 b text of *Ragnars saga* or the version of *Ragnars saga* reflected in 147. It consists only of five chapters, the last two of which—dealing respectively with King Gormr and Sigurðr hjörtr, both descend-

<sup>20</sup> See p. 68 above.



ants of Sigurðr ormr-í-auga, one of Ragnarr's sons by Áslaug—have no counterparts either in the 1824 b text of *Ragnars saga* or, as far as can be discovered, in the version of the saga reflected in 147.<sup>21</sup> The 1824 b text of *Ragnars saga* has twenty chapters, and the 147 version of *Ragnars saga*, as will be clear from what has been said above, corresponds more or less closely, in length and content, to all but the first chapter, and the last three chapters, of the 1824 b text.<sup>22</sup> There are thus few passages in the *Hauksbók* manifestation of *Ragnars saga* which correspond sufficiently in number of words and detail of content to be readily comparable with either 147 or 1824 b, and most of those which do so correspond are verse-passages, which, for the reasons suggested above, are unsuitable for our purpose; though it may be mentioned in passing that the seven *lausavísur* which the *þáttur* and 1824 b have in common occur in the same order in both these extant manifestations of *Ragnars saga*, and that of these seven the four which the *þáttur* and 147 can be seen to have in common occur in the same order in these two manifestations of the saga as well—a fact which suggests literary connections between all three extant manifestations, rather than mutually independent recording of material from oral tradition.<sup>23</sup>

The one prose passage in *Ragnarssona þáttur* which seems to correspond with passages in 147 and 1824 b in such a way as to make Mageröy's method of comparison at all feasible is one which does contain a verse, it is true, but which also contains material which does not seem to derive from the poem from which the verse is quoted. The passage in question is the one beginning with a brief statement about King Ella's defeat in battle by the sons of Ragnarr and containing, among other things, the account of Ívarr cutting the blood-eagle on Ella's back; it ends with a short summary statement about the Viking activities of the sons of Loðbrók in various countries. The poem quoted in the course of this passage is Sigvatr Þórðarson's

<sup>21</sup> See pp. 48–49 above, and the references given in notes 22 and 26.

<sup>22</sup> See pp. 49–52 above.

<sup>23</sup> See above, note 13 to Part II. The four verses which the *þáttur*, 147 and 1824 b can be seen to have in common are those corresponding to nos. 18, 19, 20, and 22 in the 1824 b text.

*Knútsdrápa*.<sup>24</sup> Both the quotation itself and the manner in which it is introduced are the same in *Hauksbók* and 147; the poem is neither quoted nor referred to, on the other hand, in 1824 b. I have left out of consideration both the reference to the poem and the quotation from it when counting the numbers and percentages of words in common between the three passages. These numbers and percentages may now be listed.

147 (Olsen, 193-94, 19r, 9-23):

Total no. of words (excluding verse and ref. to verse)	149	
No. and percentage of words in common with Hb.	45	30%
No. and percentage of words in common with 1824 b	59	40%

*Hauksbók* (ed. Finnur Jónsson, 1892-96, 464, 2-14):

Total no. of words (excluding verse and ref. to verse)	115	
No. and percentage of words in common with 147	45	39%
No. and percentage of words in common with 1824 b	21	18%

1824 b (Olsen, 167, 27-168, 13):

Total no. of words (no verse referred to or quoted)	161	
No. and percentage of words in common with 147	59	37%
No. and percentage of words in common with Hb.	21	13%

I am ready to admit that these figures do not seem particularly striking at first glance, but taken together with the figures listed earlier for 147 and 1824 b, they do in fact confirm the expectation raised in the first half of this paper that towards the end of *Ragnars saga* there would be an increase in the differences between 1824 b and 147 on the one hand, and in the similarities between 147 and *Hauksbók* on the other;<sup>25</sup> and they also confirm the expectation raised by Bjarni's stemma and my own that the correspondences between *Hauksbók* and 147 would in general be greater than those between *Hauksbók* and 1824 b. Now since, according to Mageröy's criteria at least, the literary relations between 147 and 1824 b have already been well established by the figures given earlier for those two texts, it will be necessary to concentrate now on *Hauksbók* and 147 if literary relations between all three extant manifestations of *Ragnars saga* are to be established, since these two manifestations of the saga would seem

<sup>24</sup> See note 23 to Part I, above.

<sup>25</sup> See p. 52 above, and the reference given in note 35.

to be closer to each other than *Hauksbók* and 1824 b. Well, it must be admitted that the figures just listed for *Hauksbók* and 147—while they might just pass muster with Mageröy—are not particularly impressive. Mageröy's method requires that short narrative passages such as these must have *at least* one-third of the words in common if we are to speak with confidence of their literary interrelationship. In this case, the 147 passage, which consists of 149 words, has 30%—just under one-third—of its words in common with the *Hauksbók* passage; while the latter, which consists of 115 words, has 39%—rather over one-third—of its words in common with the 147 passage. The higher percentage in the case of the *Hauksbók* passage could well be explained, however, by the fact that this passage is considerably shorter than the 147 one. Since we cannot confidently state, therefore, that the two passages have *at least* one-third of their words in common, we must look for other features in them which suggest a literary interrelationship before we admit that oral variation is a possible explanation of the differences between them. It is for this reason that the two passages are printed here side by side; the words which they have in common—apart from those in the reference to *Knútsdrápa* and in the quotation from that poem—are italicized.

*Hauksbók*, ed. Jónsson, 464, 2–14:

. . . varð konvngur þa borin ofrlíði sva at mikill þori líðs hans fell en sialfr varð hann handtekin. Ivar ok þeir bræðr mintvz nu hversv faðir þeira var pindr letv þeir nu rista orn a baki Ellv ok skera síþan rifin oll fra ryginnv með sverði sva at þar vorv lvingv vt dregin. Sva segir Sigvatr skald i Knvtz drapv Ok Ellv bak at let hin er sat Ivar ara Iorvik skorid. Eftir þessa orrostv gerðiz Ivar konvngur yfir þeim lvtu Englandz sem hans frændr hófðv fyri att. hann atti þa .i.j. bræðr frillv borna en annar het Yngvar en annar Hvsto. þeir pinvþv Iatmvdn konvng en helga eftir boði Ivars ok lagði hann síþan vndir sig hans riki. Loðbrokar synir forv

147, ed. Olsen, 193, 19r, 9–23:

. . . þa lykr suo at landz menn flyia ok fa micinn osigur . enn ella kongr er leiddur fyri ragnars sonu . hann var sarr miog . Iuar bad cigi skiott rada vm liflat hans ok er nu rad at lata sier j hug koma huernn dauda hann valdi faudr vorum Nu skal sa madr er hagur ok marka aurn a baki hanum ok rioda j blodi hans Sa madr er til þessa var kuaddur reist aurnn á baki hanum ok skar rifin frá hryggnum . ok dro vr hanum lungun ok adr enn þessu verki var lokit let ella kongr lif sitt Suo segir siguatr skald j knutz drapu . Oc ella bak at leit hinn er sat Iuar ara j iorvik skorid . Eftir þessa orrostu geriz Iuar kongr yfir þeim hluta



vm morg lond með hernaði England  
ok Valland ok Frackland ok vt vm  
Lvmbarði.

landz er adur haufdu þtt hans ett-  
menn hann iok mlog sitt a marga  
vega . Suo er sagt at hann leti drepa  
iatmund hinn helga ok lagdi vndir sig  
þiki hans lodbrokar synir foru vida  
med hernaði vm england vestur ok  
suo vida anars stadar.

It will be seen from this juxtaposition of the two passages that the order in which events are related is the same in both; that the details of Ella's torture by Ívarr are the same, and that in both passages the same verse from *Knútsdrápa*, and that verse only, is quoted; the wording of the reference to the poem is also the same in both passages. Nor is the similarity of wording between the passages confined to the torture of Ella, which because of its exceptionally gruesome nature might perhaps be expected to be remembered in detail in oral tradition; it extends to events which have little directly to do with the manner of Ella's death, such as Ívarr's accession to the throne of part of England, the slaying of King Edmund at his instigation, and the subsequent Viking activities of the sons of Loðbrók in various countries. It is also significant here that King Edmund is called 'inn helgi' in both passages. All these considerations point to literary relations between the works in which these passages are contained rather than to independent recording from oral tradition, and, taken together with the various lists given earlier, illustrate the kind of factors that should be borne in mind and thoroughly examined before casual statements are made about extant manifestations of a given saga being 'completely unrelated and based independently on oral tales'.

JÓNAS KRISTJÁNSSON

## ÍSLENDINGADRÁPA AND ORAL TRADITION

THE University of Iceland's first professor of Icelandic philology was Björn Magnússon Ólsen who held this position from 1911–1918. One of his principal activities during the years 1913–1917 was the delivering of a series of lectures on the Íslendingasögur. These lectures were published some twenty years after his death, by which time many of his opinions had appeared in the writings of younger men, especially in the introductions to the Íslensk Fornrit series. In fact, it is now difficult to determine just how much of the material in these introductions owes its origins, directly or indirectly, to Björn himself.

It may perhaps be thought that he showed an unwarranted bias in allotting four of his seven years of office to the study of this one element of Icelandic literature, but if we take note of his methods or of his achievement, then we must also grant that the time was well spent, since Björn M. Ólsen's lectures are, I believe, pioneering works of unequalled value in the field of old Icelandic literature. This becomes only too clear if we compare the lectures with two other major contemporary works which dealt with the same material: *Die Anfänge der isländischen Saga*, by Andreas Heusler (1914), and the second edition of Finnur Jónsson's literary history (1920–24). As regards the Íslendingasögur these two works now stand as memorials to two great scholars on the wrong track, whereas Björn's lectures prepared the way for present-day methods and opinions, and they retain their value, in many respects, even today. He takes the written text as being the principal object of research; he fully acknowledges the role of the author; he investigates sources and influences; he notes the relation of the sagas one to another and plots the growth and development of the genre.

'How did the sagas originate?' This is a question which Björn poses, and he answers himself: 'There can be little doubt but that

their roots lie in oral tradition, in the stories that were told of the saga heroes. This can be seen both in the material of the sagas and in their diction and narrative construction, all of which bear a strong similarity to a style of oral delivery. There must have been a great many unwritten stories in circulation in Iceland in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and there were "sagnamenn" (experienced story tellers) who took it upon themselves to entertain others with stories, as for example the man who related the journeyings of Haraldr harðráði and other stories at Haraldr's court, and the priest Ingimundr Einarsson, who together with Hrólfur af Skálmarnesi provided entertainment with *fornaldarsögur* at the feast at Reykhólar in 1119.<sup>1</sup>

Although Björn is eager to assert the importance of an oral tradition, he nonetheless recognizes that the written saga is specifically the author's own work. Here I quote: 'The more fully we come to understand our sagas, the further we take ourselves into them, and the more carefully we investigate them, the more we come to recognize the fact that they are creative works, and that it was an artist who held the pen'; and he goes on to say, 'sometimes there are also written sources existing behind the sagas.'<sup>2</sup>

It may be said that Björn's successors, the representatives of the 'Icelandic School' have continued along the same path, dividing responsibility for the *Íslendingasögur* between the 'tellers of tales' and the writers, those who finally committed the sagas to parchment. But there are those who are not prepared to content themselves with this uncertain division of labour. Some maintain that the sagas were transcribed directly from an oral rendering, possibly taken unaltered from the lips of the narrator, whereas others postulate pure deskwork which made use of literary motifs and exemplar without any reference to an original traditional story. Even the verses in the sagas are then to be looked upon as the writer's own falsifications, put together so as to lend the saga an apparent authenticity, almost certainly in imitation of the *konungasögur* where the verses are of genuine historical value.

There is a certain irony in the fact that Björn M. Ólsen, the great disciple of the oral tradition, should actually find himself stimulating extreme disbelievers by initiating this train of thought.

<sup>1</sup> *Um Íslendingasögur*, *Safn til sögu Íslands* VI, 3, Reykjavík, 1937-39, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.



Those who wish to point to written sources for the sagas have an easier task than those who would seek out a genesis based on oral tradition. 'I believe in oral tradition', is sometimes heard, and the choice of words is obviously revealing. Men of the 'literary school' can point to clear cases of similarity of matter and diction with earlier writings, both native and foreign, whereas their opponents are in extreme difficulty, since any traces of an oral tradition which may have existed are now indiscernible from the rest of the written text.<sup>3</sup>

Some disputants are so heated in their belief in oral sources that they consider themselves to be in no need of supporting evidence. They rate it as self-evident that men in earlier times were constantly retelling the stories of their forefathers, especially before the 'literary period', and regard these versions as forming the main stem of the written sagas. Others, not quite so heated, attempt to produce indirect evidence for the existence in oral form of original models for the sagas. In the contemporary sagas, there are references to public story-tellings, and the two best known are those quoted by Björn Ólsen: the wedding at Reykhólar in 1119, and the Þáttur of Þorsteinn the Story-teller who gave an account of the travels of Haraldr harðráði. In the *Íslendingasögur* oral accounts are often referred to, and notice is sometimes taken of the fact that these accounts do not agree, one with the other ('Menn segja . . .'; 'Svá er sagt at . . .'; 'Sumir segja . . . en aðrir segja . . .'). In *Droplaugarsona Saga* a man is also named as having recounted the whole saga. Events in the *Íslendingasögur* are often supported by verses attributed to the saga characters themselves. Scholars in later times have pointed to the views of Árni Magnússon who maintained that this type of poetry has only been preserved, 'because people knew those sagas of which the poems gave short summaries.'<sup>4</sup> Sometimes the genealogies of men living in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries are traced back to leading saga figures and some

<sup>3</sup> I deliberately avoid using the older terms 'free prose' and 'book prose'. Few scholars now uphold Heusler's theory of a form of 'free prose', which was handed down from generation to generation and finally committed to writing 'mit der Treue eines Phonographes'. Most scholars now agree that the *Íslendingasögur* are the works of specific writers and do not adopt any particular 'Lehre' or theory, but attempt to approach the sagas from a variety of different view points, just as they would other forms of literature.

<sup>4</sup> *Árni Magnússons levned og skrifter* II, København, 1930, pp. 139-40.

consider that the detailed and accurate knowledge shown of the places described in the sagas points to the existence of oral versions which were current in those areas.

These arguments, however, have little effect on the confirmed sceptics. To them, the account of the Reykhólar wedding feast is extremely unreliable, especially since it was not written until long after the event and contains no reference to Íslendingasögur in oral form, only fornaldarsögur. Even less to be trusted is *Þorsteins þáttur sögufróða*, since the description of the events which he is supposed to have recounted is of purely literary origin, based on foreign motifs. There is no mention in any of the saga-groups, except in the Íslendingasögur themselves, of material which they contained having ever existed in oral form, and this can not in itself be accepted as reliable evidence. It is quite clear that in some of the later sagas, references to oral versions of the story are included simply to deceive the reader and induce a sense of trust in the saga. References to specific persons may be viewed in the same light. It has also long been recognized that the verses in the later sagas were composed as the saga was written, and that certain verses in the earlier sagas also appear to be suspect, as for example in *Egils Saga*; in recent years the verses in the sagas have come under increasingly heavy attack, such that none of the Íslendingasögur may now be considered secure in this respect. Genealogies were amongst the earliest material to be written in Icelandic, as may be seen from the *First Grammatical Treatise*, but they need not necessarily have been more than an empty list of names. Detailed local description may also demonstrate nothing more than the fact that the author of the saga was well acquainted with that specific territory.

In his interesting book, *Über die Entstehung der Isländersagas*, Walter Baetke attempts to demonstrate that there are no oral versions supporting the Íslendingasögur and that they are works of purely original composition. My severest criticism of the book is that at one point the argument clearly breaks down and suddenly postulates the existence of an oral tradition.<sup>5</sup> It is possible to make various criticisms

<sup>5</sup> 'It must be admitted that both during the saga-period, as well as in later times, there were, here and there, certain recollections, *frásagnir*, or anecdotes concerning the characters and events of the period in circulation in Iceland.' *Ibid.*, p. 80 (translated).

of Baetke's approach, but I can only see that belief in the oral tradition will benefit by having its acceptability thus tested.

I am myself one of those who 'believe' that the *Íslendingasögur* are based on oral sources, yet even the most devoted disciple may have his moments of doubt. The difficulty comes when he needs to declare his belief and produce actual evidence. It would be extremely valuable to be able to present incontestable proof of the existence of at least some oral sources for the *Íslendingasögur*. This would take one weapon from the hands of the most vehement objectors, those who even doubt whether the leading characters of the oldest sagas ever existed at all, except in the minds of their creators. In my opinion it is possible to produce this type of conclusive evidence, and anyone who wishes to present this view must of course adduce detailed and secure arguments by way of support, just as is to be expected when literary sources come under scrutiny. I have a number of cases of this type in mind, and I now intend to discuss one of them.

In AM 748 I, 4to, at the end of the manuscript on a single leaf, there is a poem entitled *Íslendingadrápa Hauks Valdisarsonar*. As is well known, this is, amongst other things, the main manuscript of Eddic verse after the Codex Regius. The *Íslendingadrápa* is written in a distinctive hand which has been dated at approximately 1300, or possibly the beginning of the fourteenth century; it is difficult to be more exact than this, and a leeway of some decades must be allowed for on either side. A number of scribal errors suggest that this is not the original, but it may be considered a fairly good copy, as far as it extends. The last part, which must have been on the following leaf, is now missing. Twenty-six stanzas and two lines of the twenty-seventh remain.

Finnur Jónsson maintained that the drápa could hardly have been more than thirty stanzas long in its original form, but it is not clear what led him to this conclusion.<sup>6</sup> There is no refrain in the poem in its present form, although it is entitled a drápa.

The poem certainly derives its name from the fact that a number of leading Icelanders from early times are mentioned in it, together with

<sup>6</sup> *Den oldnorske og oldislandske litteraturs historie* II<sup>2</sup>, Københ., 1923, p. 107.



some description of their outstanding deeds and eventual fates. The main heroes may be numbered as being twenty-seven in all:

Brodd-Helgi	Bjarni skáld
Geitir [Lýtingsson]	Grettir [Ásmundarson]
Bjarni Brodd-Helgason	Þorleifr [jarlsskáld]
Þorkell Geitisson	Ormr skógarnef
Helgi Droplaugarson	Gaukr Trandíllsson
Helgi Ásbjarnarson	Gunnarr [Hámundarson]
Grímr Droplaugarson	Míðfjarðar-Skeggi
Þórólfr Skalla-Grímsson	Síðu-Hallr
Egill Skalla-Grímsson	Þorsteinn Síðu-Hallsson
Glúmr Geirason	Hólmgöngu-Bersi
Hallfröðr [vandráðaskáld]	Kormakr [Ögmundarson]
Þórálfr Skólmsón	Þórarinn kappi Steinarsson
Finnbogi rammi	Hólmgöngu-Starri
Ormr Stórolfsson	

In addition, a number of men are mentioned as having been closely connected with those just listed:

Sörli Brodd-Helgason	Hákon jarl [Sigurðarson ?]
Aðalsteinn [sigrsæli]	Þorbjörn [öxnamegin]
[Haraldr] Gunnhildarson	Óláfr [völubríótr]
[Hákon] Aðalsteinsfóstri	Gizurr [hvíti]
Eiríkr jarl [Hákonarson]	[Hrólftr] kraki

and Þórhaddr who was slain by Þorsteinn Síðu-Hallsson. Fitjar, a district in Norway and the sword Sköfnungr are also mentioned in the drápa.

The author of the drápa is otherwise completely unknown. It has been supposed that he was the grandson of Hreinn Styrmisson, Abbot of Hítardalur and Þingeyrar, and that his mother, Valdís Hreinsdóttir, was married to Magnús Þorláksson of Melar. According to this, our poet should have been alive in the second half of the twelfth century, and possibly somewhat beyond the year 1200; the problem, however, is that this is no more than the purest guesswork, supported only by the fact that the name Valdís is extremely rare. Another doubtful suggestion identifies him with a certain Víga-Haukr who flourished in the beginning of the thirteenth century. Scholars have, in any case, not been in complete agreement as to the composition date of the *Íslendingadrápa*.

The first and only detailed study of the poem appeared a hundred years ago, when it was published, with notes and explanations, by Theodor Möbius in 1874. The edition was a millennial presentation from Germany on the occasion of the one thousandth birthday of the settlement of Iceland. It was, in fact, a year of birthdays, since in 1874 Wilhelm the First, Kaiser of Germany and King of Prussia, was 77 years old, and he too was presented with a publication in honour of the occasion which included Möbius' edition of *Íslendingadrápa*.

It seems not totally inappropriate that Icelanders themselves should give the poem some attention, now that our eleven hundredth anniversary is approaching. This is not to forget that a number of our countrymen have already conducted a certain amount of research into the poem, the latest being Bjarni Einarsson in *Kulturhistorisk leksikon for nordisk middelalder*.

Möbius and Bjarni hold similar views as to the date and composition of the poem. Möbius maintains that it could scarcely have been composed before the mid-thirteenth century, basing his conclusion both on its free and simple stylistic structure, and also on the fact that a great deal of the material concerning the various heroes appears to be taken not so much from oral descriptions, as from the written sagas, the majority of these being, apparently, written after 1250. Möbius also refers to Guðbrandur Vigfússon who dated the poem as being composed at the end of the thirteenth century. Bjarni Einarsson writes that, 'the poem was apparently composed after the majority of the *Íslendingasögur* had been written; that is, according to the normally accepted dating, late in the thirteenth century.'

Finnur Jónsson touches on the poem in his literary history, and places it in the second half of the twelfth century, a century earlier than Möbius.<sup>7</sup> The editors of *Íslensk Fornrit* have adopted Finnur Jónsson's view, since they consider the *drápa* to be older than the relevant sagas — that is, if they discuss the matter at all.

Jón Helgason has offered the opinion that the sanctity of Jón Ögmundarson is referred to in the verse in the *drápa* about Síðu-Hallr who was one of Jón's ancestors, and that the poem must therefore have been written after 1200, when Jón was recognized as a saint:<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 107-108.

<sup>8</sup> *Norges og Islands diktning*, Nordisk kultur VIII: B, 1953, p. 141.

Átti élbjóðr hrotta  
 ágætr sonu mæta,  
 dýrr skóp himna harri  
 höfuðsmanna veg sannan.

(The great warrior had worthy sons. The Lord of Heaven made great honour of these chieftains.) I have already brought attention to this verse in the introduction to *Eyfirðinga Sögur*, and there I pointed out that *Síðu-Hallr* was in fact the forefather of three bishops who lived in the twelfth century; that is *Klængr Þorsteinsson* and *Magnús Einarrsson* of *Skálholt*, in addition to *Jón Ögmundarson* of *Hólar*, and in my opinion this could be a sufficient explanation of this stanza of the *drápa*.<sup>9</sup> On further examination, however, it seems to me most likely that the poet is here using the word 'sonu' literally, referring to sons rather than to descendants generally, and this is also the view which *Möbius* puts forward. The names of five sons of *Síðu-Hallr* are recorded, and most of them in terms of high praise, and the stanza after the one just quoted in the *drápa* recalls the deeds of one of his sons, *Þorsteinn*.

From what has been said so far, it is clearly necessary to examine the date of *Íslendingadrápa* and its relation to the sagas in greater detail. Three possible explanations suggest themselves:

1) That the *drápa* is older than the sagas and is, like them, supported by oral sources, without there being any direct connection between the two forms.

2) That the *drápa* is later than the sagas, which the poet used as his source.

3) That some of the sagas are older than the poem and some younger. The poet used those sagas which were available to him, but relied otherwise on oral accounts.

In examining the first of these possibilities one might initially attempt to establish the independent dates of the *drápa* and the sagas, but it is also constructive to look for any discrepancies between the accounts that the two forms offer of certain events. Such inconsistencies could then demonstrate that the poem was not entirely dependent upon the written forms as we now know them. Thirdly, it is also

<sup>9</sup> *Íslensk fornrit IX*, p. xcvi, cf. *Möbius, op. cit.*, p. 48.



possible that the drápa itself contains internal evidence which suggests the use of either written or oral sources.

In relation to the dating of the poem, I would first like to examine certain points of style. Möbius maintains the view, as was mentioned earlier, that the free and simple stylistic structure of the Íslendingadrápa ('die leichte und einfache Fügung des Vortrags'), points to a composition date later than the mid-thirteenth century. It is not easy to make such general characteristics of style into a criterion for dating verses, particularly since the development of dróttkvæði is often a long drawn out process such that there may be wide ranging variations of style between the poets of any single period, despite an overall development towards stylistic simplicity.

It is my impression, however, that the form of the drápa is actually considerably complex, and therefore likely to be of an early date. The kennings are multiple and intricate, and the sentence structure highly interwoven. I would consider that this type of poetic technique belongs more to the twelfth than to the thirteenth century. There are also certain linguistic characteristics in the poem which suggest an early date of composition.

The rhyme, for example, in a number of 'aðalhendingar' demands the early forms *fiŋg* (v. 7, l. 6) and *giŋg* (13,8; 14,6). The alternative forms *feng* and *geng* are also of an early date, but are more to be expected in later periods.<sup>10</sup> In the manuscript, the first example is written *feng*, in accordance with the form current at the time of writing, but the remaining two are abbreviated with a superscript stroke.

Also in one 'aðalhending', the vowels *o* and *a* (13,6) are rhymed together, and it is generally believed that this particular rhyming pair disappeared late in the twelfth century.<sup>11</sup>

The word *óþáum* (or *óþúm*) also appears in a non-assimilated form (19,8). After 1200, the contracted form *óþám* is normally to be expected.<sup>12</sup> In the manuscript under discussion the word appears as *óþám*,

<sup>10</sup> Finnur Jónsson, *Det norsk-islandske skjaldesprog*, pp. 98-99.

<sup>11</sup> Hreinn Benediktsson, Phonemic Neutralization and Inaccurate Rhymes, *Acta phil. Scand.* 26, 1963, p. 11.

<sup>12</sup> Adolf Noreen, *Altnordische Grammatik I* (1970), p. 115 (and works there cited).

and this clearly demonstrates the time gap, between composition and copy.

The preposition *ept* has this short form (21,6), which is accepted as being current only until the mid-twelfth century. It was gradually replaced in the thirteenth century by the longer *eptir*, which had previously only been known as an adverb.<sup>13</sup>

We should not leave this part of the discussion without considering any grammatical characteristics which might, on the other hand, suggest the later composition date proposed by Möbius. There is one example which at first sight might seem to point in this direction. The word *höldr* which in the earliest Icelandic manuscripts is written with *lð*, is in two instances rhymed with words containing original *ld*: *aldri* (25,7) and *Felldi* (26,1). The development *lð* : *ld* should not usually occur before the second half of the thirteenth century, or even later. But the explanation seems to be that originally there were two different words, one containing *lð*, the other *ld*.<sup>14</sup> This suggestion is supported by the fact that *höldr* is rhymed with words in *ld* in verses attributed to early poets: *hald* : *hölda*, Vellekla 11 (Skjaldedigtning AI, 124); *hölda* : *halda*, Vellekla 21 (Skjalded. AI, 127); *meld* : *höldi*, Vestrfararvísur 2 (Skjalded. AI, 241); *hugfylldra* : *hölda*, Glymdrápa 7 (Skjalded. AI, 23) etc.

It is generally accepted that the oldest Íslendingasögur were written shortly after 1200, and the latest in the second half of the fourteenth century. Using the examples that I have just listed, I would conclude that the language of the Íslendingadrápa points explicitly to a composition date earlier than even the earliest of the Íslendingasögur.

Our second consideration was possible inconsistencies between the drápa and the sagas. Although it superficially appears that the two forms provide almost identical accounts of the relevant incidents, it is nonetheless possible to detect certain deviations, and also certain points at which the drápa provides greater detail than would be conceivable, were it based completely on the sagas that we know of today. The main examples of this type will now be discussed:

<sup>13</sup> Finnur Jónsson, *op. cit.*, pp. 122-123.

<sup>14</sup> See H. Pipping, *Till frågan om l- och n-ljudens kvalitet i nordiska språken*, Studier i nordisk filologi VI, 5, Helsingfors, 1915, pp. 29-31; cf. Jakob Benediktsson, *Um tvenns konar framburð á ld í íslenzku*, *Íslenzk tunga* 2, 1960.

Brodd-Helgi is described in the poem as the father of Sörli (v. 3), but Sörli is not mentioned either in *Vápnfirðinga Saga*, which here would be the potential written source, or in any of the versions of *Landnámabók*. There is, however, a separate þáttir about him connected with *Ljósvetninga Saga* in a number of manuscripts. The introduction to *Íslenzk Fornrit*, vol. 10, dates the þáttir from the second half of the thirteenth century.

In the fourth stanza of the poem we are told that Bjarni Brodd-Helgason killed, in addition to Geitir, most of the other men who were responsible for his father's death, whereas in *Vápnfirðinga Saga* only one man extra is named as having been killed in this connection.

There is no mention in the sagas of Glúmr Geirason's battle alongside King Haraldr Gráfældr at Fitjar, which appears in verse eleven of the poem, despite the fact that some verses about this battle in the *konungasögur* are attributed to Glúmr himself. More noteworthy still is the fact that in *Reykðæla Saga*, which contains the greatest amount of material about Glúmr, it is Þorkell his brother and not he himself who received a sword from a dead man.

In *Orms Þáttir Stórolfssonar* it is said that Jarl Eiríkr Hákonarson commanded sixty men to attack Ormr on an open plain, and that he took a pole, and swung it in all directions so that no one dared to come near him. The account in the *drápa* states that Ormr challenged twelve of Eiríkr's men to single combat, and that Eiríkr told them to try their skill with Ormr ('leitask fyrir'), when he began to attack them with the pole.

In *Íslendingadrápa* there is mention of two heroes who are otherwise apparently almost unknown: Bjarni Skáld (v. 16) and Þórarinn Kappi Steinarsson (v. 26).<sup>15</sup>

These discrepancies between the *drápa* and the sagas would natur-

<sup>15</sup> Möbius suggests that Bjarni Skáld is the poet named in one of the main manuscripts of *Skáldatal*, who is thought to have composed an elegy on Ólafr Tryggvason, but it is probably Jarl Hákon Sigurðarson who is referred to in the *drápa*. However likely this may be, it does not bring us much closer to discovering who Bjarni Skáld actually was. Þórarinn Kappi Steinarsson is most likely the same man as Þórarinn Illi who is mentioned in *Vatnsdæla Saga*. In the saga it is clear that he was involved in a duel with Hólmgöngu-Starri, but we are not told how the duel ended. The *drápa* however suggests that Starri was the victor.



ally give cause for suspicion if one were to maintain that the poem was built entirely on the sagas. One would need then to consider the existence of written material which is now lost, or of different versions of the sagas we do know, but which are nonetheless no longer extant. We do in fact know of the existence of at least one saga which has since been lost about a hero in Íslendingadrápa, Gaukr Trandilsson.<sup>16</sup> Had Haukr, however, composed the drápa from written sagas in the late thirteenth century, it still seems unlikely that such a large number of sagas should have been lost containing the variant elements which he uses.

It is interesting at this point to look at other poems about early heroes, despite the fact that they are all much younger than Íslendingadrápa. The oldest of this group is the so-called 'Allra Kappa Kvæði', which is to be found in Pergament 4to no. 22, in the Royal Library in Stockholm, a manuscript from the first half of the sixteenth century.<sup>17</sup> One 'kappakvæði' is attributed to Þórður Magnússon who lived in the sixteenth century, and one to Björn Jónsson from Skarðsá, who died in 1655.<sup>18</sup> All these poems differ from Íslendingadrápa in two ways: They do not diverge in the slightest from the written sagas or rímur, and therefore appear to be based on them. They concentrate on the leading figures in the sagas, whereas Haukr very often restricts himself to what are in fact the secondary characters in the now extant versions. If, for example, he had used Reykdæla Saga as a source, he would have assuredly chosen to speak about either Vémundr Kögurr or Víga-Skúta, or both, but not Glúmr Geirason. Haukr's choice of subjects explicitly suggests that he was using oral sources. It also suggests that such oral forms of the stories did not necessarily incorporate the material of the written sagas and that in these oral accounts, some of the figures that receive little attention in the written versions assumed an importance quite comparable to that of their 'literary' counterparts.

<sup>16</sup> See Jón Helgason, in *Heidersskrift til Gustav Indrebø*, Bergen, 1939.

<sup>17</sup> Printed in *Arkiv for nordisk filologi* I, 1882.

<sup>18</sup> A discussion of these poems is to be found in *Kvæðabók úr Vigur*, ed. Jón Helgason, Kaupmannahöfn, 1955, introd. pp. 35-37. Incomplete editions in *Arkiv* IV, and *Timarit hins íslenska bókmenntafélags* VIII, 1887.

If we now move on to consider the possibility of internal evidence in *Íslendingadrápa*, we can immediately establish that there is no mention whatsoever of any written source, anywhere in the poem. (This of course does not prove that Haukr did not know the written sagas.) The poet does, on the other hand, frequently refer to oral sources. On nine occasions he indicates that he has heard something about what he is describing by using the expression 'frá ek' (verses 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 19, 21, 23, 25). The expression 'kváðu þjóðir' (v. 18) has exactly the same implication.

If we propose that the manuscript of the *drápa* was written about 1300, and that the poem itself was composed somewhat earlier, then we are equally suggesting that the *drápa* is older than some of the written sagas, or at least older than their surviving versions. This is certainly true of *Grettis Saga* and of *Orms Þátr Stórolfssonar*, and may possibly apply to *Njáls Saga* also. Is it not then possible that Haukr would have used the earlier written sagas as his source material, even though he had access to the younger sagas only in oral form? In fact there is nothing to suggest that he did this. There is equal inconsistency between the *drápa* and both the older and younger sagas. *Vápnfirðinga Saga* is thought to be one of the oldest sagas, written in the second quarter of the thirteenth century. *Reykðæla Saga* is considered slightly younger, and *Orms Þátr* is from the fourteenth century. The relation of the *drápa* is, in other words, the same, to older and younger sagas alike.

The main reason why some scholars believe that the *drápa* is based on written sagas, is the fact that there is, at a number of points, an extremely close similarity between the two forms in certain small details. The main examples of this will now be considered:

Helgi Droplaugarson is described as heathen in stanza six of the poem, and in *Droplaugarsona Saga* it is said that he was killed, 'one year after the missionary Þangbrandr came to Iceland', in other words two years before Christianity was accepted by the Alþing.

In the poem (v. 8) we read that Grímr Droplaugarson went in to Helgi Ásbjarnarson, and placed a sword through his body (hann 'gekk inn at Frey linna foldar'). This should be compared with the thirteenth chapter of *Droplaugarsona Saga*.

Þorsteinn Síðu-Hallsson killed five men in one morning, including Þórhaddr (v. 23); see Þorsteins Saga, chapters five and six. A gap in the saga makes an exact comparison impossible, but we read, at least, that Þorsteinn went out to kill early in the morning ('snimma of morgin').<sup>19</sup>

Gunnarr of Hlíðarendi wounded sixteen men, and killed two, when Gizurr the White attacked him (v. 20); see Njáls Saga, chapter 77.

Hólmgöngu-Bersi was victorious against thirty-five men with his sword (v. 24); see Kormaks Saga, chapter 16.

In the last two examples it so happens that the sagas contain verses which also include this exact reference. In Njáls Saga, there is a verse which is attributed to Þorkell Elfaraskáld, an otherwise unknown poet, which also states that Gunnar wounded sixteen men and killed two. The similarity is, therefore, with the verse, rather than with the saga as such, so it may be suggested there is a direct connection between it and the drápa. In Kormaks Saga there is a verse attributed to Hólmgöngu-Bersi, in which he claims to have killed thirty-five men with his sword. It is more than likely that Haukr knew these verses, and took his references straight from them.

In Droplaugarsona Saga there are verses about the death of Helgi Ásbjarnarson, composed by Grímr Droplaugarson. In one he says that he has made a reddened sword stand in Helgi's body (látið 'roðinn sárvönd' standa á Helga), and I believe that another verse may be interpreted as saying that the killing took place inside. It is equally not unlikely that Haukr knew these verses also.

In Þorsteins Saga there is a lacuna at the point which would best bear comparison with the drápa, as mentioned earlier. There are no verses in those parts of the saga which have survived down to the present day, but there are a number in the þáttir which is called Draumr Þorsteins Síðu-Hallssonar, and which is believed to have been

<sup>19</sup> In the introduction to the *Austfirðinga sögur* (*Íslensk fornrit XI*), Jón Jónhannesson suggests that the close connection between Droplaugarsona Saga and the Íslendingadrápa may be explained by the fact that Haukr knew an earlier summary of the story from the twelfth century. On the other hand he considers that the author of Þorsteins Saga may well have known Íslendingadrápa. This shows how important it is to regard the poem in its entirety. Such explanations cannot be used indiscriminantly to explain similarities between the drápa and the sagas.



copied from Þorsteins Saga when the latter was still complete. It is perfectly possible that there were verses in the lacuna previously mentioned, and that Haukr took his references about the time of day and the five killings from them. We would need, otherwise, to postulate the existence of a very exact oral source which both Haukr and the saga writer had recourse to.

It should also be mentioned that Haukr apparently knew Egill's verse in Egils Saga about the battle on Vínheiðr. 'Helt, né hrafnar sultu, / Hringr á vápna þingi', says Egill, and 'þreklundaðr fell Þundar / Þórólfr í gný stórum', which should be compared with: 'Hrings fell á því þingi / Þórólfr í gný stórum', in the drápa.

In Einar Ól. Sveinsson's opinion, Haukr is doubtlessly following verse 29 of Hallfreðar Saga when he says that Hallfreðr 'sótti konung snjallan; seggr fekk et hæsta hald tveggja döglinga'.<sup>20</sup>

The reference to Helgi Droplaugarson's being a heathen at the time of his death cannot be traced to any extant verse. The battle in Eyvindardalr, on the other hand, in which Helgi was killed, is recorded in the annals as having taken place in 998. It is not clear in what way the three sources, the drápa, the saga and the annals, are connected, and it is not possible to establish whether Haukr took his information from a written or oral source, or from a lost verse.

In conclusion, I would like to draw together the results of my investigations into Íslendingadrápa. It was composed before the first of the Íslendingasögur, and in all probability, in the twelfth century. The poet did not use any written sagas as source material. When there is agreement between the drápa and the saga in small details, this is, in some cases, completely attributable to early verses known both to the drápa poet and the saga writer, and in other cases, it is not possible to distinguish between lost verses and oral tradition as the common source.

Íslendingadrápa contains, therefore, incontestable proof of the fact that there were stories in circulation, in oral form, concerning the leading figures in the Íslendingasögur, and also other characters who never received much attention in the written forms. The drápa also provides certain proof that some of the verses in the Íslendingasögur

<sup>20</sup> *Íslensk fornrit VIII*, p. lix.

are older than the sagas themselves, and that the saga writers used them as sources. The extent to which points of detail in the drápa seem to be almost completely related to the early verses, does however suggest that such oral versions as existed behind the Íslendinga-sögur were generally insubstantial and under-developed.

ÓSKAR HALLDÓRSSON

## SÖGUSAMÚÐ OG STÉTTIR

ÍSLENDINGASÖGUR eru félagslegar bókmenntir, þar eð þær fjalla um margvísleg samskipti mjög margra manna. Þótt kjarni þeirra séu deilur einstaklinga, eigast aðiljar sjaldan einir við, sumpart af því, að þeir leita sér fulltingis annarra, sumpart af hinu, að réttarsamfélag grípur í taumana. Leiðir af þessu, að oft verða margir við málið riðnir, áður en því er lokið, svo að sögurnar verða breiðar og spanna í heild allar stéttir hins forna þjóðveldis; fyrir kraft þeirra hefur mynd þess, rétt eða röng, orðið lifandi.

Þrátt fyrir þetta er félagshyggja fremur takmörkuð í sögunum, en einstaklingshyggja að sama skapi ríkjandi. Og fjarri fer, að þær séu hlutlausar skýrslur um bardaga og málaferli. Listareðli sagnanna krefst stílfærslu, sem ekki kemst af án andstæðna, en þær koma ekki hvað síst fram í höfundarafstöðu, þ. e. samúð með sumum deiluaðiljum, en andúð á öðrum. Í mannlýsingunum koma því fram bæði bjartir og dökkir litir, þótt margir séu blandaðir.

Orsakir höfundarafstöðunnar eru fleiri og flóknari en svo, að þeim verði gerð skil í stuttu erindi sem þessu. Hér verður aðeins reynt að athuga, hvort sögusamúðin — og andúðin — eru að meira eða minna leyti stéttbundin fyrirbæri eða eiga sér aðrar forsendur. En jafnvel þótt efnið sé takmarkað með þessum hætti, er könnun mín engan veginn tæmandi, heldur byggð á nokkrum sögum, eins og síðar kemur í ljós.

Áður en ég vík að sögunum sjálfum, vil ég drepa á tvær skoðanir á þessu efni, sem nýlega hafa komið fram. Árið 1970 birti Lars Lönnroth grein í Bonniers litterära magasin, þar sem hann fullyrðir, að sögurnar séu yfirstéttarbókmenntir, 'dikt í överklassens tjänst', og þjóni þeim tilgangi að varpa ljóma á höfðingjastéttina.<sup>1</sup> Og hann legg-

<sup>1</sup> Indoktrinering i den isländska sagan. BLM nr. 10 1970.



ur megináherslu á innrætingu sagnanna í þessu skyni. Þess sé gætt að skapa samúð með þeim, sem betur mega, en um hina sé að sama skapi lítið skeytt. Um afstöðu sagnanna til utangarðsmanna í samfélaginu farast Lönnroth svo orð: 'Någon sympati med den alienerade outsidersn skall man inte vänta sig att finna i sagornas värld.'

Í annan stað hefur Bjarni Einarsson leitt rök að jafnréttishugsjón í sögunum og bent á, að enda þótt þær fjalli um ójöfnuð, búi að baki hugsjónin um jafnan rétt allra frjálsra manna. Þessa réttar varð að reka, ef á hann var gengið. Bjarni telur, að þessi grundvallarhugmynd um jafnrétti eigi rætur í þeirri þjóðfélagsgerð, sem þróaðist hér í öndverðu, og hafi hún lifað fram á daga sagnaritaranna þrátt fyrir eflingu innlends höfðingjavalds og áhrif frá ólíkum þjóðfélagshugmyndum meginlandsins. Í jafnréttisákvæðum laganna hafi falist fornnorræn manngildishugsjón, sem veitti einstaklingnum, þótt smár væri, nokkra uppreisn.<sup>2</sup>

Hið forna lagaákvæði um jafnan bótarétt náði reyndar ekki til þræla og gat því ekki stuðlað að jafnréttisafstöðu til þeirra. Þrælar voru þó ekki með öllu réttlausir. Þeim var leyft að eiga nokkra eign; þeir áttu rétt til bóta fyrir sumar misgerðir, t. d. högg, er olli lýti; þeir máttu stofna til hjúskapar, og væri gengið á rétt kvenna þeirra, þótt ambáttir væru, áttu þeir rétt til hefnda. En þrátt fyrir þetta sýna sögurnar allglögg stéttaskil milli þræla og frjálsra manna, þegar undan er skilið vinnu- og göngufólk. Sögurnar eru aristókratískar í þeim skilningi, að líf hinna lægstu stétta er aldrei uppistaðan, heldur er höfuðefni hverrar sögu atburðir úr lífi frjálsra manna, einkum höfðingja og vel stæðra bænda. Hæpið væri þó að álykta, að þetta stafaði af stéttarvitund sagnaritaranna einni saman. Eftirlætisviðfangsefni þeirra voru meiri háttar öldur, sem risið höfðu í þjóðlífi sögualdar, en slíkur órói gat síður staðið af smælingjum en höfðingjum, og ættu smælingjar í hlut, hlaut fyrr eða síðar að koma til kasta höfðingja að koma á sáttum eða standa fyrir málaferlum.

En þó að réttur allra frjálsra manna væri jafn samkvæmt lögum, hefur gæsla hans gengið misjafnlega, þar sem allsherjar framkvæmdarvald skorti, en var í reynd ásamt dómsvaldi í höndum höfðingjanna. Og réttarskerðingu fylgdi vansæmd og óvirðing. Íslendingasögur eru fullar af manngreinaráliti, sem vitnar um raunverulega stéttaskiptingu

<sup>2</sup> Öprentaður fyrirlestur fluttur í Odense í apríl 1973.

frjálsra manna. Við stofnun hjúskapar fer oft og tíðum fram eins konar mat á þjóðfélagsstöðu manna og persónulegum verðleikum; getið er um mannvirðingar, ætterni og auð. Í veislum er mönnum raðað eftir mannvirðingum, og ákvarðanir um bætur fyrir víg eða miska fara mjög eftir þjóðfélagsstöðu. Sturlunga saga, sem sýnir þessa stéttagreiningu enn skýrar, er til vitnis um, að í þessum efnum spegla sögurnar þjóðfélagið.

Þrátt fyrir mannfjölda í flestum Íslendingasögum eru menn að jafnaði nafngreindir, oft einnig sögð á þeim nokkur deili og lýsing sniðin eftir þörfum frásagnar. Þetta nær einnig til hinna lægstu stétta. At-  
hyglisvert er, að menn ræðast einatt við sem jafningjar, jafnvel þræll eða vinnuhjú getur svarað höfðingja fullum hálsi og orkað á atferli hans.

Í miðaldabókmenntum meginlandsins opnast annar heimur. Átökin eru stærri, stórstyrjaldir og landvinningar, útópísk ævintýri. Öll stéttamörk eru skarpari. Í riddarasögum eru annars vegar idealiseraðir höfðingjar og hefðarfrúr, þar sem aldrei sést kartnöggl á fingri, en umhverfis er einkennalaus og nafnlaus skari. Þótt stéttaskipting sé greinileg í Íslendingasögum, er hún gerólk þeirri, sem hér um ræðir. Samt er þar fjöldi einstaklinga, sem höfundar sagnanna taka litla afstöðu til. Hér er um að ræða fólk, sem kemur lítið við sögu eða tekur ekki frásagnarverða afstöðu sjálft. Verður að minnast þeirrar meginreglu sagnanna að takmarka lýsingar við þarfir aðalfrásagnar, svo að af þessu verður lítil ályktun dregin um sögusamúð eða andúð. Hin hlutlæga stíl Stefna og hófstilling hinna fornu sagnameistara blandar einnig oft sögusamúðina og dregur fram mismunandi sjónarmið. Hetjan, sem alltaf á einhverja samúð lesandans, er síður en svo flekklaus (Egill, Gunnlaugur ormstunga, Kjartan Ólafsson, Grettir), og á sama hátt má mjög oft finna eitthvað, sem bætir hlut þeirra, sem sagan er andvíg (Hildiríðarsynir í Eglu, Hrappur og Mörður í Njálu). En því meir sem höfundur víkur frá hlutlægni til huglægni í túlkun sinni, þeim mun auðgreindari er að jafnaði sögusamúð hans.

Hér á eftir mun ég nú í nokkrum orðum víkja að þeim frásagnar-einkennum, sem ég hef aðallega haft til marks um sögusamúð.

Í fyrsta lagi skal nefna kynningu eða frumlýsingu persónunnar. Hér er hlutlægnisreglan iðulega brotin og höfundur leggur huglægt mat eða dóm á söguhetju sína. Lýsing Njáls er á þessa lund:

Hann var vel auðigr at fé ok vænn at álitu, en sá hlutr var á ráði hans, at honum óx eigi skegg. Hann var lögmaðr svá mikill, at engi fannsk hans jafningi, vitr var hann ok forspár, heilráðr ok góðgjarn, ok varð allt at ráði, þat er hann réð mœnum, hógværr ok drenglyndr, langsfynn ok langmínnigr; hann leysti hvers manns vandræði, er á hans fund kom.<sup>3</sup>

Annarri sögupersónu sinni lýsir Njáluhöfundur svo:

Skammkell hét maðr; hann bjó at Hofi øðru; hann átti vel fé. Hann var ilgjarn ok lyginn, ódæll ok illr viðreignar. Hann var vinr Otkels.<sup>4</sup>

Stundum áréttar höfundur mat sitt síðar, annaðhvort með eigin orðum eins og í upphafi eða hann skírskotar til almenningsálits. Ákveðin innræting felst einnig í orðum einnar sögupersónu um aðra. Þannig lætur Njáluhöfundur Gissur hvíta staðfesta einkunn Skammkels: ' . . . en þó hefi ek þik sét illmannligstan mann, ok eigi deilir litr kosti, ef þú gefsk vel.'<sup>5</sup>

Í öðru lagi skiptir sjónarhorn frásagnarinnar (point of view) meginmáli fyrir samúð sögunnar. Lesandi fær samúð að öllum jafnaði með persónu, ef hann kynnist málefnum frá sjónarhóli hennar, fylgist með henni og heyrir hana túlka málstað sinn. Hér má ekki gleyma þeirri tilfinningatjáningu, sem felst í vísu.

Í þriðja lagi má greina samúðina af inntaki sögunnar í heild, þegar tekin hafa verið til athugunar hin margvíslegu atvik og samspil þeirra. Höfuðmáli skiptir aðstaða persónunnar, valkostir hennar og loks breytni.

Þessi stutta greinargerð verður að nægja hér, en í annan stað beinist könnun mín að þjóðfélagsstöðu persóna, einkum aðalpersóna í nokkrum sögum. Jafnframt verður að hyggja að ætterni og efnahag. Þá verður ekki hjá því komist að taka mið af þeim siðferðisboðskap, sem lesa má út úr sögunum, og loks verður að hafa í huga íslenskt þjóðfélag og menning, eftir því sem um er kunnugt bæði frá þjóðveldisöld og ritunartíma sagnanna.

Eins og ég vék að áðan, kemur afstaða höfunda misjafnlega ljóst fram í sögunum. Greinilegt höfðingjaviðhorf verður ríkjandi í sögum, sem fylgja sömu höfðingjætt í marga liðu (Vatnsdæla saga, Egils saga, Laxdæla saga). En annars er ætlun mín að ræða um tvær ólíkar

<sup>3</sup> Brennu-Njáls saga. Íslensk fornrit XII, bls. 57.

<sup>4</sup> Sama, bls. 120.

<sup>5</sup> Sama, bls. 129.



gerðir sagna, sem sýna að sögusamúðin er af mismunandi toga spunnin.

Í sumum sögum er líkast því sem höfundur horfi yfir sögusviðið úr svo mikilli hæð, að hann fær áþekka sýn til allra deiluaðilja. Hann virðist meta atferli hvers og eins af hlutlægni og skýrir það án verulegrar ástríðu eða tilfinningasemi. Í þessum sögum kemur fram félagslegt raunsæi og skilningur á vanda höfðingjans, þótt hann þurfi ekki að eiga óskoraða samúð lesanda. Af þessu tagi eru Eyrbyggja, Hrafnkels saga og Bandamanna saga þrátt fyrir marghátaða sérstöðu hinnar síðastnefndu. Þessar sögur sýna mætur á 'ráðagerðarmanninum' og hann er hinn sterki í þeim öllum (Snorri goði, Hrafnkell Freysgoði, Þorgeir Þjóstarsson, Ófeigur Skíðason). Hitt er annað mál, að höfundarnir taka sér ekki stöðu við hlið þessara manna nema helst höfundur Bandamannasögu varðandi hinn síðastnefnda, og á sumu atferli Hrafnkels og Snorra fær lesandi andúð. Þjóðfélagsskoðun þessara sagna kemur m. a. fram í afstöðunni til uppivöðslumanna og óaldar-seggja. Sáumur Bjarnason í Hrafnkels sögu var ' . . . uppivöðslumaðr mikill . . .', og í frásögn Eyrbyggju af skiptum Snorra goða og Óspaks Kjallakssonar, sem sat yfir hlut smælingja norður í Bitru, ríkir samúðin með höfðingjanum, sem eyðir flokki ofbeldismannsins.<sup>6</sup> Tækifæri til að róma garpskap Óspaks lætur söguhöfundur hins vegar ónotuð. Sama máli gegnir um sonarson hans og nafna, Óspak Glúms-son í Bandamanna sögu. Þrátt fyrir hreysti og ýmsa eiginleika, sem minna á Gretti, móðurbróður hans, hlýtur hann litla samúð. Óspakur er þrjótur sögunnar og örlög hans eftir því. Ekki verður höfundur Bandamanna sögu þó sakaður um samúð með höfðingjum. Hann ræðst á þá sem stétt og jafnframt á brotalöm í réttarfari, sem víða má greina í sögunum, þegar lítilvæg formsatriði í málalíbúnaði eru látin veða meira en eðli málsins.<sup>7</sup> W. P. Ker og B. M. Ólsen héldu því fram, að Bandamanna saga skýrði innra eðli þeirrar hnignunar höfðingjastéttanna og fall, sem opinberast í Sturlungu.<sup>8</sup> Skoðun þeirra fær stuðning af niðurstöðu Gunnars Karlssonar, að höfðingjar hafi verið

<sup>6</sup> Vésteinn Ólason: Athugasemdir um Eyrbyggju. Skírnir 1971.

<sup>7</sup> H. Mageröy: Studiar í Bandamanna saga. Bibl. Arn. XVIII.

<sup>8</sup> W. P. Ker: Epic and Romance 1908. — Safn til sögu Íslands VI. 3.

févana um miðja 13. öld og völdum þeirra ógnað af uppgangi stórbænda.<sup>9</sup>

Allt um þetta er óvíst, að höfundur Bandamanna sögu hafi beint satíru sinni að höfðingjastétt 13. aldar. Sagan virðist fremur miðuð við þjóðfélagsaðstæður á 11. öld, þegar verslunin var enn að nokkru í höndum landsmanna sjálfra, svo að unnt var að hagnast á kaupskap. Og á þeirri öld hafa goðarnir tæplega verið neinir auðmenn. Fjárhagur þeirra hvíldi fyrst og fremst á búskap, eins og gerðist um bændur. Þá voru hofthollar niður lagðir, en tíundargjald komst ekki á fyrr en í aldarlokin. Þar sem goðavaldið hvíldi ekki á neinum traustum fjárhagsgrundvelli, líkt og lénsvaldið í öðrum löndum, hlaut því að hnigna. Þó að heimildir um 11. öld séu fáskrúðugar, gefa þær vísbendingu um félagslegt baksvið Bandamanna sögu.<sup>10</sup>

Næst mun ég víkja að annarri gerð sagna, sem er næsta ólík hinni fyrri um sköpun sögusamúðar. Tek ég þar dæmi af útlagasögunum þremur, Gísla sögu, Grettis sögu og Harðar sögu, en auk þeirra Hávarðar sögu Ísfirðings og Njálu.

Engum, sem Gísla sögu les, mun dyljast, að sögusamúðin fylgir honum frá upphafi, en verður því minni með systkinum hans, eftir því sem þau fjarlægjast hann meir. Af aðalpersónum sögunnar eru þeir mestir höfðingjar Þorgrímur og Börkur Þorsteinssynir þorskabíts á Þórsnesi, ennfremur er Eyjólfur hinn grái Þórðarson (gellis) talinn til stórmenna (15. kap.). Meðal höfðingja, sem minna koma við sögu, eru þeir Þorkell Þórðarson í Alviðru, Þorkell Eyjólfsson og Gestur Oddleifsson. Þau systkin, Gísli, Þorkell og Þórdís, eru bændafólk, en vel ættuð og virt þegar saga þeirra hefst. Þau eflast vegna vináttu og tengda við stærri höfðingja, uns Gísli verður sekur og um leið réttlaus. Söguafstaðan til þeirra sex höfðingja, sem áður voru nefndir, stendur í réttu hlutfalli við afstöðu þeirra til Gísla. Aðalandstæðingur hans, Börkur hinn digri, hefur þó í rauninni ekki annað til saka unnið en að reyna að koma lögum yfir morðingja bróður síns. Athyglisvert er, að Gísli fer árangurslaust um allt land, hittir höfðingja og biður sér liðs. Jafnvel vinir hans, Þorkell auðgi og Þorkell Eiríksson, þorðu einungis að ' . . . skjóta skjóli yfir hann með þeim hætti, at þeir léti

<sup>9</sup> Gunnar Karlsson: Goðar og bændur. Saga 1972.

<sup>10</sup> Ólafur Lárússon: Úr byggðasögu Íslands. Vaka 1929.

eigi fé sitt fyrir þá sök.<sup>11</sup> Á þessu finnur sagan enga aðra skýringu en tröllskap Þorgríms nefi og horfir því framhjá þeirri frumskyldu höfðingja að gæta laga og réttar. Samúð Gísla sögu er þannig með þeim, sem honum eru nákomnastir og halda við hann tryggð, snúast ekki á sveif með óvinum hans. Þar ber Auði konu hans og Ingjald í Hergilsey hæst, enda hafa skipti þeirra við óvini Gísla orðið mörgum hugstæð. Þeir sem leggja sig í hættu vegna Gísla eru ekki höfðingjar, heldur óbreytt bændafólk og þjónustufólk allt niður til hinnar lægstu stéttar, sbr. liðsemd Bóthildar, sem var ambátt Ingjalds í Hergilsey.

Svipuð lögmál samúðar og andúðar gilda í Grettis sögu. Grettir brýst úr skorðum þjóðfélagsins vegna verka, sem eiga rætur í skapbrestum hans, en sagan er honum trygg og vermir þá sem duga honum. Grettla er þó ekki eins köld í garð höfðingja og hinar útlaga-sögurnar, enda þótt einn þeirra, Þórir Skeggjason í Garði, stæði fyrir sekt Grettis og ofsækti löngum. Nokkru skiptir, að Skafti Þóroddsson lögsögumaður og Snorri goði lögðu honum liðsyrði á þingi, þótt þeim tækist ekki að koma í veg fyrir sekt hans né fá hann sýknaðan. Þá má nefna skörungsskap Þorbjargar digru, er hún barg Gretti, og loks orðstír þann, er Þorgils Arason á Reykhólum gat sér með því að halda sakamenn. Sést af þessu, að samúð Grettlu er ekki stéttbundin, en ákvarðast af afstöðunni til skógarmannsins.

Aðalandstæðingur Harðar Grímkelssonar er móðurbróðir hans, Torfi Valbrandsson. Um hann segir Landnámabók:

Torfi drap Kroppsmenn tólf saman, ok hann réð mest fyrir drápi Hólmsmanna, ok hann var á Hellisfitjum ok Illugi enn svartir ok Sturla goði, þá er þar váru drepnir átján Hellismenn, en Auðun Smiðkelsson brenndu þeir inni á Þorvarðsstöðum.<sup>12</sup>

Vera má, að höfundur þessarar greinar, Sturla Þórðarson, hafi hér stuðst við Harðar sögu, en víst er það ekki. Um Kroppsmenn er ekkert vitað. Í heild virðist greinin vitna um óvenjulegan skörungsskap eins höfðingja við að koma óaldarmönnum fyrir kattarnef. En ekki hefur höfundur Harðar sögu kunnað að meta framtakssemi hans, að því er varðar Hólmsmenn, þótt hann leggi áherslu á rán þeirra og

<sup>11</sup> Gísla saga Súrssonar, Íslensk fornrit VI, bls. 68.

<sup>12</sup> Landnámabók, Íslensk fornrit I, bls. 75.



fjöldmenni. Sagan er öll á bandi Harðar og þeirra, sem fylgdu honum fastast. Í sögulok er það m. a. haft til marks um ágæti Harðar, að fleiri menn voru drepnir í hefnd eftir hann en nokkurn mann annan á Íslandi. 'Ok urðu þeir allir ógildir.'<sup>13</sup>

Eðlilegt er að spyrja, hvers vegna áður nefndar útlagasögur taki svo eindregna afstöðu með brotamönnum gegn þjóðfélaginu og forsvarsmönnum þess, þegar í odda skerst með þessum aðiljum. Svar mitt er: Þetta eru hetjubókmenntir, allir útlagarnir eru afburðamenn, svo að líklegast er, að hér lifi hetjuhugsjón víkingaaldar. Samfara henni er áhugi á harmsögulegu efni eins og í hetjukvæðum Eddu. En af hvoru tveggja leiðir, að söguafstaðan verður tilfinningaleg fremur en rökleg.

Hávarðar saga Ísfirðings bregður upp mynd af viðureign bónda við höfðingja, sem neytir þjóðfélagsstöðu sinnar til að beita aðra yfirgangi og ójöfnuði. Þorbjörn Þjóðreksson hafði goðorð um Ísafjörð og er ætt hans kunn af Landnámabók. Þorbjörn vegur Ólaf Hávarðarson, ungan mann og efnilegan, og eru eftirmál vígsins uppistaða sögunnar. Hávarður karl, faðir Ólafs, er þingmaður Þorbjarnar, hniginn á efra aldur, þegar þessir atburðir verða. Hann gerir tvær árangurslausar tilraunir til að reka réttar síns og liggur þrjú ár í rekkju, þar til hann loks hefst handa um hefndir fyrir áeggjan konu sinnar. Verður hann þá sem ungur í annað sinn, fellir Þorbjörn og bræður hans tvo auk fleiri fylgdarmanna.

Í byggingu og mannlýsingum Hávarðar sögu gætir áhrifa frá ævintýra- og hetjurómantik. Höfundur er mest í mun að magna spennu og áhrif, enda tekst það matavel. Hann tekur sér stöðu við hlið hetjunnar, sem hefur þar að auki lög og rétt sín megin. Persónur sögunnar skiptast í vonda og góða eftir afstöðu til aðaldeiluaðilja. Kemur það skýrast fram í lýsingu Atla hins litla, auðugs bónda í Otradal, sem umbreytist við liðveisluna við þá Hávarð og vasklega framgöngu. Áður var hann '. . . inn mesti vesalingr . . .' og einþykkur nírfill, en á eftir kallar sagan hann hinn hraustlegasta og besta dreng og lætur hann fá almenningsorð.<sup>14</sup> Hávarður berst fyrir sæmd, en ekki völdum og þess vegna er bjart yfir sögulokunum, enda þótt Hávarður og félagar hans hafi í rauninni þungan hlut af eftirmálunum, svo sem

<sup>13</sup> Harðar saga. Editiones Arnarnagnæanæ, series A, vol. 6, bls. 178.

<sup>14</sup> Hávarðar saga Ísfirðings. Íslensk fornrit VI, bls. 342 og 355.

vænta mátti. Hávarður er gerður héraðsrækur og verður að setjast að í afdal í öðrum landsfjórðungi.

Brennu-Njáls saga er lengst allra Íslendingasagna og jafnframt auðugust að efni. Í mannlífi hennar sjáum við þverskurð þjóðfélagsins allt frá völdugustu höfðingjum niður í farandfólk og þræla. Þótt höfundur Njálu sé meistari í meðferð hins hlutlæga sagnastíls, er hann að jafnaði fjarri hlutleysi í atburða- og mannlýsingum, og hafa ýmsir á það bent.<sup>15</sup> Afstaða hans til aðalpersóna er ljós í meginatriðum: Fjölskyldan á Bergþórshvoli og Gunnar á Hlíðarenda eru hans fólk. Njála er full af víkingaaldarrómantik og vitsmunadýrkun ýmist í anda Hávamála eða kristinnar menningar. Gunnar er æðsti fulltrúi hefðbundinnar hetjuhugsjónar eftir Sigurð Fáfnisbana. Njáll er persónugervingur djúphyggjunnar, sem er aðal ráðagerðarmannsins. Samt er Njáll ekki höfðingjahugsjónin holdi klædd, þótt hann sé mesti lögvitringur landsins, enda hefur hann ekki mannaforráð og beitir vitsmunum sínum einungis til að rétta hlut ættingja og vina, jafnvel þótt málstaður þessa fólks sé stundum harla vafasamur. Og hann heyr enga baráttu fyrir eigin völdum né ættmenna sinna. Saga hans er þannig ekki skrifuð frá sjónarhóli landstjórnarmanns eins og Eyrbyggja og Hrafnkels saga.

Deiluaðiljar í Njálu eru yfirlétt jafningar að því er þjóðfélagsstöðu varðar. Þó virðist að jafnaði samúðin með þeim, sem eiga heldur upp fyrir sig að sækja. Mörður gígja er fullt eins völdugur höfðingi og Hrótur Herjólfsson, Kirkjubæingar jafnast fyllilega á við Gunnar að auði og ætterni, Sigfússynir við Njálssonu, Hallgerður við Bergþóru og loks Flosi við Ásgrím Elliða-Grímsson. Þennan herslumun jafnar eftirlætisfólk sögunnar með persónulegum yfirburðum, þar til röðin kemur að Flosa. Sést af þessu og mörgu öðru, að höfundur Njálu er meir haldinn hetjudýrkun en höfðingjapólitik, þótt hennar gæti einnig, eins og síðar verður vikið að. Og hér fer sem víðar í sögunum, þar sem hetjuhugsjónin er ríkari en félagshyggjan, að samúðin fylgir í meginatriðum þeim, sem veita afreksmönnum. Því hygg ég, að Lars Lönnroth skjátlist, er hann telur í áðurnefndri grein, að sögusamúð Njálu sé bundin höfðingjastétt á kostnað þeirra, sem lægra eru settir. Hann bendir réttilega á hlutdrægni söguhöfundar, er hann lýsir annars vegar húskarlavígum eins og lítið sé um að vera í samanburði við hin

<sup>15</sup> Einar Ól. Sveinsson: Á Njálsbúð. L. Lönnroth BLM nr. 10 1970.

dramatísku örlög aðalpersóna sögunnar. Hitt sést Lönnroth yfir, að í Njálu er mörgum meiri háttar manni kálað án þess að rótað sé við tilfinningum lesandans, og dæmin sem hann velur eru alltof handa-hófskennd. Nærtækt væri t. a. m. að bera saman ævilok þeirra feðga Þráins Sigfússonar og Höskulds sonar hans. Þegar Lönnroth ber víg Höskulds saman við víg Kols Þorsteinssonar, gætir hann þess ekki, að Njála túlkar Kol sem höfðingja. Hann var bróðursonur Síðu-Halls og afkomandi Hrollaugs Rögnvaldssonar, jarls af Mæri, eins hins ættgöfugasta landnámsmanns. Hér skiptir höfuðmáli, að drápi brennumanna er lýst án samúðar í Njálu, enda þótt þeir hefðu hefnt Höskulds, væru í röð betri bænda og komnir af höfðingjum. Andúðin á Kol er þannig ekki þjóðfélagsleg, heldur magnast hún af því, að '... hann hafði mest hæðiyrði við af brennumönnum'.<sup>16</sup>

Loks er óhjákvæmilegt að kanna afstöðu Njáluhöfundar til þeirra, sem þar reynast æðstir valdsmenn eða eru túlkaðir svo. Skal ég fyrst víkja að tveimur stórhöfðingjum, sem báðir standa utan við meginatburði sögunnar heima í héraði, en taka afstöðu til þeirra á alþingi. Það eru þeir Guðmundur ríki Eyjólfsson á Möðruvöllum og Skafti Þóroddsson lögsögumaður. Guðmundi er lýst sem mikilmenni. Eftir rækilega og virðulega ættfærslu er þess getið, að frá honum væri komið '... allt it mesta mannval á Íslandi'.<sup>17</sup> Í heild virðist lýsing Guðmundar stefna að því að sýna, að hér fór maður, sem munaði um. Og þegar hann hefur tekið eindregna afstöðu með Njálssonum, eftir að hann hafði heyrt um skipti þeirra Skarphéðins og Þorkels háks, birtist aðáun sögunnar í orðum Ásgríms: 'Ólíkr er Guðmundur flestum höfðingjum'.<sup>18</sup> Í Ljósvetninga sögu, sem er aðalheimild um Guðmund og Njáluhöfundur mun hafa þekkt, skortir hann hins vegar glæsímennsku og sjálfstæði og hlýtur litla samúð.

Skafti Þóroddsson var lögsögumaður 27 sumur (1004–1030), og gegndi enginn þeirri virðingarstöðu svo lengi. 'Hann setti fimmtar-dómslög . . .', segir Ari. 'Á hans dögum urðu margir höfðingjar ok ríkismenn sekir eða landflótta of víg eða barsmiðir af ríkis sökum hans ok landsstjórn'.<sup>19</sup> Orð Ara hafa verið skilin svo, að Skafti hafi

<sup>16</sup> Íslenzk fornrit XII, bls. 461.

<sup>17</sup> Sama, bls. 285.

<sup>18</sup> Sama, bls. 306.

<sup>19</sup> Íslendingabók. Íslenzk fornrit I, bls. 19.



átt frumkvæði að þessari lagasetningu.<sup>20</sup> Njáluhöfundur gefur Njáli hins vegar dýrðina. Meira máli skiptir þó, hvernig ljós sögunnar fellur á Skafta, eftir að hann hefur neitað Ásgrími um liðsinni við Njáls-sonu. Sú lýsing nær hámarki í bardaganum á alþingi:

Deir Ásgrímr ok hans menn gingu þar þá at neðan. Þórhallr mælti: 'Þar er hann Skapti Þóroddsson nú, faðir,' segir hann. Ásgrímr mælti: 'Sé ek þat, frændi,' — ok skaut hann þegar spjóti til Skapta, ok kom fyrir neðan þat, er kálfi var dígrastr, ok stóð í gegnum báða fœtrna; Skapti fell við skotit ok fekk eigi upp staðit; fengu þeir þat eina ráðs tekit, er hjá váru, at þeir drógu Skapta flatan inn í búð sverðskriða nokkurs.<sup>21</sup>

Hér er Skafti rúinn virðingu og gerður hlægilegur. Og síðan er niðurlægning hans áréttuð með orðaskiptum þeirra Kára (hvort sem Kári hefur kveðið þær vísur eða ekki), þar sem Skafta er brugðið um ragmennsku. Þá tilfærir höfundur háðskviðling Snorra goða um ófarir Skafta og klykkir út með orðunum: 'Hlógu menn nú allmjök.'<sup>22</sup> Þessi hlátur, sem þingheimur gerir að Skafta lögsögumanni, verður enn sárari auðmýking, þegar þess er gætt, að honum er skotið inn í dramatískan hápunkt sögunnar. Þegar hann þagnar, heldur Hallur af Síðu áfram ræðu um sættir og býðst til að leggja Ljót, son sinn, ógildan.

Að endingu skal vikið ögn að afstöðu Njáluhöfundar til þeirra tveggja stórhöfðingja, sem mest eru flæktir í meginatburði sögunnar: Marðar Valgarðssonar og Flosa Þórðarsonar, en tímans vegna verður stiklað á stóru. Þótt Mörður sé goðorðsmaður um Rangárfing og voldugri að landslögum en Gunnar frændi hans og Njáll, er hann eins konar skuggavera og aðalbölvaldur sögunnar. Lýsing hans í upphafi: '... slægr maðr í skapferðum ok ilgjarn í ráðum',<sup>23</sup> sem höfundur áréttar síðar, fá fulla staðfestingu í öllu atferli hans. Hetjuafstaða Njálu kemur hvergji betur fram en í óbeit hennar á manhrakinu, sem öfundaði hetjurnar og vildi þær feigar. Hér bjargar það litlu, þótt maðurinn hafi fortöluhæfileika og kunningi talsvert í lögum; hvort tveggja er einungis nauðsynlegt vegna þess hlutverks, sem hann fer með í sögunni.

Kunnugt er, að ýmsir hafa lesið Njálu í fyrsta sinn með andúð á

<sup>20</sup> Jakob Benediktsson, sjá Íslensk fornrit I, bls. 19 2. nmgr.

<sup>21</sup> Íslensk fornrit XII, bls. 406-7.

<sup>22</sup> Sama, bls. 411.

<sup>23</sup> Sama, bls. 70; sjá einnig bls. 119.

Flosa, einkum unglingar og óþroskaðir lesendur. Hann gerði að engu vonir hinna góðgjarnari manna um stéttir eftir víg Höskulds. Hann tók ákvörðun um aftöku Njálssona og hann fullnægði þeirri ákvörðun með því að brenna einnig inni Bergþóru, Njál og Þórð Kárason auk fimm annarra heimamanna. Í fljótu bragði virðist hann eiga skilið sams konar andúð og aðrir mótgangsmenn Njáls og sona hans. Ekki þarf þó að lesa Njálu vandlega til að skilja, að höfundarafstaðan er ekki á þessa lund. Í klassískri epík hefur hetjan að jafnaði verðugan andstæðing og svo verður einnig í Njálu, eftir að Flosi kemur til skjalanna. Áður eru hetjurnar oftast andspænis alls kyns vélræðum vondra manna, flestra lítilsigldra. Nú hverfa öll ráð undir eitt stórmenni án þess þó að skyggt sé á hina fyrri afreksmenn né sagan afneiti hetjuhugsjón sinni. Þennan vanda leysir Njáluhöfundur með því að sameina í lýsingu Flosa og atferli, annars vegar höfðingjahugsjón (13. aldar?) og hins vegar hetjuanda sögunnar. Sem höfðingi vill Flosi setja niður deilur án þess að til eftirmála komi; sem hetja vill hann berjast, þar til '. . . aðrir hvárir hníga fyrir öðrum'.<sup>24</sup> Hann reynir sáttaleiðina til þrautar, þar til grunur hans vaknar um brodd óvirðingar. Eftir það velur hann hiklaust hinn hættumeiri kost og framkvæmir ætlan sína hvað sem hún kostar. Í þeim átökum birtist stórbrotin manngerð og miklir skapsmunir. Eftir ætlunarþörf beitir Flosi jöfnum höndum vitsmunum, hörku og seiglu, í geði hans er stórstreymi góðs og ills, er hann heimsækir Ásgrím í Tungu og treður illsakir við hann, en virðist á samri stundu gera sér ljóst, að hér er um niðingsverk að ræða.<sup>25</sup> En þetta atferli er undantekningin frá reglunni um drengskap Flosa. Hann er ekki rómantísk hetja sjálfur, en hins vegar sami aðdáandi Gunnars og Kára og höfundur Njálu. Að sama skapi hefur hann fyrirlitningu á svæsnustu óvinum Njálssona. Í lýsingu Flosa nálgast Njála þær sögur, sem fjalla um efnið frá sjónarhóli ábyrgra stjórnenda.

Af dæmum þeim úr Íslendingasögum, sem hér hafa verið dregin saman, er ekki unnt að álykta, að samúð með söguhetjunum fari eftir þjóðfélagsstöðu þeirra. Hitt virðist vega þyngra, að sögupersónan sé gædd einhverjum þeim eiginleika eða eiginleikum, sem metnir hafa verið til mannkosta á þjóðveldisöld. Virðist hetjuhugsjónin þyngst á

<sup>24</sup> Íslenzk fornrit XII, bls. 315.

<sup>25</sup> Sama, bls. 359-61.

metunum, en víða kemur einnig fram höfðingjahugsjón allólik henni. Verða sögur mismunandi eftir því, hvor sýnin er fremur höfð að leiðarljósi. Að sjálfsgöðu getur þetta tvennt leitað jafnvægis. Kunnugt er, að í sögulist Snorra er samúð síbreytileg eftir þeim málstað sem dreginn er fram hverju sinni, hvort sem í hlut á konungur, bænda-höfðingi, víkingur eða þræll. Og þótt sögur Snorra fjalli fyrst og fremst um höfðingja, eru atferlisforsendur, jafnvel hinna smæstu, nægilega ljósar til að vekja samúð (Þorgerður brák í Egilssögu). Verk Snorra sýna ljósast, að algildar forsendur sögusamúðar verða ekki fundnar, ennfremur að mjög er örðugt að draga sagnfræðilegar ályktanir af afstöðu höfundar. Fordómalaus samúð með einstaklingnum og málstað hans var bókmenntasköpuninni umfram allt listræn nauðsyn. Að öðrum kosti hefðu sögurnar ekki orðið lífvænlegar bókmenntir.



PAUL SCHACH

## ANTIPAGAN SENTIMENT IN THE SAGAS OF ICELANDERS

DURING the four centuries that elapsed between the settlement of Ingólfr Arnarson at Reykjavík and the submission of the national leaders of Iceland to the authority of the Norwegian crown Icelandic civilization underwent three major periods of transition, all of which are reflected in various ways in saga literature. The first of these cultural changes resulted from the fact of colonization, during which perforce the rapacious culture of the marauding Viking was gradually transformed into a less brutal and more orderly form of society, into a community of landholders. The raider gave way to the trader, the freebooter was replaced by the farmer and dairy husbandman—a transition that is strikingly depicted in several sagas by means of the generation-gap theme. One need think only of the contrastive description of Egill Skalla-Grímsson and his son Þorsteinn; or of Þór-ólfr bægifótr and Arnkell goði in *Eyrbyggja saga*; or of the superannuated Viking Þórarinn in *Þorsteins þáttur stangarhöggs*, who had small means but a large selection of weapons, and his son Þorsteinn, who supported his destitute father by doing the work of three men on their farm.

The second major cultural change resulted from the advent of Christianity, which brought with it literacy and a closer contact with European culture and led to the founding of schools and monasteries, where learning and literary activity flourished. For whatever reasons, saga writers were keenly conscious of what is sometimes called the discrepancy between cultural milieu and cultural reference, of the vast distance in time and essence between their own age and the dim world of the pagan past which they sought to recreate in their stories.

The third cultural change was the disintegration of the Icelandic Commonwealth during the Sturlung Age under the disruptive forces of internal discord and the constant, relentless menace of external

encroachment. The dramatic events of this age of savagery and artistic creativity provided both tragic material as well as compelling motives for saga writing.

As already mentioned, not a few saga writers reveal a keen awareness of the discrepancy between the nominally Christian cultural milieu in which they lived and worked and the pagan cultural reference, their largely imaginary re-creation of the dim and distant world of their pagan ancestors. Much of the irony and paradox and ambiguity that make the sagas so intriguing stems from the ambivalent attitude that saga writers so often seem to have had toward their own creations. On the one hand they endowed their characters with almost superhuman dimensions and with a degree of *drengskapr* such as few of the figures in *Sturlunga saga*, their own contemporaries, possessed. On the other hand they rather consistently portrayed pagan heroes as inferior to Christian ones, and frequently attributed the misfortune and tragedy of their characters to pagan beliefs and practices. Thus the golden age of Icelandic history that saga writers conjured up was both a model and a warning to their contemporaries, whose own personal and political disasters derived in no small measure from a resurgence of the truculent Viking spirit that had been held somewhat in check during the heyday of the Commonwealth. Snorri tells us that Skalla-Grím's descendants were diverse in nature. Some, like Þorsteinn Egilsson, who was strong in the faith and well-mannered, and Kjartan Ólafsson, who was the first Icelander to observe the fast during Lent and who chose to be killed rather than to kill, were among the most handsome men ever to live in Iceland. 'But the greater number of the Mýramenn were very ugly.' This quotation from the conclusion of *Egla* is meaningful only within the context of the moral and social disintegration of Snorri's own day.

In this paper I should like to discuss with you a representative selection of saga passages in which the authors directly or indirectly express their opinions about paganism and/or Christianity. I wish neither to question nor to defend any of the prevailing theories regarding religious bias in the sagas, nor shall I attempt to develop a thesis of my own. Rather, I propose to consider with you the testimony of the sagas themselves, and in so doing, to ignore (to the

extent that this is possible) the voluminous published polemics on the subject.

Let us begin our discussion with a glance at three saga portraits, in all of which the authors directly express their own opinions.

The first is the eulogy of Arnkell goði in *Eyrbyggja saga* (ch. 37):

... ok var hann öllum mönnum harmdauði, því at hann hefir verit allra manna best at sér um alla hluti í fornum sið ok manna vitrastr, vel skapi farinn, hjartaprúðr ok hverjum manni djarfari, einarör ok allvel stilltr; hafði hann ok jafnan inn hæra hlut í málaferlum, við hverja sem skipta var; fekk hann af því ófundsamt, sem nú kom fram.

... His death was lamented by all, for he was in every respect one of the best and wisest men in the ancient faith. He was composed, stouthearted, and as daring as anyone; determined, yet with a good hold on himself. He was generally successful in litigation with whomsoever he contended. It was for this reason that he provoked much jealousy, as was shown in this case.

The second is the necrology of Þorkell krafla at the end of *Vatnsdæla saga*:

Eptir þat andaðisk hann ok var mjök harmdauði þingmönnum sínum ok öllum heraðsmönnum, því at hann þótti, sem var, inn mesti heraðshöfðingi ok mikill giptumaðr ok inn líkasti inum fyrrum Vatnsdælum, svá sem Þorsteini ok Ingimundi, ok bar Þorkell þat fyrir, at hann var rétttrúaðr maðr ok elskaði guð ok bjök mjök kristiliga við dauða sínum.

After that he died, and his death was mourned by all his thingmen and by all the people of the district, for he was considered to be (as, indeed, he was) the greatest chieftain in those parts and a man of surpassing good fortune and the one most like the Vatnsdælir of old, such as Þorsteinn and Ingimundr. But Þorkell surpassed them in that he embraced the true faith and loved God and made ready for his death in the proper Christian manner.

The third is a brief character description of Þorkell Þorsteinsson, grandson of Ingólfr Arnarson, in *Landnámabók* (S, ch. 9):

Son Þorsteins var Þorkell máni lögsögumaðr, er einn heiðinna manna hefir best verit siðaðr, at því er menn vitu dæmi til. Hann lét sik bera í sólar-geisla í banasótt sinni ok fal sik á bendi þeim guði, er sólina hafði skapat. Hafði hann ok lifat svá hreinliga sem þeir kristnir menn, er best eru siðaðir. Son hans var Þormóðr, er þá var allsherjargoði, er kristni kom á Ísland.



Þorstein's son was Þorkell máni, one of the best of heathen men in regard to good conduct, as far as is known. During the illness that led to his death he had himself carried out into the sunshine and commended himself to the care of that god who had created the sun. He had lived as pure a life as the most decorous Christians. His son was Þormóðr, who was the supreme *goði* at the *Alþingi* when Christianity came to Iceland.

These three character descriptions have one fact in common: they were written from the Christian point of view. When Arnkell *goði* is described as 'one of the best and wisest men in the ancient faith', the implication is clear. The author of *Vatnsdæla* is more explicit: Þorkell krafla owes his superiority over such great heroes as Þorsteinn and Ingimundr to the fact that he has embraced the true faith and loves the true God. *Landnámabók* goes one step further: Þorkell máni is declared to have been the equal of the best of Christians. But we must not forget that Þorkell máni was an exceptional person: he was the grandson of Ingólfr and the father of Þormóðr, the *allsherjargoði* who presided at the *Alþingi* when Christianity was adopted as the law of the land. The author of this statement could think of no higher praise for one of the great national leaders of pagan times than to declare that he was equal in moral and social conduct to the best and finest of Christians.

Throughout saga literature there are numerous allusions to the advent of Christianity and the abandonment of paganism, both as factual reports and as prophecies and forebodings. The latter are especially interesting because of the variety of ways in which the conversion of the country or of an individual is foretold.

In *Bárðar saga Snæfellsáss* (ch. 1) Bárðr has a dream in which he sees a tree grow out of his fosterfather Dofri's hearth and spread over all of Norway. Various parts of the tree (a beautiful blossom, a golden bough, etc.) signify three individuals: Haraldr hárfagri, a kinsman of his who will bring a faith different from the current one, and St. Óláfr. This dream is clearly derived from the prophetic dreams that are attributed to Queen Ragnhildr and King Hálfðan in *Hálfðanar saga svarta* (chs. 6 and 7). Just how the dream came to be interpreted is not clear, but the author comments wryly that the predicted change of faith was not exactly to the liking of the pagan Bárðr. Variants of the tree dream occur in *Harðar saga ok Hólmverja* (chs. 6 and 7)

and in *Flóamanna saga* (ch. 24). In *Harðar saga* Signý Valbrandsdóttir twice dreams that a great tree grows from her bed. The first dream foretells the birth of her son Hörðr, and the second the birth of her daughter Þorbjörg, whose descendants will embrace the new and better faith. In *Flóamanna saga* the botanical symbol is a *hjálm-laukr*, which has a golden shoot that signifies the future birth of Þorlákr biskup inn helgi, a descendant of Þorgils Þorgímsson.

In *Laxdæla* (ch. 33) the third of Guðrún's four prophetic dreams is interpreted to signify her third husband. The sage Gestr Oddleifsson explains that by that time a change of faith will have occurred, 'and your husband will have embraced the new faith which we believe will be the more exalted one'. Whereas it seemed somewhat incongruous that pagans and even preternatural beings should be able to interpret dreams prophetic of the advent of Christianity or the birth of outstanding Christians in the preceding sagas, it seems quite acceptable in *Laxdæla* to have Guðrún's dreams interpreted by the benevolent sage Gestr, for Gestr is a sort of precursor of Christianity not unlike Njáll.

Njáll's foreknowledge of the advent of Christianity is too interesting not to be given in entirety. Chapter 100 of *Njála* begins with a report of the change of faith in Norway following the death of Hákon jarl and the accession of Óláfr Tryggvason to the throne:

Höfðu þeir kastat inum forna átrúnaði, en konungr hafði kristnat Vestrlönd: Hjaltland ok Orkneyjar ok Færeyjar.

Þá mæltu margir, svá at Njáll heyrði, at slíkt væri mikil firn at hafna fornum átrúnaði. Njáll sagði þá: 'Svá lízk mér sem inn nýi átrúnaðr mun vera miklu betri, ok sá mun sæll, er þann fær heldr. Ok ef þeir menn koma út hingat, er þann sið bjóða, þá skal ek þat vel flytja.'

Hann mælti þat opt. Hann fór opt frá öðrum mönnum ok þuldi, einn saman.

They had cast off the heathen belief and the king had converted the western lands—Shetland, the Orkneys and the Faroes—to Christianity.

Many people said in Njáll's hearing that it was monstrous to forsake the ancient faith. But Njáll replied, 'It seems to me that the new faith will be much better, and he who embraces it will be fortunate. And if the men who proclaim this faith come to Iceland, I shall promote it strongly.'

He often said this, and he often left the company of others to meditate aloud by himself.

In *Þiðranda þáttur ok Þórhalls*, as in *Njála* and *Laxdæla saga* it is a benevolent sage who interprets the vision that appears to Þiðrandi as a foreboding of a change of faith:

Get ek, at hér komi siðaskipti, ok mun þessu næst koma siðr betri hingat til lands. Ætla ek þær dísir yðrar, er fylgt hafa þessum átrúnaði, nú hafa vitat fyrir siðaskipti ok þat, at þær munu verða afhendar þeim frændum. Nú munu þær eigi una því at hafa engan skatt af yðr, áðr þær skiljask við, ok munu þær hafa þetta í sinn hlut, en inar betri dísir mundu vilja hjálpa honum ok kómusk eigi við at svá búnu.

I think that there will be a change of faith here, and presently a better faith will come to Iceland. I believe these spirits of you (and your kinsmen) who held the old faith probably knew beforehand about the change of faith and that they would be rejected by you. They must have disliked receiving no toll from you before departing and exacted this (i.e., the death of Þiðrandi) as their due. The better spirits will have wanted to help him, but arrived too late to do so.

The struggle between the nine women in black raiment and the nine women in bright raiment in *Þiðranda þáttur* will be discussed later. Suffice it to say that this *þáttur* constitutes one of the most vivid condemnations of paganism in saga literature. The imagery is reminiscent both of the sight (*atburður*) witnessed by Dörruðr in *Njála* (ch. 157) and of the good and evil dream women who appeared to Gísli.

In *Geirmundar þáttur heljarskinns* there is an unusual description of forebodings of the coming of Christianity:

En sá var einn hvammr í landi Geirmundar, at hann kvaðsk vildu kjósa á brott ór landinu, ef hann mætti ráða, ok mest fyrir því—'at sá er einn staðr í hvamminum, at ávallt, er ek lit þangat, þá skrámir þat ljós fyrir augu mér, at mér verðr ekki at skapi. Ok þat ljós er ávallt yfir reynilundi þeim, er þar er vaxinn einn samt undir brekkunni.' Ok þat fylgði, ef nökkuru sinni varð búfé hans statt í hvamminum, þá lét hann ónfta nyt undan því á því dægri.

There was a hollow in Geirmund's land that he said he would gladly be rid of, if the decision were his, especially because: 'There is a particular place in that hollow, and whenever I look towards it I see a light in front of my eyes that I dislike, and this light is always above the rowan bush that stands on its own at the bottom of the hillside.' And as a result, if any of his livestock happened to graze in the hollow, he would throw away their milk that day.



The church of Skarð was later built on the place where the rowan bush grew: 'according to what we have heard wise men say', says the author of the *þáttur*. This passage reflects superstitions connected with the rowan bush, which was sacred to Þórr in pagan belief.

In *Gisla saga* (ch. 22) it is the better dream woman who foretells the coming of Christianity in the first of a series of dreams. She admonishes Gísli to renounce the pagan faith and to abjure all magic and witchcraft. She urges him to deal kindly with the blind and the lame and the poor and the helpless. As the admonition of the good dream woman shows, the renunciation of paganism implied much more than the abandonment of sacrifice to heathen gods. (Gísli had already given up blood sacrifice following a visit to Denmark, where he presumably first came in contact with Christianity.) The renunciation of paganism also implied the rejection of witchcraft and magic and all forms of demoniac behavior. In *Eyrbyggja* (ch. 61) we are told that Þrándr stígandi had been a shape changer as long as he was a pagan 'but most witchcraft ceased when people were baptized'. Under Christian law the *berserksgangr* was punishable by heavy penalties, and even the *hólmanga*, which is referred to several times in saga literature as a pagan practise, was abolished by the *Alþingi* shortly after the advent of Christianity. We shall return to the matter of witchcraft and sorcery presently.

Since *Hávarðar saga* exhibits many traits of travesty or caricature, it is not surprising that Hávarðr should receive his revelation of the advent of Christianity under somewhat farcical circumstances. Actually, it is less a revelation than a recollection. During the crucial fight to avenge the slaying of his son, the rejuvenated hero is swimming in hot pursuit of his archenemy, Þorbjörn. Þorbjörn comes to land first, and as Hávarðr approaches, he sees his adversary waiting with a huge rock poised above his head. At that moment Hávarðr recalls having heard abroad about a religion different from the one in the North. He promises to accept this as the better and loftier faith if he succeeds in overcoming his enemy. No sooner has he made this decision than Þorbjörn slips and falls over backward, the huge stone striking him on the chest. Thirteen chapters later Hávarðr learns that King Óláfr is proclaiming the true faith in Norway. With his wife and a kinsman named Þórhallr he hastens abroad to receive baptism.

A similar case of conversion through recollection occurs in *Þorsteins saga uxafóts* (ch. 10), where the hero is on the point of having his throat bitten asunder by the troll woman Skjaldvör:

Þorsteini kemr þá í hug, at sá mun mikill vera, er skapat hefir himin ok jörð. Hafði hann ok heyrð margar sögur ok merkiligar frá Óláfi konungi ok þeiri trú, er hann boðaði, heitr nú af hreinu hjarta ok heilum huga at taka við þeiri trú ok þjóna Óláfi, meðan hann lifði, ef hann kæmisk heill ok lifs í brott, af allri kunnáttu.

Then it occurred to Þorsteinn that he who had created heaven and earth must be powerful. He had also heard many remarkable stories about King Óláfr and the religion he proclaimed. He promised with a pure heart and sincere mind to embrace that faith and to serve Óláfr to the best of his ability as long as he lived if he escaped alive and well.

Þorsteinn does escape, of course, but not quite so easily as Hávarðr. A simplified repetition of the motif occurs in the following chapter, where Þorstein's companion Styrkár promises the creator of heaven and earth to accept the faith proclaimed by King Óláfr if he finds Þorsteinn alive and well. The same phraseology is used in a similar situation in *Bárðar saga Snæfellsáss*: 'Þá hét Gestr á hann, er skapat hafði himin ok jörð, at taka við trú þeiri, er Óláfr konungr boðaði, ef hann kæmisk í burtu lifs ór hauginum.'

The close association here and elsewhere in saga literature of the religion proclaimed by Óláfr Tryggvason with the creator of heaven and earth (and/or of the sun) suggests that in the minds of these saga writers, at least, this creator is identical with the Christian God. Indeed, Bishop Friðrekr in *Vatnsdæla saga* (ch. 46) makes this identification to Þorkell krafla, who thereupon hurriedly has his kinsman Óláfr baptized before he dies even though Þorkell himself, perhaps for political reasons, prefers to postpone his own baptism until Christianity is officially adopted by the *Alþingi*.

Þorstein's recollection of remarkable stories about King Óláfr is foreshadowed by the initial sentence of the preceding chapter: 'It is clearly stated that there was a change of rulers in Norway that summer. Hákon the Heathen Jarl was killed and was succeeded by Óláfr Tryggvason, who proclaimed the true faith to all people.' (Glöggliga er þat sagt, at þetta sumar yrði höfðingjaskipti í Nóregi, felli frá Hákon blótjarl, en í staðinn kom Óláfr Tryggvason. Hann boðaði öllum mönnum rétta trú.)

Oddly enough, however, there seems to be no connection between these references to Christianity and an earlier prophecy made to Þorsteinn under very strange circumstances. In a dream he becomes involved in a fight in a burial mound between twelve red-clad men and twelve men dressed in black (or blue) garments. After the black-clad men have been defeated with Þorstein's help, the leader of the red-clad men thanks and rewards him and declares that this is the beginning of a series of courageous deeds he will perform abroad. He concludes with these interesting words:

'Þú munt ok taka siðaskipti, ok er sá siðr miklu betri, þeir sem hann mega hljóta, en hinum er erfiðara um, sem eigi eru til þess skapaðir ok slíkir eru sem ek, því at vit bræðr várum jarðbúar. Nú þætti mér miklu máli skipta, at þú kæmir nafni mínu undir skírn, ef þér yrði þat auðit at eiga son.'

'You will also be converted, and the new faith will be much better for those who may be granted it. But it will be more difficult for those who are not destined for it and for those like me, for my brother and I were tumulus dwellers. Now it would be of great importance to me if you were to have a child christened with my name if you should be fated to have a son.'

As a final example of Christian prophecy in the Sagas of Icelanders let us review the words of Þorsteinn Eiríksson in *Grænlandinga saga* (ch. 6), spoken from his 'good place of repose' in the world beyond:

'Mér er annt til þess, at segja Guðriði forlög sín, til þess at hon kunnir þá betr andláti mínu, því at ek em kominn til góðra hvíldastaða. En þat er þér at segja, Guðriðr, at þú munt gípt vera íslenzkum manni, ok munu langar vera samfarar ykkar, ok mart manna mun frá ykkir koma, þroskasamt, bjart ok ágætt, sætt ok ilmat vel. Munu þit fara af Grænlandi til Nóregs ok þaðan til Íslands ok gera bú á Íslandi; þar munu þit lengi búa, ok muntu honum lengr lifa. Þú munt útan fara ok ganga suðr ok koma út aprt til Íslands til bús þíns, ok þá mun þar kirkja reist vera, ok muntu þar vera ok taka nunnu-vígslu, ok þar muntu andask.'

'I am eager to tell Guðriðr her fate so that she will be able better to bear my death, for I have come to a good place of repose. But you must be told, Guðriðr, that you will be married to an Icelander, and your wedded life will last long, and you will have many descendants—vigorous, bright and splendid, sweet and of good fragrance. You will sail from Greenland to Norway and from there to Iceland, where you will establish your home. You will stay there for a long time and you will outlive your husband. You will go abroad on a pilgrimage to Rome, and return to your farm in Iceland, and by then a church will have been erected there. You will remain there and take the veil, and there you will die.'



The prophecy is completely fulfilled, and among Guðríð's 'bright and splendid' descendants are the bishops Brandr (d. 1201), Þorlákr (d. 1133), and Björn (d. 1162).

Since we have reviewed such a wide variety of forebodings of the advent of Christianity or the conversion or elevation of individuals, it will suffice to refer to a few typical statements regarding the superiority of the Christian faith over paganism. In *Grænlendinga saga* (ch. 6) Þorsteinn Eiríksson brings his ship to land after an unsuccessful attempt to sail to Vinland. He and his wife Guðríðr are invited to spend the winter at the home of a farmer named Þorsteinn. The farmer concludes his invitation with the comment that he has a faith different from theirs, but that he regards their faith as the better one. There seems to be little point to this statement at this point in the story, yet it is scarcely surprising in view of the fact that both the Vinland sagas abound in comments about paganism and Christianity, which may or may not be significant in the contexts in which they occur. Sometimes the significance is not immediately apparent, as when the author of *Grænlendinga saga* (ch. 2) concludes his introductory character sketch of Freyðis Eiríksdóttir with the remark that at that time Greenland was still pagan. It is only when we read about her monstrous crimes late in the story that we recall the sentence: 'Heiðit var fólk á Grænlandi í þann tíma.'

In *Gunnlaugs saga* (ch. 5), following the introduction of several characters including Gunnlaug's adversary Hrafn and Skapti the Law-speaker, the author states:

Ok þessu nær urðu þau tíðendi, er best hafa orðit hér á Íslandi, at landit varð allt kristit ok allt fólk hafnaði fornum átrúnaði.

At about this time the best event in the history of Iceland occurred, in that the whole country became Christian and all the people abandoned the heathen belief.

There seems to be no reason for placing this statement at this point in the story unless the author thereby wished to anticipate the abolition of the *hólmganga* later on in the story, since this form of legal duel was associated by some writers with paganism.

Another striking announcement of the conversion occurs in the surviving summary of the lost section of *Heiðarvíga saga* (ch. 8):

Í þann tíma gerðusk þau góð tíðendi á landi hér, at forn trúa var niðr lögð, en réttir siðir upp teknir. Létu þá margir ríkir bændr byggja kirkju á bæ sínum. Þeira einn var Styrr, ok lét hann kirkju reisa undir Hrauni. Sú var trúa á þeim tímum, at sá, er kirkju lét gera, ætti ráð á svá mörgum mönnum at kjósa til himnaríkis sem margir gæti staðit innan kirkju hans.

At that time a good event occurred in this country: the pagan belief was abandoned and the true faith was accepted. Many wealthy farmers had churches built on their farms. One of them was Styrr, who had a church erected on his place below Hraun. It was believed in those days that whoever had a church built could select as many men for the kingdom of heaven as could find standing room in his church.

This statement regarding the advent of Christianity and the building of churches anticipates both the episode about Styrr's burial (ch. 9) as well as the confrontation of Snorri goði and his devout son Guðlaugr, who later entered a monastery in England (ch. 12). It is interesting to note how the author of *Eyrbyggja* (ch. 49) modified this report (which must certainly have been his source). He asserts that Snorri goði was most influential in having Christianity accepted in the West Quarter, but refrains from making a value judgment about paganism and Christianity. He also adds that it was the priests who encouraged the building of more and larger churches by promising the farmers that they would have as many followers at their disposal in the kingdom of heaven as could find standing room in their churches.

It was noted above that the two *Vínland* sagas contain various allusions to pagan customs and to the less than perfect observation of Christian practices during the infancy of that religion in Greenland. Similar references are found in other sagas, especially in those in which the authors stress the great difference between *then* and *now*, between the cultural reference and the cultural milieu in which the sagas were created. In *Eyrbyggja* (ch. 53) certain events occur during Advent (*jólafasti*), and the author comments that 'in those days the fasts were not observed in Iceland'. In the following chapter he informs us that people believed in those days that men who perished at sea and then came to attend their funeral feast had been well received by Rán. 'For at that time much heathendom still prevailed even though all the people had been baptized and were nominally Christians.' (En þá var enn lítt af numin forneskjan, þó at menn væri

skírðir ok kristnir at kalla.) Very similar to this is the observation in *Fóstbræðra saga* (ch. 2):

En þó at þá væri menn kristnir kallaðir, þá var þó í þann tíð ung kristni ok mjök vanger, svá at margir gneistar heiðninnar vǫru þó þá eptir ok í óvenju lagðir.

Even though people were called Christian, still Christianity was young and very imperfect, for many sparks of heathendom remained and had become evil customs.

Although the author himself takes a dim view of the remnants of paganism and the attendant vices, many persons in those days thought it advantageous, he tells us, to be skilled in magic *því at kristni var ung ok vanger* (ch. 9). And even though Christianity was young (ch. 18), it was not customary to plunder the slain. In other words, even though paganism was evil and many Christians were not yet firm in the faith, people did not stoop so low as to plunder the bodies of those they had slain. Could this, perhaps, be an ironic allusion to contemporary practices as described in *Sturlunga saga*?

The author of this saga (ch. 23) also indulges in a bit of ironic humor in the episode dealing with Gríma, who sheltered and nursed Þormóðr in Greenland. Þormóð's enemies search for him in Gríma's house, where they find a chair with the likeness of Þórr carved on the chairposts. When chided by her rival witch Þórdís about this witchcraft (*fyrnska*), Gríma explains with a feigned ingenuousness that delights the modern reader no less than it must have amused the author's contemporaries:

'Ek kem sjaldan til kirkju at heyra kenningar lærðra manna, því at ek á langt at fara, en fámennt heima. Nú kemr mér þá heldr í hug, er ek sé líkneski Þórs af tré gert, þat er ek má brjóta ok brenna, þegar ek vil, hversu miklu sá er meiri, er skapat hefir himin ok jörð ok alla hluti sýnliga ok ósýnliga ok öllum hlutum gefr líf ok engi maðr má yfir stiga.'

'I seldom get to church to hear the sermons of priests, for I have a great distance to travel and few men at home to accompany me. But whenever I see the wooden likeness of Þórr, that I can break or burn at will, I think of how much greater he is who has created heaven and earth and all things visible and invisible, and who gives life to all things and cannot be surpassed by anyone.'



The irony in this bit of skulduggery, it seems to me, is no less sophisticated than that which informs *Hreiðars þáttur* or the Björn-Kári episode in *Njála*.

One of the pagan practices frowned upon by saga writers is that of the exposure of unwanted infants. Ari tells us that when Christianity was adopted by the *Alþingi* as the law of the land, three concessions were made to the pagans: they were to be permitted to continue the practice of the exposure of children at birth, the eating of horse flesh, and private pagan sacrifice. *Kristni saga* (ch. 11) repeats the passage from *Íslendingabók* almost verbatim, including the statement that this paganism was abandoned several years later. The author of *Njála*, however, 'corrected' his historical sources (as he occasionally did for artistic and/or tendentious reasons) by declaring that the worship of false idols (*skurðgoðavilla*), the eating of horseflesh, and the exposure of infants were abolished from the very beginning. To emphasize his abhorrence of these pagan practices, he adds in modified form Ari's statement that they were completely abandoned within a few years.

Probably the best known instance of infant exposure in saga literature is found in *Gunnlaugs saga*. Disturbed by an ominous dream, Þorsteinn Egilsson instructs his wife Jófriðr, who is pregnant, to put out their child to die in case it is a girl. The author interrupts the conversation between husband and wife to inform us that 'when the country was completely pagan, it was the custom for men of small means and many dependents to let their children die of exposure. Even so, it was considered an evil thing to do.' Following this comment by the author, Jófriðr retorts that it is unseemly for her husband to demand such a thing, especially in view of his great wealth. The episode, to which there are many parallels in ancient and medieval literature, is too well known to need detailed repetition here. Of primary importance for our present purpose is the author's apparent ambivalence. (I say 'apparent' because the entire episode is replete with irony.) He doubly underscored Þorstein's culpability by stressing his wealth and by asserting that child exposure was regarded as evil even when practiced by the indigent. On the other hand, Þorstein's decision clearly resulted from his conviction that, if permitted to live, his daughter would be the cause of great misfortune including the death of two suitors.

Interesting variants of the theme of infant exposure are found in several sagas. Although the motivation in *Finnboga saga* (ch. 2) is different, several details in this episode are similar or identical with the one in *Gunnlaugs saga*. The order to have the yet unborn child exposed to die is issued as the father is about to leave for the *Alþingi*, and the mother's protest that such a deed would be unthinkable even among destitute people recalls the condemnation of the author and of Jófríðr in *Gunnlaugs saga*. In *Þorsteins saga uxafóts* (ch. 4) there is a reference to and a condemnation of the pagan law: 'It was legal in those days for poor people to let their children die of exposure, if they wished, but it was not regarded as a good thing to do.' (En þat var þá lög í þann tíma, at út skyldi bera óríkra manna börn, ef vildi, ok þótti þó eigi vel gert.) In *Harðar saga*, as in *Gunnlaugs saga*, it is a girl child who is exposed to die, while in *Vatnsdæla saga* it is Þorkell krafla, mentioned above as a hero whose superiority over his kinsmen was based on the fact that he was a Christian whereas they were pagans. However the various episodes dealing with the theme of infant exposure may differ in motivation and detail, they are similar in two respects: the theme is essential or at least important to the action of the story, and the practice itself is identified with paganism and directly or indirectly condemned by the author. In other words, the theme of infant exposure is a function both of plot and of meaning much as the generation-gap theme is. In one case we find implicit or explicit condemnation of the marauding Viking and praise for the peaceful farmer, and in the other, condemnation of a cruel pagan practice tempered by the suggestion that even during the time of heathendom it was not a widely practiced or approved custom.

By far the most feared and powerful pagan practice was that of sorcery. Saga characters have much to say about fate and fortune, for both of which there are several names in Icelandic, but it is remarkable how frequently saga authors explain the fate or fortune of their characters on the basis of magic or sorcery or enchantment, for which there are also many designations. Several attractive and ingenious explanations of Kormák's puzzling failure to marry his sweetheart have been advanced by modern scholars, but contemporaries of the author must have found his explanation satisfactory: the sorceress Þorveig put a curse on his love for Steingerðr because he slew her



two sons. In *Njáls saga* (ch. 6) Queen Gunnhildr puts a spell on Hrútr so that he cannot enjoy the love of his bride Unnr. This sorcery sets in motion a chain of events that leads inevitably to the death of Njáll and his sons. After divorcing Hrútr, Unnr marries Valgarðr grái, the most heathen of all the heathens in *Njála*, and it is he who devises the schemes, carried out by his son Mörðr, that bring about the slaying of Höskuldr and eventually the burning of Bergþórshváll. In *Eyrbyggja* (ch. 20) the witch Katla works a spell on her executioner Arnkell goði 'that worse ill may befall you from your father than has come to Oddr from me'. Arnkel's father is Þórólfr bægifótr, a thoroughly evil and truculent superannuated Viking whose crimes and aggressions involve his son in a series of confrontations with Snorri goði that finally bring about his death. But the evil that emanates from Þórólfr, a paragon of pagan truculence and viciousness, continues long after the death of father and son.

The situation in *Gísli saga* cannot be discussed in detail here, for the configurations of opposing forces, good and bad, Christian and pagan, are exceedingly complex. Among the powers of pagan darkness, however, the author gives prominence to the black magic of a warlock named Þorgrímr nef. This evil creature is introduced into the story (ch. 11) just after the author has informed us that Gísli, unlike most of his countrymen, has abandoned the practice of blood sacrifice. Þorgrímr is described as 'full of sorcery and witchcraft, and he was as much a wizard (*seiðskratti*) as could be'. For his friends Þorgrímr and Þorkell (Gísli's adversary and brother, respectively), Þorgrímr nef forges the spear *Grásíða*, with which Gísli's friend Vésteinn and his enemy Þorgrímr are slain. Later on in the story (ch. 18) Þorgrímr's brother Börkr pays Þorgrímr nef to put an evil spell on his brother's killer so that he will not be able to find asylum anywhere in Iceland. Still later in the story the author confirms the fact that it was this black magic that prevented Gísli from finding shelter and support: 'But because of the witchcraft that Þorgrímr nef had put into his sorcery and cursing, it was not destined for him to be granted the help of chieftains.' (*En sakar þess trollskepar, er Þorgrímr nef hafði haft í seiðinum ok atkvæða, þá verður þess eigi auðit, at höfðingjar tæki við honum.*) Even if we disregard all the other sinister forces that bedeviled and tormented Gísli, we cannot avoid the conclusion—



unless we deliberately disregard the author's own explicit words—that in this story, as in *Njáls saga*, fate or destiny is closely associated with pagan sorcery and witchcraft.

As a final example of a saga hero whose lifelong misfortune and eventual tragic death seem to derive less from his conflict with society or from a combination of personal *ógæfa* and impersonal fate than from the baleful influence of witchcraft and black magic let us review briefly three of Grettir's encounters with various kinds of supernatural powers. At a haunted farm a thoroughly un-Christian shepherd named Glámr is slain mysteriously during the Christmas season. He returns as a revenant and wreaks such havoc that no one dare dwell in those parts until Grettir overcomes him (*Grettis saga*, ch. 35). But the revenant puts a double curse on Grettir, so that he will henceforth dread the darkness and all of his deeds will turn to great personal misfortune (*snúask þér til ógæfu ok hamingjuleysis*). The farmer thanks Grettir for ridding him of this unclean spirit (*þenna óhreina anda*), and this juxtaposition of pagan concepts and Christian terminology is not without significance.

The outlawry and killings predicted for Grettir by Glámr become a reality, and Grettir seeks to establish his innocence of having deliberately burned the sons of Þórir to death by submitting to an ordeal in Norway. King Óláfr gives his permission, but before Grettir can undergo the test, a boy in the church baits him into striking him. King Óláfr thereupon withdraws the right to undergo the ordeal, declaring that it is not possible for Grettir to overcome his innate misfortune (*ógæfa*). Most of those present, however, think the mysterious lad must have been an unclean spirit sent to enchant or bring misfortune to Grettir (*en þat ætla menn helzt, at þat hafi verit óhreinn andi, sendr til óheilla Gretti*). Again we find this significant juxtaposition or near-identification of Christian and pagan concepts: *óhreinn andi* and *ógæfa*, *óheill*.

And finally, Grettir's death is brought about through the black magic of an old witch named Þuríðr, who cuts runes on a tree root, reddens them with her blood, and chants magic incantations over them (*tók hon knif sinn ok reist rúnar á rótinni ok rauð í blóði sínu ok kvað yfir galdra*). When Grettir tries to chop up this *óheillatré* for kindling, the axe skids off and wounds him, and this wound so

weakens him that he is finally overborne by his enemies. But when they boast of having laid low a great champion, Grettir's brother refutes them: it was not they who slew Grettir but their witchcraft and pagan lore (*galdrar ykkir ok forneskja*).

Whereas these characters suffered because of pagan spells and curses inflicted from without, other characters bring misfortune on themselves and on others through their own pagan beliefs and practices. Hrafnkel's devotion to Freyr leads him to commit a brutal killing that eventually leads to his downfall; his renunciation of the pagan gods marks the beginning of his rapid rehabilitation. When informed of the destruction of his horse Freyfaxi and his *goðahús* and idols (ch. 7) Hrafnkell declares:

'Ek hygg þat hégóma at trúa á goð.' Ok sagðisk hann þaðan af aldri skyldu á goð trúa, ok þat efndi hann síðan, at hann blótaði aldri.

'I think it foolish to believe in gods.' And he declared that he would never worship gods from that time on, and he kept this vow and never again engaged in blood sacrifice.

The following paragraph relates Hrafnkel's rapid rise to power, wealth, and popularity. The connection between Hrafnkel's renunciation of pagan worship and his rehabilitation is clear.

In *Víga-Glúms saga*, however, the situation is more complex in regard to the interrelationship of worth of character, personal and family fortune, impersonal fate, and the pagan gods. Suffice it to say that in contrast to the friendship that existed between Freyr and Hrafnkell, the relationship between this god and Glúmr is one of enmity and hostility. Early in the story (ch. 8) Glúmr slays Sigmundur Þorkelsson while he is illegally harvesting on the field Vitazgjafi and then forces Þorkell to sell him his properties for half their real value. Before surrendering his lands (ch. 9) Þorkell reminds the god Freyr of his many previous gifts and sacrifices an ox to him with the supplication that Glúmr too be forced to leave his lands in due time ('at Glúmr fari eigi ónauðgari af Þverárlandi en ek fer nú'). Attendant circumstances strongly suggest that Þorkel's request will be granted.

Shortly before Glúmr is banished from his estate as a consequence of losing a lawsuit to Einarr Þveræingr (ch. 26), he has this encounter with Freyr:

En áðr Glúmr ríði heiman, dreymsi hann, at margir menn væri komnir þar til Þverár at hitta Frey, ok þóttisk hann sjá mart manna á eyrunum við ána, en Freyr sat á stóli. Hann þóttisk spyrja, hverir þar væri komnir. Þeir segja: 'Þetta eru frændr þínir framliðnir, ok biðjum vér nú Frey, at þú sér eigi á brott færðr af Þverárlandi, ok tjóar ekki, ok svarar Freyr stutt ok reiðuliga ok minnsk nú á uxagjöf Þorkels ins háva.' Hann vaknaði, ok lézk Glúmr verr vera við Frey alla tíma síðan.

Before Glúmr left home (to go to the Alþingi, where he was to be banished from his estate) he dreamed that many men had come there to Þverá to consult Freyr, and he thought he could see many men on the gravel banks along the creek, and Freyr sat on a chair. It seemed to him that he asked who these people were who had come there. They replied, 'These are your departed kinsmen, and we are now beseeching Freyr that you should not be banished from Þverárland, but it is of no avail, for Freyr is answering curtly and angrily, and now he recalls that Þorkell inn hávi made him a gift of an ox.' Glúmr awakened, and he declared that his relations with Freyr were worse ever since.

This quotation supplies only a partial explanation for Frey's hostility toward Glúmr. The location of the field Vitazgjafi adjacent to the temple of Freyr, its almost miraculous nature, and the meaning of the name Vitazgjafi ('the certain giver') suggest that this field was sacred to Freyr much as the hill Helgafell was sacred to Þórr in *Eyrbyggja*. Thus Glúmr's slaying of Sigmundur at that place could have been offensive to Freyr. Furthermore, there are also indications that Glúmr abandoned Freyr in favor of Óðinn during his sojourn in Norway, whereas Þorkell could remind Freyr that he had been his *fulltrúi* for a long time and had received many gifts from him.

In *Gísla saga* (ch. 15) Þorgrímur celebrates the advent of winter by making a blood sacrifice to Freyr, whereupon he murders Vésteinn and is promptly slain by Gísli in revenge. Freyr shows his appreciation for Þorgrím's sacrificial gifts (*blótin*) by preventing snow and ice from accumulating on the south side of Þorgrím's burial mound. This ironic comment on the efficacy of sacrifice to pagan gods follows immediately after the description of Þorgrímur nef's *seiðr* that contributes to Gísli's death by preventing him from receiving any effective help during his outlawry.

The author of *Ögmundar þáttur dytts ok Gunnars helmings* also employs irony in his exposure of the *hégómi* of worshipping pagan gods. The gradual revelation on the part of Frey's spouse of her af-



fection for Gunnarr helmingr, Gunnar's life-and-death struggle with the wooden statue, his vow to renew his allegiance to Christianity and King Óláfr Tryggvason in return for aid against his adversary, his impressive enactment of the role of Freyr, the delight of his followers at his prowess and especially at the pregnancy of his spouse, the substitution of gifts of gold and silver for blood sacrifice—all this is related with poker-faced sobriety, and yet the reader can almost hear the author chuckling as he spins out his ironic tale.

The worship of Þórr fares no better at the hand of saga writers than that of Freyr. According to one version of the story about Örylgr Hrapppsson in *Landnámabók* (S, ch. 15), Örylgr calls upon his patron Patrekr byskup as he approaches Iceland, lands safely, and names the fjord Patreksfjörðr. His companion Kollr, however, calls upon Þórr during a storm, and his ship is driven aground and smashed to pieces. Hallsteinn Þórólfsson (*Landnámabók*, S, ch. 123) was somewhat luckier. After he has made a blood sacrifice to Þórr, a tree provides enough wood for high-seat pillars for almost all the farms in the area. But this 'blessing' is an exception. In general, the worship of Þórr is depicted as no less foolish or baleful than that of Freyr.

The story of Helgi hinn magri (*Landnámabók*, S, ch. 218), who 'believed in Christ but called upon Þórr on sea voyages and in difficult situations' (trúði á Krist en hét á Þór til sjófara ok harðræða), is often referred to but usually for the wrong reasons. As his ship approaches Iceland, Helgi asks Þórr for advice, and he is advised to proceed northward. His son Hrólfr asks sarcastically if he would sail into the Arctic Ocean if Þórr so directed. And indeed, the first choice of land is a poor one. Eventually Helgi settles on Kristnes, where he remains for the rest of his life. The story in *Landnámabók* ends with this sentence: 'Helgi believed in Christ and for that reason he named his farm for Him.' (Helgi trúði á Krist ok kenndi því við hann bústað sinn.) Þórr has completely dropped out of the picture. Apparently Helgi's enthusiasm for him was cooled by his son's sarcasm and by the first severe winter spent in Iceland.

In *Eyrbyggja saga* it is the excessive devotion to Þórr on the part of the Þórsnesingar that precipitates the first major conflict between the descendants of Þórólftr Mostrarskegg and the Kjalleklingar, the descendants of Ketill flatnefr. It is remarkable, as we shall see pre-

sently, to what extent the action and meaning of *Eyrbyggja* are connected with pagan beliefs and customs.

In *Eiríks saga rauða* two individuals suffer because of their stubborn adherence to paganism. When Leifr proclaims Christianity in Greenland as the emissary of Óláfr Tryggvason, his mother Þjóðhildr hastens to accept the new religion, but Eiríkr is unwilling to abandon the belief of his ancestors. As a result, he loses his conjugal rights. Before making ready to sail for Vinland, he buries a chest of gold and silver. When thrown from his horse, breaking some ribs and dislocating a shoulder, Eiríkr himself interprets this mishap as a punishment—a common type of anachronism in saga literature, this one based upon a later law making the burying of money illegal in Christian Iceland.

In this story, which is clearly a re-working of the much older *Grœnlendinga saga*, Þórhallr veiðimaðr replaces Tyrkir and also functions as a sort of surrogate for Eiríkr as a foil to the Christians. His initial character portrayal (ch. 8), which is the most interesting and detailed of any in the story, reveals his affinity to Eiríkr:

Þórhallr . . . veiðimaðr . . . hafði lengi verit með Eiríki, veiðimaðr hans um sumrum, en bryti um vetrum. Hann var mikill maðr ok sterkr ok svartr ok þursligr, hljóðlyndr ok illorðr, þat er hann mælti, ok eggjaði jafnan Eirík ins verra. Hann var illa kristinn. Honum var víða kunnigt í óbyggðum.

Þórhallr the Hunter had been with Eiríkr for a long time. He was his hunter during the summer and his steward during the winter. He was a tall, strong man, swarthy and ogre-like. He was taciturn, but abusive when he did speak. He always exerted an evil influence on Eiríkr, and would have nothing to do with Christianity. He had widely explored the wild regions.

Þórhall's only contribution to Karlsefni's expedition is a whale that he produces through magic incantations and the help of his friend Þórr, but all who eat of the whale become ill. Finally Þórhallr grows disenchanting because they find no wine and parts company with Karlsefni. He is driven ashore by storms in Ireland, where he and his small band of companions are beaten and enslaved.

The most obviously 'churchy' denunciation of Þórr worship is found in *Flóamanna saga* (chs. 20–21), when Þórr appears in a series of dreams to Þorgils following his conversion and threatens him with

all sorts of harm 'unless you return to faith in me' (nema þú hverfir aprt til míns átrúnaðar). But although Þórr proves to be a formidable adversary, Þorgils remains firm in the faith. One of his dreams is modeled in part on Satan's temptation of Christ:

Síðan þótti honum Þórr leiða sik á hamra nökkura, þar sem sjóvarstraumur brast í björgum. 'Í slíkum bylgjum skaltu vera ok aldri ór komask, utan þú hverfir til mín.'

'Nei,' sagði Þorgils, 'far á burt, inn leiði fjándi. Sá mun mér hjálpa, sem alla leysti með sínum dreyra.'

Thereupon it seemed to him that Þórr led him onto a certain precipice, where the ocean tide roared upon the crags. 'You will be cast into such billows and never escape unless you turn to me.'

'No,' replied Þorgils, 'go away, you loathsome devil. He will help me who has redeemed all mankind with his blood.'

Even from this brief survey it is clear that saga writers employed an even greater variety of techniques in their denunciation of witchcraft and pagan worship than they did in heralding the advent of Christianity. Ridicule was a favorite means of attacking pagan worship, and it assumed various forms, ranging from the most discreet form of irony to heavy-handed sarcasm. But antipaganism could also be quite humorless, especially when the baleful rather than the foolish aspect of belief in pagan gods was attacked.

Although the transition from paganism to Christianity seems to have proceeded rather smoothly in Iceland, *Íslendingabók*, *Kristni saga*, and other historical sources report various instances of conflict between pagans and Christians. Ari tells us that Þangbrandr, King Óláfr Tryggvason's personal emissary to the Icelanders, slew *tvá menn eða þrjá* before he returned to Norway, convinced that Christianity would never be adopted in Iceland. This brief and bare report was developed by later saga writers into detailed and dramatic accounts, the most vivid and artistic of which is found in *Njáls saga* (chs. 100-105). In a previous missionary expedition it was not the foreign missionary, Bishop Friðrekr, but the Icelandic convert, Þorvaldr Koðráns-son, whose religious zeal led him to commit homicide against his own countrymen. Still a third Icelander, Stefnir Þorgilsson, was so frustrated at the resistance against the new faith, especially on the part of his own kinsmen, that he went on a furious rampage, destroy-



ing pagan temples and holy places and idols. As related in *Kristni saga*, the conflict between pagans and Christians rose in a crescendo until it reached its climax at the *Alþingi* in the year 1000. For a time it seemed as though the impasse between the pagan and Christian parties could be resolved only by armed conflict. But in the end reason and moderation prevailed over fanaticism, and the pagan Law-speaker, Þorgeirr Ljósvetningagoði Þorkelsson, resolved the conflict in favor of the Christians. Before proceeding to a discussion of some of the ways in which saga writers three centuries later reflected and developed the pagan-Christian conflicts reported here, let us pause for a moment to recall three examples of comic relief with which the author of *Kristni saga* (ch. 11) interspersed his terse account of the conversion.

During the deliberations news came to the *Alþingi* that a lava flow was threatening the farm belonging to Þóroddr goði. Immediately one of the pagans declared the volcanic outburst to be divine punishment, since the wrath of the gods had been incited by talk of Christianity. To this Snorri goði retorted with the question: 'What were the gods angry about when the lava burned that we are now standing on?' After coming to the momentous decision to abandon the religion of their forefathers in favor of the faith proclaimed by Óláfr Tryggvason, the national leaders of Iceland refused baptism at the *Alþingi* because the water was too cold. They insisted on being baptized in warm springs on their way homeward. And finally, when Rúnólfr Úlfsson, one of the most obstinate and aggressive pagans, was undergoing baptism, Hjalti Skeggjason could not refrain from the un-Christian gibe: 'Now we are teaching the old *goði* to mumble the salt.'

We noted above that Þorkell krafla was eager to have his kinsman Óláfr baptized before he died, but that he himself put off conversion until Christianity had been adopted by the *Alþingi*. It was suggested that political considerations might have motivated this delay. It is also possible that Þorkell was not yet inwardly ready to become a Christian. Not a few saga heroes were converted to Christianity over a period of time—in stages, as it were. Some, like Egill Skalla-Grímsson, did not go beyond the *prima signatio*. In the case of others, such as the titular hero of *Orms þáttur Stórolfssonar* (ch. 8), the *prima*

*signatio* preceded baptism: 'Þat segja menn, at Ormr væri þrimsigndr í Danmörku, en hafi kristnast á Íslandi.'

The inner conflict resulting from the abandonment of the belief of one's kinsmen and ancestors for a faith proclaimed by a foreign king is depicted in various ways. Sometimes the conversion is described as a general growth, as in *Laxdæla saga*. Kjartan at first angrily rejects the king's proffer and even threatens to burn him to death in his house. Gradually, however, the king's kindness and patience mollify Kjartan to the point where he declares he will no longer worship Þórr. Before long his admiration for the king induces him to seek baptism as eagerly as Óláfr desires him to accept it. After returning to Iceland, Kjartan continues to grow in the faith. He is the first person to observe a strict fast throughout Lent, and people come from miles around to observe and admire him. Finally he makes the supreme sacrifice, letting Bolli cut him down because he prefers to receive death from his fosterbrother rather than to inflict it on him. The only comparable demonstrations of the spirit of Christianity in the Sagas of Icelanders are the death of Höskuldr in *Njáls saga* and Njál's sacrifice of his family in atonement for the sins committed by his sons.

A similar development is undergone by Gísli Súrsson. Early in his saga we learn that he has abandoned blood sacrifice to the pagan gods following a visit to Christian Denmark. When his brother Þorkell is slain by Véstein's sons, he cannot bring himself to harbor his brother's killers, but he does forego wreaking vengeance on them. Ironically the former paragon of heroic paganism now places loyalty to his spouse above loyalty to kinsmen—a virtue from the Christian point of view, but the very failing from the pagan standpoint for which he formerly found fault with his sister Þórdís. Gísli's inner conflict is symbolically depicted through the ominous dreams in which a good and an evil dream woman appear to console and to harass him. Finally, as he retreats to the cliffs for his courageous last stand, he deliberately marks the trail so that his enemies cannot fail to find him. He dies bravely, as did Roland and many another Christian warrior. It is perhaps not insignificant that his death remains unavenged, and it is certainly significant that his wife Auðr goes to

Denmark to be baptized and then makes a pilgrimage to Rome, never to return to Iceland. Auð's motive seems quite clear when we recall the pilgrimage of Sturla Sighvatsson to receive absolution from the Pope for his and his father's transgressions, or the several instances in saga literature of pagans seeking to gain vicarious benefits through the baptism of namesakes.

As already mentioned, the vision that appears to Þiðrandi Síðu-Hallsson is one of the most vivid symbolic manifestations of religious conflict in the Sagas of Icelanders. Þiðrandi sees nine women in black raiment and with drawn swords riding toward him from the north, and nine women in bright raiment riding toward him on white horses from the south. The black-clad women arrive first and attack him, and despite his stout defense they cut him down. He lives long enough to relate his experience, the interpretation of which has already been discussed. It seems likely that Þiðrandi, whose behavior and attitude are almost too obviously those of a Christian, has undergone conversion abroad, and it is a well-known fact that his father was converted by Þangbrandr before Christianity was officially adopted in Iceland.

The only one of the *Íslendingasögur* that centers around the spiritual conflict of an individual is *Hallfreðar saga*. On the surface this saga is a love story, somewhat like *Gunnlaugs saga*, but the confrontation between Hallfreðr and King Óláfr (ch. 5) marks the beginning of a spiritual struggle that ends only with the poet's death. On his arrival in Norway Hallfreðr is admonished by the king 'to reject witchcraft and the evil faith and to believe in the true God, the Creator of heaven and earth' (*kasta forneskju ok illum átrúnaði, en trúa á sannan guð, skapara himins ok jarðar*). Hallfreðr agrees to be baptized—but only on the condition that the king himself be his sponsor. Unlike more zealous converts (ch. 6), Hallfreðr does not speak ill of the pagan gods:

Hallfreðr lastaði ekki goðin, þó at aðrir menn hallmælti þeim, kvað eigi þurfa at ámæla þeim, þó at menn vildi eigi trúa á þau.

Hallfreðr did not decry the gods even though other men deprecated them. He said it was not necessary to disparage the gods even if one did not wish to believe in them.



A verse in which Hallfreðr admits that he formerly enjoyed the worship of Óðinn brings on a second debate with the king, in which Hallfreðr speaks only in verse. Gradually the verses become less pagan and more Christian until the king's displeasure with his 'difficult skald' (vandráðaskáld) is mollified. The king's ire is aroused again when Hallfreðr slays one of his courtiers and is accused by the slain man's brother of secretly engaging in pagan sacrifice and carrying with him an image of Þórr. To regain the king's good graces, Hallfreðr is to kill or blind a certain pagan as punishment for his refusal to accept Christianity.

After putting out one of the pagan's eyes, Hallfreðr proceeds to Gautland (ch. 7), where he is set upon by a highwayman. In dire straits he calls upon the White Christ for help, and succeeds in overcoming his adversary 'with the help of God and the good luck of King Óláfr' (með fulltingi guðs ok giptu Óláfs konungs). In Gautland (ch. 8) Hallfreðr marries a pagan woman, and is so highly esteemed and so well treated by her kinsmen that his observance of Christianity gradually diminishes to blowing over his drinking horn in the form of a cross and perhaps singing an occasional psalm: 'Þat hafði hann helzt til trúar, at hann blés í kross yfir drykk sínum, áðr hann drakk, en fátt söng hann.'

In the third year of Hallfreð's sojourn among the heathen (ch. 9), King Óláfr appears to him looking very angry. He reproaches him for having cast off his faith and commands him to return to the court. Here a priest hears Hallfreð's confession and baptizes his wife Ingi-björg and their two sons. To atone for his weakness in the faith and for having lived so long among pagans, Hallfreðr at the behest of the king composes a poem on the creation.

During a brief interlude in Iceland following the death of his wife, Hallfreðr challenges his old rival Gríss to a duel, but King Óláfr, as so often, appears in a dream and warns against it. News of the death of his royal patron shocks Hallfreðr so deeply that he plans vengeance against Jarl Eiríkr. Again Óláfr appears in a dream and urges Hallfreðr to commemorate the Jarl in a *drápa* instead.

In the description of Hallfreð's death and burial the author masterfully depicts and resolves the conflicting forces in the life of the

troublesome poet. Fatally injured when struck by a sailyard during a storm, Hallfreðr sees his guardian spirit in the form of a large woman wearing a mail coat and walking on the waves. He takes leave of her, and she then becomes the *fylgjukona* of his son Hallfreðr. Thereupon he recites his last poem, declaring that he could die peacefully if he knew his soul were saved. He fears nothing except hell, yet he is willing to let God decide where he will live in the next world. His coffin, containing three gifts from King Óláfr, drifts ashore in the Hebrides, where it is plundered and the body sunk in a bog. Apprised in a vision by King Óláfr of the desecration, the abbot of a nearby monastery has the body properly buried:

Lík Hallfreðar var flutt til kirkju ok var grafit virðuliga. Kalekr var gerr af hringinum, en altarisklæði af skikkjunni, en kertastikur ór hjálminum.

Hallfreð's body was brought to the church, where it was buried in a worthy manner. A chalice was made from the ring, an altar cloth from the cloak, and candle sticks from the helmet.

I have dwelt at some length on *Hallfreðar saga* because of the fact that this story is usually interpreted as a conventional *skáldasaga*, i.e., a love story with a poet as hero. Yet not even the most cursory reading of the saga permits such an interpretation. Hallfreð's introductory description occurs in chapter 2 and his affection for Kolfinna is briefly reported at the end of chapter 3. His first confrontation with King Óláfr occurs in chapter 5, and from that point on, except for a brief interlude following his wife's death, Hallfreð's thoughts and actions result from or are closely bound up with the struggle between paganism (which, among other things, supplied the metaphors for his poetry!), and Christianity, embodied in the stern, dominating, inescapable figure of the missionary king. Spiritually Hallfreðr is caught between these opposing forces just as he was fettered physically on three occasions. Although King Óláfr gradually dominates and directs his life more and more, Hallfreðr is not completely freed of traces of paganism until he takes leave of his *fylgjukona* (walking on the waves as if on land!) and, despite his understandable fear of hell, confidently commends his soul to God's mercy. The completion of the transition from paganism to Christianity is symbolized by the transformation of the king's three gifts into objects associated with Christian worship.

At the outset we considered three ways in which saga writers stressed the superiority of Christians over pagans: through the qualified praise of pagan heroes, through the attribution of superiority of heroes to the fact that they were Christian rather than pagan, and through the declaration that the individual, although pagan, was the equal in morality and conduct of the very best Christians. Still another effective method is through the use of contrastive characterization. One of the best examples of this technique is found in *Vápnfirðinga saga* (chs. 4-5), where the avarice and truculence of two chieftains, Brodd-Helgi and Geitir, are made to seem all the more reprehensible when contrasted with the gentleness and generosity of the sea-faring trader Þorleifr hinn kristni.

Þorleif's partner, a Norwegian named Hrafn, is slain under circumstances that strongly implicate the two chieftains as the instigators of the crime. Brodd-Helgi and Geitir appropriate Hrafn's property, but Þorleifr retrieves it and returns it to his partner's kinsmen in Norway. The two chieftains suspect each other of having stolen a gold ring and a chest (thought to be full of gold and silver) that belonged to the slain Norwegian, and as this suspicion increases, their friendship decreases and eventually turns into hostility. Upon his return from Norway, Þorleifr is cited for nonpayment of the temple tax by a woman named Steinvör, the priestess of the chief temple. The case against Þorleifr is assumed by Brodd-Helgi, who manipulates a certain Digr-Ketill into summoning Þorleifr for this infraction of the law. After reluctantly carrying out this task, Digr-Ketill is forced by a fierce snowstorm to accept shelter from Þorleifr; and by the time the storm abates, the relationship between the two has become so cordial that Digr-Ketill refuses to prosecute Þorleifr, leaving Brodd-Helgi to suffer moral defeat and disgrace. Having served his purpose, Þorleifr hinn kristni quietly disappears from the story. Brodd-Helgi's disregard for the rights of others eventually becomes so gross that Geitir is compelled to kill him. Geitir in turn is killed by Bjarni Brodd-Helgason, and when Geitir's son Þorkell seeks to avenge the death of his father, it seems as though the curse (*ættgeigr*) put upon Helgi by the first victim of his axe will continue 'meðan landit er byggt'. But eventually Bjarni's good will and moderation prevail over Þorkel's stubborn demand for revenge, and tranquility is once more restored.



In *Porsteins þáttur stangarhöggs*, a pendant to *Vápnfirðinga saga* written some 50 years after the composition of this story, Bjarni becomes a *trúmaðr mikill* and, like so many saga heroes, makes a pilgrimage to Rome.

And finally we come to *Njála*, the mightiest of the Sagas of Icelanders, and about this literary masterpiece we could talk until doomsday. Almost all of the various means of expressing antipagan sentiment that we have already touched upon can be found in this remarkable work of art. We have seen that magic, witchcraft, and sorcery were said by the author to be the cause of much of the trouble and tragedy in this story; and, of course, destiny and fortune also have important functions. But what must be the supreme irony in the most ironic of all the *Íslendingasögur* is the strange rôle played by Njáll himself. The author states (ch. 20) that Njáll's 'advice was sound and benevolent, and always turned out well for those who followed it'. And yet a careful reading of the saga reveals that Njáll's nobility and benevolence contribute no less to the disaster and destruction of himself and his family than do the malevolent, baleful forces of pagan sorcery. All of Njáll's planning and scheming, his intellectual efforts to alter and fend off fate are of no avail. It is only through the transformation of the pagan concept of indifferent, immutable destiny into the Christian concept of benign providence that death and destruction are transvaluated into spiritual victory. What would have been total defeat according to the pagan view of life becomes penance and atonement for the heinous crime and sin committed by Njáll's flesh and blood against his spiritual son Höskuldr:

'Verðið vel við ok mælið eigi æðru, því at él eitt mun vera, en þó skyldi langt til annars slíks. Trúið þér ok því, at guð er miskunnsamr, ok mun hann oss eigi bæði láta brenna þessa heíms ok annars.'

'Take heart and speak no words of despair, for this will be only a brief storm, and it will be long before another one like it comes. Have faith in God's mercy, for he will not let us burn in this world and the next.'

At the beginning of this paper I stated that I intended neither to engage in controversy nor to develop a thesis regarding religious bias in the Sagas of Icelanders. Instead, I wished merely to review with you a selection of representative passages in which saga writers reveal their attitudes toward paganism and/or Christianity. In so doing we

concentrated on the texts themselves, quoting extensively and exclusively from the sagas and disregarding the polemic literature about them. For those of us who read and enjoy the sagas as serious fiction created in Iceland for the most part in the thirteenth century, there is nothing new or startling either in the quotations or in my comments about them. For others, however, who may be more intimately acquainted with romantic speculations about the sagas than with the texts themselves, some of the quotations (and my commentary) may have been just a bit annoying or disquieting, since they do not always say what sagas are supposed to say.

There seems, for instance, to be far too much praise of Christians and deprecation of pagans in these passages. Even if the adoption of Christianity was such an important event in the history of Iceland, was it really necessary for so many saga writers to make such a big thing of it in stories that are, according to romantic doctrine, predominantly pagan? Even more disquieting questions are raised by the statement in *Sturlunga saga* that Sturla Sighvatsson made a pilgrimage to Rome to receive absolution for his transgressions and those of his father, and by the various requests made by dying pagans that their Christian conquerors name sons for them. Perhaps the numerous accounts in saga literature of pilgrimages to Rome and the Holy Land are more than a casual concession to the Church? And why did so many writers of pagan sagas find it necessary to condemn so many pagan practices? And why, if the sagas were written from the pagan point of view, is the belief in pagan gods so consistently depicted as baleful or ludicrous or both?

According to romantic saga doctrine the Christian element in the sagas is slight and superficial, having little or nothing to do with their essence or substance. If this were so, we should have to regard more than half of *Hallfreðar saga* as a superfluous superimposition, and the haunting dream verses in *Gísla saga* would have to be eliminated as late emendations. And *Njáls saga* would no longer be the mightiest of the Sagas of Icelanders, for we would have to regard some of the most memorable and meaningful passages of this monumental repudiation of the old way of life as improper intrusions on the heathen viewpoint that must, according to romantic doctrine, inform the *Íslendingasögur*. Njál's adoption of Höskuldr, whose father was slain by

his own sons in an endeavor to assure peace between the two families; Höskuld's words of forgiveness when slain by his brothers: 'May God help me and forgive all of you!'; Flosi's inner conflict between the pagan duty of blood vengeance and the keen realization that burning Njáll and his family was a transgression against God; Njál's deliberate and premeditated sacrifice of himself and his family in expiation of the sins of his sons; Skarphéðin's symbolic burning of a cross on his back and chest; the saintly glow of Njál's body; Hallr af Síða's renunciation of compensation for his slain son in an effort to bring about a truce between the hostile parties; the reconciliation between Flosi and Kári after both have received absolution of their sins in Rome; and the marriage between Hildigunnr, who unleashed fearful vengeance for the slaying of Höskuldr, and Kári, who wreaked equally fearful countervengeance for the burning, as a symbolic pledge of the permanence of that reconciliation—all of this would have to be scrapped as superficial Christian additions to a pagan story. But this, of course, is patent nonsense, and speculation of this kind can only lead away from the meaning of *Njála* and, indeed, from the meaning of all the Sagas of Icelanders.

What conclusions can we reasonably draw from the saga passages quoted and discussed here? Without in any way generalizing about the *Íslendingasögur* as a genre, we can state that to the extent that these quotations represent the views of the authors and are integral parts of the sagas in which they occur, they do not seem to lend support to the romantic doctrine that these stories were written from a pro-pagan point of view.



RÉGIS BOYER

PAGANISM AND LITERATURE:  
THE SO-CALLED 'PAGAN SURVIVALS' IN THE  
SAMTÍÐARSÖGUR

SINCE the general theme of this Conference deals with 'The Sagas and Medieval Icelandic Society', the precise subject I have chosen to develop here may seem puzzling at first view: one is not obliged to see immediately the link between Medieval Icelandic Society, its reflection or embodiment or direct translation into the saga world, and the pagan survivals such as they appear in the *samtíðarsögur*.

Before investigating the matter more accurately, and elucidating the puzzle, I have to explain why I chose, and limited my researches to the *samtíðarsögur*, here below understood as the whole *Sturlunga Saga* and most of the *Biskupa Sögur*.<sup>1</sup> According to the classification proposed by Sigurður Nordal in *Nordisk Kultur VIII B* (1953), the difference between the *samtíðarsögur* and all other sorts of sagas comes from the distance in time which separates the presumed author of the work and the facts, more or less historical, that he relates. In the case of the *Íslendingasögur* or family sagas, this distance is usually three or more centuries (two and a half at the very least). In the *samtíðarsögur*, this distance is often much less significant, and in some cases, such as Sturla Þórðarson's *Íslendinga Saga*, it is non-existent since here the author is also one of the personalities in the saga. On the other hand, the purpose of the authors of the *samtíðarsögur* is visibly to write history, in the meaning the word had in the Middle Ages, that is a kind of chronicle of the events they had themselves experienced or learnt about from reliable witnesses. It follows that the image of society given by the *samtíðarsögur* has every chance of being far closer to reality than that which we find in all other kinds of sagas. Also, it seems highly probable that a

<sup>1</sup> The references will be to: *Biskupa Sögur*. Guðni Jónsson bjó til prentunar. Reykjavík, 1953. 4 vol.; *Sturlunga Saga*. Jón Jóhannesson, Magnús Finnbogason, Kristján Eldjárn. Reykjavík, 1946. 2 vol. All the sagas will be quoted by their titles and number of chapter in these editions.

good number of *samtíðarsögur* must have been written earlier than other sorts of sagas. These later sagas, if we consider the nature of the saga itself—a subject I shall not touch here—are more likely to be submitted to a kind of literary convention which, so to speak, controls the way the texts were written, but one may presume that this literacy is not so great or deep in the *samtíðarsögur* as elsewhere. I mean that they could be more faithful to reality; also they may well have been used as models for many *Íslendingasögur*, which then probably refined the devices and techniques used in the former. Finally, it is more difficult to accuse them of trying to project present situations into the past, a reproach which may be brought upon many an *Íslendingasaga*, not to speak of *fornaldarsögur* and the like.

In fact, this paper would like to make an attempt at studying one important feature of Icelandic medieval society, that is to say, its religious attitudes such as expressed in the *samtíðarsögur* and, more precisely, to raise the problem of the 'Pagan Revival' (la Renaissance païenne) in XIIIth century Iceland, since many a scholar—for instance F. Paasche<sup>2</sup> — has used this expression. In the XIIIth century, Iceland has been christianized for more than two centuries. Has the victory of the Church over old Northern paganism been complete? And in that case, why and how has this pagan revival been possible, or more exactly, how genuine is this revival?

Before studying the pagan survivals in the *samtíðarsögur*, however, two things are necessary: we have first to make certain obvious reservations about the way a new type of culture and civilization can both reinstate and eradicate an older one: and then, to define the principles according to which the study of the phenomenon will be conducted.

1) As for the reservations to be made it should be born in mind that there are a certain number of immemorial structures (dealing in general with the fundamental organization of the society, the 'Weltanschauung' and ethics) which can survive for centuries or more, independently of the superficial culture adopted by a country. As Mircea Eliade points out:

<sup>2</sup> F. Paasche: *Norges og Islands Litteratur*, 2nd ed., 1957, pp. 398 ssqq.

It is true that most of the rural populations of Europe have been christianized for more than a millenary. But they have succeeded in integrating into their christianity a great part of their pre-christian heritage of an immemorial antiquity. It would be inaccurate to believe that, for this reason, the peasants of Europe are not Christians. / . . . / When they accepted Christianity, the European peasants integrated into their new faith the cosmic religion they had preserved since Prehistory.<sup>3</sup>

If these basic structures are either inoffensive or neutral, or may easily be adopted (adapted) by the new religion, they are obviously of minimum significance or interest to us. The present study will, accordingly, deal only with the 'offensive' apparatus of Northern paganism.

Moreover, since all the Icelandic medieval texts which interest us now were composed some two or three centuries after the christianization of the country, and composed either by clerics or by authors who had received a partly clerical education, we must not expect to find pagan features directly or openly; these texts ask for a 'second reading', and it is on the so to speak 'unconscious' level that they may be interesting. To give an example, when, in *Íslendinga Saga*, chapter 55, Aron Hjörleifsson, having just killed Rögnvaldr, takes his weapons and clothes and throws his corpse into the sea far from the coast, we may suppose that there is here a survival of an ancient custom of burying in the wilderness, under stones (*kasa, færa í urð*) or of casting into the sea the bodies of ill-doers, sorcerers and the like. But in fact, the practice may just as well be Christian and represent a refusal to bury a villain in the soil of Christian Iceland!

Let us first observe that most of the 'pagan survivals' appear in the *kenningar* of the *vísur* included in the *samtíðarsögur*, or in artistic objects such as discovered by archaeologists.<sup>4</sup> As E. Ó. Sveinsson most rightly says, 'if Northern paganism seems to be still alive in the XIIIth century, it is in first place because of the scalds'.<sup>5</sup> In this respect, these traces must be relevant to a kind of literary convention and we should be right in suspecting them of being devoid of living meaning. Accordingly, they should be treated with caution.

It is also important to keep in mind the way the Church worked, in

<sup>3</sup> *Le Sacré et le Profane*, Paris, 1965, p. 138.

<sup>4</sup> See instances in K. Eldjárn: *Kuml og haugfé*, Reykjavík, 1956.

<sup>5</sup> *Um íslenskar þjóðsögur*, Reykjavík, 1940, p. 66.



the North as elsewhere, in fighting against paganism.<sup>6</sup> The Church acted in four different directions: a) it accepted such features or beliefs which did not in any way contradict its own teachings (for instance, belief in the existence of another world, a tenet common both to Northern paganism and to Christianity); b) it adapted those features which could easily be christianized, as for example some of the major festivals, *jól* becoming similar to Christmas, or such rites as *ausa barn vatni*, supposing this last one to be actually anterior to, and different from Christian baptism; c) it tried to devaluate features and beliefs which appeared to present a threat to Christian doctrine. Certain beliefs in the Nordic gods may be included in this category, and one is justified in seeing a Christian intention behind eddic poems such as *Lokasenna* and *Hárbarðsljóð*, where gods are more or less ridiculized; and d) it openly struggled against features and beliefs which it could not accept, human sacrifices for instance, or the exposure of new-born children, and apparently, it succeeded in this work of eradication. It is, for example, most surprising to discover that there is no mention at all in the *samtíðarsögur* either of these practices, or of those features known to us through the *Íslendingasögur*, such as *hólmganga*, *jóstbræðralag* (I mean here, the ceremony itself), and, what is still more surprising, *seiðr*.

Anyhow, it remains clear that in our present discussion only points c) and d) above are of importance to us.

2) Now for the principles: I should like to try to show that the so-called pagan revival in Iceland is the result of foreign and literary influences, which came to Iceland through the institution of the Church, which acted here either directly, or as an intermediary. I would also like to show that there is a kind of displacement of time (*décalage*) or deliberate attempt to fuse past and present by including archaic elements in the texts. And, finally, that the pagan features which may appear in the *samtíðarsögur* have, not unfrequently, an origin which is *not* local: they could have been borrowed from foreign sources and adapted to local taste.

This paper being a study in method, I shall not try directly, or at

<sup>6</sup> See H. Delehaye: *Les légendes hagiographiques*, Bruxelles, 3è éd. 1927, Chapitre VI.

least only in passing, to venture upon historical evidence. It goes without saying, for instance, that one cannot but be strongly impressed by the Irish example in the IXth century, particularly where, in somewhat similar circumstances, there had also been an attempt at recreating the distant past, and of committing the ancient traditions to writing. For the fact is that pagan resurgences appear more and more frequently in Icelandic literature as time elapses.

Thus, this little study will try to show that the so-called pagan survivals in the *samtíðarsögur* look like a patient and deliberate reconstruction. Our object of study is a number of literary texts, and they must be viewed in their entirety as literary artefacts if the significance of an apparently pagan revival, contained within them, is to be appreciated. For the sake of clarity I will first examine elements of possibly pagan cults, and the apparently pagan features of certain social institutions. I will then move on to the gods and related myths, then beliefs concerning life after death, and finally witchcraft and magic; all this in an attempt to present an overall view.

## I. CULT AND INSTITUTIONS

As a principle in this section, in order to be considered as genuine, a survival should still be of some living significance, and often they are. In most cases, however, they have been accepted without struggle or adapted (one could say: 'recuperated') and even here, numerous instances of reconstructions or importations are visible.

a) We shall first enumerate features which seem inalienable and genuine, but which may, nonetheless, be the result of deliberate reconstruction.

The importance of the family (*ætt*), according to the ancient Germanic and Nordic conception, understood as a sacred community in the bosom of which the peace (*friðr* or *gríð*) was warranted and the links of which are felt to be binding (see the word *skyldr* which means both: obliged to and akin to) remains and will remain living for a long time, and the illustrations one could give of the fact, in the *samtíðarsögur*, are very numerous (e.g. *Íslendinga Saga*, ch. 16; *Þorgils Saga Skarða*, ch. 12. The whole argument of *Þorgils Saga ok Hafliða*

(where Hafliði Mátsson feels compelled to protect his nephew, Már Bergþórsson in spite of his contempt for the man himself, but supports him *fyrir frændsemi sakir* / ch. 6 /) rests upon this conception (see also *Sturlu Saga*, ch. 30 where Guðmundr dýri helps Páll Sölvason in a bad affair, because he is married to Arndís, Páll's daughter; *ibidem*, *Íslendinga Saga*, ch. 39; *Þórðar Saga Kakala*, ch. 2; *Þorgils Saga Skarða*, ch. 20).

However, although the consciousness of belonging to a family group is nowhere absent from the mind of an Icelander, the religious or sacred strength of the link seems more or less lost, mainly for political or economic reasons. The *ætt* is no longer a sacred community (as shown by M. Cahen),<sup>1</sup> but a collectivity united by bloodties, possibly by affection, but chiefly through common interests and tradition, and all this, in a direction which tends towards a rationalization of the situation. Otherwise what way is there of explaining Guðmundr dýri's barbaric remark, that it would make no difference even if his daughter was included in the burning of Langahlíð (*Guðmundar Saga Dýra*, ch. 14), or the not less cruel reply of Eyjólfur Rögnvaldsson to his father who is inside the *bæjarhús* at Breiðabólstaðir when it is set fire to. Eyjólfur calls to him three times to come out, and as the old man refuses, Eyjólfur shouts: 'Brenndu þar þá, djöfulskarlinn!' (*Þorgils Saga Skarða*, ch. 32). Thus when Heusler declares<sup>2</sup> that one never sees father pitched against son, or brother against brother, he probably forgets the tumultuous family of the Sturlungar!

The family cult had been responsible for the general organization of the house,<sup>3</sup> for its sacred character, and for the solidarity which reigned among its members<sup>4</sup> (visible in particular in the relations between master and servants). However, it is hard to say that many conscious traces of this cult remain in the mind of the Icelanders in the Age of the Sturlungar. If the *öndvegi* is still the seat of honour in the *skáli*, it is rarely called by its name (*Geirmundar Þáttur Heljar-*

<sup>1</sup> *La Libation*, Paris, 1921, p. 5 and p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> *Zum isländischen Fehdewesen in der Sturlungenzeit*, Berlin, 1912, p. 36.

<sup>3</sup> See V. Guðmundsson: *Privatboligen på Island i sagatiden*, København, 1889, *passim*.

<sup>4</sup> Á. Pálsson: *Sambúð húsbænda og hjúa á lýðveldistímanum*, in *Skírnir* CV, 1931, pp. 218 and 235: 'The house was a place of peace.'



*skinns*, ch. 2; *Sturlu Saga*, ch. 4; *Íslendinga Saga*, ch. 39) and we find simply no mention at all of the *öndvegissúlur* which, according to so many instances in *Landnámabók*, ought to be sure witnesses of a family cult. Moreover, the word *öndvegi* itself is replaced by the continental loan-word *hásæti* (in *Prestssaga Guðmundar Góða*, ch. 25) or even by a perfectly neutral periphrasis: *á inn eystra langbekk miðjan, á inn vestra bekk miðjan* (*Íslendinga Saga*, ch. 170).

Let us now look at some of the pagan sacraments: there is no trace in our texts of the *ausa barn vatni*; the only ceremony which is mentioned is the baptism (*skírn*, verb *skíra*); nor of the birth rites (such as presented by F. Ström<sup>5</sup>); no *tannfé*, no indication of interesting survivals in betrothal or marriage. The rites of burial will be dealt with at a later point.

The major annual festivals give an interesting example of substitution or adaptation. They have more or less, all of them, been preserved, but their significance has been altered, although some practices could easily be kept without harm. For instance, *jól* has become the Christian Christmas, and nothing could prevent the maintaining of *jóla-veizla*, *jóladrykkja*, *jólaboð* (*Þorgils Saga Skarða*, ch. 2 for instance) and *jólavist* or *jólafríðr*, provided the object of all these practices could be different from what it had been in the past. In the same way, the Church has assimilated the *vetrnætr* to the feast of Saint Michael (although *Guðmundar Saga Arasonar*, ch. 41 makes the distinction) and the *sumarmál* to the feast of Saint John.<sup>6</sup> The sense of the sanctity, past and present, of these dates, is not lost, and even their names remain unchanged: we very frequently find such expressions as *á vetrnáttahelgi* (for instance in *Þorgils Saga Skarða*, ch. 25), *á sumarmála helgi* (*Íslendinga Saga*, ch. 146), *at miðsumarshelgi* (*Þorgils Saga Skarða*, ch. 40). They go on playing an important part in public life: marriages, payment of fines, the concluding of a settlement often takes place at *vetrnætr* or *at miðju sumri* (*Íslendinga Saga*, ch. 5). Curious also is the fact that the third day of the *einmánaðarsamkváma* (The meeting of the *hreppsmenn*, supposing the *hreppar* to

<sup>5</sup> *Nordisk hedendom. Tro och sed i förkristen tid*, Göteborg, 1961, p. 42.

<sup>6</sup> L. Musset: *Histoire des peuples scandinaves au Moyen Age*, Paris, 1955, p. 135.

be a genuinely pagan institution in Iceland) is reserved for the formulation of public vows (*heitdagr*).<sup>7</sup>

If now we cast a glance over some fundamental aspects of the political and juridical institutions, it is clear that the greatest part of the deepest structures has remained unchanged, having in fact nothing to offend the new ideals coming from abroad. The old Germanic law had very ancient roots, its spirit was quite original, and most of its specific constituents—the administrative and political system, the jurisdiction, the constitution of popular assemblies or *þing*—existed long before the settlement of Iceland. The link between religion and law was also particularly deep-rooted, and this feeling could not but remain very sensitive, even in the XIIIth century. For instance, when Þorgils skarði delegates his powers to Þórðr Hítnesingr to consecrate the autumn *þing* at Þverá (*helga Þverárleið*, *Þorgils Saga Skarða*, ch. 27), it is clear that this consecration is a ceremony which is older than the christianization of Iceland, even though Þórðr had to pronounce Christian formulas. The same applies to the drinking toasts, as we will see later; the Church could modify the formulas, it could not alter the rites. And, sacred as it had certainly once been, we are astonished to see that one unique passage in the whole bulk of the *samtíðarsögur*, *Þorgils Saga ok Hafliða*, ch. 16 (where, moreover, the ironical intention is clear too), alludes to the inviolability of the *þing* (*þinghelgrin*). What is far more obvious in the *samtíðarsögur*, with their ceaseless fights, battles and murders during the *alþing* sessions and even in the *lögrétta* (*Prestssaga Guðmundar Góða*, ch. 2), is that the sacred character of this institution was not much felt. In a similar way, the respect for the tribunals, the authority of which should have been very old and undisputed, is, in the Sturlung Age, much contested. In 1234, Bishop Magnús Gizurarson is obliged to forbid people to carry weapons before tribunals (*Íslendinga Saga*, ch. 99), a fact which the deplorable habit of *hleypta upp dóminum* (*Þorgils Saga ok Hafliða*, ch. 18; *Sturlu Saga*, ch. 5) justifies enough.

Now, in the conduct of war or warlike enterprises, we could expect to find traces of ancient customs.<sup>8</sup> Besides practices which do not seem

<sup>7</sup> See E. Bull: *Folk og Kirke i Middelalderen*, Kristiania, 1912, p. 46.

<sup>8</sup> See R. Boyer: La guerre en Islande à l'âge des Sturlungar, in *Inter-Nord* 11, 1971, pp. 184–202.

to convey any particular religious significance, and may be relevant to the so to speak natural ways of proceeding (as, for instance, the *kvi* in *Íslendinga Saga*, ch. 80), and besides those which may be described as Viking customs (the *bera allt til stanga* of *Þorgils Saga Skarða*, ch. 60), we find the famous wedge formation earlier noticed by Tacitus<sup>9</sup> in *Íslendinga Saga*, ch. 155 or *Þórðar Saga Kakala*, ch. 42. We know from *Skjöldunga Saga* that Óðinn himself was supposed to have initiated this tactic.<sup>10</sup> *Íslendinga Saga*, ch. 155 has the word *rani* (the snout of a pig). But here as elsewhere, it is never apparent that the possible religious sense of the practice is still of living or conscious significance. On the other hand, in battles such as the one at Örylgsstaðir, the strategy, if one can describe it as such, is banal, and the great warman of the time, Þórðr kakali, tries to apply European tactics in Iceland. We can also mention the swearing of the truce, *grið*, a very frequent practice in the *samtíðarsögur*. These texts give us every possible detail about this practice, and we have every evidence that the institution was highly regulated (see for instance *Íslendinga Saga*, ch. 67, or *Þorgils Saga Skarða*, ch. 15). If, as seems certain seeing the formulas preserved in *Grágás* or in *Grettla*, the operation had a sacred character, then the Church had no difficulty in adapting it and associating it with the truce of God such as edicted by the Council of Nice in 1041. The fact is that we see the progressive appearance of the word *kirkjugrið* (e.g. *Þórðar Saga Kakala*, ch. 31) in our texts, to replace the simple *grið*.

There remains one very interesting survival in *Hákonar Saga Hákonarsonar*<sup>11</sup> by Sturla. The latter remarks that, in the year of Hákon's accession to the throne, 'there was a good year, fruit trees yielded fruit twice in the year and the wild birds hatched twice'. This, naturally, reminds us of the ancient belief in the sacred king elected *til árs ok friðar, ársæll ok friðsæll*.<sup>12</sup> True to say, this detail, which would obviously show a clear survival, applies to Norway, not to XIIIth century Iceland. Has Sturla felt it inoffensive for his compatriots where the situation was quite different? Or have we to inter-

<sup>9</sup> *Germania*, VI, 6: *acies per cuenos componitur*.

<sup>10</sup> See Cleasby-Vigfússon-Craigie: articles *hamalt*, *svínfylking* and *rani*.

<sup>11</sup> Quoted here after the Norwegian translation by A. Holtmark.

<sup>12</sup> See F. Ström: *op. cit.*, pp. 48-51.



pret it as a Northern version of the ecclesiastical new view about the monarchy of divine origin (la monarchie de droit divin)?

b) We can now study features where the instances of adaptation or assimilation by the Church are more clearly visible. We have just seen cases in which the transference into a Christian context has already been completed. Here are a number of examples in which this transition is even more evident:

Let us take first the word *blót*. The sacrifice, as everybody knows, was the very centre of Northern paganism, the real moment when the whole pagan assembly felt united in a communion with the gods. In its successive phases, it represented the religion itself, certainly far more than the myths or individual practices. The *Landnámabók* could bear witness of its importance, if it did not also occur in a series of texts which do *not* belong to *samtíðarsögur* and show a remarkable tendency to archaism. What must be stated here is that there is no mention at all of *blót* in our texts. The word *blótmaðr* occurs in *Geirmundar Páttur Heljarskinns*, ch. 5, but we shall see that this is a text which does not deserve a place among the contemporary sagas and is in fact already an *Íslendingasaga*. For the rest, the word *blót* which occurs in *Íslendinga Saga*, ch. 67, 71 and 95, has suffered such a devaluation that it means simply swear or revile (*blót ok bölvun*). And the term *blótskapr* used in *Jóns Saga Helga II*, ch. 12, is a pure synonym of idolatry, copied down from some Latin text by Gunnlaugr the monk.

The sacrificial banquet or *veizla* (in its original form) could be long-lived, since it included practices which were other than sacred. Its importance in the Sturlung Age has remained considerable, and it is still the 'communion in drinking' defined by M. Cahen.<sup>13</sup> Its general form has not been altered: placing people according to their rank, bringing tables and food, pronouncing the old *formáli til árs ok friðar*, drinking to the memory of the dead, eating and drinking until drunkenness; during the *veizla*, entertainment of the guests with plays, dances, reading or recitations of sagas and poems: all this is often shown, the best instance being the *veizla* in Reykjahólar in *Porgils Saga ok Hafliða*, ch. 10 (but see also *Íslendinga Saga*, ch. 39 or 170).

<sup>13</sup> *La Libation*, op. cit., p. 29.

Here, the Church could not alter the situation and it had to adapt itself to circumstances. This it did by re-directing the old custom or institution to its own uses and benefits. The meaning and the importance of the *veizla* came from the drink (beer, *öl*) which was consumed, and which had to be consecrated first. Thence, the importance of the *formáli* and of the toasts. And we can see from our texts that the adaptation has been exhaustive: there are *veizlur* for purely religious purposes (not to speak of the assimilation of *jól* to Christmas). In *Páls Saga Byskups*, ch. 7, a *veizla* is given for the exhumation of Bishop Þorlák's relics; the same text, ch. 14, informs us that, in any place where he was invited, Bishop Páll had the *formáli* pronounced. As for the toasts, which were supposed to be given formerly to Óðinn, Þórr and Freyr, they are now given to Christ, the Holy Virgin and Saint Michael (*Lárentius Saga*, ch. 36; *Hákonar Saga Hákonarsonar*, p. 232). The toasts in honour of the dead (*drekka full franda*) are replaced by toasts to the dead man for whom the banquet is given (*drekka minni föður*, for instance). In other words: if the fundamental meaning and importance of the *veizla*, the assertion of the sacred character of the group, had remained unchanged through the times, its expressions and its precise rites have been given a Christian content, and there is no instance in the *samtíðarsögur* of genuine survival of pagan elements in the *veizla*, not at least in its external forms.

Another important feature of the ancient *blót* was, if we are to trust such texts as *Hervarar Saga ok Heiðreks*, the taking of oaths, usually so as to accomplish extraordinary deeds. This institution was obviously deeply rooted since we find it in the legislation, where it constituted a legal method of disculpation. If we assume the formula contained in *Víga-Glúms Saga*<sup>14</sup> to be authentic, then the oath taker had to swear upon a sacred ring placed in the temple or *hof* and the oath was to be made to the famous *Áss inn almáttki*, supposing that this last expression does not betray a Christian and, accordingly, un-genuine tincture. The comparison with *Árna Saga Byskups*, ch. 59, where bishop Árni himself dictates the formula, is enlightening: *Áss inn almáttki* has given place to *guð* and the *stallahringr* to the *bók*, that is to say the Bible. The word *baugeiðr* has been replaced by *bók-eiðr* or even by *lögeiðr*, which is thus 'neutral' rather than offensive.

<sup>14</sup> *Íslensk Fornrit* IX, p. 86. See also *Landnámabók*, Hauksbók, ch. 268.

And the only two passages in the *samtíðarsögur* which give any details state that, if one does not swear upon the Bible (*Íslendinga Saga*, ch. 129) it should be on the Holy Rood (*ibidem*, ch. 156).

One further point: it concerns the names of the days of the week and of the months of the year. If we are to trust *Jóns Saga Helga I*, ch. 24, Bishop Jón Ögmundarson would be the man who tried to substitute for the pagan names of the days of the week, such new names as *annarr dagr viku*, *þriðjudagr* and so on. We must confess that he succeeded in a remarkable way whereas, elsewhere in Europe, the efforts of for instance Bede the Venerable, or Isidore of Sevilla were a failure.<sup>15</sup> We find once *Týsdagr* (*Íslendinga Saga*, ch. 124) and once *Þórsdagr* (*Þorláks Saga Byskups*, ch. 18) in the whole bulk of our texts and most often even *sunnudagr* is replaced by *dróttinsdagr*. The same applies to the names of the months. Alongside *einmánaðr*, we find two instances of *gói* (*Íslendinga Saga*, ch. 43, and *Konungs Annáll* for year 1276). No mention of *þorri*, *frermánaðr*, *hrútmánaðr* or the others. The silence of the texts (latin expressions are in fact generally used for preference) is here particularly eloquent.

We now come to instances where reconstructions or importations are highly probable. I am here concerned with two different phenomena: certain features in the *Íslendingasögur* or similar texts, do not appear in the *samtíðarsögur*, and must therefore be deliberate reconstructions in the former, whatever their sources; on the other hand, there are many elements in the *samtíðarsögur* which are strongly reminiscent of details extant in European sources and which must therefore have been adapted to Icelandic conditions.

We can take place names as an example of the first phenomenon: the discrepancies between *samtíðarsögur* and *Íslendingasögur* (and *Landnáma*) are here very striking. A great number of toponyms witnessing the presence of a cult place has been listed by specialists.<sup>16</sup> They are generally simply missing in the *samtíðarsögur* where we can find only about a score of them in all.<sup>17</sup> No *Blótbjörk*, no *Goðafoss*,

<sup>15</sup> See Bede: *De Temporibus*, in Migne P. L., vol. XC, col. 281, or Isidore in Migne P. L., vol. LXXXII, col. 181.

<sup>16</sup> For instance Ó. Briem: *Heiðinn siður á Íslandi*, Reykjavík, 1945, pp. 75-85 and 134-137.

<sup>17</sup> That is: Helgafell, Heljardalsheiðr, Hofshöfði, Surtshellir, Þórsmörk, Þórsnes



no *Landdísasteinar*, such as are to be found in *Landnáma*. Are we to conclude that these latter are fingered formations? that is, do they exist there merely for the sake of couleur locale? Besides, the comparison made by Kolsrud between place names which remind of the name of a pagan god in Norway and similar place names in Iceland<sup>18</sup> shows a big difference, and it must be added that Kolsrud has investigated the whole of saga literature.

One might expect that pagan rites of death and burial would survive in XIIIth century Iceland, especially if we bear in mind the minute descriptions given in *Glúma*, *Gísla Saga Súrssonar* or *Egla*, and recall that these particular social institutions are amongst the most conservative in their development. But in reality this is not the case: there are no *veita nábjargir*, no *helskór* in *Sturlunga*. One must wonder, accordingly, whether the picturesque details just mentioned have not been taken from Latin or European sources where magical or strange practices concerning death are very frequent.

There is a field where discrepancies are still more surprising: it regards the so called ancient laws or judicial practices, so abundantly illustrated in *Íslendingasögur*. And this discrepancy is not only apparent in a comparison between *samtíðarsögur* and family sagas, it also exists between the *samtíðarsögur* and *Grágás*. If we compare the three thousand pages of the *samtíðarsögur* with the three hundred pages of a group including *Víga-Glúms Saga*, *Hrafnkels Saga Freysgoða* and *Gísla Saga Súrssonar*, we discover that the former do not say one word of things which are clearly stated in the latter, such as *hólm-ganga* (ÍF IX, p. 12 or VI, pp. 10-11), the accusation against a dead man whose corpse is unburied (ÍF IX, pp. 32-33), the *lýritr* or *goði's* veto (ÍF IX, p. 84), the exact formulation of oaths (ÍF IX, p. 86), the *níðstöng* (ÍF IX, p. 88 or VI, p. 10), the taking of land by fire (ÍF IX, p. 89), the exact details about the way a *fjárnsdómr* has to be held (ÍF XI, p. 118), the *vápnatak* (ibidem), the *fóstbræðralag* (ÍF VI, p. 125), the *geirnaclar* (ÍF VI, p. 22), the difference between *launvig* and *morð* (ÍF VI, p. 44), the rites concerning the shrouding of the

in *Sturlunga* and *Heljardalsá*, *Hofsá*, *Hofsstaðir* (twice), *Hofsteigr*, *Hörgá*, *Hörgárdalur*, *Hörgárdalsheiðr*, *Hörgsholt*, *Hörgsland*, *Reynir*, *Reynines* and seven different *Hof* in the *Biskupa Sögur*.

<sup>18</sup> *Noregs Kyrkjesoga I. Millomalderen*, Oslo, 1958, pp. 49-50.

dead (ÍF VI, pp. 45–46) and the *seiðr* (ÍF VI, p. 56). We should not know anything about these pagan elements if we had only the *samtíðarsögur* at our disposal.

Are we therefore to conclude that the three *Íslendingasögur* just mentioned, as well as the *Íslendingasögur* as a group, reflect a deliberate attempt to reconstruct these pagan elements? Two possibilities present themselves: Either (i) that the features listed above, that exist in the *Íslendingasögur*, but are missing in the *samtíðarsögur*, are more or less genuine, and reflect an effort on the parts of the authors to recreate a past in accordance with their ideas of what it should have been like, or (ii) that these features were still social realities in the thirteenth century, yet the authors of the *samtíðarsögur* wanted to eliminate them from their texts so as to comply with the claims of the Church. The second view is hardly tenable since many different writers composed *samtíðarsögur*, and the same man may well have written both an *Íslendingasaga* and a *samtíðarsaga*, as is probably the case with Sturla Þórðarson. We are very tempted to conclude that the truth, the faithful reflection of reality, is rather to be found in the *samtíðarsögur*, whereas the *Íslendingasögur* are the works of antiquarians, the antiquities in question coming either from the Germanic past, or even from quite different sources.

Let us now take three different features which seem quite clearly to come from Europe and owe nothing to Northern or Germanic ancestry.

The first regards the *dansar*. Familiar as the term is today, it has never been studied in detail with the necessary distinctions. The word itself, of French origin, is capable of expressing at least three separate concepts which should be carefully distinguished. *Dans* may apply to: *leikr*, *spott* (or *flimtan*) and *mansöngur*. Without giving too many details—for this is a subject that would deserve a special treatment—let us say that all three types are present in the *samtíðarsögur*. In the first meaning: *dans* = *leikr*, it is a kind of play, accompanied by dancing and mimicking which may well have very ancient cultural roots. The rock engravings of the Bronze Age throughout Scandinavia suggest this at least. Into this group would come *vísa* 10 in *Íslendinga Saga*, ch. 33, where the quarrel between *Víðidalr* people and *Mið-fjörðr* inhabitants is thus depicted, and also *vísa* 6 in the same text,

ch. 28, which ridicules Kálfr Guttormsson. In spite of the probably extremely ancient Northern origins of this genre, D. Strömbäck and Stefán Einarsson<sup>19</sup> have established that it was also probably a foreign custom originating in the south-west of France<sup>20</sup> and that it may have undergone a strong revival in the XIIth–XIIIth centuries through the influence of the courtly literature which, it must be remembered, re-introduced to Europe the fashion of masks and disguises.<sup>21</sup> According to this theory, we would here be faced with an interesting phenomenon of revival through foreign influences.

The second type of *dans* is simpler. It is also satirical but we are not obliged to consider that it implied mimic, disguise or special attire. It would be represented by the *dansagerðir* made by Kolbeinn ungi's followers against Þórðr kakali in *Þórðar Saga Kakala*, ch. 39, or by those directed against Loftr Pálsson, or even by the *vísa* 18 of *Íslendinga Saga: Loftr er í eyjum / bítr lundabein*, and so on. K. Liestøl and D. Strömbäck agree in giving this genre also a foreign origin<sup>22</sup> and therefore we may count this as a case of an Icelandic adaptation of a foreign model.

As for the third type, the most interesting for us, it is represented in *Sturlunga* by one verse only: *Mínar eru sorgir þungar sem blý* (*Íslendinga Saga*, ch. 200) sung by Þórðr Andréasson the very day of his death, and, also by the famous *vísa* 74 in the same saga, sung by Þórir jökull when dying (*Upp skalt á kjöl klífa / köld er sjávar drífa . . .*). Elsewhere, the texts speak, without further detail, of *dansleikar* (*Þorgils Saga ok Hafliða*, ch. 10, where the association *dans-leikr* is interesting), *hringleikr* (*Sturlu Saga*, ch. 20), *dans sleginn í stofu* (*Íslendinga Saga*, ch. 76) and, in *Jóns Saga Helga I*, ch. 24, of *mansöngur*: in all cases, the text allows us to think that we are in presence of real dance in the present meaning of the word, accompanied by music, and erotic, elegiac, or lyrical song. This is, no doubt, the French *carole* which was well-known in aristocratic circles in Den-

<sup>19</sup> D. Strömbäck: Cult remnants in dramatic dances, in *Arv* 4, 1948; S. Einarsson: Horse dance in the *Sturlunga Saga*, in *Folkloristica*, Uppsala, 1960.

<sup>20</sup> It is also attested by Tacitus: *Germania* XXIV.

<sup>21</sup> See for instance F. Heer: *Medeltiden*, Stockholm, 1966, p. 105.

<sup>22</sup> K. Liestøl: Dei eldste islenske dansekvæde in *Arv* 1, 1945; see note 19.



mark at the beginning of the XIIth century<sup>23</sup> and where, for the rest, the quotation from Þórðr Andréasson finds an exact equivalent: 'Eya, huad sorigen du est tung!'<sup>24</sup> Thus, the *dansar* are an ideal example of this confusion or fusion which occurred in Iceland during the Sturlung Age, between local traditions, pagan remnants and foreign influences.

Let us take another point: let us look at the custom of *fóstr* (the fostering of a child): this practice was universal in Iceland in the Sturlunga Age, the case of Snorri Sturluson's fostering by Jón Loftsson that proved to be the only means of soothing Hvamm-Sturla's anger being the most expressive (*Sturlu Saga*, ch. 34). It seems clear nowadays that this is an import from Ireland rather than a typical Germanic heritage.<sup>25</sup>

Finally, I shall give one instance of 'superimposition'. The role of fate and the consultation of its edicts by means of the drawing of lots, whatever their nature, is well established amongst religious features typical of the Germanic peoples, being already witnessed by Tacitus.<sup>26</sup> The practice has not yet disappeared in the Sturlung Age and the *samtíðarsögur* give numerous instances (see *Sturlu Saga*, ch. 23, *Íslendinga Saga*, ch. 162). *Íslendinga Saga*, ch. 100 gives interesting details: dice (*teningar*) were used and the text quotes the usual expression *kasta daus ok ás*, which is an obvious translation of the French *jeter deux et as*, to denote a very bad result. It was a term of *trictrac* (Icelandic *kvátra*, itself coming from the French *quatre* pronounced /kwatre/ at that time because it was played on a small table divided into four parts).

To sum up: in this field of cults and institutions, the general impression is that of a constant effort to substitute possibly ancient practices by new features, borrowed either from Ireland or from the whole Western world. Of the cult practices and of their embodiment in social institutions, there is very little left in the *samtíðarsögur*. In any case, any clear awareness of the original religious meaning of

<sup>23</sup> J. de Vries: *Altnordische Literaturgeschichte*, Berlin, 2 ed. 1967, § 162.

<sup>24</sup> *Danmarks gamle folkeviser*, number 37.

<sup>25</sup> See K. Gjerset: *History of Iceland*, London, 1923, p. 92; *ÍF* III, p. 7, note 1; O. Loyer: *Les chrétientés celtiques*, Paris, 1965, p. 67.

<sup>26</sup> *Germania* X; see also R. Boyer: *L'Islandais des sagas*, Paris, 1967, ch. 1.

these practices seems to have disappeared. The Icelandic society of the *samtíðarsögur* does not stand at an equal distance between pagan and Christian ways of living. This society appears to be quite well installed in the new state of things.

## II. GODS AND MYTHS

We shall, I think, draw still more drastic conclusions from the investigation of our second chapter, which concerns gods and myths of old Northern Europe, as seen in the *samtíðarsögur*. F. Paasche declared<sup>1</sup> that 'under the action of Christianisation, it was comparatively easy to dispose of the major gods: they (their statues) had been transported into the temples and they disappeared with them'.

Verification of this is swiftly achieved. There is a passage in *Jóns Saga Helga* I, ch. 24, where Týr, Óðinn and Þórr are mentioned in connection with the names of the days of the week. Then *Sturlu Saga*, ch. 31 compares Hvamm-Sturla to Óðinn (because he is in danger of becoming one-eyed, as is Óðinn); Sturla Sighvatsson is twice called Dala-Freyr because of his luxurious house and style of living (*Íslendinga Saga*, ch. 71 and 85).

These instances reveal a good knowledge of the Northern mythology: they are applied with great skill. But, studying the *samtíðarsögur*, one does not see how to confirm G. Turville-Petre's opinion when he says that 'the gods were a living aspect of the life of the old Icelanders'.<sup>2</sup>

The above examples came from the prose passages of the *samtíðarsögur*. It goes without saying that the situation is perforce different in the *vísur*, since this kind of poetry was hard to write without the employment of *kenningar* and *heiti* which, in their turn, almost automatically used the names of gods or references to myths. There are in the whole of *Sturlunga Saga* 53 *kenningar* dealing directly with mythology. Of these 53, 13 concern Óðinn under his various titles, 5 relating to Freyr, 3 to Baldr and 1 to Njörðr. There is no mention of Þórr. There too, we discover a most remarkable knowledge of the Northern mythology. Such rare Óðinn's names as Hnikarr, Rögnir or

<sup>1</sup> *Møtet mellom hedendom og kristendom i Norden*, Oslo, 1958, p. 81.

<sup>2</sup> *Um Óðinsdyrkun á Íslandi*, in *Studia Islandica* 17, 1958, p. 9.

Dundr are used; small divinities like Gerðr, Njörun, Rán or Hlín, or valkyries like Guðr, Göndul, Mist, Hildir, Sigrlöð; even mythological sea-kings like Gylfi, Áli, Sigarr, are present. What is more remarkable is the very strong sense of the artistic potential of this mythology which is there displayed: the employment of certain legends attached to heroes like Hamðir, Hrólfr kraki, Heðinn or giants like Suttungr and Iði, is very conscious and clever in the same way as the references to the myth of the origin of poetry with the two vessels Boðn and Són. I want to state here that the purely decorative value of these references is prominent, and admirable as well. But, to take an example: calling Bishop Guðmundr (*Íslendinga Saga*, vísa 2) the maple of the fire of Gylfi's ground: *Gylfa láðs báls hlynr* (Gylfi's ground being the sea, the fire of the sea being gold, the tree of the gold being the man, here Guðmundr) is certainly very satisfying for a lover of technical acrobatics, but it is difficult to attach a religious value to the image, the link between Guðmundr and Gylfi being hard to see. One might even speak here of inadequacy.

Let us add that these mythological *kenningar* represent only one fifth of the total number of *kenningar* in *Sturlunga* (53 of 246). All the other are 'neutral', that is to say, without precise references to mythology, as for example *geirnets hyrjar hreggmíldr* (*Íslendinga Saga*, vísa 13) for a man inclined to fighting, literally: liberal in the storm of the fire of the net of the spears.

There may be cases which look mythological at first view, but are in fact not. For instance, *Hrafn's Saga Sveinbjarnarsonar*, ch. 19, tells us that, at the place where Hrafn was beheaded, the grass grew green the following summer, a detail which reminds us immediately of a similar remark about the burial mound of Þorgrímr in *Gísla Saga Súrssonar* (because, this last text says, there had been a strong friendship between Þorgrímr and the god Freyr).<sup>3</sup> But, as A. Tjomsland noticed<sup>4</sup> this is a point which approaches the banal in the Saints' or Martyrs' lives in Latin. Here we are confronted with a 'reverse movement': a detail has been taken from Church literature and adapted to the vernacular (Hrafn is clearly presented as a kind of saint in his saga),

<sup>3</sup> See *ÍF* VI, p. 57.

<sup>4</sup> Introduction to *The Saga of Hrafn Sveinbjarnarson*, Ithaca, 1951, p. XIV.



and finally turned into a so-called Northern mythological detail in *Gísla Saga*.

Another point may attract our attention: the frequent presence, especially in the dreams which constitute a kind of set theme in sagas of all kinds, of animals and, accordingly, the link which one is tempted to establish with old pagan beliefs. It is well known that the raven was Óðinn's favourite animal, the swine or the ox or the horse, Freyr's and so on. All these animals and others play a part in the *samtíðarsögur*. The raven remains a bird of fatality in *Íslendinga Saga*, *vísa* 9 or *vísa* 21. The pig is present in *Prestssaga Guðmundar Góða*, ch. 4, although I have suggested elsewhere<sup>5</sup> that the detail may have been borrowed from Pope Gregory's *Dialogues*. There is a furious bull in *Þorláks Saga Byskups*, *yngrí gerð*, ch. 47 (and in *Jarteinabók Þorláks Byskups* I, ch. 29) which is soothed by an invocation to Þorlákr. It is naturally possible to see in all these stories traces of ancient religious fears, although they may equally well belong to stock images resting on timeless superstitions and therefore not be specifically pagan.

It is an unexplained fact that the seal has been considered a special and fateful animal by the Icelanders. The nickname Orknhöfði (head of a seal) given to Hallr Teitsson in *Þorgils Saga ok Hafliða*, *vísa* 13, and the monster Selkolla which frequently torments Bishop Guðmundr (*Íslendinga Saga*, ch. 25; *Jarteinabók Guðmundar Byskups*, ch. 20) are evidence of this. What is to be pointed out here, however, is that, very curiously, it looks as it were the Church itself which made use of the strange properties of this animal: it plays an important part in the tales of miracles, being very often the instrument of the miracle-doers (e.g. *Þorláks Saga Byskups*, ch. 26; *ibidem*, *yngrí gerðin*, ch. 45; *Jarteinabók Þorláks Byskups* I, ch. 5 and 22).

There can be no doubt that the horse possessed a magical and ritual value in the old Scandinavian religion. Once more, we can invoke here Tacitus's testimony,<sup>6</sup> and we think also of Freyfaxi in *Hrafnkatla*. The Church was obviously aware of the importance of the horse,

<sup>5</sup> The influence of Pope Gregory's *Dialogues* on Old Icelandic literature, in *The Proceedings of the First International Saga Conference*, London, 1973, p. 14.

<sup>6</sup> Tacitus: *Germania* X, 4-5, see also G. Gjessing: Hesten i förhistorisk kunst og kultur, in *Viking* 7, 1943, and B. Egardt: Problem kring hästskallar, in *Rig* 33, 1950.

since one of its first orders was to forbid the eating of horse flesh. Nevertheless, its role remains considerable in the *samtíðarsögur*. The horse was also supposed to possess certain powers, amongst others, the ability to foresee the future. And indeed, it appears in several dreams in *Sturlunga* (*Hrafn's Saga Sveinbjarnarsonar*, ch. 18; *Íslendinga Saga*, ch. 190). Particularly interesting is Sighvatr Sturluson's dream in *Íslendinga Saga*, ch. 132, where Sighvatr sees his own horse, named Fölski: the horse asks his master why he does not invite him to eat and drink; then, he takes his place at Sighvatr's table and devours everything at hand, the plate included. Just then, Sighvatr recites a *vísa* (number 54 in *Íslendinga Saga*) which, mark the point, contains a metaphor which is directly borrowed from his brother, Snorri Sturluson (Hunger is Hel's plate, see *Gylfaginning*, ch. 34). Is Fölski Sighvatr's *fylgja*, since it is clear that his appearance foretells Sighvatr's death? The common name *fölski*, which also occurs in *Gylfaginning*, applies to the ashy remains of an object which has been burned beyond recognition. Moreover, Fölski devouring the plate, strongly reminds us of Logi eating up the trough, once more in the *Gylfaginning* (ch. 46) in his match against Loki. This makes in all three direct references to *Gylfaginning*, and we must bear the fact in mind for a while.

There remain a few details concerning earlier heroes which deserve attention. In the famous chapter of Jóreiðr's dreams (*Íslendinga Saga*, ch. 190), Guðrún Gjúkadóttir appears, and says, notice the fact: 'It does not matter whether I am pagan or christian, but I am the friend of my friends': a declaration which shows a visible contempt for all religious feelings; it may seem quite natural also that Snorri Sturluson called his *búð* at the *althing* Valhöll (*Íslendinga Saga*, ch. 80). And if the valkyries are present in the famous *vísa* 4 in *Íslendinga Saga* (Guðr and Göndul), perhaps also in same text ch. 122 (the woman who tears out men's heads with a kind of net), their images are purely symbolical: they belong, as J. de Vries would say, to the mythological apparatus of heroic poetry, not to the faith.<sup>7</sup> Let us notice that the Church, here too, has assimilated the notion: the saint hermit Hildir is

<sup>7</sup> *Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte*, 2 ed., Berlin, 1956, § 193.

called God's *skjaldmær* (a typical heiti for the valkyries) in *Jóns Saga Helga I*, ch. 48.

One curious element has also to be mentioned: it concerns the phenomenon of *herfjöturr*, this uncouth and sudden paralysis which strikes a man, in a battle for instance, or at the very moment when it is most important for him to spring into action: incapable of taking flight or of defending himself, he is killed on the spot. There are very few instances of this in the whole of Icelandic literature, except in *Sturlunga*, where one finds several cases of it (*Íslendinga Saga*, ch. 144, *Sturlunga Saga II*, p. 288; those two examples using the word *herfjöturr* itself). There is a valkyrie who is named Herfjöturr: she is mentioned in *Grímnismál* (strophe 36), a poem which is recorded in Snorri's *Edda*. The problem is that of knowing whether or not this notion—which may well be founded on quite normal or physiological features—is Germanic or Northern at all. We have instances of similar occurrences in Homer's works (*Odyssey XXII 297 seq.* and *Iliad XII 358–360 or XXII 5 seq.*) or even in *Atharva Veda* (VIII.8 or XI.9) and two miracles at least in the *jarteinabækur* remind us of it: *Odda-verja Páttur*, ch. 6, and *Jarteinabók Þorláks Biskups II*, ch. 1. Identical remarks would apply to a similar phenomenon, *Þeim var bilt*, in relation to the goddess Bil and are illustrated, in connection with the god Þórr himself, once more in the *Gylfaginning* (ch. 44). It occurs several times in *Sturlunga*, for example in *Íslendinga Saga*, ch. 98.

These are all the instances I could find of references to gods and myths in the *samtíðarsögur*. They call for an important and very significant remark: practically *all* the details which have just been listed above, scanty as they are, could have come from Snorri Sturluson's works (all of them written before 1241, and some of them some twenty years earlier), especially *Gylfaginning*. This possibility is particularly convincing for the Fölski episode in *Íslendinga Saga*. It is as if Sturla Þórðarson and other authors of *samtíðarsögur* had tried to apply in their works what they had learned in Snorri's works—and we do know that Snorri did not compose his *Edda* out of regret at the passing of the old faith, but on pedagogical and so-called historical



grounds. As regards the *kenningar* and the *heiti*, the greatest number of them reflects an attentive reading of the *Skáldskaparmál*.

I think one may conclude that, as far as mythology is concerned in the *samtíðarsögur*, the so-called pagan revival or pagan survivals are a purely literary feature devoid of all living religious significance.

### III. THE OTHER WORLD

Obviously, it cannot be possible to draw such radical conclusions from a study of the ideas that the Icelanders may have had of the other world, and of the beings who were supposed to inhabit it. For here, we reach the deepest of all religious structures. Nevertheless, I feel somewhat inclined to contest E. Ó. Sveinsson's view when he writes that

the old belief in spiritualism, dreams, apparitions and ghosts has maintained itself, without fully agreeing with the Christian faith.<sup>1</sup>

We know that the other world was a reality for the Old Germanic Peoples, that they had a cult for the dead as supporters and protectors of the family, that they believed in the migration of souls, and that their religion was highly eschatological.<sup>2</sup> The notion of *hugr* corresponds fairly well to our conception of a soul foreign to the body it inhabits, capable of freeing itself from it and of acting independently. In that case, it could take a proper shape, *hamr*, which was like the symbolical figure of the internal ego. Certain individuals had this property like our modern werewolves: at night, they could escape from their bodies which remained inert as dead, and go elsewhere to commit mischiefs. Such a man was said to be *hamrammr* or *ramm- aukinn*. *Landnámabók* gives many instances of this.

We must notice that there is only one mention, however, of such an event in the *samtíðarsögur*, and that in *Geirmundar Þáttur Heljar-skinns*, a rather late text. In this connection an important observation must be made. It may be true that the *hamrammr* phenomenon is of shamanistic origin<sup>3</sup> and Snorri's *Ynglinga Saga* tells us things about

<sup>1</sup> *Um íslenskar þjóðsögur*, op. cit., p. 66.

<sup>2</sup> See F. Ström: *Nordisk Hedendom*, op. cit., pp. 146-148.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 81.

Óðinn which are not at all different from what we can learn in shamanistic texts.<sup>4</sup> Let us, however, take a closer look at *Prestssaga Guðmundar Góða*, ch. 19: we read there that the priest Guðmundr Arason has fallen asleep, from physical exhaustion, against a deacon who is sitting next to him; after a while, the deacon does not feel the weight of Guðmundr's body at all. And at the same time, a man in a distant region who has been long tormented by a *flagð*, having just invoked Guðmundr, sees the saint appear in a blaze of light, and sprinkle holy water on the *flagð*, which immediately disappears into the ground, never to return. This story may be relevant to the *hamrammr* complex and, as such, belongs, under Christian disguise, to genuine Northern traditions which reflect shamanistic influences. But rare is the mention of a *hamrammr* man travelling in human form—they are usually supposed to take the shape of an animal—and, which is far more interesting, a reader who was not aware of Northern antiquities would doubtless take the whole story as a rather commonplace case of levitation, a property frequently attributed to Christian saints in medieval hagiography.<sup>5</sup>

Belief in the immortality of the soul, whatever its form, has given birth in the North to another body of creeds which expresses itself in the importance attached to the phenomenon of the *landvættir*: these could be the souls of the dead which take refuge in places or things, which 'inhabit' them, and thus protect their descendants.<sup>6</sup> They want a special cult and offerings, that is if we are to trust many of the tales from *Landnámabók* and *Kristni Saga*. There was here too a real difficulty for the Church which, as a consequence, fought hard against belief in the *landvættir*, as we can see at the beginning of Úlfjótr's laws. Once more, we are obliged to state that there is, in the *samtíðarsögur*, only one mention of *landvættir*, and one additional reference in *Geirmundar Páttur Heljarskinns* (the well-known story of the rowan-trees at Skarð).

<sup>4</sup> *Ynglinga Saga*, ch. VII (ÍF XXVI, pp. 18 ssqq).

<sup>5</sup> See for instance O. Leroy: *La lévitation*, Paris, 1928.

<sup>6</sup> See Jón Helgason: *Íslands Kírke frá dens Grundlæggelse til Reformationen*, København, 1925, p. 18; K. B. Ólafsson: *Landvættir og álfar*, in *Andvari*, haust 1962, pp. 260–271.

As there are similarities between *landvættir* and *álfar*,<sup>7</sup> we shall, perhaps, be more lucky if we seek for the latter in the *samtíðarsögur*. But here too, the harvest is poor. *Prestssaga Guðmundar Góða*, ch. 4, borrows probably from German annals, for the year 1167, the mention of strange beings—*kynjamenn*—riding in the sky. Two *kenningar* for warrior use the word *álfr* (sword's *álfr* in *Þórðar Saga Kakala*, *vísa* 3, fight's *álfr* in *Hákonar Saga Hákonarsonar*, p. 192). And, if we accept E. Ó. Sveinsson's suggestion that references to *álfar* are intended in two different tales of miracles (in *Þorláks Saga Byskups*, ch. 51 and in *Jóns Saga Helga* I, ch. 30), then the examination of these passages shows close links with the impish creatures and devils familiar in European saints' lives in Latin. Here, par excellence, a foreign literary influence has superseded what may originally have been a genuine belief. The visible effort of the Church has clearly been to assimilate all possible pagan creatures of the other world, genuine or not, to the Christian images of devils. And in many a case, the intervention of such beings either seems invented for the sake of edification, especially in the *jarteinabækur*, or has been placed there for purely artistic purposes.

The situation with regard to reincarnation is complex. There is in *Þorgils Saga Skarða*, ch. 62, a passage which seems to indicate a genuine belief in the migration of souls. The text says that, once Þorgils skarði has become, after Kolbeinn ungi, the chief of the Skagafjörður, the inhabitants of this district thought that 'Kolbeinn ungi was back (*aftr kominn*) and reborn (*endrborinn*)'. Snorri Sturluson says exactly the same about Hákon the Good, who was Haraldr hárfagri *endrborinn*, in *Heimskringla* (ÍF XXVI, p. 150).<sup>8</sup> There is a good means of verifying this belief: it consists in studying the choice of names given to children. Everyone knows that, according to specialists,<sup>9</sup> in the Germanic world this custom obeyed strong principles: one had to give children part of the names of their parents: Ásgeirr and

<sup>7</sup> F. Jónsson: *Álfatrúin á Íslandi*, in *Elmreiðin* I, 1895, pp. 95–103; K. B. Ólafsson, *art. cit.*, pp. 269–270.

<sup>8</sup> See also de Vries: *Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte*, *op. cit.*, § 138.

<sup>9</sup> M. Keil: *Altisländische Namenwahl*, Leipzig, 1931; E. Wessén: *Nordiska namnstudier*; J. Jónsson: *Um íslenzk mannanöfn*, in *Safn til sögu Íslands* III, 1896–1902, pp. 569–700.



Þorgerðr should have children called Geirr and Þorgeirr, and so on . . .

A statistical study of all the names included in the *samtíðarsögur* convinces us immediately that these principles were not applied in Iceland. The only evidence is that one can possibly detect a predominating name within one given family, generally because this has been the name of an illustrious ancestor: Sæmundr in the Oddaverjar family, Gizurr in the Haukdælir, Þórðr and Magnús in the Reykhylltingar, Egill amongst the Mýramenn, and so on . . . Moreover, we see an increasing popularity of the names of saints, Icelandic saints chiefly, such as Jón. If we compare statistically the frequency of names in *Njála* on one side and in the *samtíðarsögur* on the other side, we see that the most popular names in *Njála* are Þorkell (18 out of 229 names), Ketill (16/229), and Þorsteinn (15/229) whereas in the *samtíðarsögur*, they are Jón (166/401), Þórðr (119/401) and Þorsteinn (117/401). Names which exist in the *samtíðarsögur*, but are absent in *Njála* are: Páll (39/401), Andréas (20/401), Nikulás (14/401), Markús (13/401) etc. . . . This is a good illustration of the progressive substitution of the cult of the saints for the old cult of pagan heroes.

We have just spoken of trolls. The notion is very complex. Kelchner sets the equation *troll* = *jötunn* = the soul of a dead person, ordinarily, somebody wicked.<sup>10</sup> But the reading of the *samtíðarsögur* shows that this description is not strictly limited to trolls, since it is equally applicable, sometimes to *draugr*, sometimes to *álfr*, sometimes even to *landvattnr*. The process of christianization has not missed the opportunity of reducing all these categories to common devils; see the expression *troll vísi yðr til búrs* (in *Jarteinabók Guðmundar Byskups*, ch. 18). *Troll* is also assimilated to *draugr* or *flagð* in many passages of *Prestssaga Guðmundar Góða* or *Jarteinabók Guðmundar Byskups*. The general impression is that it is very difficult to make a distinction between these different forms of nomenclature.

On the other hand, there are clearly some Christian stories which are given so-called pagan features when reference is made to the other world. Such is the case of the vampire Faraldr, in *Hrafns Saga Svein-*

<sup>10</sup> *Dreams in Old Norse Literature*, Cambridge, 1935, pp. 40-45. L. Musset agrees in *Histoire des peuples scandinaves*, op. cit., p. 135.

*bjarnarsonar*, *vísa* 3, who probably does not belong to the genuine pagan mythology but is, on the contrary, very frequent in the Latin *vitae*. He resembles the horrible *Járngrímr* who appears to Guðmundr guðijekkr in *Íslendinga Saga*, ch. 141: all these figures remind us very strongly of the numerous *Danses macabres* or *Vers de la Mort*, so popular during the Middle Ages throughout Europe.

One word more about the difficult and complex notion of *fylgja* and/or *hamingja*, a kind of protective spirit attendant on one individual, or one family. It is highly probable that these figures go back to pagan sources. We find, unfortunately, or typically enough, four mentions only of *fylgjur* (or *hamingjur*) in our texts: these are *Þorgils Saga Skarða*, ch. 12, where Þórðr Sturluson appears in a dream to his son Sturla to inform him of the arrival of the *viðbjörn* (that is Þorgils skarði), then *Íslendinga Saga*, ch. 90, where Sighvatr Sturluson guesses that Valgarðr Styrmisson is *feigr* by looking at the latter's horse. The word *fylgjur* itself occurs in *Sturlunga Saga II*, p. 287 (*óvina fylgjur*) and in *Íslendinga Saga*, ch. 70 (*ófriðarfylgjur*). This is very little evidence of an element which all specialists consider to be one of the most important in Northern paganism.<sup>11</sup> How are we to interpret this scantiness?

The answer may be that the concept of *fylgja* fused conveniently with the Christian notion of a guardian angel. Through the intermediary of such anglo-norman texts as Henri d'Arce's *Vitas Patrum*<sup>12</sup> we can quite clearly see how the two notions can be confused or amalgamated. Besides this, the Icelanders were early acquainted with the notion of *fylgjuengill*, and this would facilitate the eradication of the pagan image.

What we may conclude from this section of the study is that the Church had brought with itself to Iceland a lot of stories and beliefs which could assimilate or replace the ancient Northern beliefs concerning the other world. The ground was firm: in both camps there was the same certainty that the other world existed and was inhabited. Judging from the *samtíðarsögur*, one must very often wonder whether the details given of the other world are not in fact taken from Latin

<sup>11</sup> See B. Melsteð: *Íslendinga saga*, Kaupmannahöfn, 1903-1930, vol. II, p. 102; G. Turville-Petre: Dreams in Icelandic Tradition, in *Folklore* 69, 1958.

<sup>12</sup> Lines 5960-5961.

or continental sources, *vitae* in latin, tales of miracles, 'scientific' writings and so on . . . Even in the case of what may seem to be genuine, one feels justified in speaking of superimpositions, as photographers would term it. On an old Northern pattern, the Church has grafted or imposed new images and stories, and probably only the outer Christian form was visible to the *samtíðarsögur* authors' contemporaries.

#### IV. WITCHCRAFT AND MAGIC

If we now study witchcraft and magic, I am aware of the fact that we are on the border of religion proper, and that such a study is far more difficult than the previous ones. For this is a field in which religion and faith do not necessarily play a prominent part. On the other hand, E. Ó. Sveinsson remarks judiciously that the Church brought with itself 'a whole world of witchcraft and sorcery'.<sup>1</sup> And it is true, it is very difficult in many cases to make a distinction between practices which may be genuinely Northern and the sorcery of the Western world.

We shall begin with a very important consideration: all the practices that we have the right to consider as genuinely pagan, such as *seiðr*, *galdr*, *gandreið*, *sending*, *níðstöng* are *totally* missing from the *samtíðarsögur*. This is surely surprising to anyone who has read the *Íslendingasögur* or *Landnámabók*.

The only passage in the *samtíðarsögur* which may shed some light on the matter is *Jóns Saga Helga* I, ch. 24 (or the parallel text in II, ch. 12) where it is said that bishop Jón Ögmundarson (1106-1121) fought against all evil customs, witchcraft (*fjölkyngi ok forðæðuskapr*), magic (*galdrar ok gerningar*), optical illusions produced by spells (*sjónhverfiligr kuklaraskapr*) and esoteric practices (*forneskja*) and *Jóns Saga Helga* II adds here, idolatry, *blótskapr*— This enumeration, in its alliterated form, does not have a genuinering: monk Gunnlaugr must here have translated a Latin formula. *Jóns Saga Helga* I gives examples: Bishop Jón forbade the promulgation of superstitions (*hindrvitni*) such as these concerning the moon and the names of the days of the week, he denounced *dansar* and *mansöngs-*

<sup>1</sup> *Um íslenskar þjóðsögur*, op. cit., p. 67.



*vísur*. It is very little evidence to work from, and rather deceptive. Let us try to see if a closer examination of the texts can give us more.

We can begin with the runes, since their magic value is generally admitted.<sup>2</sup> They appear three times in *Sturlunga* (*Prestsaga Guðmundar Góða*, ch. 13, *Íslendinga Saga*, ch. 112 and 150) and twice in *Hákonar Saga Hákonarsonar* (p. 191). But a comparison with *Egla* or *Grettla* is significant: never in *Sturlunga* are their so-called magical virtues mentioned. In three of these five examples, the word is used simply to denote inscription, and *Íslendinga Saga*, ch. 150 seems decisive: Oddr Sveinbjarnarson sends to Snorri Sturluson a letter written in Pope Gregory's *Dialogues*, where it occurs at all possible opportunities (of runes). But nobody was able to read them! On the contrary, we see in *Sturlu Þáttur*, ch. 3, how Sturla Þórðarson uses runes in a derisive way.

We may content ourselves with speaking only en passant of the very numerous details concerning prophecies, second-sight and the like. There is practically no important character in the *samtíðarsögur* who is not gifted with this special power. I have studied the question elsewhere.<sup>3</sup> Of course, this faculty could belong to Northern antiquities and could even show remnants of shamanism. But we must remember that this is, par excellence, the attribute of saints and martyrs in medieval hagiography. And, to give a more precise source, it is a set theme in Pope Gregory's *Dialogues*, where it occurs at all possible opportunities. *Heilagra Manna Sögur* and *Postola Sögur* show that this kind of literature was fairly well known in Iceland and there is no need to labour the point further. The position with regard to such features is exactly the same as with dreams, another conventional point in the sagas, and probably of the same origin: they appear to be a somewhat obligatory element or device, which is given a purely literary utilization. Here, we are far from *Völuspá* or *Fáfnismál*! For the rest, the characters who are the most endowed with the prophetic gift are the three saint bishops of Iceland!

I am not saying that there are no pagan magical practices recorded in the *samtíðarsögur*: they are certainly present and have been duly

<sup>2</sup> G. Turville-Petre: *Origins of Icelandic Literature*, Oxford, 1953, p. 17; L. Musset: *Introduction à la runologie*, Paris, 1965, does not agree.

<sup>3</sup> In: *The influence of Pope Gregory's Dialogues . . .*, op. cit.

recorded elsewhere.<sup>4</sup> I am simply pointing out that many of these features could be Christian as well, or could have been imported with Christianity.

For instance, much has been written about the famous *sólarsteinn* which is mentioned several times (in *Hrafn's Saga Sveinbjarnarsonar*, ch. 11, 19, *Íslendinga Saga*, ch. 30, and even in *Guðmundar Saga Arasonar* by Arngrímur Brandsson, ch. 26.<sup>5</sup> As Th. Ramskou points out, it may have been a kind of *leiðarsteinn* used as a navigational aid, and accordingly a genuine Northern discovery. But scientific works such as those recorded in *Rím I* were not unknown to Iceland, and it is quite reasonable to think that the *sólarsteinn* goes back to Pliny the Elder or to Isidore of Sevilla. The latter, to be sure, was read by Icelanders in the XIIIth century.

We can imagine, on the other hand, that the popular medicine, such as practised, for instance, by the famous *læknir* Hrafn Sveinbjarnarson, could employ more or less magical methods. It is true that in this violent and quarrelsome Icelandic society wounds were often incurred, and we have many an example in the sagas of treatments and healings which, astonishing as they are for us, must have been effective. Of course, it is not necessary to invoke magic to provide a satisfying explanation of these results. Such realistic and matter of fact people as the Icelanders of the Sturlung Age may equally well have been reaping the benefits of their keen sense of observation and well known manual dexterity. What remains to be said is that the *samtíðarsögur* and particularly the *jarteinabækur* of the *biskupa sögur* do not show traces of especially strange practices (See *Hrafn's Saga Sveinbjarnarsonar*, ch. 4; *Jóns Saga Helga I*, ch. 44; *Prestssaga Guðmundar Góða*, ch. 6; *Íslendinga Saga*, ch. 81; *Svínfellinga Saga*, ch. 3; *Porgils Saga Skarða*, ch. 7). We must therefore concentrate our attention on Hrafn's doings. There is no sign of professional magic or occultism in his behaviour, and if there is an instance of a non-scientific approach, it consists (in ch. 5) in the recitation of five *Pater Nosters* before beginning an operation. As for his science, several studies—and most recently Jónas Kristjánsson's thesis *Um Fóst-*

<sup>4</sup> Cf. chiefly N. Lid in *Nordisk kultur* XIX, 1935.

<sup>5</sup> See for instance P. G. Foote: Icelandic 'sólarsteinn' and the Medieval Background, in *Arv* 12, 1956.

*bræðrasögu*— have demonstrated that Hrafn faithfully followed the teaching of the Salerno school, either directly or through Montpellier, which he is supposed of having personally visited when travelling abroad.<sup>6</sup> Also the popularity of the famous *Regimen Sanitatis Salernitanum* was as great in Iceland as in the rest of medieval Europe.

One last detail: much has been written also about a curious passage in *Prestssaga Guðmundar Góða*, ch. 6, where a boat threatened by shipwreck tries to avoid the danger by so-called magical means: the crew tries to find out whether there isn't a man on board who knows 'the highest name of God' (*nafn guðs it hæsta*), this being in their minds the only means to calm the tempest. Doubtless, in Northern paganism as in other primitive religions, the strength of sacred names must have been great.<sup>7</sup> But as far as *guðs nafn it hæsta* is concerned, it reminds us of a similar passage in the *Roman de Flamenca*,<sup>8</sup> or could draw its origin from the Latin cantilenas, so popular at the time, since it is said of King Sverrir, in *Sverris Saga*, that he sung the *Alma chorus Dei* during the Norðness battle in 1181.<sup>9</sup>



From this brief survey of a problem which, certainly, is far more difficult than it has been presented here, I think we may draw three conclusions:

First, the genuine pagan feelings and survivals in the *samtíðarsögur* appear to be insignificant. One remains impressed by the fact that the authors are either perpetually trying to make *couleur locale*, probably for purely literary ends, or, more precisely, are engaged in a process of reconstruction. Their main concern does not seem to be what they have to say, but how they should say it. And the influence of the models of all kinds that they had at their disposal played a very important part. I think this attitude is typical of a society which wants to create and elaborate its own past according to the idea they have formed of it from other texts. We have to remember constantly that

<sup>6</sup> See A. Tjomsland, the introduction of *Hrafn's Saga*, op. cit.

<sup>7</sup> See de Vries: *Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte*, op. cit., § 216 and B. Gröndal: *Folketro i Norden*, in *ANOH*, 1863, pp. 127 ssqq.

<sup>8</sup> P. Meyer: *Le roman de Flamenca*, Paris, 1865, pp. 316-317.

<sup>9</sup> See *ÍF IX*, Jónas Kristjánsson's Introduction, p. LXV.



Iceland, newly discovered and inhabited as it was, lacked very old traditions and that it had to create its own history. As time goes by, this mental habit or mentality grows and gathers force.

This is quite visible in the *samtíðarsögur* and could provide an explanation of the evolution which gave birth to the *Íslendingasögur* proper. As I have suggested twice before, it is very interesting to see that the text in *Sturlunga* which is the richest in survivals is also the most recent of the collection, *Geirmundar Þáttur Heljarskinns*, probably written about 1300, to serve as a sort of introduction for the whole series of sagas. In its six pages—it is a very short text—this *þáttur* gives information (and in most cases, these details appear nowhere else) about the conditions of slaves, the scald Bragi, ways of living typical of Vikings (*herfang*, *skotpenningr*, *friðland*), a man who was a great *blótmaðr*, another who was *hamrammr*, not to mention the rowan-tree episode. More important, it is the only text where the anger of the pagan gods is illustrated (and it is worth saying that this point finds an exact parallel in *Landnámabók*). Now, such obvious mistakes as the detail about the parity between gold and silver being 1 to 10 (instead of 1 to 8 as it must have been in the Viking Age) show that the author has tried to reconstitute an image of the past, probably using lost texts such as *Hróks Saga Svarta* and oral traditions associated with Skarð. Here, it seems quite clear that Þórðr Narfason, if he is the author of this text, has endeavoured to recreate a society and an atmosphere as he imagined that they should have been. He is projecting onto a rather loose historical frame his readings, his actual experiences or fancies.

And this is the final observation I should like to make. Through their readings, either directly, or through the intermediary of the Church, the authors of *samtíðarsögur* initiate in their works a process of re-creation of the past. This movement reaches its high point in the *Íslendingasögur* and then enters an irreversible movement of devaluation and decay with the *fornaldarsögur*. It is remarking that the more we follow this progression: *samtíðarsögur*—*Íslendingasögur*—*fornaldarsögur*, the greater is the pagan revival, the more numerous are the so-called pagan survivals. A lover of Northern antiquities has, on the whole, rather little to learn from *Íslendinga Saga*, a deal more from *Eyrbyggja Saga* or *Fóstbræðra Saga*, and a great deal from let

us say *Gautreks Saga* not to speak of *Örvar-Odds Saga*. How this movement began is not so hard to retrace: in all fields, the Icelanders of the XIIth and XIIIth centuries undertook to gather, organize and then commit to writing, using foreign patterns and often distant memories, first their laws, then their general and particular history, and thus the distinctive quality of their earlier society, mentality, mythology and religion. Even though, not unfrequently, their ultimate source may be oral, their sagas and first of all their *samtíðarsögur* show, especially as regards the so-called pagan survivals, a deep literary impregnation.

This is a society which gives us the impression of possessing a strong desire to record for posterity an image of its personality, in terms which will be comprehensible also to contemporaries and the contemporary world. This means that, in my opinion, the true value of these masterpieces is not so much their content, but the way in which they are written. But that is quite another story!

### BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

THE following works which have been freely used in the above study should be added to the bibliographical indications given in footnotes:

- Almqvist Bo: *Norrön niddiktning. Traditionshistoriska studier i versmagi I*, Stockholm, 1965.
- Andersson Theodore M.: *The Problem of Icelandic Saga Origins. A Historical Survey*, New Haven & London, 1964.
- Baetke W.: *Das heilige im Germanischen*, Tübingen, 1942.
- Bekker-Nielsen H., Olsen Th. D., Widding O.: *Norrøn Fortællekunst*, København, 1965.
- Gud Tue: *Legenden i dansk middelalder*, København, 1961.
- Hallberg Peter: *Den fornisländska poesien*, Stockholm, 1962.
- Jóhannesson J.: *Íslendinga saga I*, Reykjavík, 1956.
- Ker W. P.: *Collected Essays*, London, 1925.
- Ljungberg H.: *Den nordiska religionen och kristendomen. Studier över det nordiska religionsskiftet under vikingatiden*, Uppsala, 1938.
- Olsen Olaf: *Hørg, hov og kirke. Historiske og arkæologiske vikingetidsstudier*, in ÅNOH, 1965.
- Pálsson Hermann: *Sagnaskemmtun Íslendinga*, Reykjavík, 1962.

- Perroy E., Auboyer J., Cahen Cl., Duby G., Mollat M.: *Le Moyen Age*, Paris, 1961.
- Phillpotts B. S.: *Kindred and Clan in the Middle Ages and after. A study in the sociology of the Teutonic races*, Cambridge, 1913.
- Reichborn-Kjennerud L.: *Vår gamle trolldomsmedisin*, Oslo, 1928-1943.
- Sveinsson Einar Ólafur: *The Age of the Sturlungs. Icelandic civilization in the thirteenth century*, Ithaca, 1953.



KURT SCHIER

## ICELAND AND THE RISE OF LITERATURE IN 'TERRA NOVA'

*Some comparative reflections*

ICELAND—as is generally known—is a country where literature takes an important place in everyday life and where people are interested in problems of the older or newer literature to a very high degree. Where else for instance could the return of two old manuscripts be celebrated as an official ceremony as well as a festival for the whole country, as happened only a few years ago, when the Codex Regius of the Poetic Edda and the Flateyjarbók came home to Iceland? And now try to imagine the consequences of finding in England a new manuscript of the Beowulf, or if in Germany Walther von der Vogelweide could be identified as the author of the Nibelungenlied—such a discovery would mean a sensation to a few scholars only and the majority of the people probably would not take notice of it at all. Now in spring 1973 it happened in Iceland that the largest newspaper, Morgunblaðið, published an article on the front page concerning a manuscript of the Njáls saga, which was said to have been discovered in the Vatican Library and in which Snorri Sturluson himself was attested to be the author of the Njála. In addition to this article the director of the Stofnun Árna Magnússonar, Jónas Kristjánsson, wrote a commentary, expressing his excitement about the discovery.—It was a joke, of course, an excellent joke on Fool'sday, April First; however, a joke of this kind could only be effective, if the majority of the readers could be expected to understand and laugh at it. And really, many people understood and laughed. It seems to me that such a joke is impossible in any country but Iceland.

If one asks why literature in Iceland has such an extraordinarily important place in the Icelandic society, it is very difficult to find an answer of some plausibility. The simplest answer would be that Ice-

land has had a literary tradition from the middle ages and that a sense of art and style, form and structure of literary texts has been preserved or developed through many centuries. But from this answer even more complex questions arise: what are the reasons for the enormous wealth of literature in Iceland during the high and late middle ages?

We all know that this has been asked very often, and we also know that the answers have never been quite satisfactory. Nevertheless I think it to be worth while reflecting on this problem somewhat more. I am sure it is not possible to explain the role of literature in the old Icelandic society or to solve the riddle of its development in a simple way; naturally these reflections can only be regarded as an attempt to present some possibilities of explanation.

I want to begin with two generally accepted statements:

- 1) The medieval literature of Iceland as a whole is incomparable with any other contemporary literature in Europe. Of course there are many continental influences on the literature of Old Iceland, especially in historical and theological works, but also in the narrative art of several kinds of saga literature. Neither writings in Latin nor any European national literature in the middle ages explains fully the complexity of saga art, its characteristic combination of subject, art and style, historical or pseudohistorical connections and a system of ethic values. Though we find a lot of influences in several aspects, saga literature as a whole is a specifically Icelandic phenomenon.
- 2) In Norway the conditions for the development of literature were obviously nearly the same as in Iceland. The differences between the Old Norwegian and the Old Icelandic language are of no importance for our problem. The fact that the number of Celtic people in Icelandic society must have been considerable does not provide the main reason for the development of medieval Icelandic literature. — The pre-literary traditions were most likely the same in Norway and in Iceland; for instance Eddic lays (in an older shape maybe) or the themes of *fornaldarsögur* were known in both countries. The influences of the European literatures, particularly the historical and theological literatures,

were effective in Norway as in Iceland, perhaps in some aspects earlier in Norway. The most artistic form of Germanic—maybe of European—poetry, the poetry of the scalds, existed in Norway already at the time of the discovery of Iceland. But the development of literature is quite different in both countries:

- a) the Eddic lays were preserved only in Iceland; here they were elaborated and probably first written on parchment,
- b) scaldic poetry has become a mere Icelandic art since the end of the 10th century,
- c) and again only in Iceland we find artistic prose narratives like those in the saga literature.

And this was at a time when the connection between Iceland and Norway was most intense. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries Iceland of all the Scandinavian countries was clearly dominant in literary production. Nearly all the sagas about Norwegian kings and jarls, about Danish history (in the *Skjoldunga* saga and the *Knýtlinga* saga), and about events on the Orkneys and the Faroe Islands were written in Iceland or by Icelanders. And when King Sverrir of Norway wanted to have his biography written, he charged an Icelander, Karl Jónsson, with this work.

We all know more examples of this kind. But the question remains: what are the reasons for such a different development of literature in Norway and in Iceland? Since the literary preconditions were nearly the same in both countries, we have to look for explanations outside literature. Many attempts have been made in this direction in order to find a possible solution. Out of these I would like to quote only a few. For instance, it was supposed that the Norwegians, who emigrated from their home country, had been a kind of élite, men with a special longing for independence. According to another opinion the extraordinarily highly developed sense of literature among the Icelanders was a consequence of Irish influence on Icelandic literature or of the Irish strain in the Icelandic people. Other scholars suggested that the *alþingi* as a centre for communication and tradition was of extremely high importance for the literature of Old Iceland. Of course all the facts just mentioned could possibly have influenced the deve-



lopment of literature in Iceland. Nevertheless I consider it impossible that any single one of these factors could be regarded as the initial impulse for the rise of literature in Iceland to such an extremely high standard.

Iceland was a 'terra nova'. This term I want to use in a more extensive meaning. Iceland was not only a 'terra nova' as a country newly discovered, settled and colonized. 'Terra nova' in my meaning also signifies a new beginning of a community, the creation of new political, legal and social orders.

But if we try to compare the particular situation of Iceland and its literature with some similar societies or literatures, we meet a lot of difficulties. It seems impossible to find a country or a society with conditions identical to the ones which characterised Iceland. The settlement of a new country or a new landscape is not always combined with the creation of new orders. Moreover, the beginning of quite new political or legal orders, which sometimes lead to the creation of a new state or a new nation, is not necessarily combined with the settling of a new land.

I think it will suffice for our reflections to compare the Icelandic situation with that of a few other societies or countries which are 'terrae novae' in only one of these respects, or to state how far Iceland seems to be incomparable at all.

The aim of such comparative reflections is to illuminate the rise of literature in a country like Iceland. But what kind of material can we compare? Probably it would not lead to any results if one were to try to compare single works or artistic forms or genres of literature in different societies. We have to start with the most characteristic peculiarities of Old Icelandic literature. These characteristics, I think, can be shown by disregarding all details and reducing the differences between Old Icelandic and Old Norwegian literature to the most striking points. These could be the following items:

- a) In Iceland probably old traditions were preserved better than in Norway.
- b) In Iceland such old traditions were not only preserved orally, but were written on parchment. It can be taken as a rule that the process of writing itself influenced the works being written.

In this way an oral tradition may never be quite the same as the corresponding work in written 'literary' shape. I want to call this very complicated process 'literarisation'.

- c) But in Iceland new traditions arose also about the events during the discovery and settlement of the country and especially about the forming of new orders and the conflicts connected with them. These traditions must have been considered very important ones by the Icelanders for a long time, both in the pre-literary stage, and, obviously, also afterwards. This means that these traditions were subject to 'literarisation' in a similar way as the older ones.

These differences between Old Norwegian and Old Icelandic literature are not always clearly apparent, and certainly they are not simply stages in a chronological development.

Let us now look at these three elements somewhat closer.

#### 1. THE PRESERVATION OF OLD TRADITIONS

It is commonly known that traditions of several kinds as well as the language itself are very often preserved much better in colonized countries than in the homeland itself. So, for example, the language of Bavarian speaking colonists in the so-called Seven Communities (*Sette comuni*) in Upper Italy has been preserved in a very archaic form through many centuries, and though it is now named 'Cimbrian' it is a very old form of Bavarian dialect.—In the Gottschee, a city and district in Jugoslavia colonized by German speaking people, the theme of the Middle High German poem 'Kudrun' still existed in our century as a ballad with the title 'Die Meererin'. As in these communities old traditions, sometimes only relics, are preserved particularly well in so-called 'Sprachinseln', where settlers are surrounded by a people speaking another language. We can find such settlements especially in the eastern and south-eastern parts of Europe, mainly as the result of planned colonizations.

But there are other examples, too. Scholars in folk tale research know that folk tales, first of all Märchen, in the New England States in North America, and sometimes even in Australia, are preserved

better and very often in a more archaic form than in England itself. In the New England States dances also are still alive which are nearly forgotten in the home country.

Preserving old traditions does not mean that tales or songs, which have been told or sung once, will be handed down and delivered unchanged and will be told or sung in the same manner for ever. Sometimes a 'Gattung', a literary genre, is alive in such a way, that not only old themes or subjects are retold or resung, but also new tales or songs are created in a traditional manner. Heroic tales and heroic poetry in oral tradition are still alive in some Balcanic regions in the south-east of Europe—we all remember the works of Parry and Lord. Here not only songs and tales are living, but the way of singing and telling, and new events may be told or sung just like the old stories. One of the best examples of such traditional art can be found in our neighbourhood, on the Faroe Islands. There themes of *fornaldarsögur*, *riddarasögur* and many other tales have been passed on through oral tradition from the middle ages up to our days as ballads sung in connection with dance. The Faroese dance ballads are in my opinion one of the most astonishing examples of oral tradition of any people speaking a Germanic language. But here again we can see that tradition does not mean sterile conservation; themes and forms do not remain unchanged through a long time; on the contrary, as long as tradition is still alive, themes and forms will be developed and subjected to alterations. The dance ballads had become the only existing form of poetry in this society. During the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century the ballad assumed the functions of other literary genres: satires on events of the present were sung and danced, and even a political satire, the *Fuglakvæði* by Nolsoyar Páll, was performed in this way and is still living as dance song nowadays.

Some of the societies favourable for preservation of old traditions are isolated, either by the geographical situation (mountain valleys, islands) or by language. An isolated situation is often combined with the lack of influences from outside. But there are exceptions, too: the New England States have not been isolated in this sense, and neither has Iceland. Isolation cannot be the sole factor in explaining the preserving of old traditions in a society, but it will favour it. It is difficult to say what the essential reasons for such a tendency might be—



probably a psychological one; maybe an inclination to honour and preserve all that had been of common possession in the home country.

As already mentioned, it is above all folk tales, ballads, dances, legends, and similar traditions that are generally well preserved. As a rule traditions of such kinds are passed on only in a community, in an auditory for instance or in a circle of dancers and singers. Very often the artistic form of such traditions is not very complicated. In Iceland *fornaldarsögur* (in an oral, pre-literary stage) and maybe Eddic lays belong to this group. But there is the scaldic poetry, one of the highest developed artistic forms of poetry we know, which depends on an individual poet with an extremely good sense of language, rhyme, and metre. Scaldic poetry is not a kind of folk poetry and cannot be compared with folk poetry or folk literature in general. I think there is no doubt that scaldic poetry is a traditional art, too, but a tradition bound in strong rules. Where such a poetry existed elsewhere, it was generally connected with a sacral or secular school of poets, as for instance in Old Ireland, and the poems created by such authors are functionally destined. Also the scaldic poetry in Norway had been a functional one, and scalds, as for instance the Norwegians Þjóðólfr and Eyvindr in the tenth and the Icelanders Sighvatr Þórðarson and Arnórr Þórðarson in the eleventh century, were court poets. But already in the tenth century scaldic poetry had become an art independent of the courts of kings and jarls, and it is first of all Icelanders like Egill, Kormákr, and Gísli, who used the possibilities of scaldic poetry as a free artistic form without a functional limitation. At a very early time these Icelanders using traditional forms created a kind of *l'art pour l'art* poetry.

## 2. THE LITERARISATION OF OLD ORAL TRADITIONS

Probably we would not know anything about the old traditions of Iceland and Norway, if so many of them had not been written down in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. But of course the term 'writing down old traditions' does not mean the same as 'literarisation'. When Snorri quoted scaldic verses in the *Heimskringla* or in his *Edda* he

obviously wrote down traditions as he knew them, and the anonymous scribe who first wrote Eddic lays probably did it in a similar manner. This does not mean that these traditions must have been preserved unchanged, but the alterations or additions were limited. When folk tales, ballads, or legends are written down, this is very often performed by scholars; and putting them on paper or parchment begins in general the ending of a living tradition. Also Snorri's approach to scaldic poetry was a scholarly one aimed at explaining scaldic poetry at a time when it had passed its highest achievements. Themes and rules of Eddic and scaldic poetry were fixed; writing down was not an innovation in the development of these genres. Writing down old traditions is a very common process and examples can be found in many times and cultures, from Charlemagne, who ordered to collect and write down German heroic lays to Elias Lönnroth, who collected Finnish epic songs and elaborated the epos Kalevala out of this material.

Prose narratives in folk tradition like Märchen, hero tales, Sagen and legends are never fixed by rules of form and metre as poetic traditions, and the so-called 'epic laws of folk tales' are not at all laws or rules comparable with metric rules in poetic tradition; they are mere tendencies of composing and narrating a story. These tendencies are followed more in Märchen, less in other kinds of folk tales.

Saga literature is first of all literature, and thanks to the work of many scholars—not the least Icelandic ones—today there is no doubt that the sagas in the shape we can read them in manuscripts are works of literature and not products of folk tradition. But probably all the sagas are built on traditional material, and in my opinion we are not allowed to neglect this fact. Of course these pre-literary oral traditions are vague in many respects; we do not know very much about the subjects of such traditions and still less about their form. But without these traditions a very great part of saga literature would not exist. Therefore the process of literarisation of oral traditions is an extremely important one, and one of the most fascinating I know.

I did not succeed in finding a society or a literature comparable with Iceland in this respect. There are for instance single works built on folk traditions like Kalevala, The Cid or even—to a lesser degree—the Decameron of Boccaccio. But I do not know a single national

literature where a whole literary genre depends on folk tradition and has nevertheless become an artistic literary prose of high standard.

If Icelandic prose literature seems to be unique in this respect, it is worth considering the presuppositions for such a development. I want to mention only a few, but probably one can find some more:

- a) Oral traditions must be considered important to the people or people must at least be interested in them.
- b) Already the oral tradition must contain some formal or artistic tendencies in composing or narrating a story.
- c) There must be an impulse to literarise such native traditions, probably inspired by other literary genres or works or by influence from foreign literature.
- d) There must be men who are familiar with the native traditions as well as with the literary impulse, especially the one coming from foreign literature.

With the first of these suppositions—people's interest in oral traditions—I want to deal later. The second one has recently become again an object of scholarly discussion.<sup>1</sup> Investigating early works of Old Norse literature, particularly translations, historical and theological works, some scholars have found scenes or episodes narrated in a manner we know from *konungasögur* or *Íslendingasögur*. I tend to agree with these scholars that here the written works show at an early stage of Old Norse literature the manner of oral narration. There are not many examples of this kind, but enough to prove the existence of a kind of narrative art already preformed in oral tradition. Of course by this I do not advocate the old 'free prose theory' in its extreme form; today nobody still believes that oral sagas were like the written ones. But the fact that oral traditions existed before the written sagas and were connected with them, shows at least the existence of some inherent formal tendencies, for instance the way to compose a scene or to tender a dialogue. These are not artistic laws or rules, just as the so-called saga-style is not determined by rules but

<sup>1</sup> E.g. Jan de Vries: *Die isländ. Saga und die mündl. Überlieferung*, in: *Festschrift f. F. v. d. Leyen*, München 1963, S. 169–176; D. Hofmann: *Die mündl. Vorstufe der altnord. Prosaerzählkunst*, in: *Annales Universitatis Saraviensis* 10, 1961, S. 163–178; also: *Vers u. Prosa in d. mündl. gepflegten mittelalterl. Erzählkunst d. german. Länder*, in: *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 5, 1971, S. 135–175.



by a particular way of telling a story, differing from one saga to the other.

As to point three: It is superfluous to talk about foreign influences on saga literature—there is no doubt they existed, and it is quite irrelevant to ask what in detail is native Icelandic and what is due to foreign influence.

Of more interest is the fourth supposition: namely men familiar with native traditions as well as with foreign literature. During the middle ages in many European countries there were only few links between folk traditions and written literature. On the continent education and knowledge of literature was attached to monasteries. The language spoken there was Latin, but there is some evidence that clerics also used older traditions of oral literature. The epic poem *Waltharius manu fortis* was created by a clergyman, and is based on older heroic tales; but language and form of the poem are Latin, not German. On the continent the reshaping of old oral traditions in written literature remains an exception. Telling a story or singing a lay is one thing; writing it down another. The 'upper class' of clergymen in the famous monasteries, where scholarship and literature flourished, was a kind of international élite.

Conditions in Iceland were quite different. Christianization was no interruption, neither in tradition nor in the social structure of the country. The leading families in pagan times were to a large extent the leading families during the first Christian centuries too. Education, higher learning and historical or literary knowledge were not necessarily attached to the monasteries, as Ari or the *Oddaverjar* prove. And on the other hand clerics like Karl Jónsson of *Pingeyrar* also wrote in Icelandic.

Obviously there was no gap between learned laymen and clerics on the one side, common people on the other. The number of inhabitants and the non-hierarchic structure of society may have favoured these conditions.

Nevertheless it is astonishing that these men writing works like some of the earlier *konungasögur* or *Íslendingasögur* did not use Latin as historians and chroniclers did on the continent; instead of it they used their vernacular language and obviously tried to combine traditional themes and formal tendencies with their literary experience.

I want to repeat: I am not able to cite any other culture with a literary development comparable to the Icelandic one.

This now leads us to the final question: what is the essential impulse which led to the further development of such traditions in such an uncommon way?

### 3. TRADITIONS OF THE 'LANDNÁM'-TIME AND SAGA-LITERATURE

The most important innovation within old Icelandic literature are the *Íslendingasögur*, stories about events concerned with the original discovery and settlement of the country, the establishment of the *alþingi*, conflicts between individual families, and about Christianization; in short, about the beginning of Icelandic history. It is irrelevant to our discussion whether the events told in the *Íslendingasögur* are historical reality or—more or less—fictions. We may suppose that the content of a major part of the *Íslendingasögur* was considered historical reality, at least at the time when these sagas were composed, as is attested by Sturla Þórðarson.

These events and the creation of new social, legal and political order signify not only the beginning of Icelandic history in a chronological sense. About 870, when the first settlers came to Iceland, the island was empty except for a few Irish monks. The settling meant a completely new start, not only as regards the material conditions which the sagas mention repeatedly—think of the chapter 29 of the *Egils saga* which describes the planning of Skallagrím's farms according to questions of economy. The possibility to create everything anew out of their own vigour must have further strengthened the already clear striving for independence of the new colonists. Innovations had to take place not only in the personal sphere but more so in social intercourse. The hierarchical order of Norway had lost its validity; new forms had to be developed.

Repeatedly one can observe in various literatures of the world how—at a certain moment in literature—a distinct turning back occurs towards the time of the beginning of the state or nation. This can happen in many different ways. In Ancient Rome, to use a very obvious example, the historiographer was thought of as especially digni-



fied and historical writing as the only appropriate literary occupation for a man in politics. History was conceived as a model, above all the history of the beginning, 'ab urbe condita'. Livius states this quite clearly in the preface to his historical work.

In the mind of the Romans 'ab urbe condita' constituted the actual starting point for the initial impulse that led to the Imperium Romanum. In Roman literary tradition over and over again the recollection of the origin of the city becomes apparent. For our purposes it is of minor importance whether the description of the origin of Rome reflects in a condensed form historical realities or whether mythical paradigms are taken as its basis, as has been presumed occasionally.

This search for the origins, the turn towards the time when the actual impulse for the entire further development was given, is always combined with the first constitution of political and legal orders. Apparently the process of the creation of a state or a nation virtually begins with such an initial establishment of laws.

Another manner of inquiring after origins goes even further back in time. Very often it starts with the—generally legendary—tradition of a people's immigration. Rome's greatest epic poem, Vergil's Aeneid, dealt with the origin of the people depicting how Aeneas came to that country and thus established a point of origin.

One can gather similar evidence from Hebrew literature. The Pentateuch, the five books of Moses, can never be estimated too highly for their significance in the selfconsciousness and selfcomprehension of the Jewish people throughout thousands of years. This great book, revised by a redactor, goes back to many individual traditions, which were passed on orally throughout a longer period of time. The whole process of gathering and revising the separate traditions into the present book took almost one thousand years. Here again we find two very characteristic events as points of culmination: the establishment of a—today still compulsory—legal order by Moses and the appropriation and settling of the Promised Land. These are factors which can be regarded as typical for such a literature referring back to the origin of a people.

Let us return to Iceland.—

Once again I want to point out that in an attempt to determine what motives have led to a certain phenomenon in literary development,



very little can be proved by exact materials. Therefore, I must ask you again to look at these thoughts as I have characterized them: as reflections only.

Some time after the 'landnám', in Iceland like in other 'terrae novae' a consciousness must have developed to have created something entirely new. Thus the oral traditions concerning these events received a special emphasis and were regarded as extremely important ones. As in Rome and Israel the establishment of laws played a significant part. From this point of view it is certainly not by chance that the description of legal procedures take up so much room in the *Íslendingasögur*.

Iceland displays an important difference in comparison with other similar societies: in them the events marking the origin of a people or state lie in the far, sometimes mythical past, whereas in Iceland only a comparatively short temporal distance separates the authors of *Íslendingasögur* from the events of the 'landnám'-time, a space of time which under favourable preconditions can be bridged by oral tradition. It has already been observed that out of the turmoils of the Sturlunga days the events of the 'landnám'-time were seen in an idealizing and glorifying light. This fits in easily with the conceptions here exposed.

I should like to summarize the preceding reflections in short.

In Iceland as in many other newly settled regions older traditions were conserved better than in the motherland. But already in the 10th century the court poetry of the scalds was elaborated and severed from its functional connexion.—I had to leave aside the question of the coherence between this development of scaldic poetry and of Icelandic narrative prose.—The most vigorous impulse for the developing of new traditions and especially for their conservation and their being handed down I see as a 'consciousness of initiation' among the Icelanders; this, however, crystallized only after some delay.

The awareness of standing at a beginning, of having created something entirely new, and the process of shaping new orders as well, evidently had considerable psychological and sociological consequences. The strengthened selfconsciousness led to a new—and sometimes problematical—political conception and later on to idealizing the

situation and the events of the beginning. For these reasons the traditions were considered extremely important, thus providing an essential supposition for their being passed on.

In my view these are the most important factors concerning psychology and tradition in the Icelandic literary development. But they would hardly have led to such an impressive literature, if there had not also existed a receptivity to literary influences from outside. In order to combine native traditions with foreign literary impulses it was necessary to have men of literature, who were familiar with the traditions of the country, who were attached to these, and at the same time were experienced in foreign literatures.

To me the shaping of literature in Iceland is a multifarious and complex process, and we can only follow it with our present knowledge to a limited extent; in many respects we depend on hypotheses. The development of the old Icelandic literature is however a model and exemplum of the interaction of the most diverse vigours within and outside literature, which probably has no parallel in world-literature.

## RÍMUR AF FINNBOGA RAMMA

FINNBOGA ríma færeyska er ort af efni úr Finnboga sögu. Jóhan Hendrik Poulsen hefur gert nákvæman samanburð á rímunum og þeim kafla sögunnar sem hún er kveðin af í grein, 'Um Finnbogarímu færeysku', sem birtist í *Skírnir* 1963, bls. 46–58. Finnboga ríma er prentuð í sjö gerðum, auðkenndum A–G, í *Føroya kvæði . . .* Herausgegeben von Chr. Matras, Band II, Kopenhagen 1941, bls. 146–162. Í rímuni er Finnbogi færeyskur maður og býr í Sikilsoy (Siglisoy eða Siguloy eftir gerðum), sem Jóhan Hendrik sýnir fram á að sé auknefni á Nólsey, notað í kveðskap. Efni er staðfært með þeim ágætum, að allir mundu hiklaust telja rímuna orta eftir færeyskri sögn, sem meira að segja fengi stuðning af vitnisburði fornminja,<sup>1</sup> ef sagan væri ekki til.

Efni það sem Finnboga ríma er ort af er í 12.–17. kapitula Finnboga sögu, sjá *Íslensk fornrit* XIV, bls. 276–286. Í þessum kafla eru notuð þrjú sagnaminni: *A* Maður gistir hjá ræningja. Að kveldi skipta þeir með sér verkum, ræninginn sækir vatn, en gesturinn kveikir eld. Ræninginn ætlar að vega gestinn, en gesturinn sér við honum og drepur hann. *B* Söguhetja verður að leysa höfuð sitt með því að glíma við blámann. *C* Söguhetja verður að leysa höfuð sitt með því að þreyta sund við hvítabjörn. Í öðrum sögum koma þessi minni fyrir, *A* í Hallfreðar sögu og Áns sögu bogsveigis,<sup>2</sup> *B* í Kjalnesinga sögu og víða annars staðar,<sup>3</sup> *C* í Vilmundar sögu viðutan.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Skírnir* 1963, bls. 48: 'Þegar menn voru að grafa í Álvabý, komu þeir niður á bæjarrúst. Þar fannst m. a. talsvert af brunnum víði og í eldstónni brot af eirpotti.' Sbr. Finnboga rímu D og E, 38–39.

<sup>2</sup> *Ísl. fornrit* VIII, bls. 169–171, *Fornaldar sögur Norðrlanda . . .* útg. af C. C. Rafn, II, bls. 345–346.

<sup>3</sup> *Ísl. fornrit* XIV, bls. 35–37; Helgi Guðmundsson, *Um Kjalnesinga sögu . . .* *Studia Islandica* 26, § 2.47; Inger M. Boberg, *Motif-Index of Early Icelandic Literature*, *Bibliotheca Arnæmagnæana* XXVII, H1166.1.

<sup>4</sup> *Late Medieval Icelandic Romances* IV, Ed. by Agnete Loth, *Editiones Arnæmagnæanæ*, Ser. B, vol. 23, bls. 169–170.



Texta Finnboga sögu er að sjálfsögðu ekki fylgt nákvæmlega í Finnboga rímu, og verður það ekki rakið hér, heldur gripið niður á stöku stað, þar sem á annan veg er sagt frá í rímunni en í sögunni.

Þegar Finnbogi og Álfur afturkempa komu til gistingar segir í sögunni:

Eptir þat skiptu þeir verkum með sér. Finnbogi sló upp eld, en Álfur tók vatn.<sup>5</sup>

Í Hallfreðar sögu segir að Hallfreður skipti verkum með sér, Auðgísli og Önundi,<sup>6</sup> en í Áns sögu bogsveigis er sagt að Gáran stigamaður *spurði* Án: '... hvort villtu heldr taka vatn eða gjöra eld.'<sup>7</sup> Í Finnboga rímu færeysku segir að Finnbogi og Álfur tóku náttstað í Skopun; að kveldi sátu þeir 'og drukku mjöð av skál' (A 14.1), en þar var ekki kyrrt, og steptist ketillinn niður í eldinn (A 15) og varð myrkt í húsinu (A 16). Þá spyr Álfur hvort Finnbogi vilji heldur kveikja eld eða sækja vatn. Hér vîkur ríman frá efni sögunnar, og nú vill svo til, að undarlega náin samsvörun verður í orðalagi í Finnboga rímu og Áns rímum bogsveigis, sem eru ortar eftir Áns sögu:<sup>8</sup>

Fl. A:

17. 'Hvat heldur vilt tú, kempan þög,  
kveikja eld ella sækja lög?'  
18. Ikki kvaðst tann kempan þög  
kunnugt vera at sækja lög.

Án. IV:

36. Þrá eg að þessi fýlan rög  
frækinn spurði Bjarnar mög:  
'Hvort vill kappinn kenn við slög  
kveikja eld eða sækja lög?'  
37. Hér má þreifa um harkapilt.  
Hetjan svaraði allvel stillt:  
'Vatn er hér að vakta illt;  
eldinn kveiki eg þegar þú vilt.'

Í Hallfreðar sögu segir að Önundur stigamaður hjó til Hallfreðar með öxi.<sup>9</sup> Í Áns sögu bogsveigis er vopn Gárans stigamanns ekki nefnt, og Finnboga saga nefnir ekki vopn Álfs afturkembu. Í Finnboga rímu og Áns rímum er hins vegar talað um öxi:

<sup>5</sup> *Ísl. fornrit* XIV, bls. 278.

<sup>6</sup> *Ísl. fornrit* VIII, bls. 169-170.

<sup>7</sup> *Fax*, II, bls. 345.

<sup>8</sup> *Áns rímur bogsveigis*, Íslenzkar miðaldarímur II, Ólafur Halldórsson bjó til prentunar, Stofnun Árna Magnússonar á Íslandi, rit 4, Reykjavík 1973.

<sup>9</sup> *Ísl. fornrit* VIII, bls. 170.

Fl. A:

23. Álvur reiggjaði þksi hátt,  
ætlar at briggða þði smátt.

Án. IV:

39. Ei var grómlaus garpa sátt:  
Gáran reiðir ðxi hátt;  
kappann hugði að kvista smátt;  
kemr í sverð og brast við hátt.

Hallfreður lagði Önund stigamann saxi í gegnum og dró hann síðan út úr skálanum, en ekki er getið að hann græfi hræið.<sup>10</sup> Finnbogi braut bringubein Álfs afturkembu á steini, en sagan segir ekkert um hvað hann gerði af líkinu.<sup>11</sup> Án bogsveigir braut Gáran stigamann einnig aftur um stein, en síðan segir í sögunni:

hann hjó af honum höfuðit, ok dró hann út, ok stakk nefinu í klof honum,  
at hann gengi eigi dauðr.

En ekki er getið að hann dysjaði skrokkinn. Í Áns rímum segir hins vegar að Án hafi dysjað Gáran 'þar sem gröf er tóm'. Finnboga ríma hefur það einnig fram yfir söguna, að Finnbogi hafi grafið Álf; frá-sögn hennar af drápi Álfs minnir á Áns rímur:

Fl. A:

29. Finnbogi sprakk yvir jarðarmein,  
rykti hann Álv nú fram yvir stein.  
30. Snarpan seg eftir semju brá,  
síðan hjó honum hævur frá.  
31. Gróv hann hann undir Grikkjulág,  
...

Án. IV:

44. Olboga setr í bringubein,  
brýtur hrygginn aprt um stein;  
það var dárans dauðamein;  
drengriinn bregður sáratein.  
45. Höggur af honum hetjan fróm  
höfuð í burt með skjótan dóm;  
dregr hann út um dyrnar gróm  
og dysjar þar sem gröf er tóm.

Í þeim stöðum sem hér hafa verið nefndir vikur Finnboga ríma frá sögunni. Þar er einnig viðbót, sem ekki styðst við söguna, að ðxi Álfs hafi sokkið í gólfið þegar hann hjó til Finnboga; frá þessu segir í 24. erindi A-gerðar, sem líklega er afbakað, en það minnir dálítið á erindi í Áns rímum, þar sem segir frá að Ívar upplenski ætlaði að vega Án:

Fl. A:

24. Hann brá seg undan benjalín,  
semjan niður í gólvið sök.

Án. V:

21. Undan vikur ðxarmunn  
Án í nauðum vöndum;  
skautz hún niðr í skógarrunn,  
skaptið sök að höndum.

<sup>10</sup> Ísl. fornrit VIII, bls. 171.

<sup>11</sup> Ísl. fornrit XIV, bls. 279.

Í Finnboga sögu er þannig sagt frá viðureign söguhetjunnar við hvítabjörn:

Ok einn tíma, er þeir váru niðri báðir, þá tekr hann annarri hendi knifinn, en annarri tekr hann saman skinnit undir bæginum, stingur nú knífium fyrir framan, slíkt er hann má taka, lætr síðan hlaupa aptr skinnit yfir benina; blæðir þá inn, ok mæðir dýrit skjótt. Ok svá verðr með öllu umfangi þeira, at Finnbogi deyðir björninn.<sup>12</sup>

Eins og áður segir er sama minni notað í Vilmundar sögu viðutan, þar sem á þessa leið er sagt frá því þegar Vilmundur drap björninn:

Hann tekur nú sinn tygilkníf og stingur undir bóg dýrino og inn til hjartans. . . . En þegar björninn hefir banasár fengið, dettur hann dauður niður, því það er hans náttúra, að hann hefir engi fjörbrot.<sup>13</sup>

Finnboga ríma og Vilmundar rímur viðutan eftir Orm (hér á eftir stytt VO.) fylgja ekki algerlega sögunum sem þær eru ortar af;<sup>14</sup> í þeim eru sameiginleg efnisatriði og orðalagslíkingar sem varla geta verið fyrir tilviljun:

## Fi. A:

68. Finnbogi legði seg undir kav,  
tók til muddin, hans móðir gav.
69. Finnbogi hefur í höndum bógv,  
brá hann svá undir björnina bógv.
70. Leysan seg úr vatni bar,  
dývir hann björnina so undir kav.
71. Hélt so saman hold og skinn,  
at benin skuldi bløða inn.
72. Dýrið sökk í dökkan sand,  
Finnbogi kom sær upp á land.
73. Dýrið sökk tá niður til grunn,  
Finnbogi leikar nú glaður á sundi.

## VO. VII:

65. Kappinn hyggst í kólgu vóg  
karl að hafa frá lífi,  
leggr hann undir bjarnar bóg  
með bitrum tygilknífi.
66. Féll þá hratt úr benjum blóð,  
björn réð sár að kenna;  
ítran lét hann unda skóð  
inn til hjartans renna.
67. Heimtir saman með höndum skinn,  
halrinn ráðin kunní;  
í búkinn varð að blæða inn,  
svo björn féll dauðr að grunní.

Mismunur á Finnboga rímu og sögunni er í fyrsta lagi, að í rím-  
unni segir að Finnbogi hélt saman holdi og skinni á birninum, svo að  
benin blæddi inn, en í sögunni að hann dró til skinnið, áður en hann  
stakk björninn, og lét það hlaupa aftur yfir benina; í öðru lagi er  
tekið fram í rímunni að dýrið sökk niður til grunna (í dökkan sand),  
sem ekki er nefnt í sögunni. Í Vilmundar sögu er sagt að björninn

<sup>12</sup> Ísl. fornrit XIV, bls. 285.

<sup>13</sup> LMIR IV, bls. 170. 6-11.

<sup>14</sup> Vilmundar rímur viðutan, Íslenzkar miðaldarímur IV, Ólafur Halldórsson  
bjó til prentunar. Í prentun.



datt dauður niður þegar Vilmundur hafði stungið hann til hjartans, og þar sem þeir voru á sundi, skilur lesandi textann vitanlega þannig, að björninn hafi sokkið niður til grunna. Í VO. er VII 67 efnislegur fauki sem á sér enga stoð í texta sögunnar og er raunar mótsögn við það sem segir annars staðar: 'Féll þá hratt úr benjum blóð' (VII 66. 1), og að 'vatnið gjörvallt var sem blóð' (VII 69.3), ennfremur: 'Blóðhrönn eina að bragnar sjá' (VII 70.1), þar sem kemur fram að birninum hefur aldeilis ekki blætt inn, enda á þetta efnisatriði hvorki heima í Vilmundar sögu né Vilmundar rímum. Í Finnboga rímu er hins vegar tekið fram, að jarl bannaði Finnboga að hafa vopn á sér, þegar hann færi að þreyta sund við hvítabjörninn, sbr. A 60:

Tá ið tú kemur um sundagarð  
skalt tú ikki hava vákn á tær.

Hann verður því að gæta þess að ekki blæði úr sárinu, því að þá hefði komist upp að hann hafði hníf á sér. Í sögunni er ekki tekið fram að Finnbogi skyldi vera vopnlaus, en þar er hins vegar getið um ráð það sem hann beitti til að birninum skyldi blæða inn. Líklegt er að efni VO. VII 67 sé sótt í sögu eða rímur sem hafa haft samskonar frásögn og er í Finnboga rímu, en orðalagslíkingar sem eru í Fi. A 71 og 73.1 annars vegar og VO. VII 67 hins vegar benda eindregið til að einhver skyldleiki sé þar í milli. Sama máli gegnir um líkt orðalag í Finnboga rímu og Áns rímum bogsveigis; það kemur fyrir einmitt þar sem Finnboga ríma vîkur frá efni sögunnar og hefur fyllri frásögn.

Hér verður ekki reynt að finna óbyggjandi svör við því, hvernig standi á skyldleika Finnboga rímu færeysku, Áns rímna bogsveigis og Vilmundar rímna viðutan eftir Orm, heldur skal hér bent á hugsanlega skýringu. Vel má vera, að Finnboga ríma færeyska sé ekki ort eftir Finnboga sögu, heldur íslenskum Finnboga rímum sem hafi verið yngri en Áns rímur og þegið þaðan bæði efnisatriði og orðalag, en hins vegar eldri en VO., og mætti vera að VO. VII 67 væri komið úr þeim lítt eða ekki breytt. Rímnaskáld tóku stundum erindi úr eldri rímum traustataki, sbr. Lokrur II 44 og Bósa rímur III 13:

## LO. II:

44. Hrauðnir spurði og hreyfði sig  
hvað þá væri í leikum:  
'Hvort munu fuglar fella á mig  
fagra laufið af eikum?'

## Bó. III:

13. Hrímnir talaði og hreysti sig,  
harður næsta í leikum:  
'Hvað munu fuglar fella á mig,  
eða fölnar laufið á eikum?'

Þetta erindi er í kafla, þar sem höfundur Bósa rímna hefur vikið frá efni sögunnar sem hann orti eftir, og einmitt þar fær hann lánaða vísu úr öðrum rímum.<sup>15</sup> Einnig mætti vera, að úr \*Finnboga rímum væri kominn lesháttur í texta Áns rímna í Hólsbók, AM 603 4to, sem í stað Án. IV 39.3 (sjá bls. 184) hefur: 'eigi hyggst hann brytja smátt', og fer þar öll stuðlasetning úr skorðum. En ef þessi lesháttur er ættaður úr \*Finnboga rímum væri líklegast að Fi. A 23 ætti rætur að rekja til vísuorða sem upphaflega hefðu verið þannig:

Álfur reiðir öxi hátt,  
eigi hyggst hann brytja smátt.

Ekkert er vitað um aldur Finnboga rímu færeysku, og vitanlega gefa uppskriftir frá 18. og 19. öld óskýra mynd af frumgerð kvæðisins. Elstu íslenskar rímur sem vitað er um af Finnboga ramma eru eftir Guðmund Berghórssón (1657–1705), ortar 1686,<sup>16</sup> en ekki er Finnboga ríma færeyska ort eftir þeim. Engar heimildir eru um að eldri Finnboga rímur hafi verið til, ortar á Íslandi, en þess er að gæta, að rímur sem hafa verið ortar á Íslandi fyrir siðaskipti eru ekki allar varðveittar, sem betur fer.

<sup>15</sup> *Die Bósa-Rímur* herausgegeben von Otto L. Jiriczek, Germ. Abhandl. X, Breslau 1894, bls. 86; Björn K. Þórólfsson, *Rímur fyrir 1600*, Safn Fræðafélagsins um Ísland og Íslendinga IX, Kaupmannahöfn 1934, bls. 408.

<sup>16</sup> *Olgeirs rímur danska* eftir Guðmund Berghórssón, Björn K. Þórólfsson og Finnur Sigmundsson bjuggu til prentunar, Reykjavík 1947, I, bls. xvi og xvii.

## SUMMARY

THE Faroese *Finnboga ríma* is based on chapters 12–17 of *Finnboga saga ramma*, with the natural adjustments that Finnbogi is said to be Faroese and that the action is made to take place in the Faroes and Norway. In these chapters there are motifs which also appear in *Hallfreðar saga*, *Áns saga bogsveigis*, *Kjalnesinga saga*, *Vilmundar saga víðutan* and others. *Finnboga ríma* deviates from the saga at a number of points. Where this occurs there is a blatant similarity between the ríma and corresponding episodes in *Áns rímur bogsveigis* and Ormur's *Vilmundar rímur víðutan* (VO.). It is possible that the Faroese *Finnboga ríma* was based on Icelandic *Finnboga rímur*, now lost, which were younger than *Áns rímur* and partially dependant on them, but older than VO., in which case stanza VII 67 in VO. might be derived from the postulated lost *Finnboga rímur*, in partially or completely unchanged form.

HELGI GUÐMUNDSSON

## RÚNARISTAN FRÁ NARSSAQ

### I

ÁRIÐ 1953 fannst rúnarista í Narssaq á Grænlandi, við mynni Tunugdliarfík, en þar hét áður Eiríksfjörður. Þessa ristu gaf Erik Moltke út árið 1961; hann benti á að hún væri elzt grænlenzkra rúnaristna og að efni hennar væri forvitnilegt.<sup>1</sup> Ristan kom upp þegar mold var mokað úr rúst frá tíma norrænna manna; hún fannst því ekki *in situ* og verður ekki tímasett með aðferðum fornleifafraeðinnar. En á grundvelli rúnagerðar tímasetti Erik Moltke ristuna um 1000, eða frá því um 985/986 þegar talið er að norrænir menn setjist að á Grænlandi þar til um 1025.

Rúnirnar eru á ferstrendri spýtu sem er 42,6 cm á lengd. Á öllum hliðum hennar eru rúnir. Á hlið II er rúnastafróf og auk þess nokkrar rúnir, á hlið III eru nokkrar rúnir og mörg tákn sem líkjast rúnum, flest eins, og er þeim skipt í hópa þannig að oftast eru þrjú saman, en einnig t. d. tvö eða sex, og á hlið IV eru nokkrar rúnir. En það er einkum hlið I sem er forvitnileg. Hún er að mestu auðlesin, og Erik Moltke las hana og umritaði síðan með samræmdri stafsetningu á þennan veg: X ḡ:sa:sa:sa:is:ḡsa:sat X bibrau:haitir:mar:su:is:sitr: ḡ:blan . . . ; þ. e. á sæ, sæ, sæ, es ása sát; Bibrau heitir mæi sá, es sitr á Blán[um]. Þýðing hans er á þessa leið: Á sæ, sæ, sæ, er felustaður ása; Bibrau heitir mæi sá er situr á hinni bláu (himinhvelfingu).

Erik Moltke benti á að þetta mætti lesa sem fjögur vísuorð og að efni ristunnar virtist vera úr goðafræði.

<sup>1</sup> Erik Moltke, 'En grønlandsk runeindskrift fra Erik den rødes tid, Narssaq-pinden', *Grønland, Nr. 11, November 1961*, 401–410. Ristan var gefin út aftur með túlkun Erik Moltkes óbreyttri af Ingrid Sanness Johnsen, *Stuttuner i vikingtidens innskrifter*, Oslo 1968, 211–212. Sbr. einnig Sverrir Páll Erlendsson, 'Rá og röst', *Mimir 19* (1972), 41–42.



## II

Það kann að vera ástæða til að líta á nokkur atriði í túlkun Erik Moltkes á ristunni:

(1) *á sæ, sæ, sæ, es ása sát.* Í þessum hluta ristunnar er úr vöndu að ráða vegna þess að mörg orðanna eru tvírað eða margrað. Það kemur í ljós með því að setja upp töflu sem vísast vantar þó eitt-hvað í:

þ	sa	sa	sa	is	þsa	sat
á <sup>1</sup>	sæ <sup>2</sup>	sæ <sup>2</sup>	sæ <sup>2</sup>	es <sup>7</sup>	ása <sup>10</sup>	sát <sup>15</sup>
	sá <sup>3</sup>	sá <sup>3</sup>	sá <sup>3</sup>	es <sup>8</sup>	ása <sup>11</sup>	sát <sup>16</sup>
	sá <sup>4</sup>	sá <sup>4</sup>	sá <sup>4</sup>	ís(s) <sup>9</sup>	Ása <sup>12</sup>	sát <sup>17</sup>
	sæ <sup>5</sup>	sæ <sup>5</sup>	sæ <sup>5</sup>		á sæ <sup>13</sup>	sáat <sup>18</sup>
		sá <sup>6</sup>	sá <sup>6</sup>		á sá <sup>14</sup>	sæat <sup>19</sup>
						sat <sup>20</sup>

1. Fors. á.
2. Þf. eða þgf. et. af *sær* 'haf'; þgf. þess orðs getur þó einnig verið *sævi*.
3. Þf. eða þgf. et. af *sár* 'kerald'.
4. 1. eða 3. p. et. þt. fh. af *sjá* 'horfa'.
5. 1. p. et. nt. fh. af *sá* 'sá t. d. korni, dreifa'.
6. Nf. et. kk. af ábendingarforanafninu *sá*,
7. 3. p. et. nt. fh. af *veja* 'vera'.
8. Tilvísunarorðið.
9. Nf. eða þf. orðsins *íss* 'isjaki, lagís, klaki', einnig heiti rúnarinnar I.
10. Ef. ft. af *áss* (*þss*) 'goð'.
11. Þf. eða ef. ft. af *áss* (*áss*) 'stoð, bjálki'.
12. *Ása*, nafn konu.
13. Eins og 1 og 2, eða 1 og 5, ef tákn um orðabil vantar.
14. Eins og 1 og 3, eða 1 og 4, ef tákn um orðabil vantar.
15. *Sát* 'sæti, verustaður' eða 'felustaður'.
16. *Sát* eða *sætt* 'samkomulag'.
17. 2. p. et. þt. fh. af *sjá*.
18. Eins og 4 með neitunarviðskeytinu *-at*.
19. Eins og 5 með neitunarviðskeytinu *-at*.
20. 1. eða 3. p. et. þt. fh. af *sitja*.

Hér er gert ráð fyrir að sérhljóðinn í *sa sé á* eða *é*. Ef *é* er bætt við, en það er ósennilegra, fjölgar kostum enn; *sé* getur verið bh. eða 1. p. et. nt. fh. af *sjá*.

Úr þessu má lesa á ýmsa vegu. Túlkun Erik Moltkes er þó álitleg vegna þess að þannig er fyrri hluti ristunnar hliðstæða síðari hlutans.

Sennilegt er að síðasta orð þessa hluta ristunnar, *sát*, merki þá 'sæti, dvalarstað, sátur', sbr. *uppsát* 'staður þar sem skip er sett á land'.<sup>2</sup> Næst síðasta orðið, *ása* (*ása*), er tvírett, en með hliðsjón af síðari hluta ristunnar má e. t. v. ætla að merkingin sé 'heiðin goð'. Ekki verður leitað nánari fréttu í grænlenzka goðafræði, en með hliðsjón af yngri heimildum annarra þjóða má gízka á að átt sé við Ægi og Rán í sambandi við sæinn.<sup>3</sup>

Það er reyndar sérkennilegt að sa skuli vera þrítekið og í sambandi við það hefur Aslak Liestøl bent á tvær yngri ristur sem fundizt hafa í Björgvin. Á annarri stendur, ásamt setningu úr Andreas sögu postula, *sesesæssesekonouena:seþu:hvar:sitter:* og á hinni *sisi.si.sissi.snot.uliota*. Á báðum þessum ristum eru s-samstöfur, ef til vill bh. sé, og á báðum er síðan talað um konur. Þetta minnir óneitanlega nokkuð á Narssaq ristuna og gæti leitt hugann að einhvers konar mangaldri.<sup>4</sup> En Narssaq ristan er þó frábrugðin að því leyti að hún hefst á *q* sem getur varla verið annað en forsetningin *á*.

(2) *Bibrau heitir mæi sá*. Á ristunni stendur *bibrau* og Erik Moltke gat þess til að úr því mætti lesa *Bifrau*, *Bifrey* eða ef til vill *Bifró*. Þetta er samsett nafn, ef sleppt er myndinni *Bifra*, og getur þá verið *Bi-brau*, *Bib-brau*, *Bib-rau*, *Bibr-rau* eða *Bibr-au*.

(a) *Bi-brau* gæti ef til vill verið *Bý-bró*. Fyrri samsetningarliðurinn kemur fyrir í nafninu *Býleistr*, en í Snorra-Eddu segir að hann sé bróðir Loka; önnur mynd sama nafns, ef. *Býleipz*, kemur fyrir í Völu-

<sup>2</sup> Johan Fritzner, *Ordbog over Det gamle norske Sprog III*, Kristiania 1896, 797.

<sup>3</sup> *Edda Snorra Sturlusonar I*, Hafniae 1848, 338, *Egils saga Skalla-Grimssonar*, Sigurður Nordal gaf út, Íslenzk fornrit II, Reykjavík 1933, 248–249.

<sup>4</sup> Aslak Liestøl, 'Runemagi', *Kulturhistorisk leksikon for nordisk middelalder XIV* (1969), 464–465, Aslak Liestøl, 'Runic Voices from Towns of Ancient Norway', *Scandinavica XIII* (1974), 26–27. Sbr. einnig Anders Bæksted, *Målruner og trolldrøner*, København 1952, 147–149. Á norsku risturnar minna reyndar nokkuð óskiljanleg orð *Sisisill bivivill* sem standa meðal heita í AM 748 I 4to, frá upphafi 14. aldar, *Edda Snorra Sturlusonar II*, Hafniae 1852, 494. Í þessu sambandi mætti e. t. v. benda á spássugrein frá 14. öld í handritinu Cod. C:564 í Háskólabókasafni í Uppsölum, á sömu síðu og á er bókaskrá sem hefur verið tengd Árna Sigurðarsyni Björgvinjarbiskupi, en hún er á þessa leið: 'fa fa fa fa salutem in domino fa', sjá Oluf Kolsrud og Georg Reiss, *Tvo norrøne latinske kvæde med melodiar*, Videnskapselskabet's Skrifter. II. Hist.-filos. Klasse. 1912. No. 5, Kristiania 1913, 61; hér eru s-samstöfur, e. t. v. einnig frá Björgvin, en að öðru leyti er vísast engin hliðstæða með þessu og rúnaristunum.

spá.<sup>5</sup> *Bý-* virðist vera *býr* 'bær'.<sup>6</sup> Síðari samsetningarliðurinn gæti verið *bró* 'augnalok'. Það orð kemur fyrir í auknefninu *gullbrá*; samtíma- maður rúnameistarans í Narssaq, skáldið Gizurr *gullbrá*, er nefndur í Ólafs sögu helga í Heimskringlu; í öðrum gerðum sögunnar er hann einnig nefndur *gullbrárfóstri* og *gullbrárskáld*, en það virðist benda til konu sem hafi heitið eða verið auknefnd *gullbrá*.<sup>7</sup> Nafnið *Býbró* getur þannig staðizt.

(b) *Bib-brau* gæti verið *Bif-bró*. Erik Moltke benti á, að *Bif-* kæmi fyrir í *Bifröst* 'hin bifandi, eða e. t. v. marglita, brú, regnboginn'. Sú mynd orðsins kemur þó aðeins fyrir í Snorra-Eddu, en í Grímnismálum og Fáfnismálum stendur *Bilröst*.<sup>8</sup> Síðari samsetningarliðurinn getur þá verið hinn sami og í skýringu (a).

(c) *Bib-rau* gæti verið *Bif-ró*. Fyrri samsetningarliðurinn gæti verið hinn sami og í (b). Hinn síðari væri *ró*. Þetta þarf nokkurrar athugunar við og kemur einkum tvennt til greina.

*Ró* merkir 'stöng, staur, tré'. *Bifró* 'hin bifandi stöng' væri hugsanlegt nafn á vætti; orð sem merkja 'staur, stöng' eru einmitt oft notuð um vætti eða goð.<sup>9</sup>

Annar kostur er sá að hér sé komið orð sem í austurnorsku er *rå* 'einhvers konar vættur', *skogsrå* 'skógarvættur eða dís sem oftast er vinveitt þeim sem um skóginna fara, vísar til vegar, gefur ráð o. s. frv.', *fiskerå* 'vættur sem ræður fyrir fiski'; í sænsku kemur bæði fyrir *rå* og *skogsrå*, og að auki *bergsrå* og loks *sjórrå* sem hefur svipaða merkingu og norska *fiskerå*.<sup>10</sup> Hér má einnig nefna Stafrós kvæði sem Gissur Sveinsson (1604–1683) skrifaði upp. *Stafró* er vættur í kvenmanns-

<sup>5</sup> *Edda Snorra Sturlusonar I*, Hafnæ 1848, 104; *Eddadigte I, Völuspá, Háva-mál*, údg. af Jón Helgason, København, Oslo, Stockholm 1951, 11.

<sup>6</sup> *Lexicon poeticum*, København 1931, 73.

<sup>7</sup> *Heimskringla II*, Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson gaf út, Íslenzk fornrit XXVII, Reykjavík 1945, 358, 381; *Den store saga om Olav den hellige I*, utg. av Oscar Albert Johnsen og Jón Helgason, Oslo 1941, 543 o. s. frv., *Flateyjarbok II*, Christiania 1862, 226, 315 o. s. frv. *Gullbrá* er nafn konu í ungri sögu, *Vilmundar saga við- utan, Late Medieval Icelandic Romances IV*, ed. by Agnete Løth, Editiones Arnamagnæanæ, Series B, vol. 23, Copenhagen 1964, 141 o. s. frv.

<sup>8</sup> Dæmum er safnað af Odd Nordland, 'Bivrost', *Kulturhistorisk leksikon for nordisk middelalder I* (1956), 646–647.

<sup>9</sup> Sbr. einnig *völr* og *völvá*.

<sup>10</sup> Um þessi orð sjá Elof Hellquist, *Svensk etymologisk ordbok II*, Lund 1957, 861–862, Erik Noreen, 'Rå "vätte" och "Päoc hos Dio Cassius", *Språkvetenskapliga*



mynd sem býr í skógi, en í lok kvæðisins breytist hún í landamerki.<sup>11</sup> Þetta kvæði er án efa þýtt úr einhverju Norðurlandamálanna, þótt það sé aðeins til á íslenzku nú, og bendir til orðsins *stavrð* eða svipaðs orðs á miðöldum, sennilega í norsku eða sænsku.

Því hefur stundum verið haldið fram að *rþ* 'stöng', sbr. norsku og sænsku *rð* 'stöng, landamerki', og norska og sænska *rð* 'vættur' sé eitt og sama orðið; það kemur heim við dæmið í Stafrós kvæði.<sup>12</sup> Þannig væri orðmyndin *Bifrþ* auðskilin. En þess ber að gæta að í ýmsum fornlegum sænskum mállýzkum kemur fyrir *råd* 'vættur', en ekki *rð*, og það gæti verið fornlegri mynd orðsins. Um þetta verður því ekki fullyrt.

(d) *Bibr-rau* gæti verið *Bifr-rþ*. En þá er vandséð hvað *bifr-* gæti verið.

(e) *Bibr-au* gæti verið *Bifr-þ*. Óvíst er hvað *bifr-* getur verið, og auk þess er *þ* 'á, fljót' ósennilegur samsetningarliður í nafni kvenveru; ey væri e. t. v. nærtækara.

Af þessum fjórum kostum er (c) vænlegastur. Rúnin **b** táknar þá raddaða öngljóðið [b], allófón af /f/;<sup>13</sup> það virðist geta staðizt. Ekkert er því til fyrirstöðu að lesa **au** sem *þ*; í öðrum ristum eru dæmi um að **au** tákni stutt *þ*, og einnig er dæmi um að **au** tákni langt, nefkveðið *þ̄*, en þetta kemur fyrir í rúnaristum frá tíundu öld.<sup>14</sup>

*sällskapets i Uppsala förhandlingar, Jan. 1916 – Dec. 1918; Uppsala 1919, 45–58, Lars Levander, 'Om rå "mytiskt väsen"', Nysvenska studier III (1923) 101–147, Petrus Envall, Gudastolpen, Rod och Råd, En studie i fornordisk språk- och religionshistoria, Uppsala 1969, 7–16, Jan de Vries, Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte I, Berlin 1970, 261, II, Berlin 1957, 249–250.*

<sup>11</sup> *Íslensk fornkvæði, Islandske folkeviser I*, údg. af Jón Helgason, Editiones Arnarnagnæanæ, Series B, vol. 10, København 1962, 50–55. Langt er síðan bent var á tengsl orðanna *Stafró* og *rð*, *Íslensk fornkvæði II*, ved Svend Grundtvig og Jón Sigurðsson, Nørdiske Oldskrifter XXIV, Kjøbenhavn 1858, 59 nm.

<sup>12</sup> Í Arons sögu segir: 'Maðr er nefndr Auðunn ok var kallaðr handi. Hann var litill maðr ok nær hálfvængl', *Sturlunga saga II*, Jón Jóhannesson, Magnús Finn-bogason og Kristján Eldjárn sáu um útgáfuna, Reykjavík 1946, 240, 311; merking mun vera 'hálfgerður dvergur (að vexti)'. Johan Fritznér, *Ordbog over Det gamle norske Sprog I*, Kristiania 1883, 706, áleit og ýmsir aðrir síðan að í þessu orði væri fólgið sama orðið og *rð* 'vættur'. Ef svo er styður það þessa skýringu.

<sup>13</sup> Sbr. William G. Moulton, 'The Stops and Spirants of Early Germanic', *Language XXX* (1954), 18.

<sup>14</sup> Sbr. Ballaugh á Mön, um 950–1000, *þulaibr*, þ. e. sennilega *Öleifr*, sem

(3) *es sitr á Blán* . . . Erik Moltke stakk upp á að lesa úr þessu *Blán[um]* sem þgf. af *Bláinn*. Orðið kemur fyrir í *Völuspá* í ef. *Bláins*, en það er lesháttur sem styðst aðallega við eitt handrit; þetta er oftlega talið vera eitt nafna Ýmis jötuns, en af hausi hans var himinn gerður.<sup>15</sup> *Vindbláinn* og *viðbláinn* koma fyrir í þulum og merkja himin.<sup>16</sup> Auk þessa er sagt *út í bláinn* 'út í buskann, út í hött'; ef þetta er þf. sama orðs ætti væntanlega að skrifa *út í bláin*. En þgf. þessa orðs kemur ekki fyrir í íslenzku.

Í orðinu *bláinn* er sennilega viðskeytið *-ina*, eða þá að orðið er myndað að fyrirmynd orða sem hafa þetta viðskeyti, t. d. *himinn* eða mannsnafnið *Þráinn*.<sup>17</sup> Beygingin er þá *bláinn*, *bláin*, *bláni*, *bláins*.

Sú orðmynd sem vænta má í ristunni er þá þgf. *bláni*. Og það er einmitt sú orðmynd sem kemur fram bæði á mynd og teikningu í grein Erik Moltkes. Eftir n rúninni stendur greinileg í rún, síðasta rúnin á hlið I. Á eftir þeirri rún eru þó engir punktar sem tákna orðabil, né heldur X sem stendur þó bæði við upphaf ristunnar og í miðju; en í rúnin stendur rétt við enda spýttunnar, og Erik Moltke gerði ráð fyrir að bútur sem á hefðu staðið ein eða tvær rúnir hefði brotnað af enda hennar og það getur verið að slík merki hafi staðið þar á.

Það virðist sennilegt að orðið merki himin, bæði vegna annarra dæma um sama orð og vegna andstæðunnar við *sæ* í fyrri hluta ristunnar, ef það er rétt skilið.

Ýmislegt í þessari ristu virðist óneitanlega benda til heiðins dóms eins og Erik Moltke benti á. Það er þó engan veginn auðvelt að koma

nokkra hliðstæðu við táknun bæði sérhljóðans og samhljóðans, Ingrid Sanness Johnsen, *Stutruner i vikingtidens innskrifter*, 48, 226; sbr. einnig *glabr Ólafr* í ristu frá 11. öld, Magnus Olsen, *Runerne i St. Molaise's celle paa Holy Island, Arran, Skotland*, Videnskapselskabet's Skrifter. II. Hist.-filos. Klasse 1912. No. 1, Kristiania 1912, 12–13.

<sup>15</sup> *Eddadigte I, Völuspá, Hávamál*, udg. af Jón Helgason, 3, 39; Ekki er fullljóst hvernig skilja ber textann og *bláinn* gæti einnig merkt sjóinn, *Völuspá*, gefin út með skýringum af Sigurði Nordal, Reykjavík 1923, 48.

<sup>16</sup> *Den norsk-islandske skjaldedigtning A I*, ved Finnur Jónsson, København og Kristiania 1912, 678, 683.

<sup>17</sup> Um safn orða með þessu viðskeyti, þ. á m. *Bláinn*, sjá Alexander Jóhannesson, *Die Suffixe im Isländischen*, Reykjavík 1927, 47. Tilgáta Erik Moltkes er einnig vafasöm vegna þess að þar er gert ráð fyrir viðskeyttum greini; það er óvíst hvort hann var til í norrænu svo snemma.

því heim og saman við það sem kemur fram í öðrum heimildum um norræna goðafræði. Þess er þó varla að vænta því að þær eru ærið brotakennar og flestar miklu yngri en ristan. Fljótt á litið gæti mær sem situr á himni leitt hugann að kristilegum hugmyndum, en ekki virðist það skýra ristuna neitt. Slíkt minnir einnig dálítið á trúarhugmyndir sem koma fram hjá Sömum, en þeir tóku ýmislegt upp úr norrænum trúarbrögðum.<sup>18</sup> Annars er vísa í Vafþrúðnismálum sem minnir nokkuð á þetta:<sup>19</sup> *Hræsvelgr heitir, er sitr á himins enda, lqtunn í arnar ham; af hans vængiom kveða vind koma alla menn yfir.*

En það er einnig hugsanlegt að þetta sé einhvers konar töfraþula eins og Aslak Liestøl benti á. Einnig getur verið að þetta sé gáta, hver sem ráðningin kann þá að vera, eða jafnvel miðavísa eða eitthvað enn annað.

Vandinn er auðvitað sá að ekki verður vitað hvað sá sem risti hafði í huga, en ristan er a. m. k. nú óljós og margræð.

## III

Með því að velja úr þeim helzt til mörgu kostum sem raktir voru í I og II hér að framan gæti ristan verið á þessa leið á máli þess sem risti:<sup>20</sup> *á sé, sé, sé, es ása sát; Bifr heiter mēr sú, es sitr á bláni.*

Ristunni svipar nokkuð til vísu, en hún er þá óreglulega ort og varla ástæða til að gera því skóna að hún sé hluti úr kvæði. Sé hún sett upp sem vísa með samræmdri stafsetningu gæti þetta tvennt komið til greina og án efa margt annað:

<i>Á sæ, sæ, sæ,</i>	<i>Á sæ, sæ,</i>
<i>es ása sát;</i>	<i>sæ(r) es ása sát;</i>
<i>Bifr heitir mær sú,</i>	<i>Bifr heitir mær,</i>
<i>es sitr á bláni.</i>	<i>sú es sitr á bláni.</i>

<sup>18</sup> Sbr. Knut Bergsland, 'Runebomme', *Kulturhistorisk leksikon for nordisk middelalder XIV* (1969), 456.

<sup>19</sup> Sbr. Ingrid Sanness Johnsen, *Stuttruner i vikingtidens innskrifter*, 212, að því er virðist eftir Erik Moltke; *Eddadigte II, Gudedigte*, udg. af Jón Helgason, København, Oslo, Stockholm 1952, 6-7.

<sup>20</sup> Um íslenskt fónemkerfi fyrir miðja 12. öld sjá *The First Grammatical Treatise*, ed. by Hreinn Benediktsson, University of Iceland Publications in Linguistics 1, Reykjavík 1972, 115-174. Grænlenzk norræna hefur vísast haft sama eða mjög svipað fónemkerfi á þeim tíma sem hér um ræðir.



THE EAST TOCHARIAN  
PERSONAL PRONOUN 1ST PERSON  
SINGULAR MASCULINE: A CASE  
OF PRONOMINAL BORROWING

## I

THE system of personal pronouns of the 1st person in West Tocharian, Tocharian B, is as follows:

SINGULAR	PARAL	PLURAL
<i>ñās</i>	<i>wene</i>	<i>wes</i>

The East Tocharian, Tocharian A, system, on the other hand, may be set out in the following way:

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
MASC.	<i>ñāṣ</i>	<i>wqs</i>
FEM.	<i>ñuk</i>	

Historically, the singular and plural forms have been explained as follows:<sup>1</sup>

(a) West Tocharian *wes*, East Tocharian *was*. The forms represent an IE 1st p. pl. nom., cf., e.g., Got. *weis*.

(b) West Tocharian *ñās* and East Tocharian *ñuk* can both be derived from *\*ne-kw(e)* < *\*me-kwe*, cf. Got. *mik*, Venet. *mexo*.<sup>2</sup>

Gratitude is due to Jón Gunnarsson mag. art. for constructive criticism, and to Dr Andrew Dennis for improving the English version.

<sup>1</sup> Wolfgang Krause und Werner Thomas, *Tocharisches Elementarbuch I*, Heidelberg 1960, 162, Holger Pedersen, *Tocharisch vom Gesichtspunkt der indoeuropäischen Sprachvergleichung*, Det Kgl. Danske Videnskaberne Selskab, Historisk-filologiske Meddelelser XXVIII, 1, København 1941, 134-139.

<sup>2</sup> Recently Jochem Schindler has attempted a different approach: 'M. E. könnte man für B *ñās* von *\*mene-kwe* oder *\*mene-kwis* > *\*m(ā)ñās* ausgehen, wozu in A

(c) East Tocharian *nāy* is of uncertain origin, but is sometimes considered to represent an IE 1st p. pl. obl. form, cf., e.g., Lat. *nōs*.<sup>3</sup>

If the derivation in (c) is correct it follows that Proto-Tocharian has preserved both the IE nom. and obl. forms. The function of the obl. form has subsequently been changed in East Tocharian, in all probability as follows: pl. obl. > honorific sg. > masc. In West Tocharian the form has accordingly been lost. It is, no doubt, possible to envisage such a development, but this explanation has not met with much approval.

## II

It may be worth while trying a different approach to this problem. It is not unreasonable to assume that at an earlier stage the system of pronouns was the same in both West and East Tocharian:

SINGULAR	PLURAL
W.T. <i>ñäš</i>	W.T. <i>wes</i>
E.T. <i>ñuk</i>	E.T. <i>was</i>

This system would represent the situation in Proto-Tocharian and agrees with the etymology set forth in I (b) above.

The development leading from the Proto-Tocharian system to the East Tocharian one may be explained in two slightly different ways, as follows:

(1) The distinction between ordinary and honorific usage was introduced into East Tocharian. In other languages where this has happened the new honorific forms have developed along different lines:<sup>4</sup>

ein f. \**mene-kwä* zu *ñuk* führen konnte; A *nāy* bleibt schwierig.' Jochem Schindler, 'Lane, George S.: On the Interrelationship of the Tocharian Dialects, in *Ancient Indo-European Dialects*, ed. by Henrik Birnbaum and Jaan Puhvel, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1966,' *Die Sprache* XIII (1967), 94-95. [Review]. It may not be advisable to postulate three-syllable forms for these pronouns, although some parallels can be found, e.g. Gr. *ἑγώγε*, Greenlandic *ivanga*.

<sup>3</sup> Walter Petersen, 'Tocharian Pronominal Declension,' *Language* XI (1935), 204.

<sup>4</sup> For some examples see Helgi Guðmundsson, *The Pronominal Dual in Icelandic*, University of Iceland Publications in Linguistics 2, Reykjavik 1972, 99-105.

(a) Within the language in question. This is brought about on the one hand by changing or extending the function of an extant form and on the other hand by developing a new form.

(b) By borrowing.

Here it is worth noting that this is a question of the 1st person. From the point of view of the modern European languages where honorific usage occurs mainly in the 2nd person this may seem strange. But honorific usage is also well known in the 1st person and there are in fact indications that it may have originated in the 1st person.<sup>5</sup>

Mention was made above of the theory that *nāš* had developed within East Tocharian as an honorific form. But it is also possible that it was borrowed, viz. from West Tocharian *nāš*. At first it may have been used as an honorific form in East Tocharian, changing its function later in that the opposition ordinary/honorific was replaced by the opposition feminine/masculine.

(2) The second possibility is that the distinction between masculine and feminine was introduced into the 1st p. sg. in East Tocharian. This distinction is rarely encountered in the 2nd p. sg., but it occurs in the Semitic languages, in the West Caucasian Abchaz and Abaza, and, e.g., in Khasi, a language of Assam. But in the 1st p. sg. it is very uncommon indeed.<sup>6</sup>

It is, however, found in Andi, an East Caucasian language of

<sup>5</sup> According to É. Benveniste, *Problèmes de linguistique générale*, Paris 1966, 234-236, the semantic complexity of especially the 1st person plural was instrumental in bringing about the use of plural for one person; see also *The Pronominal Dual in Icelandic*, 15-16, 34-35 etc. On the occurrence of the honorific 1st person in Sanskrit, see Wackernagel, *Altindische Grammatik* III, Göttingen 1930, 453, and in Chinese, R. A. D. Forrest, *The Chinese Language*, London 1948, 189.

<sup>6</sup> Ed. Hermann thought that the East Tocharian distinction was due to Tibetan influence. According to him the Tibetan 1st p. sg. is *bdag*, but alternative forms masc. *kho vo*, fem. *kho mo*. It seems rather doubtful whether the masc. and fem. forms are pronouns at all; it is more likely that they are honorifics as commonly found in several oriental languages, e.g. Japanese. In any case such an influence is also doubtful for historical reasons as pointed out by W. Krause. See Eduard Hermann, 'Sieg, Siegling, Tocharische Sprachreste, I. Band, Die Texte,' *KZ L* (1922), 309-310. [Review], W. Krause, 'Zur Frage nach dem nichtindogermanischen Substrat des Tocharischen,' *KZ LXIX* (1951), 191-192.



Daghestan. Andi is spoken in nine villages, each village showing some dialectal peculiarities. The pronouns in eight of the villages are as follows: 1st p. sg. *den*, 2nd p. sg. *men*. But in the village of Andi itself the pronouns are: in the speech of men *din*, *min*, but in the speech of women *den*, *men*.<sup>7</sup>

Thus in the village of Andi it is the masculine form, or better the form used by men, which is apparently an innovation. If it is possible to look at the Tocharian pronouns in the same way it is the masculine form that should represent the innovation.

In II (1) above, it was mentioned that the honorific form could have developed along different lines. This is also the case here, and again one of the possibilities is borrowing.

## III

In order to pursue this further it will be necessary to examine the whole paradigm in question, viz. the three primary cases; the secondary cases which are formed with monofunctional suffixes do not matter in this context. The paradigms are as follows:

	West Tocharian	East Tocharian	
		MASC.	FEM.
NOM.	<i>ñäs</i>	<i>näs</i>	<i>ñuk</i>
OBL.	<i>ñäs</i>	<i>näs</i>	<i>ñuk</i>
GEN.	<i>ñi</i>	<i>ñi</i>	<i>näñi</i>

The similarity of the West Tocharian and the East Tocharian masculine paradigms is so great that it is difficult to ascribe it to pure coincidence.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> I. I. Cercvadze, *Andiuri ena - Andijskij jazyk*, Tbilisi 1965, 346. The development of the pronouns in the village of Andi may be due to the interplay of two linguistic features, together with possible concomitant social reasons. On the one hand there is a certain fluctuation between *i* and *e* in the corresponding pronouns in several related languages also spoken in the Andi Valley. And on the other hand a distinction by class indicators between masc., fem., lifeless etc., is made in numerous finite as well as infinite verb forms in Andi, as, e.g., in the related and better known Avar.

<sup>8</sup> It is, however, quite probable that *ñi* was found in both dialects and this could have facilitated the borrowing; cf. the occurrence of the suffixed personal pronoun of the 1st p. sg., often in possessive function, West Tocharian *-ñ*, East Toch-

In order to examine whether borrowing is at all possible in this case it will be necessary to look at some further aspects of the problem:

(1) The borrowing of pronouns is, no doubt, very rare and it may be assumed that three prerequisites are necessary to make such a borrowing possible:

(a) Closely related languages or dialects.

(b) A considerable number of bilinguals.

(c) One of the languages or dialects enjoys a higher prestige and this language or dialect provides the pronouns.

In this connection it is of interest to look at Norwegian. Until about 1400 the 2nd p. pl. pronouns *þér*, *yðer*, *yðers* etc. were used in honorific address to one person in Norwegian. But from that time onwards the pronouns *I*, *Er*, *Ers* are found in honorific address, gradually superseding *þér* etc. in this function.<sup>9</sup> The latter pronouns are, no doubt, borrowed from Danish or Swedish and this is in complete agreement with the three prerequisites set out above.

It is, of course, of primary importance to note that in Norwegian not only the nom. but also the obl. and gen. forms are borrowed.

Another example is also of interest here. The English pronouns *they*, *them*, *their* are, as is well known, loan-words from Scandinavian, dating from the time of Scandinavian settlement in England.<sup>10</sup> Again nom., obl. and gen. are all borrowed.<sup>11</sup>

arian -*ai*, without difference in gender, *Tocharisches Elementarbuch* I, 162-163. In that case the East Tocharian fem. gen. *nāi* would be secondary, formed after the introduction of the distinction feminine/masculine.

<sup>9</sup> *The Pronominal Dual in Icelandic*, 121, with references.

<sup>10</sup> Albert C. Baugh, *A History of the English Language*, London 1968, 120.

<sup>11</sup> There are more cases of borrowed pronouns, some rather surprising, as Albanian '*unc* "ich". Aus lat. *ego* + *ne*,' Gustav Meyer, *Kurzgefasste albanesische Grammatik*, Leipzig 1888, 103. The Modern Icelandic pers. pron. 1st p. sg. *Jeg*, in modern orthography *ég*, shows an irregular development when compared with the Old Icel. *ek* which has a short vowel; the modern form dates from the sixteenth century, see Björn K. Þórólfsson, *Um íslenskar orðmyndir*, Reykjavík 1925, 41. It seems therefore possible that the form in question has developed under influence from the corresponding Danish *Jeg*. Similarly, Danish influence is considered to account for the East Norwegian *Jeg*, see Einar Haugen, 'Norwegische

These instances of borrowed pronouns may not be as singular as they appear at first sight. An example of a case in point may be the relatively recent expansion of the German pronouns *Sie*, *Ihnen* etc. in honorific use, superseding the older *Ihr*, *Euch* etc.

(2) To assume that a loan-word was brought from West into East Tocharian is apparently in agreement with what is known about these peoples. For example writing was first developed for West Tocharian and was later adopted for East Tocharian, indicating the direction of cultural influence.<sup>12</sup> The usual direction for loan-words is in fact from West into East Tocharian.<sup>13</sup>

(3) Another aspect of the problem is whether the distinction ordinary/honorific preceded the distinction feminine/masculine, cf. II (1) and (2) above. *A priori* this may seem likely because the former distinction is very common in the world's languages whereas the latter is extremely rare.

It is, however, possible that another feature of Tocharian grammar may throw some light on this. In the Tocharian noun flexion a distinction is made between animate and inanimate; thus in East Tocharian the gen. sg. in *-āp* and a certain obl. sg. are reserved for the animate, or higher, class. An exception is, e.g., *šūṃ* 'wife', pl. nom. *šnu*, showing an ending otherwise reserved for the inanimate, or lower, class.<sup>14</sup> It is possible that this feature is connected with the origin of the distinction in the pronouns, which accordingly should have been between feminine and masculine from the outset.<sup>15</sup>

Sprachgeschichte. By Didrik Arup Seip, revised and extended by Laurits Saltveit, Berlin 1971, *Language* 50 (1974), 577. [Review].

<sup>12</sup> W. Krause, *Tocharisch*, Handbuch der Orientalistik IV, 3, Leiden 1955, 7.

<sup>13</sup> Holger Pedersen, *Zur tocharischen Sprachgeschichte*, Det Kgl. Danske Videnskabernes Selskab, Historisk-filologiske Meddelelser XXX, 2, København 1944, 31.

<sup>14</sup> W. Krause, 'Zur Frage nach dem nichtindogermanischen Substrat des Tocharischen,' 193.

<sup>15</sup> It has been assumed here that the distinction is in fact between feminine/masculine and not between ordinary/honorific. The lack of texts precludes any certainty in this matter, and, besides, it is possible that the texts do not represent accurately the colloquial usage. In this context it would of course be an advantage to know the social conventions which prevailed among the East Tocharians. But leaving this aside, the dividing line between the two possibilities may not be very



(4) The last aspect of the problem to be considered here is of the sound form, viz.  $\bar{n}\bar{a}\bar{s} > n\bar{a}s$ . It is clear that the forms do not fit completely, especially as West Tocharian  $\bar{n}$  should apparently have been taken up in East Tocharian as  $\bar{n}$ . If the borrowing has, however, gone through the intermediate stage  $*\bar{n}\bar{a}s$  it seems possible that some kind of palatal dissimilation has been at work here.<sup>16</sup> In fact, pronouns are well known for presenting irregular forms, sometimes attributed to development in unaccentuated position. But relatively little is known about Tocharian sound systems and dialects and it seems at least possible from this point of view as well that this is a question of borrowing.

clear as it is easy to envisage a distinction ordinary, feminine/honorific, masculine. Cf. the distinction in Khasi, mentioned above: 'However, . . . in the 2nd pers. the distinction is not, or no longer, one between m. and f., but me is given as "thou" (to man, rude) and pha as "thou" (famīl.),' H. J. Pinnow, 'Personal Pronouns in the Austroasiatic Languages: A Historical Study,' *Lingua* 14 (1965), 6. Yet another, and apparently fluctuating, distinction is described by A. D. Haudricourt, 'La première personne inclusive du singulier en Polynésie,' *Bulletin de la Société de linguistique de Paris* 54 (1959), 130-135; see also G. B. Milner, 'Notes on the Comparison of two Languages (with and without a Genetic Hypothesis),' *Linguistic Comparison in South East Asia and the Pacific*, London 1963, 39-40.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. East Tocharian  $s\bar{a}\bar{n}$  'art', but West Tocharian  $s\bar{a}\bar{n}$  and  $s\bar{a}\bar{n}$ , Werner Thomas, *Tocharisches Elementarbuch II*, Heidelberg 1964, 148, 249, 253. On  $n$ ,  $\bar{n}$ , cf. West Tocharian  $\bar{n}\bar{a}ka\bar{n}\bar{c}\bar{e}$  'silvery',  $\bar{n}\bar{u}mka$  'ninety', East Tocharian  $n\bar{k}\bar{a}\bar{n}\bar{c}\bar{i}$ ,  $n\bar{m}uk$ , *Tocharisches Elementarbuch II*, 195, but these are hardly loan-words; cf. also Sanskrit  $niraya >$  West Tocharian  $nrai$ , East Tocharian  $\bar{n}are$ , *Tocharisches Elementarbuch II*, 206. As for  $\bar{s}$  and  $s$ , cf. Sanskrit  $\bar{s}l\bar{o}ka >$  West Tocharian  $\bar{s}l\bar{o}k$ , East Tocharian  $\bar{s}l\bar{o}k$  and  $s\bar{y}ok$ , *Tocharisches Elementarbuch II*, 148, 248. Holger Pedersen, *Tocharisch vom Gesichtspunkt der indoeuropäischen Sprachvergleichung*, 238, mentions 'Zahlreiche Verschiebungen zwischen intakten und palatalisierten Lauten.'

## HANDRIT

- Den arnamagnæanske samling, København, Stofnun Árna Magnússonar á Íslandi, Reykjavík:*
- AM 169 d fol. 37  
 - 193 d fol. 37  
 - 203 fol. 37  
 - 433 II<sup>a</sup>, fol. 13  
 - 147 4to 44, 45, 47-55, 58-64, 68-74  
 - 298 4to 37  
 - 363 4to 37  
 - 544 4to (Hauksbók) 44, 52, 53, 55, 63, 64, 68, 69, 71-74  
 - 582 4to 37  
 - 591 g 4to 37  
 - 592 a 4to 37  
 - 603 4to (Hólsbók) 187  
 - 748 I 4to 80, 190<sup>1</sup>  
 - 748 II 4to 13  
 - 757 a 4to 13  
 - 949 e 4to 37  
 - 123 8vo 11, 36, 37
- Rask 30 37  
 Rask 35 37  
 Gl. kgl. sml. 1005 fol. (Flateyjarb.) 168  
 - - - 2365 4to (Codex Regius Ljóða-Eddu) 80, 168
- Det kongelige bibliotek, København:*  
 Ny kgl. sml. 1824 b 4to 44-55, 57-64, 68-74
- Landsbókasafn, Reykjavík:*  
 Lbs 152 4to 37  
 - 1572 4to 37  
 - 2152 8vo 37  
 JS 408 8vo 37
- Kungliga biblioteket, Stockholm:*  
 Perg. 4to nr. 22 87
- Universitetsbiblioteket, Uppsala:*  
 Cod. C:564 190

## VÍSUR OG VIÐLÖG

- Aldrig var ieg udi dít hus 26  
 Buch och Biörn och Ellffuer Stien 21  
 Eya, huad sorigen du est tung! 150  
 Her legger penge paa guolditt ströð 30  
 (Ja) álder saa jeg en laver' Hus 26  
 Loftr er í eyjum 149
- Mínar eru sorgir þungar sem blý 149  
 Pendingenn legger paa guoldett (líkl. villa f. guolfett) ströð 29  
 Tá var veður á sjónum hart 34  
 Upp skalt á kjöl klífa 149  
 Aaren din æ i hynno brei 14

## NAFNASKRÁ

- A. Aarne 17  
 Aðalfari (sjá Þorkell aðalfari)  
 Aðalsteinn sigursæli 81  
*Aeneid* (sjá *Eneasarkviða*)  
 Agnar, sonur Ragnars loðbrókar 47, 60  
 Áki, karl 58, 62  
 Alexander Jóhannesson 193  
 Álfur, í Finnþoga rímu færeysku 183, 184, 187  
 Álfur afturkempa 183, 184  
 Áli, sækonungur 152  
*Allra kapp kvæði* 87  
*Alma chorus Dei* 164  
 B. Almqvist 43  
 Alviðra í Dýrafirði 97  
 Án bogsvelgir 183, 184, 187  
 T. Andersson 65, 66  
 Andi, þorp í Kákasus 198  
*Andreas saga postula* 190  
*Áns rímur bogsvelgis* 183, 184, 186, 187  
*Áns saga bogsvelgis* 182, 183, 187  
 Arctic Ocean (sjá Norður-Íshaf)  
 Ari fróði Þorgilsson 101, 117, 125, 177  
 Arinnefja, tröllsheiti 16  
*Árna saga biskups* 145  
 Arndís Pálsdóttir 140  
 Arngrímur Brandsson 163  
 Arngrímur Jónsson 44, 49, 52, 53, 64  
 Árni Magnússon 78  
 Árni Pálsson 140  
 Árni Sigurðarson, Björgvinjarbiskup 190  
 Árni Þorláksson biskup 145  
 Arnkell goði Þórólfsson bægifóts 105, 107, 108, 119  
 Arnór Þórðarson 174  
 Aron Hjörleifsson 137  
*Arons saga* 192  
 Ásgrímur Elliða-Grímsson 100–103  
*Ásla ríma* 59  
 Áslaug, dóttir Sigurðar Fáfnisbana 45, 47–50, 55–62, 64, 72  
 Ásmundur flagðagæfa 15, 21  
 Ástralía 172  
 Atli hinn litli í Otradal 99  
 Auðgisl, gauskur maður 183  
 Auðunn handi 192  
 Auðunn Smiðkelsson 98  
 Auður Vesteinsdóttir 98, 127, 128  
 Australia (sjá Ástralía)  
 W. Baetke 79, 80  
 Baldur, goð 151  
 Ballaugh á Mön 192  
*Bandamanna saga* 68, 96, 97  
*Bárðar saga Snæfellsás* 108, 112  
 Bárður Snæfellsás 108  
 A. C. Baugh 199  
 Beda prestur 146  
 Benedikt Sveinbjarnarson Gröndal 164  
 É. Benveniste 197  
*Beowulf* (sjá *Bjólfskviða*)  
 K. Bergsland 194  
 Bergþóra Skarphéðinsdóttir 100, 103  
 Bergþórshvöll í Landeyjum 100, 119  
*Bibllan* 145, 146  
 Bibrau (í ýmsum myndum), nafn í rúnaristu frá Narssaq á Grænlandi 188, 190–192, 194  
 Bifrost (Bílrost) 191  
 Bil, gyðja 155  
 H. Birnbaum 196  
 Bitra, hérað í Strandasýslu 96  
 Bjarmaland 41



- Bjarni skáld 81, 86  
 Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson 191  
 Bjarni Brodd-Helgason 81, 86, 131, 132  
 Bjarni Einarsson 82, 93  
 Bjarni Guðnason 43-57, 60, 61, 63-66, 68, 71, 73  
*Bjólfskviða* 168  
 Björgvin, borg í Noregi 190  
 Björn ráðgjafi 11, 12, 19, 21-24, 31, 38, 41  
 Björn, sonur Ragnars loðbrókar 70  
 Björn Gilsson biskup 114  
 Björn Jónsson á Skarðsá 87  
 Björn hvíti Kaðalsson í Mörk 117  
 Björn Magnússon Ólsen 76-78, 96  
 Björn K. Þórólfsson 187, 199  
 Bláinn, nafn? í rúnaristu frá Narssaq 193  
 A. J. Bliss 43  
 I. M. Boberg 15, 22, 182  
 G. Boccaccio, ítalskt skáld 175  
 Boðn 152  
 Bogi Melsteð 160  
 Bolli Þorleiksson 127  
 Borghildur, dóttir Eysteins bela 47  
*Bósa rímur* 186, 187  
 Bóthildur, ambátt í Hergilsey 98  
 R. Boyer 142, 150  
 Bragi skáld Boddason 165  
 Brandur Sæmundarson biskup 114  
 Breiðabólstaður á Reykjanesi vestra 140  
*Brennu-Njáls saga* (sjá *Njáls saga*)  
 Brodd-Helgi Þorgilsson 81, 86, 131  
*Brynhildar sáttur* (sjá *Sjúðar kvæði*)  
 Brynhildur Buðladóttir 45, 50, 56-59, 61  
 J. Brøndum-Nielsen 26  
 S. Bugge 48  
 E. Bull 142  
 Býleistur, bróðir Loka 190  
 A. Bæksted 190  
 O. Bø 9  
 Börkur hinn digri Þorsteinsson 97, 119  
 M. Cahen 140, 144  
 I. I. Cercvadze 198  
 Charlemagne (sjá *Karlsmagnús*)  
 R. Th. Christiansen 66  
*Chronicon Lethrense* (sjá *Hleiðrar-krónika*)  
*Cid*, spánskt hetjukvæði frá 12. öld 175  
 R. Cleasby 143  
*Compendium Saxonis* 25, 26  
 W. Craigie 143  
 Daghestan, hérað í Kákasus 198  
 Dala-Freyr (Sturla Sighvatsson) 151  
*Danasaga Saxa* hins málsþaka (sjá *Gesta Danorum*)  
 Danmörk (Denmark) 29, 70, 111, 127, 128, 149-150  
*Danska rimkrónikan* (*Den danske rimkrønike*) 25-26  
*Decameron*, eftir Boccaccio 175  
 H. Delehay 138  
 Denmark (sjá Danmörk)  
 A. Dennis 195  
*Dialogues*, rit eftir Gregorius páfa mikla 153, 162  
 N. Djurhuus 59, 60  
 Dofri, fóstri Bárðar Snæfellsáss 108  
*Draumur Þorsteins Síðu-Hallssonar* 89  
*Droplaugarsona saga* 78, 88, 89  
 Dörruður 110  
*Edda* 99, 168  
 Edmund (sjá Játmundur hinn helgi)  
 A. Edzardi 46, 48, 56, 63  
 B. Egardt 153  
 Egill Skallagrímsson 81, 90, 94, 105, 126, 159, 174  
*Egils saga Skallagrímssonar* (*Egla*) 79, 90, 94, 95, 104, 106, 147, 162, 178  
 Einar Ólafur Sveinsson 19, 20, 43, 66, 90, 100, 137, 156, 158, 161  
 Einar Þveræingur Eyjólfsson 121  
*Eiríks saga rauða* 114, 115, 124  
 Eiríksfjörður á Grænlandi 188  
 Eiríkur jarl Hákonarson 81, 86, 129

- Eiríkur (Eirekur), sonur Ragnars loðbrókar 47, 60  
 Eiríkur rauði Þorvaldsson 124  
 M. Eliade 136  
 Ella, konungur í Englandi 49, 70, 72, 74, 75  
 Eneas 179  
*Eneasarkviða* 179  
 England 47, 49, 70, 74, 75, 115, 168, 173, 199  
 P. Envall 192  
 Evrópa (Europe) 137, 146, 148, 149, 151, 160, 164, 169, 172, 173  
 Eyjólfur Rögnvaldsson 140  
 Eyjólfur hinn grái Þórðarson 97  
*Eyrbyggja saga (Eyrbyggja)* 96, 100, 105, 107, 111, 115, 119, 122–124, 165  
 Eysteinn belí, Svíakonungur 47, 60, 61, 70  
 Eyvindardalur 90  
 Eyvindur skáldaspillir Finnsson 174
- Fáfnismál* 162, 191  
 Faraldur, draummaður 159  
 Faroe Islands (sjá Færeyjar)  
 R. G. Finch 62  
*Finnboga ríma færeyska* 182–187  
 \**Finnboga rímur*, íslenskar 186, 187  
*Finnboga saga ramma* 118, 182, 183, 185–187  
 Finnbogi, færeyskur maður í Finnboga rímu færeysku 182–187  
 Finnbogi rammi 81, 183–187  
 Finnur Jónsson 13, 34, 44, 49, 73, 74, 76, 80, 82, 84, 85, 158, 193  
 Finnur Sigmundsson 187  
*First Grammatical Treatise* (sjá *Fyrsta málfræðiritgerðin*)  
 Fitjar, hérað í Noregi 81, 86  
*Flóamanna saga* 109, 124  
 Flosi Þórðarson 100, 102, 103, 134  
 P. G. Foote 163  
 R. A. D. Forrest 197  
*Fóstbræðra saga* 116, 165  
 Frakkland (France) 75, 149  
 Freydis Eiríksdóttir hins rauða 114  
 Freyfaxi, hestur 121, 153  
 Freyr, goð 121–123, 145, 151–153  
 Friðrekur, saxneskur biskup 112, 125  
 J. Fritzner 190, 192  
*Fuglakvæði*, eftir Nolsoyar Pál 173  
*Fyrsta málfræðiritgerðin (First Grammatical Treatise)* 79  
 Færeyjar (Faroe Islands) 10, 109, 170, 173, 187  
 Fölski, hestur 154, 155
- Gandvík 11, 19, 20, 22, 32, 33, 37  
 Gáran, stígamaður 183, 184  
 Garður í Aðaldal 98  
 Gaukur Trandilsson 81, 86  
 Gautland 46, 57, 58, 62, 129  
*Gautreks saga* 166  
*Geirmundar þáttur heljarskinns* 110, 140–141, 144, 156, 157, 165  
 Geirmundur heljarskin 110  
 Geitir Lýtingsson, í Krossavík 81, 86, 131  
 Gerður, gyðja 152  
 H. Gering 25  
*Germania*, rit eftir Tacitus 150, 153  
 Germany (sjá Þýskaland)  
 M. Cl. Gertz 25, 26  
*Gesta Danorum*, rit eftir Saxo Grammaticus 15, 16, 25, 26  
*Gesta Romanorum* 25  
*Gests ríma* 59  
 Gestur Bárðarson 112  
 Gestur Oddleifsson 97, 109  
*Gísla saga Súrssonar* 97, 98, 111, 119, 122, 133, 147, 152, 153  
 Gísli Súrsson 97, 98, 110, 111, 119, 122, 127, 174  
 Gíssur skáld gullbrá 191  
 Gíssur Sveinsson, prestur á Álftamýri 191  
 Gíssur hvíti Teitsson 81, 89, 95, 159

- K. Gjerset 150  
 G. Gjessing 153  
 Gjúkungar 56  
 Glámur, sauðamaður 120  
 Glámur Eyjólfsson (Viga-Glámur) 121, 122  
 Glámur skáld Geirason, á Geirastöðum 81, 86, 87  
*Glymdrápa*, kvæði eftir Þorbjörn hornklofa 85  
*Gongurólvsdans* 21, 34, 35  
 Gormur hinn gamli Knútsson 71  
 Gottschee, borg í Júgóslavíu 172  
*Grágás* 143, 147  
 Grásíða, sverð 119  
 Gregorius (Gregory) páfi mikli 153, 162  
 Grettir Ásmundarson 81, 94, 96, 98, 120, 121  
*Grettis saga (Grettla)* 88, 97, 98, 120, 143, 162  
 Gríður tröllkona (Signý í álögunum) 12-14, 16, 19, 23, 24, 27, 30, 35, 36, 39, 41  
 Grikkjulág 184  
 Gríma, kona Áka karls 58, 59, 62, 70  
 Gríma, kona Gamla í Eiríksfirði á Grænlandi 116  
*Grimnismál* 155, 191  
 Grímur Droplaugarson 81, 88, 89  
 Gríss Sæmingsson 129  
 S. Grundtvig 39, 192  
 Grunnavík í Ísafjarðarsýslu 13  
 Grænland (Greenland) 113-116, 124, 188  
*Grænlandinga saga* 113-115, 124  
*Grænlandinga þáttur* 114, 115  
 Grøi 21  
 Grønneland 21  
 Guðbrandur Vigfússon 82, 143  
 Guðlaugur munkur Snorrason goða 115  
*Guðmundar saga Arasonar* 141, 163  
*Guðmundar saga dýra* 140  
 Guðmundur Arason biskup 152, 153, 157  
 Guðmundur Bergþórsson skáld 187  
 Guðmundur ríki Eyjólfsson 101  
 Guðmundur guðþekkur Gunnarsson 160  
 Guðmundur dýri Þorvaldsson 140  
 Guðni Jónsson 135  
 Guðriður Þorbjarnardóttir 113, 114  
 Guðrún Gjúkadóttir 154  
 Guðrún Ósvífursdóttir 109  
 Gullbrá, dóttir Visivalds konungs í Garðaríki 191  
 Gunnar helmingur 123  
 Gunnar Gjúkason 56  
 Gunnar Hámundarson 81, 89, 100, 102, 103  
 Gunnar Karlsson 96, 97  
 Gunnhildur drottning 119  
*Gunnlaugs saga ormstungu* 114, 117, 118, 128  
 Gunnlaugur ormstunga Illugason 94, 114  
 Gunnlaugur Leifsson munkur 144, 161  
 Gunnur (Guðr), valkyrja 152, 154  
*Gylfaginning* 154, 155  
 Gylfi, sækonungur 152  
 Göndul, valkyrja 152, 154  
 Gönguhrólfur (Rolf Gangar, Gongurólur, Rosmer) 21, 34  
 Hafliði Mátsson 140  
 F. H. von der Hagen 46  
 Haki, fóstri Kráku 59, 60  
 Hákon Hákonarson, Noregskonungur 143  
 Hákon Aðalsteinsfóstri Haraldsson (Hákon góði), Noregskonungur 81, 158  
 Hákon jarl Sigurðarson 81, 86, 109, 112  
*Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar* 143, 145, 158, 162  
 Hálfðan svartí Guðröðarson konungur 108



- Hálfðanar saga svarta* 108  
*Hallfreðar saga* 90, 128, 130, 133, 182, 183, 187  
 Hallfreður Hallfreðarson vandræðaskálds 130  
 Hallfreður vandræðaskáld Óttarsson 81, 90, 128–130, 183, 184  
 Hallgerður langbrók Höskuldsdóttir 100  
 Hallsteinn Þórólfsson Mostrarskeggs 123  
 Hallur Teitsson, í Haukadal 153  
 Hallur Þorsteinsson (Síðu-Hallur) 81–83, 101, 102, 134  
 Hamdir, sonur Jónakurs konungs 62, 152  
 V. U. Hammershaimb 13  
 T. Hannaas 31  
 Haraldur gráfeldur Eiríksson, Noregskonungur 81, 86  
 Haraldur Gunnhildarson (sjá Haraldur gráfeldur)  
 Haraldur hárfagri Hálfðanarson, Noregskonungur 108, 158  
 Haraldur harðráði Sigurðarson, Noregskonungur 77, 78  
*Hárbarðsljóð* 138  
*Harðar saga og Hólmverja* 97–99, 108, 109, 118  
 A. D. Haudricourt 201  
 E. Haugen 199  
 Haukdælir 159  
 Haukur Erlendsson lögmaður 46  
 Haukur Ormsson (Viga-Haukur) 81  
 Haukur Valdísarson 80, 87–90  
*Hávamál* 100  
*Hávarðar saga Ísfirðings* 97, 99, 111  
 Hávarður hinn halti Ísfirðingur 99, 100, 111, 112  
 Hebrides (sjá Suðureyjar)  
 Héðinn, sonur Hjarranda konungs á Serklandi 152  
 F. Heer 149  
*Heiðarvíga saga* 114  
 Heimir í Hlymdölum 48, 49, 57, 58, 61, 62  
*Helmskringla* 158, 174, 191  
 Hel 154  
 Helgafell, bær á Snæfellsnesi 146  
 Helgafell, fjall á Snæfellsnesi 122  
 Helgi Hundingsbani 57  
 Helgi Ásbjarnarson, á Oddsstöðum og víðar 81, 88, 89  
 Helgi hinn magri Eyvindarson, landnámsmaður 123  
 Helgi Droplaugarson 81, 88, 90  
 Helgi Guðmundsson 182, 196  
 Helgi Þorgilsson (sjá Brodd-Helgi)  
 Heljardalsá 147  
 Heljardalsheiður, fjallvegur á milli Hjaltadals og Svarfaðardals 146  
 Hellisfitjar, við Surtshelli 98  
 Hellismenn 98  
 E. Hellquist 191  
 Henri d'Arcis 160  
 Herebjörn (sbr. og Björn ráðgjafi) 20, 21, 23, 38, 41  
 Herfjöturr, valkyrja 155  
 Hergilsey á Breiðafirði 98  
 Ed. Hermann 197  
 P. Herrmann 15, 25, 52  
 Herruður, jarl á Gautlandi 46, 57  
*Hervarar saga og Heiðreks* 10, 145  
 A. Heusler 76, 78, 140  
 Hildigunnur Starkaðardóttir 134  
 Hildiríðarsynir 94  
 Hildur, valkyrja 152, 154  
 Hildur Gríðardóttir 12, 19, 20, 27, 41  
 Hindarfjall 50  
 Hitardalur 81  
 Hjalti Skeggjason, úr Þjórsárdal 126  
 Hjaltland (Shetland) 109  
*Hleiðrarkrónika* 26  
 Hlér, jötunn 26  
 Hlésey 26  
 Hliðarendi í Fljótshlíð 89, 100  
 Hlín, gyðja 152  
 Hlymdalir 57

- Hnikarr (Óðinsbeiti) 151  
 Hof annað, bær á Rangárvöllum (Minna-Hof) 95  
 Hof, ýmsir bæir 147  
 D. Hofmann 176  
 Hofsa, bær í Svarfaðardal 147  
 Hofshöfði í Flateyjaral 146  
 Hofstaðir í Reykholtaldal 147  
 Hofstaðir í Skagafirði 147  
 Hofsteigur á Jökuldal 147  
 Hólar í Hjaltadal 83  
 Hólmgöngu-Bersi 81, 89  
 Hólmgöngu-Starri 81, 86  
 Hólmsmenn 98  
 A. Holtmark 143  
 O. Holzapfel 26  
 Hómer, grískt skáld 155  
 Hrafn, norrænn stýrimaður 131  
 Hrafn Sveinbjarnarson, á Eyri 152, 163, 164  
 Hrafn Ónundarson 114  
 Hrafnkell Freysoði Hallfreðarson 96, 121  
*Hrafnkels saga Freysoða* 96, 100, 147, 153  
*Hrafn's saga Sveinbjarnarsonar* 152, 154, 159–160, 163, 164  
 Hrappur Örgumleifson 94  
 Hraun, undir Hrauni, bær á Mýrum (nú Staðarhraun) 115  
*Hreiðars þáttur helmska* 117  
 Hreinn Benediktsson 84, 194  
 Hreinn Styrmisson, ábóti í Hitardal og á Þingeyrum 81  
*Hróks saga svarta* 165  
 Hrólfr af Skálmarnesi 77  
 Hrólfr, sonur Helga magna 123  
 Hrólfr kraki Helgason 81, 152  
 Hrollaugur Rögnvaldsson 101  
*Hrómundar saga Greipssonar* 10, 11  
 Hrutur Herjólfsson 100, 119  
 Hraesvelgur 194  
 Hungur, diskur Heljar 154  
 Hústó, sonur Ragnars loðbrókar 74  
 Hvítserkur, sonur Ragnars loðbrókar 70  
 Hörður Grímkelsson 98, 99, 109  
 Hörgá í Eyjafirði 147  
 Hörgárdalsheiður, milli Hörgárdals og Skagafjarðar 147  
 Hörgárdalur í Eyjafirði 147  
 Hörgsholt, bær í Miklaholtshreppi 147  
 Hörgsland á Síðu 147  
 Höskuldur Þráinsson 101, 103, 119, 127, 132–134  
 Iceland, Icelanders (sjá Ísland, Íslendingar)  
 Iði, jötunn 152  
*Illonskviða (Iliad)* 155  
 Illgerðsteinur 21  
*Illuga dans* 13, 16–18, 21, 22, 24–26, 34–36, 38–40, 42  
*Illuga saga Gríðarfóstra* 9–11, 13–27, 29, 30, 32, 34–36, 38–41  
 Illugi Gríðarfóstri (Illugjen) 9, 11–14, 18–23, 25, 27, 31, 39–41  
 Illugi hinn svartí 98  
 Imperium Romanum 179  
 G. Indrebø 15  
 Ingibjörg, dóttir Eysteins bela 47, 60  
 Ingibjörg Þórisdóttir 129  
 Ingimundur Einarsson prestur 77  
 Ingimundur hinn gamli Þorsteinsson 107, 108  
 Ingjaldur í Hergilsey 98  
 Ingólfur Arnarson 105, 107, 108  
 Írland (Ireland, Eire) 124, 150, 174  
 Ísafjörður 99  
 Isidorus frá Sevilla 146, 163  
 Ísland (Iceland) 10, 11, 25, 40, 77, 79, 82, 88, 99, 101, 105–110, 113–115, 119, 123–129, 133, 136–138, 142, 143, 147, 150, 159, 160, 162–165, 168–175, 177, 178–181, 187  
*Íslendinga saga* 135, 137, 139–144, 146, 148–155, 160, 162, 163, 165  
*Íslendingabók* 101, 117, 125

- Íslendingadrápa* Hauks Valdísarsonar 80–90  
 Íslendingar (Icelanders) 80, 82, 125, 140, 151, 153, 156, 160, 163, 166, 170, 172, 180  
 Ísrael 180  
 Ítalía 172  
 Ívar beinlausí 47, 49, 70, 72, 74, 75  
 Ívar upplenski 184
- Jakob Benediktsson 44, 53, 85, 102  
 Járngrímur, maður í fyrirburði 160  
*Jarteinabók* Guðmundar biskups 153, 159  
*Jarteinabók* Þorláks biskups 153, 155  
 Játmundur hinn helgi (Edmund) 49, 74, 75  
 O. L. Jiriczek 187  
 Jófriður Gunnarsdóttir, að Borg 117, 118  
 Jóhannes postuli (St. John) 141  
 I. S. Johnsen 188, 193, 194  
 O. A. Johnsen 191  
 Jón Gunnarsson 195  
 Jón Helgason biskup 157  
 Jón Helgason prófessor 82, 87, 191–194  
 Jón Jóhannesson 89, 135, 192  
 Jón Jónsson prestur á Stafafelli 158  
 Jón Loftsson 150  
 Jón Ólafsson úr Grunnavík 13  
 Jón Samsonarson 36  
 Jón Sigurðsson 192  
 Jón Ögmundarson biskup 82, 83, 146, 161  
 Jónas Kristjánsson 61, 163, 164, 168  
*Jóns saga helga* 144, 146, 149, 151, 155, 158, 161, 163  
 Jóreiður Hermundardóttir 154  
 Jórvík (York) 47, 74  
 Júgóslavía 172  
 E. Jørgensen 26  
 Jörmunrekur konungur 57
- Kalevala* 175  
 Kálfur Guttormsson 149  
 Kári Sölmundarson 102, 103, 117, 134  
 Karl Jónsson, ábóti á Þingeyrum 170, 177  
 Karlamagnús 175  
 Karlsefni (sjá Þorfinnur karlsefni Þórðarson)
- Katla í Holti 119  
 M. Keil 158  
 G. D. Kelchner 159  
 W. P. Ker 96  
 Ketill (Digur-Ketill) 131  
 Ketill flatnefur Bjarnarson 123  
 Kírkjubæingar 100  
 Kjalleklingar 123  
*Kjalnesinga saga* 182, 187  
 Kjartan Ólafsson 94, 106, 127  
 Klængur Þorsteinsson biskup 83  
 Knut Skráddar 67  
*Knútsdrápa* 49, 63, 73–75  
*Knýtlinga saga* 170  
 Kolbeinn ungi Arnórsson 149, 158  
 Kolfinna Ávaldadóttir 130  
 Kollur í Kollsvík, fóstbróðir Örlýgs á Esjubergi 123  
 O. Kolsrud 147, 190  
 Kolur Þorsteinsson 101  
*Konungsannáll* 146  
*Kormaks saga* 89  
 Kormakur (Kormákur) Ögmundarson 81, 118, 174  
 Kráka (Áslaug Sigurðardóttir) 45, 55, 56, 58–62, 68, 70  
*Krákumál* 44, 52, 62  
 W. Krause 195, 197, 200  
 Kristján Bersi Ólafsson 157, 158  
 Kristján Eldjárn 135, 137, 192  
 Kristnes í Eyjafirði 123  
*Kristni saga* 117, 125, 126, 157  
 Kristur 30, 123, 125, 129, 145  
 Kroppsmenn 98  
*Kudrun*, miðháþýskt kvæði 172



- R. Köhler 26  
 K. Kálund 11
- Å. Lagerholm 20, 22  
 Landið helga (Holy Land) 133  
*Landnámabók (Landnáma)* 86, 98, 99, 107, 108, 123, 141, 144-147, 156, 157, 161, 165  
 M. B. Landstad 9, 15, 21, 28, 30, 34  
 G. S. Lane 196  
 Langahlíð í Hörgárdal 140  
*Lárentius saga biskups* 145  
*Laxdæla saga* 95, 109, 110, 127  
 Leifur Eiríksson 124  
 O. Leroy 157  
 L. Levander 192  
 F. von der Leyen 176  
 N. Lid 163  
 A. Liestøl 190, 194  
 K. Liestøl 9-11, 13-15, 17, 18, 20, 21, 24, 28, 30, 38, 40, 65, 67, 149  
 Livius 179  
*Ljósveitinga saga* 68, 69, 86, 101  
 Ljótur Hallsson 102  
 Loðbrók (sjá Ragnar loðbrók)  
 Loðbrókarsynir (sjá Ragnarssynir)  
 Loftur Pálsson 149  
 Logi 154  
*Lokasenna* 138  
 Loki Laufeyjarson 154, 190  
*Lokur* 186  
 London 47  
 G. Loomis 56  
 A. B. Lord 173  
 M. Lorenzen 26  
 A. Loth 182, 191  
 J. Louis-Jensen 61  
 O. Loyer 150  
 Lúmbarði (sjá Lyngbarði)  
 Lúna, borg í Suðurríki 70  
 Lyngbarði (Lúmbarði) 70, 75  
 E. Lönnroth 175  
 L. Lönnroth 44, 45, 49, 64-66, 68, 69, 71, 92, 93, 100, 101  
 H. Magerøy 65-69, 71-74, 96  
 Magnús Einarsson biskup 83  
 Magnús Finnbogason 135, 192  
 Magnús Gissurarson biskup 142  
 Magnús Sölvason 159  
 Magnús Þorláksson á Melum 81  
 Már Bergþórsson 140  
 María mey 145  
 Chr. Matras 59, 60, 182  
*Die Meererin* 172  
 Melar í Melasveit, Borgarfjarðarsýslu 81  
 G. Meyer 199  
 P. Meyer 164  
 Miðfirðingar 148  
 Miðfjarðar-Skeggi Skinna-Bjarnarson 81  
 J.-P. Migne 146  
 Mikjáll, heilagur 145  
 G. B. Milner 201  
 Mist, valkyrja 152  
 M. Moe 9  
 E. Mogk 56, 57  
 E. Moltke 188-191, 193, 194  
 Montpellier, borg í Frakklandi 164  
*Mósebækur* 179  
 Móses 179  
 W. G. Moulton 192  
 M. Mundt 43, 46, 47, 56  
 L. Musset 141, 159, 162  
 Mýramenn 106, 159  
 Mæri 101  
 Th. Möbius 82-86  
 Möðruvellir í Eyjafirði 101  
 Mön 192  
 Mörður gígja Sighvatsson 100  
 Mörður Valgarðsson 94, 102, 119
- Narssaq á Grænlandi 188, 190, 191  
 New England (sjá Nýja England)  
*Nibelungenlied* 168  
 Nice, borg í Frakklandi 143  
 Njáll Þorgeirsson 94, 100, 102, 103, 109, 119, 127, 132-134

- Njáls saga (Njála)* 88, 89, 94, 95, 97, 100–103, 109, 110, 117, 119, 120, 125, 127, 132–134, 159, 168  
 Njálssynir 100, 102, 103  
 Njörður, goð 151  
 Njörun, gyðja 152  
 Nólsey, ein af Færeyjum 182  
 Nolsoyar Páll, færeyskt skáld 173  
 O. Nordland 191  
 Norðmenn (Norwegians) 170  
 Norðnes í Noregi 164  
 Norður-Ameríka (North America) 172  
 Norðurlönd 20, 170  
 Norður-Íshaf 23  
 A. Noreen 84  
 E. Noreen 191  
 Noregur (Norway) 28, 34, 57, 70, 81, 108, 109, 111–113, 120, 122, 125, 128, 131, 143, 147, 169–171, 174, 178, 187  
 North America (sjá Norður-Ameríka)  
 Norway (sjá Noregur)  
 Norwegians (sjá Norðmenn)  
 Nýja England (New England), ríki í Bandaríkjunum 172, 173  
  
*Óddaverja þáttur* 155  
 Óddaverjar 159, 177  
 Óddur Kötluson 119  
 Óddur Sveinbjarnarson 162  
 Odense 93  
 Ódnarbiörn 21  
*Odysselskviða (Odyssey)* 155  
 Óðinn 122, 129, 143, 145, 151, 153, 157  
 Ófeigur Skíðason 96  
 Ólafur, nafn í rúnaristu 193  
*Ólafs saga helga* 191  
 Ólafur á Haukagili 112, 126  
 Ólafur völuþjófur 81  
 Ólafur Briem 146  
 Ólafur Halldórsson 183, 185  
 Ólafur helgi Haraldsson 108, 120  
 Ólafur Hávarðsson 99  
 Ólafur Lárusson 97  
 Ólafur Tryggvason 86, 109, 111, 112, 123–130  
 Óleifr, nafn í rúnaristu 192  
 A. Olrik 22, 53  
 J. Olrik 15, 16, 24, 26  
 M. Olsen 44–52, 54, 57, 58, 60–63, 68–71, 73, 74, 193  
 Orkneyjar (The Orkneys) 109, 170  
 Orknhöfði (Hallur Teitsson) 153  
*Orms þáttur Stórolfssonar* 86, 88, 126  
 Ormur, höfundur Vilmundar rimna 185–187  
 Ormur skógarnef 81  
 Ormur Stórolfsson 81, 86, 127  
 Óspakur Glúmsson 96  
 Óspakur Kjallaksson 96  
 Otkell Skarðsson í Kirkjubæ 95  
 Otradalur 99  
  
 Páll Jónsson biskup 145  
 Páll Sölvason prestur í Reykjaholti 140  
*Páls saga biskups* 145  
 H. Parry 173  
*Pater Noster* 163  
 Patreksfjörður 123  
 Patrekur biskup 123  
 H. Pedersen 195, 200, 201  
*Pentateuch (sjá Mósebækur)*  
 R. M. Perkins 43, 66  
 W. Petersen 196  
 H. J. Pinnow 201  
 H. Pipping 85  
 Plinius (Pliny the Elder) 163  
*Poetic Edda (sjá Edda)*  
 J. H. Poulsen 182  
*Prestsaga Guðmundar góða* 141, 142, 153, 157–159, 162–164  
 Prússland (Prussia) 82  
 J. Puhvel 196  
 F. Paasche 136, 151  
  
 C. C. Rafn 9, 48, 182  
 Ragnar loðbrók 44–49, 51–53, 55–62, 64, 65, 68, 70–72

- Ragnars saga loðbrókar* 10, 43–64, 68, 69, 71–73  
*Ragnars döttur* 56, 59, 60, 64  
*Ragnarssona þáttur* 44, 46, 47, 49, 52–54, 56, 59, 60, 64, 68, 71, 72  
 Ragnarssynir 49, 60, 70, 72, 74, 75  
 Ragnhildur Sigurðardóttir drottning 108  
 Th. Ramskou 163  
 Rán, gyðja 115, 152, 190  
 Randalín (Áslaug Sigurðardóttir) 45, 56  
 Rangárþing 102  
 Rauður, bóndi 26  
*Regimen Sanitatis Salernitanum* 164  
 G. Reiss 190  
*Rerum Danicarum Fragmenta* (RDF) 44, 49, 53, 64  
*Reykdale saga* 86–88  
 Reykhólar (Reykjahólar), bær í Reykhólasveit 77–79, 98, 144  
 Reykhyttingar 159  
 Reykjavík 43, 105  
 Reynines 147  
 Reynir, bær í Mýrdal 147  
 Roger of Wendover 56  
 Roland 127  
 Róm (Rome) 113, 128, 132–134, 178–180  
*Roman de Flamenca* 164  
 Rómverjar (Romans) 179  
 Rosmer (sjá Gönguhrólfur)  
 Runólfur Úlfsson 126  
 H. Ræder 15, 24  
 Rögnir (Óðinsheiti) 151  
 Rögnvaldur 137
- Sagnkrøniker i Stockholm* 26  
 Salerno, borg á Ítalíu 164  
 L. Saltveit 200  
 Samar 194  
 Sámur Bjarnason 96  
 Satan 125
- Saxo grammaticus 15–17, 24–27, 29, 38, 40  
 Scandinavian countries (sjá Norðurlönd)  
 Scandinavia (sjá Skandinavía)  
 J. Schindler 195, 196  
 D. A. Seip 200  
 Selkolla, óvættur 153  
 Seven Communities (Sette communi), á Ítalíu 172  
 Shetland (sjá Hjaltland)  
 Sibilja, kýr 70  
 Sigarr, sækonungur 152  
 Sigfússynir 100  
 Sighvatur Sturluson 154, 160  
 Sighvatur (Sigvatur) Þórðarson 49, 63, 72, 74, 174  
 Sigmundur Þorkelsson hins háva 121, 122  
 Signý (Gríður) 12, 19  
 Signý Valbrandsdóttir 109  
 Sigurður Fáfnisbani 45, 50, 56–59, 61, 100  
 Sigurður hjörtur 71  
 Sigurður ormur í auga 56, 70, 72  
 Sigurður Nordal 135, 190, 193  
 Sigurður Vilhjálmsson konungs úr Vallandi 32, 37  
 Sigurlöð, valkyrja 152  
 Sikilsoy (Siglisoy, Siguloy), auknefni á Nólsey 182  
*Sjárðar kvæði* 59  
 Skafti Þóroddsson 98, 101, 102, 114  
 Skagafjörður 158  
*Skáldatal* 86  
*Skáldskaparmál* 156  
 Skálholt í Biskupstungum 83  
 Skalla-Grímur Kveldúlfsson 106, 178  
 Skálmarnes á Barðaströnd 77  
 Skammkell, bóndi að Hofi 95  
 Skandinavía (Scandinavía) 148  
 Skarð á Skarðsströnd 111, 157, 165  
 Skarðsá í Sæmundarhlöð 87  
 Skarphéðinn Njálsson 101, 134



- Skjaldvör, skessa 112  
*Skjöldunga saga* 44, 52–54, 57, 64, 143, 170  
 Skopun, smáþorp á Sandey 183  
 Sköfnungur, sverð 81  
 A. P. Smyth 43  
*Snorra-Edda* 13, 155, 174, 190, 191  
 Snorri Sturluson 104, 106, 150, 154–156, 158, 162, 168, 174, 175  
 Snorri goði Þorgrímsson 96, 98, 102, 115, 119, 126  
 Snær kóngur 26  
 S. Solheim 9, 10  
 Són 152  
 Spangarheiður, bær Áka karls og Grímu 58, 59, 62, 70  
 Stafró, vættur 191  
*Stafrós kvæði* 191, 192  
 Stefán Einarsson 149  
 Stefnir Þorgilsson 125  
 Steingerður Þorkeldsdóttir 118  
 Steinvör, hofgyðja 131  
 G. Storm 52  
 F. Ström 141, 143, 156  
 D. Strömbäck 149  
 Sturla goði Kalmansson 98  
 Sturla Sighvatsson 128, 133, 151  
 Sturla Þórðarson í Hvammi 150, 151  
 Sturla Þórðarson sagnaritari 98, 135, 143, 148, 155, 160, 162, 178  
*Sturlu saga* 140–142, 149–151  
*Sturlu þáttur* 162  
 Sturlunga(a) Age (sjá Sturlungaöld)  
 Sturlunga days (sjá Sturlungaöld)  
*Sturlunga saga (Sturlunga)* 94, 96, 106, 116, 133, 135, 146–147, 149, 151, 152, 154, 155, 160, 162, 165  
 Sturlungar 140  
 Sturlungaöld (Age of the Sturlungar, Sturlunga(a) Age, Sturlunga days) 105, 140, 142, 144, 150, 163, 180  
 Styrkár Indriðason, á Gimsum 112  
 Styrr Þorgrímsson (Viga-Styrr) 115  
 Suðureyjar (Hebrídes) 130  
 Surtshellir í Hallmundarhrauni 146  
 Suttungur, jötunn 152  
 Sverrir Páll Erlendsson 188  
 Sverrir Sigurðarson, Noregskonungur 164, 170  
*Sverris saga* 164  
 Sviar (Swedes) 47  
*Svinfellinga saga* 163  
 Svíþjóð (Sweden) 47, 60  
 Sæmundur fróði Sigfússon 159  
*Sörla rímur* 34  
 Sörli, sonur Jónakurs konungs 62  
 Sörli Brodd-Helgason 81, 86  
 Tacitus, rómverskur sagnaritari 143, 149, 150, 153  
 Tantalus, grísk sagnapersóna 41  
 W. Thomas 195, 201  
 S. Thompson 15, 17  
 A. Tjomsland 152, 164  
 H. Toldberg 26  
 Torfi Valbrandsson, á Breiðabólstað í Reykholtisdal, Borgarfjarðarsýslu 98  
 J. A. B. Townsend 43  
*Tristrams saga* 47  
 Tröllabotn 34  
 Tunga (Bræðratunga) í Árnessýslu 103  
 Tunugðliarfik (Eiríksfjörður) á Grænlandi 188  
 G. Turville-Petre 151, 160, 162  
 Týr, goð 151  
 Tyrkir, förunautur Leifs heppna 124  
 Úlfjótur, lögsögumaður 157  
 Unnur, dóttir Marðar gígju 119  
 Útgarða-Loki 16  
*Vafþrúðnismál* 194  
 Valdis Hreinsdóttir 81  
 Valgarður hinn grái Jörundarson 119  
 Valgarður Styrmisson 160  
 Valhöll, búið Snorra Sturlusonar á alþingi 154  
 Valland 75  
 Valtýr Guðmundsson 140

- Vatnsdæla saga* 86, 95, 107, 108, 112, 118  
 Vatnsdælir 107  
*Veda (Atharva-Veda)* 155  
 A. S. Vedel 21  
*Vellekla* 85  
 Vémundur kögur Þórisson 87  
 Vergilius (Vergil) 179  
 Vésteinn Ólason 96  
 Vésteinn Vésteinsson 119, 122  
 Vésteinssynir (Helgi og Bergur) 127  
 Vestfirðingafjórðungur 115  
 Vesturfaraarvísur 85  
 Vesturlönd 109  
 Viðdælir 148  
 Víflsborg 70  
*Víga-Glúms saga (Glúma)* 121, 145, 147  
 Víga-Glúmur (sjá Glúmur Eyjólfsson)  
 Víga-Haukur (sjá Haukur Ormsson)  
 Víga-Skúta Áskelsson 87  
 Víga-Styrr (sjá Styrr Þorgrímsson)  
 Vilhjálmur I, Þýskalandskeisari 82  
*Vilmundar rímur viðutan*, eftir Orm 185–187  
*Vilmundar saga viðutan* 182, 185–187, 191  
 Vilmundur viðutan 185, 186  
 Vínheiður 90  
 Vínland 114, 124  
*Vínland sagas (sjá Eiríks saga, Græn-  
 lendinga saga og Grænlandinga þát-  
 tur)*  
*Vitas Patrum* 160  
 Vitazgjafi, akur 121, 122  
 Walther von der Vogelweide 168  
*Vopnfirðinga saga* 86, 88, 131, 132  
 J. de Vries 55–57, 59–63, 150, 154, 158, 164, 176, 192  
*Völsunga saga* 43–50, 55–57, 61–63  
 Völsungar 55, 56  
*Völsungsrímur* 45  
*Völuspá* 162, 190–191, 193
- J. Wackernagel 197  
*Waltharius manu fortis* 177  
 E. Wessén 158  
 West Quarter (sjá Vestfirðingafjórð-  
 ungur)  
 P. Wieselgren 63
- Ýmir, jötunn 193  
*Ynglinga saga* 57, 156, 157  
 Yngvar Ívarsson 74  
 York (sjá Jörvík)
- Þangbrandur Vilbaldús son greifa 88, 125, 128  
*Þiðranda þáttur og Þórhalls* 110  
 Þiðrandi Hallsson (Síðu-Hallsson) 110, 128  
*Þiðriks saga af Bern* 46, 48, 63  
 Þingeyrar í Húnaþingi 81, 177  
 Þjóðhildur Jörundardóttir 124  
 Þjóðólfr úr Hvini, skáld Haralds hárfagra 174  
 Þór, goð 111, 116, 122–125, 127, 129, 145, 151, 155  
 Þóra borgarhjörtur 46–48, 57, 58  
 Þórálfrur Skólmsón 81  
 Þórarinn, bóndi í Sunnudal 105  
 Þórarinn kappi Steinarsson (Þórarinn illi) 81, 86  
 Þorbjörg Grímkelsdóttir 109  
 Þorbjörg digra Ólafsdóttir pá 98  
 Þorbjörn öxnamegin Arnórsson hýnefs 81  
 Þorbjörn Þjóðreksson 99, 111  
 Þórdís Einarisdóttir, á Löngunesi í Einarsfirði á Grænlandi 116  
 Þórdís Súrsdóttir 97, 127  
*Þórðar saga kakala* 140, 143, 149, 158  
 Þórður Hítningur 142  
 Þórður Andréasson 149, 150  
 Þórður Kárasón 103  
 Þórður Magnússon 87  
 Þórður Narfason 165

- Þórður gellir Ólafsson 97  
 Þórður kakali Sighvatsson 143, 149  
 Þórður Sturluson 160  
 Þórður Sölvason 159  
 Þorfinnur karlsefni Þórðarson 124  
 Þorgeir Þjóstarsson 96  
 Þorgeir Þorkelsson Ljósvetningagoði 126  
 Þorgerður brák, ambátt Skalla-Gríms 104  
 Þorgils Arason á Reykhóllum 98  
 Þorgils skarði Böðvarsson 142, 158, 160  
*Þorgils saga og Hafliða* 139, 142, 144, 149, 153  
*Þorgils saga skarða* 139-143, 158, 160, 163  
 Þorgils örrabeinsstjúpur Þórðarson 124, 125  
 Þorgils Þorgrímsson 109  
 Þorgrímur nef, á Nefsstöðum 98, 119, 122  
 Þorgrímur Þorsteinsson, goði 97, 119, 122, 152  
 Þórhaddur (skáld Hafliótsson?) 81, 89  
 Þórhallur, frændi Hávarðar Ísfróðings 111  
 Þórhallur, veiðimaður á Grænlandi 124  
 Þórhallur Ásgrímsson 102  
 Þórir Skeggjason í Garði 98  
 Þórir jökull Steinfinnsson 149  
 Þórisssynir (Þorgeir og Skeggi), úr Garði 120  
 Þorkell aðalfari (Þorkillus) 15, 16, 21, 26, 38, 40  
 Þorkell Elfaraskáld 89  
 Þorkell hinn hávi 121, 122  
 Þorkell Eiríksson í Keldudal 97  
 Þorkell Eyjólfsson 97  
 Þorkell Geirason, bróðir Glúms skálds 86  
 Þorkell Geitisson í Krossavík ytri 81, 131  
 Þorkell Súrsson 97, 119, 127  
 Þorkell auðgi Þórðarson í Alviðru 97  
 Þorkell hákur Þorgeirsson 101  
 Þorkell krafla Þorgrímsson 107, 108, 112, 118, 126  
 Þorkell máni Þorsteinsson 107, 108  
*Þorkáls saga biskups* 146, 153, 158  
 Þorkákur helgi Þórhallsson biskup 109, 114, 145, 153  
 Þorleifur jarlsskáld Ásgeirsson 81  
 Þorleifur hinn kristni í Krossavík 131  
 Þormóður Kolbrúnarskáld Bersason 116  
 Þormóður Þorkelsson mána 107, 108  
 Þoróddur Eyvindarson, goði 126  
 Þórólfur bægifótur Bjarnarson 105, 119  
 Þórólfur Skalla-Grímsson 81, 90  
 Þórólfur Mostrarskegg Örnólfsson, landnámsmaður 123  
 Þórsmörk í Rangárvallasýslu 146  
 Þórsnes á Snæfellsnesi 97, 146  
 Þórsnesingar 123  
 Þorsteinn stangarhögg 105  
 Þorsteinn svartur, bóndi í Lýsufirði á Grænlandi 114  
 Þorsteinn uxafótur 112, 113  
 Þorsteinn þorskabítur 97  
 Þorsteinn Egilsson að Borg 105, 106, 117  
 Þorsteinn Eiríksson rauða 113, 114  
 Þorsteinn Hallsson (Síðu-Hallsson) 81, 83, 89  
 Þorsteinn Ingimundarson hins gamla 107, 108  
 Þorsteinn Ingólfsson, goði 107, 108  
*Þorsteins saga Síðu-Hallssonar* 89, 90  
*Þorsteins saga uxafóts* 112, 118  
*Þorsteins þáttur stangarhöggs* 105, 132  
*Þorsteins þáttur sögufróða* 78, 79  
 Þorvaldur Koðránsson hinn víðförli 125  
 Þorvarðsstaðir í Hvítársíðu 98  
 Þórveig hin fjölkunnuga á Steinsstöðum 118



- |   |  |
|---|--|
| Práinn Sigfússon 101                            | Ægir, goð 190  |
| Prándur stígandi Ingjaldsson 111                |  |
| Pundur (Óðinsheiti) 152                         | <i>Ögmundar þáttur dytts og Gunnars<br/>helmings</i> 122 |
| Þuriður, fóstur Þorbjarnar önguls 120           | Önundur, stígamaður 183, 184                             |
| Þverá (þingstaður) í Borgarfirði 142            | Örlygsstaðir í Skagafirði 143                            |
| Þverá, bær í Eyjafirði (Munkaþverá)<br>121, 122 | Örlygur Hrappsson 123                                    |
| Þýskaland (Germany) 82, 168                     | <i>Örvar-Odds saga</i> 10, 166                           |







