

ANTHONY FAULKES

DESCENT FROM THE GODS

1. *The development of the Old Icelandic langfeðgatal*

There are a number of ways in which the idea of descent from the gods is used in medieval writings. In some legends individual heroes are said to be sons of gods or descended from a god, like Hercules and Æneas. Thus in Eddic poems adjectives such as *reginkunnigr* and *góðborinn* are used of some heroes to distinguish them from ordinary mortals.¹ This divine ancestry of selected individuals was presumably understood literally in heathen times.

Even as far back as the time of Tacitus, however, there existed in Germanic tradition another idea that appears in connection with the universally popular kind of legend that tells of the origins of things. In *Germania* 2, Tacitus mentions the tradition of a progenitor of the tribes of the Ingævones, Istævones, and Herminiones (and perhaps of other tribes too, he adds) called Mannus, son of the god Tuisto whom the earth brought forth. In such primitive legends there was probably no clear distinction made between the origin of nations and the origin of mankind as a whole, and the tradition reported by Tacitus can be seen as paralleled in the Norse poem *Rígsþula*, which tells how each of the three classes of men (slaves, freemen, noblemen) are descended (on the male side) from the god Rígr, identified in the prose introduction with Heimdallr. The same conception seems to be implied in the first verse of *Völuspá*.² The idea of universal and thus basically undifferentiated descent of all men from a first man who was son of a god found reinforcement in Christian times in the book of Genesis, and Adam is sometimes referred to as son of God.³

For a list of editions of texts referred to, see p. 37.

¹ *Helgakviða hundingsbana* I 32, *Hamðismál* 16 and 25 (*PE* 135, 271, 273). It is possible that *regin-* is simply an intensive ('of mighty descent' or 'having mighty wisdom?'), and that the other word should be *góðborinn* ('well-born'); but it would be churlish to deny all the evidence for the belief in divine descent in heathen Scandinavia. Cf. K. von See, *Mythos und Theologie im Skandinavischen Hochmittelalter* (Heidelberg, 1988), p. 76.

² *PE* I and 280 ff.

³ See *Reliquiæ Antiquæ*, ed. T. Wright and J. O. Halliwell, II (London, 1843), 173; the Anglo-Saxon chronicle s.a. 855; Nennius, *Historia Brittonum*, p. 161.

Probably as a development of these two, a third idea became common, and was used to support the claims to nobility of individual families, both to differentiate them from commoners and in rivalry with other families either within the same national group or outside it. Already in the sixth century Jordanes (*De origine actibusque Getarum* 13–14) traced the descent of the Gothic royal house of the Amali from ‘semidei’ called Anses (i.e. Æsir) and names the progenitor of the family Gapt.⁴ This name is thought to represent Óðinn, one of whose names in Norse tradition is Gautr. Jordanes did not himself regard these ancestors as divine, but his motive for reporting the tradition was presumably to show that the Amali had as respectable a genealogy as the noble Roman families who counted gods among their ancestors; moreover it is uncertain how much genuine Gothic tradition Jordanes knew. Always when such genealogies are recorded by Christian writers (e.g. Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica* I 15), the gods that appear in them will have been interpreted euhemeristically, i.e. as great kings or heroes who came to be worshipped as gods after their deaths. Descent from such great and successful men would have been regarded as a claim to nobility, while heathen gods themselves could hardly have been regarded with anything but abhorrence. Since the gods in genealogies were considered to have been really mortals, there was moreover felt to be no inappropriateness in continuing the genealogical lists back beyond them, sometimes even as far as Noah and Adam.⁵ (It is likely that Biblical genealogy, such as is found in Genesis and Matthew 1, played a part in encouraging medieval scholars to compile genealogies stretching back to the remote past.)

The transition from the type of tradition recorded by Tacitus to the royal genealogies of Christian times must have been gradual. Names that

⁴ *Jordanis Romana et Getica*, ed. T. Mommsen (Berolini, 1882; Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Auctores antiquissimi V, i), p. 76. Cf. Nennius, *Historia Brittonum*, p. 172, where Hengest and Horsa are given a genealogy from ‘Geta, qui fuit, ut aiunt, filius Dei’; Asser, *Life of Alfred*, ch. 1: ‘Geata, quem Getam iam dudum pagani pro deo venerabantur’; *Textus Roffensis*, ed. P. Sawyer, I (Copenhagen, 1957; Early English manuscripts in facsimile, 7), fol. 101r: ‘Geata. þene þa hæþena wurðedon for god’. Cf. K. Sisam, ‘Anglo-Saxon Royal Genealogies,’ *Proceedings of the British Academy*, XXXIX (1953), 313–14; Sisam also points out (p. 323) that other early Germanic genealogies do not include names of gods. Jordanes probably described the Anses as ‘semidei’ to try to soften the idolatrous picture he presents of his heathen forefathers.

⁵ As in the Anglo-Saxon genealogies quoted in note 3 above; cf. also Nennius, *Historia Brittonum*, pp. 154 and 172.

originally applied to the tribe or nation seem, as political relationships became more complex, to have come to be applied to dynasties, which were perhaps believed to preserve the pure line of descent from the original progenitors best. Thus there seems to be a connection between the Ingævones of Tacitus, the Ingwine of *Beowulf*, and the Ynglingar in Icelandic historical writings.⁶ All three names imply descent from an ancestor called Ing or Yngvi, but in Icelandic sources the Ynglingar are no longer a tribe or nation but a dynasty. Similarly the name Scyldingas in *Beowulf* seems to refer to the Danes as a nation, but in Norse writings the Skjöldungar are the royal house of the Danish rulers.⁷

Such legends of eponymous ancestors or founders of tribes and dynasties, however, did not always involve divine figures at all. It seems not to have been until the twelfth century that Skjöldr is made son of Óðinn—in *Beowulf*, though Scyld's origin is mysterious, the idea of divine ancestry is not introduced—and it is uncertain how early Yngvi came to be regarded as identical with the god Freyr. Other eponymous founders of nations were never given divine status (e.g. Danr, Nórr).⁸ The motive of divine ancestry is often found in association with legends about the origins of nations and dynasties, but not invariably, and it ought to be treated as a separate phenomenon; it cannot be assumed that the earliest figures in extended genealogies were always considered divine. The Icelandic genealogies in fact provide very little evidence for the divine status of any of the figures in them; when there is any interpretation at all, they are always treated as human kings, even in the oldest examples (*Íslendingabók* and apparently *Háleygjatal*; the part of *Ynglingatal* that would have thrown light on this problem is not extant⁹). It is possible

⁶ See *Beowulf*, ed. F. Klaeber (Boston, 1950), p. xxxvii. It may be noted that an Ingui appears in a genealogy of Northumbrian kings (sixth from Woden) in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle s.a. 547; but there is no hint there that he had any special status.

⁷ Most sources however are rather ambiguous on this point; in *Beowulf*, for instance, the Danes evidently existed as a nation before the coming of Scyld, and Arngrímur Jónsson in his version of *Skjöldunga saga* writes 'à Scioldo, qvos hodie Danos, olim Skioldunga fuisse appellatos, ut et Svecos ab Ingone Inglinga' (*Opera*, I 333).

⁸ See *Heimskringla*, I, xlvii. On the vexed question of the divinity of Yngvi and other figures in Norse tradition see W. Baetke, *Yngvi und die Ynglinger* (Berlin, 1964; Sitzungsberichte der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, Phil.-hist. Kl. 109.3), and the review of recent study by R. McTurk, 'Sacral kingship in Ancient Scandinavia,' *Saga-Book*, XIX, 139–69.

⁹ See *Heimskringla*, I, xxxii.

that the introduction of figures from mythology into Icelandic genealogy was the result of the influence of English traditions, for Anglo-Saxon genealogies included names of gods long before Norse ones can be shown to have done so.

There are therefore several kinds of ambiguity in records of ancient genealogy. It is often uncertain whether a given figure was regarded in any sense as a god; it is often unclear whether we are being told of the origin of a dynasty or of a nation (generally the Icelandic sources are concerned with dynasties, but *Upphaf allra frásagna*, believed to be derived from the beginning of the lost *Skjöldunga saga*, *Ynglinga saga*, and the prologue to *Snorra Edda* all have vague references to the Æsir being accompanied by a large following;¹⁰ while *Rígsþula*, though it began by accounting for the origin of the human race, ended by celebrating the noble descent of the kings of Denmark); and thirdly, since a list of rulers and a genealogy look very much the same, it is sometimes not quite clear when we have to do with succession and when with descent. But the greatest uncertainty concerns the age of the various traditions. For obvious reasons it is always difficult to trace them back beyond the introduction of literacy which with all Germanic nations came as a consequence of the conversion to Christianity (runic inscriptions offer no information about genealogical traditions of pre-Christian times). If genealogies were taken back to the gods in heathen times, they were presumably closely associated with the kind of legend that survives in the Eddic poems quoted above, and may have implied that those who could claim such descent were different from ordinary mortals. But if the gods were only introduced into genealogies after the coming of Christianity, then the euhemeristic interpretation of the gods must have preceded the construction of the genealogies. This latter view makes it easier to explain certain aspects of the extant genealogies, for instance the fact that many of them conflict with each other, so that there appears to have been no fixed tradition about the relationships of the gods and their human sons, and the even more striking fact that the family relationships of the gods in genealogies are very different from those they have in mythology. In Christian times the constructors of genealogies would have had no reason to pay attention to the authority of myths, but one would have thought that in heathen times they would have been bound to.

¹⁰ *Danakonunga sögur*, p. 39; *Heimskringla*, I, 14; *Snorra Edda*, p. 5. The prologue to *Snorra Edda* (p. 7), like *Skjöldunga saga* (*Danakonunga sögur*, p. 39), assumes that the Norse language was brought to the north by the invading Æsir. *Heimslýsing* (see section 3 below) is certainly concerned with the origin of nations.

In Icelandic tradition, as in Anglo-Saxon, most of the genealogies going back to the gods concern the families of national rulers, but some Icelanders had connections with royal families and a number of the extant versions of *langfeðgatal* trace the lines of individual Icelandic families back to great heroes and gods. Such family pride was common in Iceland, and the genealogies are just one of many ways in which it found expression. Rivalry of various kinds (between Goths and Romans, between different royal families in Anglo-Saxon England, between various Icelandic families and between Icelanders and other Scandinavians) must have been the principal reason for the compilation of most of the genealogies in Germanic tradition that include mythological names.

The oldest Norse genealogy that survives seems to be that in *Ynglingatal*, supposed to have been composed by the Norwegian poet Þjóðólfr of Hvinir about 890.¹¹ It survives as quotations in Snorri Sturluson's *Ynglinga saga*, and was clearly his chief source for his account of the Yngling kings, though he probably had other sources as well. In the verses that are extant, the poem traces the genealogy of the kings of Norway back to Fjölfnir, who is said to be a contemporary of the Skjöldung king Frið-Fróði, grandson of Skjöldr (according to other sources Fróði was ruling in the time of the emperor Augustus¹²). Snorri has three more names before Fjölfnir: he places Óðinn first, and he is succeeded by Njörðr (who in Snorri's account is not Óðinn's son¹³), whose son is Freyr, according to Snorri also known as Yngvi or Yngvi-Freyr, and Fjölfnir is his son. It is difficult to believe that Snorri in this part of his account is following lost verses of *Ynglingatal*—the fact that he does not quote any verses for the names before Fjölfnir suggests that either he did not know any or that he was following a tradition that differed from *Ynglingatal* here.¹⁴ One would

¹¹ *Skjaldedigtning*, A I, 7–15; *Heimskringla*, I, 26 ff. On the different versions of the Yngling genealogy see S. Ellehøj, *Studier over den ældste norrøne historieskrivning* (København, 1965), pp. 109 ff. On doubts about the date of *Ynglingatal*, see K. von See, *Mythos und Theologie* 77–8.

¹² See Stefán Karlsson, 'Fróðleiksgreinar frá tólfu öld', *Afmælisrit Jóns Helgasonar* (Reykjavík, 1969), pp. 332 and 341–3.

¹³ Snorri's respect for mythology is probably the reason for this, for Njörðr and Freyr were Vanir, unrelated to Óðinn and the Æsir.

¹⁴ Compare Snorri's accounts of *Háleygjatal*: when he says Sæmingr is son of Yngvi-Freyr in the prologue to *Heimskringla* (I, 4; Ingunarfreyr in the prologue to his *Saga Óláfs konungs hins helga*, ed. O. A. Johnsen and Jón Helgason (Oslo, 1941), p. 4), but son of Óðinn in *Ynglinga saga* (*Heimskringla*, I, 21), as in the prologue to *Snorra Edda* (p. 7), it is apparent that on one occasion or the other he was 'correcting' his poetical source in its account of mythological figures, and

also have expected *Ynglingatal* to have begun with Yngvi.¹⁵ Besides *Ynglingatal*, there existed in Snorri's time three other versions of this part of the genealogy. Ari's genealogy in *Íslendingabók*, which is also based on *Ynglingatal*, begins Yngvi, Njörðr, Freyr, Fjölfnir. The genealogical lists in AM 1 e β II fol., which seem to be derived from a compilation of genealogies and regnal lists made in the early thirteenth century and used by Snorri both in *Heimskringla* and the prologue to his *Edda* (see below), have the sequence Óðinn, Njörðr, Yngvi-Freyr, Fjölfnir. According to *Skjöldunga saga*, Ingi-Freyr (Ingo), like Skjöldr, was son of Óðinn.¹⁶ It would seem likely that in *Ynglinga saga* Snorri has departed from *Ynglingatal* for the names before Fjölfnir and has preferred to follow the genealogical list from which AM 1 e β II fol. is derived (in the prologue to *Snorra Edda*, on the other hand, *Skjöldunga saga* is followed). The increasing tendency to put Óðinn at the head is probably due to English influence (cf. also Jordanes), for in Anglo-Saxon royal genealogies he is the most prominent progenitor among the gods;¹⁷ in addition the scaldic and mythological tradition in the centuries before Snorri seems gradually

he may have done the same with *Ynglingatal*. On the other hand his vacillation with regard to the beginning of *Háleygjatal* could be taken to imply that he was supplying a gap in his knowledge of it. In the prologue to *Heimskringla* (I, 4) he admits that he has followed *Ynglingatal* but has 'þar við aukit eptir sögn fróðra manna'.

¹⁵ As does Ari's Yngling genealogy in *Íslendingabók*. Cf. the prologue to Snorri's *Saga Óláfs konungs hins helga*, p. 3: 'allt til Ingunarfreyrs er heiðnir menn kǫlluðu guð sinn.'

¹⁶ *Upphaf allra frásagna* in AM 764 4to (*Danakonunga sögur*, p. 39); *Arngrimi Jonae Opera*, I, 333. Arngrímur's account probably represents the beginning of the saga more reliably than the version in the fragment in AM 764 4to, which may have used other sources as well, even perhaps the prologue to *Snorra Edda*. See Bjarni Guðnason, *Um Skjöldungasögu* (Reykjavík, 1963), pp. 18–22. On the genealogical lists in AM 1 e β II fol, see Anthony Faulkes, 'The Genealogies and Regnal Lists in a Manuscript in Resen's Library,' *Sjötú ritgerðir helgaðar Jakobi Benediktssyni 20. júlí 1977* (Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar, 1977), pp. 177–90.

¹⁷ Cf. Bjarni Guðnason, op. cit. pp. 173, 187, 287; A. Heusler, *Die gelehrte Urgeschichte im Altisländischen Schrifttum* (Berlin, 1908), p. 66 (reprinted in *Kleine Schriften*, II (Berlin, 1969), p. 132). The identification of Yngvi, progenitor of the Ynglingar and perhaps son of Óðinn, with Freyr, and the consequent conflict with the mythological tradition, according to which Freyr was son of Njörðr, presumably led to the various attempts to work all four names into the genealogy. Cf. *Heimskringla*, I, xlvii and xxxv; Baetke, op.cit. (note 8 above), pp. 85 ff. Óðinn might also have been preferred as progenitor after the development of the migration legend (see section 3 below), which, because of the etymological association with Asia, involved Æsir rather than Vanir.

to have made Óðinn the most prominent of the Norse gods at the expense of some of the others.

The rest of the genealogy in *Ynglingatal* is also of doubtful antiquity. There is no reason to doubt the authenticity of the last six names (from Halfdan hvítbeinn down to the poet's own time), but at that point the poem makes the genealogy of the Norwegian kings a branch of the Swedish royal family. It is possible that Þjóðólfr did not in fact have any information about his patron's family further than five generations back, and so joined it on to the better-known Swedish dynasty.¹⁸

Whether or not there were gods at the head of the genealogy in *Ynglingatal*, the poem implies descent from the gods by the use of the terms *godkynningr*, *Freys afspringr* (and *áttungr*), *Týs áttungr*.¹⁹ The next oldest surviving genealogy is that in *Háleygjatal*, supposed to have been composed about 985 by Eyvindr skáldaspillir in imitation of *Ynglingatal*. This poem seems to have begun its account of the ancestry of the jarls of Hlaðir with Óðinn and his son Sæmingr, though the beginning of this poem too is not well preserved, and the genealogy in it can only be reconstructed from later lists.²⁰ But gods certainly appeared in it, and the word *Manheimar* in verse 3 implies a contrast with *Godheimar*, which in turn implies the concept of euhemerised gods.²¹ The third poem belonging to the genre is *Nóregskonungatal* (composed about 1190), but the line of kings in this poem is not taken back to the gods or to prehistoric times at all.²² *Hyndluljóð* includes gods in its genealogy (cf. verse 8), but the age of this poem is altogether uncertain.²³

¹⁸ See *Heimskringla*, I, xlii–xliv.

¹⁹ Verses 11, 17, 21, 27 (*Skjaldedigtning*, AI, 9, 11, 12, 13). The reading *godkynning* is not certain, as some manuscripts have *godkonung*.

²⁰ Only sixteen verses or parts of verses have been preserved (see *Skjaldedigtning*, A I, 68–71) of which five are in *Snorra Edda*, five in *Fagrskinna*, and ten in *Heimskringla* (four of these ten being the same as four of the verses in *Fagrskinna*). The beginning of the genealogy in the surviving verses (see *Heimskringla*, I, 21–2) cannot be said to be quite clear, and Snorri's accounts of it are contradictory (see note 14 above). The later lists (*Heimskringla*, I, 47, note) seem to be derived from that in AM 1 e β II fol. (see note 27 below), which in the case of the Yngling line does not follow *Ynglingatal* exactly, and so may not follow *Háleygjatal* exactly either. It cannot therefore be regarded as certain that the line in *Háleygjatal* began with Óðinn. See Anthony Faulkes, 'The genealogies and regnal lists in a manuscript in Resen's library,' pp. 189–90, note 36.

²¹ Cf. *til goða* in verse 1 (*Skjaldedigtning*, A I, 68); and *Skjöldunga saga*, p. 39.

²² *Flateyjarbók*, II, 520–28.

²³ *PE*, 289.

Apart from the oldest genealogical poems, all the other Norse genealogies were not only first written down in Christian times: they were also first compiled in Christian times. If in view of the problems about the beginning of *Ynglingatal* it must be regarded as uncertain how common it was for genealogies in heathen times to go back to the gods, in Christian times it became almost universal. The oldest non-poetic genealogy is that of Ari and is based on *Ynglingatal*; it is preserved as an appendix to his *Íslendingabók* (pp. 27–8), admittedly only in seventeenth-century manuscripts, but they are thought to reproduce accurately the contents of a text first compiled in the early twelfth century. This genealogy begins Yngvi Tyrkja konungr, Njörðr Svía konungr, Freyr, Fjölunir. There is no accompanying narrative that survives but evidently Ari had in mind some idea of a migration of euhemerised gods from the Black Sea area to Scandinavia, perhaps in imitation of other European legends of the foundation of nations by survivors of the Trojan war (see section 3 below), though it is impossible to know exactly what Ari meant to imply by the word Tyrkir. A similar genealogy is found at the beginning of *Historia Norvegiæ*, written in Norway about 1190, but this has no mention of the Turks.²⁴

It is thought that about the time Ari was tracing his genealogy to the Ynglings, a member of the Oddaverjar family was tracing his to the Skjöldungs, perhaps in rivalry with Ari.²⁵ This genealogy was incorporated in *Skjöldunga saga*, written perhaps about 1200, now only known from a Latin version by Arngrímur Jónsson and from passages incorporated in other works.²⁶ It is uncertain how much if any of this genealogy was derived from poetic sources. *Skjöldunga saga* began with Óðinn and his son Skjöldr, ancestor of the Skjöldungs, who is said to be brother of Ingi (Ingi-Freyr in the fragment believed to be derived from the beginning of the saga in AM 764 4to, Ingo in Arngrímur's Latin), ancestor of the Ynglings.

Thus by the end of the twelfth century there existed genealogies, partly in prose, partly in verse, of each of the three chief ruling houses of Scandinavia, the Ynglings, the Skjöldungs, and the Hlaðjarlar, in each

²⁴ *Monumenta historica Norvegiæ*, ed. G. Storm (Kristiania, 1880), p. 97 (quoted at the beginning of section 2 below). According to von See, *Mythos und Theologie* p. 76–9, all euhemerism in the North derives from Christian sources.

²⁵ See Bjarni Guðnason, *op. cit.* (note 16 above), pp. 150 ff.; Stefán Karlsson, *op. cit.* (note 12 above), pp. 335–6; Einar Ól. Sveinsson, 'Sagnaritun Oddaverja,' *Studia Islandica*, I (1937), 13–16; Halldór Hermannsson, 'Sæmund Sigfússon and the Oddaverjar', *Islandica*, XXII (1932), 41.

²⁶ *Arngrimi Jonæ Opera*, I, 333 ff. (see also I, 148 f. and cf. IV, 107–17).

case tracing the line back to names of Norse gods. These three genealogies were incorporated in a single table, with Óðinn now heading each line, in a compilation probably made in the early thirteenth century, but now surviving only in late copies of which the best is in AM 1 e β II fol.²⁷ The compiler, however, made a significant addition to the genealogies: he added four more lists, all derived from an English source, three giving lines of descent from Óðinn through two more sons (Veggdegg and Beldegg) to Anglo-Saxon kings, and one giving Óðinn's descent through eleven generations from Seskef (a misunderstanding of Old English *Se Sceaf*). Thus Óðinn himself now, for the first time in Icelandic genealogies, had ancestors.²⁸

Further developments first appear in the prologue to *Snorra Edda*, which has an even more elaborate scheme. Here Óðinn is said to have had six sons. Three are the ancestors of the three Scandinavian dynasties (though the author has preferred to make them Skjöldr, Yngvi, and Sæmingr, following *Skjöldunga saga* and *Háleygjatal*, which is mentioned by name, rather than Skjöldr, Njorðr, and Sæmingr as in AM 1 e β II fol.).²⁹ The other three sons are said to have been kings in different parts of Germany;

²⁷ The genealogies in this manuscript were copied by Árni Magnússon from a manuscript in P. H. Resen's library, destroyed in 1728, which had been made about the middle of the thirteenth century, but the compilation it contained was almost certainly known to Snorri Sturluson. See the article referred to in note 16 above. There is another version of most of the lists in AM 1 e β II fol., written in the early seventeenth century in AM 22 fol., fol. 63, though it may be derived from an earlier version of the compilation in Resen's manuscript rather than from that manuscript itself. The West-Saxon regnal list at the end of *Breta sögur* is not closely related to that in AM 1 e β II fol., but is most similar to that in Cotton Tiberius A iii, fol. 178. See Bjarni Einarsson, *Litterære forudsætninger for Egils saga* (Reykjavík, 1975), p. 234.

²⁸ According to the mythological tradition embodied in *Gylfaginning* (cf. *PE*, I and 293), Óðinn was the son of Borr, the son of Buri, the first man, who was licked from salt stones by the primeval cow Auðhumla. This parentage is occasionally included in later genealogies as an alternative to the names from the Anglo-Saxon source (*Flateyjarbók*, I, 26; cf. *Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* (Hafniæ, 1848–87), II, 636).

²⁹ Cf. notes 14 and 20 above. The sentence 'telja þar Nóregskonungar sínar ættir til hans' (i.e. to Sæmingr; *Snorra Edda*, p. 7) is presumably only a modification of the facts in the interest of uniformity with the other descendants of Óðinn, for it was well known that Sæmingr's descendants, the Hlaðajarlar, never became kings and that according to *Ynglingatal* the kings of Norway traced their ancestry to a branch of the Ynglings of Sweden. The compiler of the prologue salves his conscience by adding 'ok sva jarlar ok aðrir ríkismenn'. It is indeed

two of them are the Veggdegg and Beldegg that appear in AM 1 e β II fol. and are derived from English sources (though neither they nor AM 1 e β II fol. say anything about Germany), the third is Siggí, father of Rerir and ancestor of the Vǫlsungs, and the information about him is presumably taken from an early version of *Vǫlsunga saga*, whether written or oral (a forerunner of the extant *Vǫlsunga saga* was also probably used in parts of *Skáldskaparmál*, though the *Sigurðar saga* mentioned in *Háttatal* does not seem to mean a particular form of the story³⁰). This Vǫlsung genealogy is the only part of the genealogy in the prologue to *Snorra Edda* (apart from the remoter ancestors of Óðinn) that was neither in *Skjöldunga saga* nor the compilation from which AM 1 e β II fol. is derived (*Ynglinga saga* on the other hand does not go beyond the information in that compilation at all as regards Óðinn's sons, and does not include any of Óðinn's ancestors³¹). Moreover the Vǫlsung genealogy is only known from Norse sources; besides *Snorra Edda*, it appears at the beginning of the extant *Vǫlsunga saga*, in *Vǫlsungs rímur* I and II, at the beginning of *Flóamanna saga*, and as part of the genealogy at the beginning of *Sverris saga* in *Flateyjarbók* (it is perhaps unlikely that this genealogy was included in the original version of *Sverris saga* and taken from there by the author of the prologue to *Snorra Edda*).³² Four of the six sons of Óðinn in the prologue (i.e. excluding the two Anglo-Saxon names) are

true that Ása, daughter of Hákon jarl Grjótgarðsson, bore Haraldr finehair sons, among whom was Hálfðan svartí, who held power for a brief time in Norway, and Magnús Erlingsson was also descended from the Hlaðajarlar (*Heimskringla* III, pp. 323, 373–4; cf. Klaus von See, 'Snorris Konzeption einer Nordischen Sonderkultur,' *Snorri Sturluson. Kolloquium anlässlich der 750. Wiederkehr seines Todestages*, ed. Alois Wolf, Tübingen 1993, p. 171). But it seems clear that there was a desire for symmetry in Óðinn's descendants, and this is expressed in concrete form in the lists from which Árni made his copy in AM 1 e β II fol., for there the compiler had put three lines of descent from Óðinn according to Anglo-Saxon sources on one page, the three lines according to Icelandic sources on a second, and lists of the rulers of Norway, Denmark and Sweden on a third.

³⁰ *Snorra Edda*, 126–34 and 231; cf. *Snorra Edda*, lvi, and J. de Vries, *Altnordische Literaturgeschichte*, II (Berlin, 1967), 468–9.

³¹ In *Heimskringla*, I, 14, however, there seems to be a reference to the account in the prologue to *Snorra Edda* of the settlement of Óðinn's sons in Germany.

³² *Vǫlsunga saga*, ed. M. Olsen (København, 1906–08) pp. 1 ff.; *Rímnasafn*, ed. Finnur Jónsson (København, 1905–22), I, 318, 321 ff.; *Flóamannasaga*, ed. Finnur Jónsson (København, 1932), p. 1; *Flateyjarbók*, II, 533. In *Vǫlsunga saga*, *Vǫlsungs rímur* and *Sverris saga* the form *Sigi* (*Sige*) is found, in *Flóamanna saga* the form *Sigarr*; in *Vǫlsungs rímur* the form *Rerri*, in *Flóamanna saga* and *Sverris saga*, *Reri*; and in *Sverris saga*, *Reri* is made Óðinn's son, *Sigi* his grandson.

included in the *pula* of names of Óðinn's sons (alongside other names from mythological tradition) appended to *Skáldskaparmál*, and Semingr, Skiollldr and 'Reyri' appear among his sons in the fragment of mythology in AM 162 m fol.³³

The eleven ancestors of Óðinn back to Seskef that are listed in AM 1 e β II fol. (and are derived from Anglo-Saxon tradition) appear also in the prologue to *Snorra Edda*, but the author of the prologue has extended the line back yet further, to Tror/Pórr, son of Munon/Mennon and Troan, daughter of Priam of Troy. Between Seskef and Pórr are put six names that are all variants of names that elsewhere in Norse tradition are associated with Pórr: Lor(r)iði, Einriði and Vingþórr correspond to Hlórriði, Eindriði and Vingþórr, which all appear in the *pula* of Pórr-names in *Snorra Edda* 196, verse 428; Hlórriði also in *Hymiskviða* and *Prymskviða*, Vingþórr in *Prymskviða* and *Alvíssmal*.³⁴ Vingenir, Móði and Magi correspond to Vingnir, Móði and Magni, which all appear in *Vafþrúðnismál* 51 (though Vingnir is not in the Codex Regius text of the Eddic poems), quoted in *Snorra Edda* 75; Vingnir is apparently a name for Pórr, Móði (also in *Hymiskviða*) and Magni (also in *Harbarðsljóð* and *Snorra Edda* 103) are his sons, both of whom are also mentioned in *Snorra Edda* 87.³⁵ The six names may have been chosen to fill the gap between Pórr and Seskef because the compiler thought them appropriate for descendants of Pórr, and the variations from the normal spelling elsewhere may be deliberate attempts at archaism or 'foreign' spellings, in which considerable interest is shown elsewhere in the prologue (though the compiler may simply of course have wanted to distinguish the names from the actual names of Pórr and his sons while retaining their associations with Pórr). But the reason for having Pórr at all in this part of the genealogy is not clear; he is not elsewhere found as a progenitor of royal lines in genealogies, and his introduction at this point, in association with the Trojan figures and so many generations earlier than Óðinn, makes for uncomfortable conflict both with the mythological tradition and historical plausibility.

The beginning of the genealogy in the prologue seems to have been constructed from names chosen arbitrarily from various learned writings. Priamus and Troan are probably derived from *Trójumanna saga*, which also mentions in two places a Men(n)on who may be the source of the prologue's Munon/Mennon (though his relationship with Priam has no

³³ *Snorra Edda*, 196 and *Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* (Hafniae, 1848–87), II, 636.

³⁴ *PE*, 88, 90, 93, 95, 112, 113, 115; 111, 125.

³⁵ *PE* 55, 94, 79, 86.

authority).³⁶ Tror is perhaps an echo of Tros son of Erichthonius, who is mentioned in Dictys Cretensis (but not in *Trójumanna saga*).³⁷ The identification of Tror with Þórr and Sibyl with Sif is presumably based purely on similarity of sound; the sibyls also are not mentioned in *Trójumanna saga* but appear commonly in medieval Latin writings.³⁸ As to Þórr's foster-parents, Lorikus has not been identified, while Lora/Glora is presumably a variant of Hlóra (*Snorra Edda* 95). No source is known for the stories told about Tror/Þórr in the prologue.

The author of the prologue thus succeeded, by rather arbitrary means, in relating the beginnings of Scandinavian dynasties, through Óðinn and Þórr, to Priam of Troy, thus making their ancestry as noble as those of the Frankish and British kings (though only on the distaff side). In the version of the prologue in Codex Wormianus the line is extended further back still, to Saturn.³⁹ This part of the genealogy is again based on learned sources, but used in a more scholarly way, and has more authority than the line from Priam to Seskef. Priam's descent from Saturn was quite well known in the Middle Ages, and appears for example in Honorius Augustodunensis, *De imagine mundi* III, and in the first mythographer.⁴⁰ The inclusion of Priam's ancestors now meant that the kings of Scandinavia were not only

³⁶ P. 9: *Priamus réð þá fyrir Tyrklandi and dætr þeira þær Casandra ok Polixena ok Troan*; p. 56: *Kasandra er Troan hét qðru nafni* (these three passages are only in the *Hauksbók* text but may have also been in earlier manuscripts that are now lost). Men(n)on appears on pp. 71–2 and 108. Dares Phrygius (see note 127 below) mentions Memnon, and some manuscripts spell the name *-nn-*. Troan is thought to have been originally a misunderstanding of the Latin adjective in a phrase such as 'filia Trojana'; cf. Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Historia regum Britanniae*, I, 3 (p. 225): 'ex Trojana namque matre natus erat' (Assaracus); this passage is however correctly translated in *Breta sǫgur*.

³⁷ Dictys Cretensis, *Ephemeridos belli Troiani libri sex*, ed. F. Meister (Lipsiae, 1872). Tros appears also in the first three of the sources quoted in note 40 below. The name is found in the form Thrór in *Stjórn*, ed. C. R. Unger (Christiania, 1862), p. 82.

³⁸ E.g. besides *Aeneid*, VI, in S. Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, X, 27, XVIII, 23 (*Patrologia Latina*, 41, 306 and 579–81); Honorius Augustodunensis, *De imagine mundi*, III (*Patrologia Latina*, 172, 169).

³⁹ Codex Wormianus was written about the middle of the fourteenth century, but it is uncertain when the additions to the prologue that appear in it were compiled.

⁴⁰ *Patrologia Latina*, 172, 171 (Honorius however lacks the link Jupiter–Dardanus); *Scriptores rerum mythicarum Latini tres* I, ed. G. H. Bode (Cellis, 1834), pp. 34 and 43; cf. *Iliad*, XX 215 ff. and Servius on the *Aeneid*, I, 139 and VIII, 319. see also note 42 below.

descended from Norse gods but from classical gods too (no attempt was made in the genealogies to identify figures in the two mythologies).

The final stage was reached in versions of *langfeðgatal*, in which the genealogy of Norwegian kings and Icelandic families is traced back to Noah and Adam. Probably the oldest versions of this are the genealogies of the Sturlung family that are preserved in two manuscripts of *Snorra Edda*, the Uppsala manuscript and AM 748 II 4to.⁴¹ These genealogies are not part of the *Edda*, and in their present form may have been compiled after Snorri's time, but it is likely, in view of their inclusion in manuscripts of his work and the fact that they concern his family, that parts of them are derived from genealogies constructed by him. The Sturlungs traced their descent back through the Skjöldung line to Óðinn. This part of their genealogy is presumably derived from *Skjöldunga saga* and differs in some details from that in AM 1 e β II fol. From Óðinn back to Priam in these and other versions of *langfeðgatal* is derived from the prologue to *Snorra Edda*, as is shown for instance by the fact that they nearly all (excepting only the version in *Sverris saga* in *Flateyjarbók*) have the intrusive fragment of narrative 'Munon eða Mennon hét konungr í Tróju', and all have the female link through Troan (like Ari's genealogy in *Íslendingabók* and those in AM 1 e β II fol., the versions of *langfeðgatal* are in the main simply lists of names, unlike the genealogies in the poems, in *Skjöldunga saga*, and in the prologue to *Snorra Edda*, where they are worked into narratives). Whether the line from Priam to Saturn in the versions of *langfeðgatal* is derived from the version of the prologue in Codex Wormianus or vice versa is impossible to say; but Codex Wormianus itself was written later than the oldest manuscript of *langfeðgatal* that contains this part of the genealogy (i.e. the Uppsala manuscript).

It is uncertain where the Icelandic compiler found the links between Saturn and the Biblical names. Cælus or Celius father of Saturn of Crete is part of classical tradition (e.g. Servius on the *Æneid* V 801). 'Zechim' (i.e. Cethim) back to Adam is from Genesis. The two links between Celius and Zechim, Cretus and Ciprus (or Ciprius) also appear in some thirteenth-century Welsh genealogies, where the whole line from Saturn back to Adam appears in similar form to the Icelandic *langfeðgatal*.⁴² Presumably

⁴¹ *Diplomatarium Islandicum* (Kaupmannahöfn, 1857 ff.), I, 504–6, and III, 10–13; *Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* (Hafniæ, 1848–87), III, lxxiii f. The Uppsala manuscript was written in the first quarter of the fourteenth century, AM 748 II 4to about 1400

⁴² See Heusler, op. cit. (note 17 above), pp. 76–7 (140–41), who quotes Godfrey of Viterbo, *Pantheon (Patrologia Latina, 198, 1028; Monumenta Germaniae*

there was a common medieval Latin source for this genealogy, but it has not yet been discovered.

The other versions of *langfedgatal* were probably mostly compiled in the fourteenth century. Haukr Erlendsson wrote his own and his wife's genealogy back to Adam, like the Sturlung genealogy through the Skjöldung line.⁴³ The version of *Sverris saga* in *Flateyjarbók* traces Sverrir's descent both through the Yngling line to Njǫrðr and also through Haraldr hárfagri and the Vǫlsungs back to Óðinn, Priam and Adam.⁴⁴ It is likely that this genealogy was not in the earliest version of the saga. At the beginning of *Flateyjarbók* there is a collection of genealogies, including the Yngling line back to Óðinn with his descent from Burs and Burri (these are evidently ultimately derived from the Borr and Buri in *Gylfaginning*), who is said to have been king in Tyrkland; and the Skjöldung genealogy in a form similar to that in AM 1 e β II fol., as well as Haraldr hárfagri's descent from Adam through a version of the Skjöldung genealogy more similar to that embodied in *Skjöldunga saga* (though the later part of this genealogy too corresponds to AM 1 e β II fol.), with the line back from Óðinn as in other versions of *langfedgatal*.⁴⁵ In AM 415 4to there is a collection of genealogies which as a whole is

Historica, Scriptores in folio 22 (Hannoverae, 1872), pp. 300–01); there Saturn's father Celus is said to be son of Cres, son of Nembrot (= Nimrod?—according to Godfrey descended from Sem son of Noah), and this provides part of the link. The Biblical Cethim (Kittim) is associated with Citium, the city in Cyprus, by Gervase of Tilbury (c. 1210), *Otia Imperialia. Recreation for an Emperor*, ed. S. E. Banks and J. W. Binns, Oxford 2002, II 26 (p. 531). Cf. von See, *Mythos und Theologie* 75–6, who quotes from Godfrey of Viterbo, *Speculum regum* I,5–8, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, Scriptores in folio 22 (Hannoverae, 1872), pp. 35–9. —The Welsh genealogies are printed in P. C. Bartrum, *Early Welsh Genealogical Tracts* (Cardiff, 1966), pp. 36, 39, 95. See also *Historia Gruffud vab Kenan*, ed. D. Simon Evans (Caerdydd, 1977), p. 2 (cf. pp. ccxvii f.). A similar genealogy linking Saturn to Noah is found in *Y Bibyl Ynghymraec*, ed. T. Jones (Caerdydd, 1940), pp. 623 (cf. p. 124 and pp. xx, xxiii, xlvi–xlvii). I am indebted to Patrick Sims-Williams for these two references. The line from Priam back to Celus father of Saturn is also in some versions (particularly Irish ones) of *Historia Brittonum*, ed. T. Mommsen, *Chronica Minora Saec. IV. V. VI. VII*, vol. III (Berolini, 1898), *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, Auctores antiquissimi, XIII, pp. 149–51 (and cf. also p. 161); cf. *Lebor Bretnach*, ed. A. G. van Hamel (Dublin, 1932), p. 16).

⁴³ *Hauksbók*, 504–05; *Diplomatarium Islandicum*, III, 5–8 (AM 281 4to, foll. 103–04 and AM 738 4to, foll. 29–30; both written in the late seventeenth century).

⁴⁴ *Flateyjarbók*, II, 533–4.

⁴⁵ *Flateyjarbók*, I, 26–7 ('Ættartala Harallds frá Óðni; Ættartala; Ætt Harallds frá Adam').

similar to that in AM 1 e β II fol., though the order is different: here there is a *langfeðgatal* tracing the Yngling line through Óðinn back to Noah (including an explanatory note about Óðinn that corresponds closely to that in AM 1 e β II fol.), the Skjöldung line back to Óðinn in a similar form to that in AM 1 e β II fol., and lists of rulers of Norway, Sweden, and Denmark that again correspond to lists in AM 1 e β II fol.⁴⁶ In Uppsala University Library DG 9 the genealogy of Bishop Jón Arason is traced through the Skjöldung line and Ragnarr loðbrók back to Adam.⁴⁷

All these versions of *langfeðgatal* have virtually the same names in the sequence from Óðinn back to Adam (with scribal variants and occasional omissions), and in the part from Óðinn to Priam are probably all derived (ultimately) from the prologue to *Snorra Edda*. From Óðinn down to the time of the settlement of Iceland there was a choice of four lines, the Skjöldungs, Ynglings, and Háleygjajarlar (these three were all available in the compilation from which AM 1 e β II fol. is derived), and the Völsungs; and in this part of the genealogy different versions of *langfeðgatal* follow different lines. For the links with Icelandic families various sources must have been used, some of them probably dating from the twelfth century. In many cases compilers of individual versions of *langfeðgatal* were clearly using various conflicting sources, and it is not possible to construct a straightforward stemma of relationships.⁴⁸

There is also a genealogy going back to Balldr son of Óðinn in AM 1 f fol., fol. 13, copied by Ketill Jörundsson in the early seventeenth century from the continuation of the fragment AM 162 m fol., originally part of the same manuscript as AM 764 4to. This is a separate concoction not directly related to the versions of *langfeðgatal* described above.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ *Alfræði*, III, 55–9.

⁴⁷ *Biskupa sögur*, II (Kaupmannahöfn, 1878), 417–20 (DG 9 was written c.1580–90).

⁴⁸ Heusler, op. cit. (note 17 above), pp. 19–20 (93–4) discusses the relationships of the various versions of the genealogy from Óðinn backwards, and points out the close relationship between the two versions in *Flateyjarbók* and that in DG 9, and between the versions in the two manuscripts of *Snorra Edda*. But the picture is complicated by the fact that the compiler of the lists in AM 415 4to certainly used, besides a version of *langfeðgatal*, a compilation similar to that in AM 1 e β II fol. (which was unknown to Heusler); and the compiler of the lists at the beginning of *Flateyjarbók* used similar sources and also a version of *Snorra Edda*. Moreover the genealogies in the prologue to *Snorra Edda* were probably used in the compilation of *langfeðgatal* rather than vice-versa as Heusler assumes.

⁴⁹ See Stefán Karlsson, *Ættbogi Noregskonunga*, 'Sjötú ritgerðir helgaðar Jakobi Benediktssyni 20. júlí 1977 (Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar, 1977), 677–704.

The Old Icelandic *langfeðgatal*, therefore, developed in several clearly defined stages. In preliterate times there were poems tracing genealogies of ruling families back to the ancestors and founders of dynasties Yngvi and Sæmingr, and possibly also traditional genealogies in other forms tracing other lines back to eponymous ancestors like Skjöldr. By at any rate the twelfth century it had become customary to have the names of Norse gods at the head of these genealogies, and it became increasingly common for Óðinn to appear either as a replacement for other figures or in front of them. By the early thirteenth century Anglo-Saxon royal genealogies became known in Iceland, and names were introduced from them extending the lines back several generations beyond Óðinn, as in AM 1 e β II fol. These names were incorporated in the prologue to *Snorra Edda*, the compiler of which extended the line back even further and introduced figures at its head associated with Troy, using names that were partly derived from Norse mythology and partly from Latin writings. A reviser of the prologue added the ancestors of Priam of Troy from classical tradition back to Saturn, thus introducing the names of classical gods as well. Finally, by the end of the thirteenth century an unknown genealogist added some more apocryphal pseudo-classical names from an unknown source that was also known to Welsh writers, linking Saturn's father Celus/Celius to the descendants of Japhet in Genesis, thus taking the line right back to Adam. In some versions of *langfeðgatal* the descent of thirteenth-century Icelandic families is traced back to the Scandinavian royal lines and thus linked on to the same line of descent through Óðinn.

The final versions thus included names from the Bible and classical mythology and legend, as well as the names from Germanic (Anglo-Saxon and Old Norse) historical and mythological traditions. A similar mixture of elements from three traditions is found for instance in the Anglo-Saxon poem *Widsið*, which includes classical names like Alexander and Cæsar, and names of Biblical nations like Israelites and Hebrews, among lists containing predominantly Germanic names (lines 15, 20, 76, 82–4). Anglo-Saxon genealogies themselves sometimes go back to Noah and Adam, but do not introduce classical (Trojan or mythological) names; they are therefore considerably shorter than the Icelandic *langfeðgatal*. Genealogies of British kings in versions of *Historia Brittonum* (some of them Irish ones) and later Welsh lists provide the closest parallels to the Icelandic ones, in that they too include names associated with Troy and the names of classical gods as well as being linked to Genesis (see note 42 above), though it is difficult to believe that there is any direct link between these and Icelandic tradition.

2. Euhemerism in Icelandic sources

All genealogies written in Christian times, whether in Iceland or England, that contain names of heathen gods also contain an assumption of euhemerism. In some cases the doctrine is made explicit, as in Ari's genealogy in *Íslendingabók*, where Yngvi is described as king of the Turks and his son Njörðr king of the Swedes; and it is even more so in the corresponding passage in *Historia Norvegiæ*:

Rex itaque Ingui, quem primum Swethia monarchiam rexisse plurimi astruunt, genuit Neorth, qui vero genuit Froy; hos ambos tota illorum posteritas per longa sæcula ut deos venerati sunt. Froy vero genuit Fiolni . . .⁵⁰

The genealogy of Óðinn in AM 1 e β II fol. has the following comment:

Voden, þann kǫllum vér Óðin. Frá honum eru komnar flestar konunga ættir í norðr hálfu heimsins. Hann var Tyrkja konungr ok flýði fyrir Rúmverjum norðr higat.⁵¹

Even *Ynglingatal* and *Háleygjatal* may have contained a more or less explicit euhemeristic interpretation of the heathen gods mentioned in them.⁵² Already Jordanes had applied the interpretation to Germanic gods when he gave the supposed descent of the Amali from the Anses:

Proceres suos, quorum quasi fortuna vincebant, non puros homines, sed semi-deos id est Ansis vocaverunt . . . Horum ergo heroum . . . primus fuit Gapt.⁵³

There are similar comments in some Anglo-Saxon genealogies, such as Asser's *Life of Alfred*, ch. I and *Textus Roffensis*, fol. 101r.⁵⁴ But the most detailed exposition of the theory of euhemerism in Anglo-Saxon is in Ælfric's homily *De falsis diis*, of which there is a translation in *Hauksbók* that may well have been made already in the twelfth century, and thus known to early Icelandic historians:

Enda fengu þeir enn meiri villudóm ok blótaðu menn þá er ríkir ok rammir váru í þessum heimi, síðan er þeir váru dauðir, ok hugðu þat at þeir myndu orka jammiklu dauðir sem þá er þeir váru kvikir.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ *Monumenta Historica Norvegiæ*, ed. G. Storm (Kristiania, 1880), p. 97.

⁵¹ Cf. *Alfræði*, III, 58.

⁵² See *Heimskringla*, I, xxxii.

⁵³ See note 4 above. Cf. H. Wolfram, 'Methodische Fragen zur Kritik am 'sakralen' Königtum germanischer Stämme,' *Festschrift für Otto Höfler* (Wien, 1968), II, 478 ff.

⁵⁴ See note 4 above.

⁵⁵ *Hauksbók*, 'Um þat hvaðan otru hofsk', 158; *Homilies of Ælfric, A Supplementary Collection*, ed. J. C. Pope, II (Oxford, 1968; Early English Text

Although Ælfric's examples were mainly taken from classical mythology, he identified the Roman gods with their Norse counterparts, so that the application of the theory to Norse mythology was already explicit in his homily. (Norse equivalents to classical gods appear also in *Clemens saga*, probably introduced by the translator of the Latin source.)

Saxo Grammaticus most of the time treats the Norse gods euhemeristically; see particularly the account of Óðinn and Þórr in *Gesta Danorum* I 7 and VI 5.⁵⁶ Saxo's treatment (like, it seems, Jordanes's) is especially similar to Snorri's and that in *Trójumanna saga* (see below) in that he unequivocally makes his kings achieve the status of being the object of worship while they are alive, not just after death as in most other medieval Latin versions of the doctrine.

One of the fullest narrative developments of the theme in Old Icelandic is in the fragment *Upphaf allra frásagna*, which is thought to be derived from the beginning of *Skjöldunga saga*. Here the doctrine is expounded clearly:

Óðinn ok hans synir váru stórum vitrir ok fjölkunnigir, fagrir at álitum ok sterkir at afli. Margir aðrir í þeira ætt váru miklir afburðarmenn með ýmisligum algerleik ok nokkura af þeim tóku menn til at blóta ok trúá ok kölluðu goð sín.⁵⁷

As well as telling the story of the migration of the Æsir from the south-east, *Skjöldunga saga* reported that King Fróði, great-grandson of Óðinn, lived at the time of Christ, thus placing the Norse gods in a specific historical context.⁵⁸

Society, No. 260), pp. 681–2. Cf. *The homilies of Wulfstan*, ed. D. Bethurum (Oxford, 1957), p. 335. Ælfric also expresses euhemerism in *De initio creaturæ*, see *The Sermones Catholici or Homilies of Ælfric*, ed. B. Thorpe, I (London, 1844), p. 22; see also Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*, ed. W. Skeat, I (London, 1881), 126. Cf. Ursula and Peter Dronke, 'The Prologue of the Prose *Edda*: Explorations of a Latin Background', *Sjötíu ritgerðir helgaðar Jakobi Benediktssyni 20. júlí 1977*, Reykjavík 1977, pp. 153–76.

⁵⁶ Ed. J. Olrik and H. Raeder, I (Haunia, 1931), 25 and 152. See R. Schomerus, *Die Religion der Nordgermanen im Spiegel christlicher Darstellung* (Borna-Leipzig, 1936), pp. 49 ff.

⁵⁷ *Danakonunga sögur*, p. 39.

⁵⁸ Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum*, V 15 (ed. cit. pp. 141–2), also associated the peace of Fróði with the incarnation; see note 12 above. Compare *Rómverja sögur*, where *pax Romana* and the reign of Augustus are associated with the incarnation (Konráð Gíslason, *Fire og Fyrretyve Prøver af Oldnordisk Sprog og Literatur* (Kjøbenhavn, 1860), pp. 251–2).

Skjöldunga saga was known to Snorri, and it is probably from it that he developed his own account of euhemerism. In the prologue to *Snorra Edda*, the process of deification is described in some detail:

En hvar sem þeir [the Æsir] fóru yfir lönd, þá var ágæti mikit frá þeim sagt, svá at þeir þóttu líkari goðum en mönnum . . . Sá tími fylgði ferð þeirra, at hvar sem þeir dvöldust í löndum þá var þar ár ok friðr góðr, ok trúðu allir at þeir væri þess ráðandi.⁵⁹

But euhemerism is even more explicit in *Ynglinga saga*:

Óðinn . . . var svá sigrsæll at í hverri orrostu fekk hann gagn ok svá kom at hans menn trúðu því at hann ætti heimilan sigr í hverri orrostu . . . En Óðin ok þá höfðingja tólf blótuðu menn ok kǫlluðu goð sín ok trúðu á lengi síðan.⁶⁰

Euhemerism appears elsewhere in Icelandic literature too, in places where the foreign source is more obvious. The introductory chapter to *Trójumanna saga* in *Hauksbók* gives an account of classical mythology (in which classical gods are identified with their Norse counterparts) interpreted from a historical and euhemeristic viewpoint. It is possible that this account was known to the author of the prologue to *Snorra Edda* (it was certainly known to the person who added the interpolations in Codex Wormianus). The traditional story of the origin of idolatry in the worship of Bel (cf. Peter Comestor, *Historia Scholastica*, Genesis XL: ‘De morte Beli et ortu idolarum’)⁶¹ is reproduced in *Veraldar saga* and AM 194 8vo, as well as in the translation of *Elucidarius*, where, as a result again of the identification of Jupiter of Crete with Þórr, the doctrine of euhemerism is also applied to Norse mythological figures (as in *Trójumanna saga* and the prologue to *Snorra Edda* in Codex Wormianus):

Hann (Ninus) lét gera líkneskju eftir feðr sínum dauðum, en hann hét Belus, ok bauð hann allri þjóð ríkis síns at gøfga líkneskit. En þar námu aðrir eftir ok gerðu líkneski eftir ástvinum sínum, eða eftir hinum ríkastu konungum dauðum, ok buðu lýðinum at blóta þá svá sem Rúmaborgar menn Romulum, Krítar menn Þór eða Óðin.⁶²

⁵⁹ *Snorra Edda*, 5/10–12 and 6/16–18, cf. 8/18–20.

⁶⁰ *Heimskringla*, I, 11 and 20. Euhemerism is further developed in the extended version of the prologue to *Snorra Edda* in Codex Wormianus, and in AM 162 m fol. (see notes 33 and 49 above).

⁶¹ *Patrologia Latina*, 198, 1090.

⁶² *Veraldar saga*, pp. 42–3; *Alfræði*, I, 49; *Hauksbók*, p. 170. Cf. also *Hauksbók*, pp. 498–9 and Konráð Gíslason, ‘Brudstykker af den islandske Elucidarius,’ *Annaler for Nordisk Oldkyndighed og Historie* 1858, pp. 150–51 and 155–6;

All these accounts are of course part of a long tradition going back to classical times, and euhemerism had become one of the usual ways of interpreting heathen gods. Most Christian writers would think of Wisdom 14, especially verses 15–21:

. . . multitudo autem hominum, abducta per speciem operis, eum qui ante tempus tanquam homo honoratus fuerat nunc deum aestimaverunt . . .

The idea is common in the early Middle Ages; Lactantius has several passages that develop it, e.g.:

Illi ergo, qui dii putantur, quoniam et genitos esse tanquam homines, et procreasse constat, mortales utique fuerunt; sed dii crediti sunt, quod, cum essent reges magni ac potentes, ob ea beneficia, qua in homines contulerant, divinos post obitum honores consequi meruerunt.⁶³

Augustine mentions the doctrine in various places in *De civitate Dei*, e.g.:

De quibus credibilior redditur ratio, cum perhibentur homines fuisse, et unicuique eorum ab his qui eos adulando deos esse voluerunt, ex ejus ingenio, moribus, actibus, casibus, sacra et solemnia constituta.⁶⁴

Isidore was universally used, and he has a thorough account of heathen religions from a euhemeristic standpoint in *Etymologiæ* VIII 11, beginning:

Quos pagani deos asserunt, homines olim fuisse produntur, et pro uniuscujusque vita vel meritis, coli apud suos post mortem cæperunt.⁶⁵

The material of this chapter is reproduced by Rabanus Maurus, *De universo* XV 6 ('De diis gentium').⁶⁶

Although euhemerism is thus extremely common, particularly in the early Middle Ages, it was not the only way of interpreting the heathen gods, and was not necessarily the commonest one. More didactic writers particularly often preferred another interpretation, that heathen gods were

and Honorius Augustodunensis, *Elucidarius*, II. 21, *Patrologia Latina*, 172, 1151. The passage only survives in manuscripts of the translation from the fourteenth century and later, so it is not possible to be certain that Þórr and Óðinn were mentioned in the original translation, made in the twelfth century. The account of Ninus is found also in *Stjórn* pp. 101–02.

⁶³ *Epitome* 6; see also *Divinæ Institutiones*, I, 8–15 (*Patrologia Latina*, 6, 153–201 and 1023).

⁶⁴ VII, 18; cf. VI, 7 and VIII, 26 (*Patrologia Latina*, 41, 208, 184, 253–4).

⁶⁵ *Patrologia Latina*, 82, 314. See P. Alphandéry, 'L'Euhémérisme et les débuts de l'histoire des religions au moyen âge,' *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, CIX (1934), 16–18.

⁶⁶ *Patrologia Latina*, III, 426 ff.

manifestations of the devil. But euhemerism remained popular among writers whose main purpose was historical, like Gregory of Tours and Rudolf of Fulda, and among the mythographers.⁶⁷

In Iceland too, both interpretations were known, and the idea that heathen gods were really devils is commonly found in hagiographic writings. But euhemerism is all-pervasive among more secular historical writers from the earliest times, and must be considered to have been the underlying concept when names of gods were included in genealogies from the earliest literary period onwards. Like many of the names themselves in the genealogies, this idea was an importation from Christian Europe, and underlines the fact that Icelandic genealogy owes rather little to native tradition going back to pre-Christian times. But by the time of Snorri Sturluson, who was the Icelandic writer who made the most extensive use of euhemerism in his works, the doctrine was well established in Icelandic tradition, and he would not have needed to go beyond native sources to find it expressed.

3. *The origin in Troy*

The prologue to *Snorra Edda* is a puzzling mixture of wit and ignorance. The first section tells of the origin of heathen religions, and the theory proposed and its working out is as intelligent a piece of writing as can be found on this subject from the Middle Ages. Then, rather abruptly, the author turns to an account of the geography of the world as an introduction to his story of the origin of the Æsir in Troy, which provides the beginning of his genealogy of the kings of Scandinavia—a story that proposes a different theory of the origin of the gods, euhemerism, that is virtually unrelated to the first part of the prologue, and displays a very hazy knowledge of the story of Troy itself. In his geographical introduction the author gives the usual three-fold division of the world that is found frequently in medieval treatises and derives ultimately from classical sources.⁶⁸ Several medieval chronicles have such a geographical intro-

⁶⁷ Gregory, *Historiæ*, 11, 20 (29), *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, *Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum* I, i (Hannoverae, 1951), p. 74; *Translatio S. Alexandri*, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, *Scriptores* in folio II 675; Fulgentius, *Mitologiæ*, I, 1; Bode, *op. cit.* (note 40 above) I 74, 152, 172. Note also Adam of Bremen, *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum*, IV, 26 (p. 470). See further J. D. Cooke, 'Euhemerism: a mediaeval interpretation of classical paganism,' *Speculum*, II (1927), 396–410; J. Seznec, *La survivance des dieux antiques* (London, 1940); Alphandéry, *op. cit.* (note 65 above); Schomerus, *op. cit.* (note 56 above).

⁶⁸ *Snorra Edda*, 3/8–19. See Pliny, *Naturalis historia* III, 1 (3 ff.); Isidore of

duction.⁶⁹ Other Icelandic and Norwegian writings reproduce similar standard information, though it is difficult to point to any one as the source of the author of the prologue's knowledge.⁷⁰ It is probable that he had direct access to some medieval Latin sources. Paradise was traditionally in the east, but for the description of the east as a place of wealth and luxury and wisdom, compare Otto von Freising's *Chronica* (written c.1145), Prologus libri primi.⁷¹ The description in the prologue to *Snorra Edda* is reproduced in the third Grammatical Treatise: 'í sjálfu Asia landi þar sem mest var fegrð (v.l. frægð) ok ríkdómr ok fróðleikr veraldarinnar.'⁷²

Although the author thus reproduces information derived from learned Latin sources, he appears in some respects oddly ignorant. He describes three zones of the world, the (northern) temperate zone, the arctic, and the equatorial; but seems to be ignorant of the southern hemisphere, though this is clearly described for instance in Isidore, *De natura rerum* 10 and in *Konungs skuggsjá*.⁷³ In *Gylfaginning* (*Snorra Edda* 15/20 ff.) a flat earth is described (*kringlótt*, 'disc-shaped'). This might simply be because there Snorri is describing the world-picture of the ignorant heathen (the words are Hár's), but the beginning of *Ynglinga saga* too, though the geography there is slightly more sophisticated than in the prologue to *Snorra Edda*, seems with the words *kringla heimsins* to refer to a flat earth.⁷⁴ (The phrase is used in Old Norse as an equivalent of *orbis terrarum*, though like English orb, *kringla* may have come to mean

Seville, *Etymologiæ*, XIV, 2 (*Patrologia Latina*, 82, 495–6) and *De natura rerum*, XLVIII. 2 (*Patrologia Latina*, 83, 1016–17); Guillaume de Conches, *De philosophia mundi*, IV, 1–4 (*Patrologia Latina*, 172, 85–7); Honorius Augustodunensis, *De imagine mundi*, I, 1–9 (*Patrologia Latina*, 172, 121–3).

⁶⁹ E.g. Orosius, *Historiæ*, I, 2 (*Patrologia Latina*, 31, 672 ff.); Nennius, *Historia Brittonum*, pp. 160 f.; Otto von Freising, *Chronica*, I, 1, ed. A. Hofmeister (Hannoverae et Lipsiæ, 1912; *Scriptores rerum Germanicarum*, 45), pp. 37 f.

⁷⁰ *Alfræði*, I, 7–10; *Heimslýsing*, *Hauksbók*, pp. 164–5; AM 764 4to, *Antiquités Russes* (Copenhagen, 1850–52), II, 443–5; *Verldar saga*, p. 13; *Elucidarius*, ed. Konráð Gíslason (see note 62 above), p. 119 (= *Patrologia Latina*, 172, 1124); *Heimskringla*, I, 9; *Konungs skuggsjá*, ed. L. Holm-Olsen (Oslo, 1945), pp. 3–4; *Stjórn*, p. 64. Cf. Heusler, op. cit. (note 17 above), p. 54 (122).

⁷¹ Ed. cit., p. 8/22 f. Cf. Genesis 2. 8; *Elucidarius*, ed. cit. p. 63; *Alfræði*, I, 6; *Verldar saga*, p. 5.

⁷² *Den tredje og fjærde grammatiske afhandling i Snorres Edda*, ed. B. M. Ólsen (København, 1884), p. 60.

⁷³ *Patrologia Latina*, 83, 978; *Konungs skuggsjá*, loc. cit.

⁷⁴ *Heimskringla*, I, 9.

‘sphere’ as ideas about astronomy changed.)⁷⁵ But it was well enough known in medieval Iceland that the earth is spherical; see *Elucidarius*, ‘høfuð hans [i.e. manns] var þollótt í glíking heimballar’;⁷⁶ the second astronomical treatise, ‘jarðar yfirbragð er þollótt’;⁷⁷ AM 685 d 4to, ‘svá segir Imago mundi at heimrinn sé vaxinn sem egg’;⁷⁸ *Konungs skuggsjá*, ‘þollótttr er jarðar hringr’.⁷⁹ Whether the prologue to *Snorra Edda*, *Gylfaginning*, and *Ynglinga saga* can all be describing a flat earth so as to indicate the limited horizons of pre-Christian Scandinavia is perhaps doubtful.

Enea as a name for Europe is unexplained, and is perhaps derived from some misunderstanding.⁸⁰ It may relate to the various traditions that different parts of Europe were settled by survivors of Troy (see below), of whom the best-known was Æneas.

The Icelandic accounts of the origin of the Æsir (and other gods) in the south-east, on the boundaries of Europe and Asia, may have been inspired partly by the traditional idea, originating in classical times, that the Germanic nations (especially the Goths) were originally located in Scythia (usually taken to be an undefined area north of the Black Sea) or Thrace.⁸¹ In Icelandic writings, ‘Svíþjóð hin mikla’ is usually used as the equivalent

⁷⁵ E.g. *Nikulás saga* II, *Heilagra manna sögur*, ed. C. R. Unger (Kristiania, 1877), II, 145/38: *í allri heimsins kringlu* = ‘in orbe terrarum,’ B. Mombricitus, *Sanctuarium* (Parisiis, 1910), II, 307/36.

⁷⁶ Ed. cit., p. 61.

⁷⁷ *Alfræði*, II, 104 ff.

⁷⁸ *Alfræði*, III, 75. The manuscript was written in the fifteenth century, but the material in it was probably known earlier. See Honorius Augustodunensis, *De imagine mundi*, I, 1 (*Patrologia Latina*, 172, 121).

⁷⁹ Ed. cit., p. 11.

⁸⁰ *Snorra Edda*, 3, *Heimskringla*, I, 9, but nowhere else. On the settlement of Italy by Æneas, Rudolf Simek, *Altnordische Kosmographie* (Berlin, 1990), p. 192, refers to Gervase of Tilbury, *Otia Imperialia*, ed. G. W. von Leibnitz, *Scriptores rerum Brunsvicensium* (Hanoverae, 1707–11), I 913; Honorius Augustodunensis, *De imagine mundi*, III (*Patrologia Latina*, 172, 171–4); but these seem to have little relevance.

⁸¹ See, for example, Isidore, *Historia de regibus Gothorum*, 66 (*Patrologia Latina*, 83, 1075); cf. Pliny, *Naturalis historia*, IV, 11 and 12 (40–41 and 80–81); Jordanes, *De origine actibusque Getarum* 4–5 (ed. cit, note 4 above, pp. 60–66). See the excellent account in J. A. Leake, *The Geats of Beowulf* (Madison, Milwaukee, and London, 1967), chs. 1 and 2, where it is shown to be likely that this localisation of the Goths results primarily from the application of the name Getæ to them, and the consequent confusion of the Goths with the Thracian tribe of that name. Jordanes, who seems to have known traditions of the origin of the Goths in Scandinavia, has them migrating in the opposite direction from the Icelandic sources, i.e. from Scandinavia to Asia. On the Icelandic migration

of Scythia. Thus in *Rómverja sögur* ‘per Scythia populos’ (Lucan, *De bello civili* I 367) is translated *um Svíþjóð hina miklu*.⁸² AM 764 4to has the equivalents *Scitia, þat er nú Svíþjóð hin mikla*, and *Cithia, þat kollum vér Svíþjóð hina miklu*.⁸³ *Hauksbók* and AM 194 8vo mention two parts of Svíþjóð hin mikla, one in Europe and one in Asia, both distinct from Svíþjóð in Scandinavia.⁸⁴ Isidore already mentions these two parts of Scythia, the main part in Asia, and Scythia inferior in Europe, north of the Black Sea.⁸⁵ In Icelandic usage the definition *in mikla* is obviously used primarily to distinguish that Svíþjóð from the one in Scandinavia (in AM 194 8vo called Svíþjóð in minni),⁸⁶ and it is easy to see how it might be assumed that the one was settled from the other. This seems to have been explicitly stated in *Skjöldunga saga*, where the original home of the Æsir had a more elaborate name: ‘Svíþjóð hin stóra eða hin kalda.’⁸⁷

The Icelandic use of Svíþjóð to mean Scythia is probably merely a reflection of the tendency of medieval Latin writers to use the word Scythia to mean, or at any rate include, Sweden. Richard of S. Victor writes that the Normans under Rollo, though originally Danish, attacked Germany and Gallia across the sea from Scythia inferior, which here perhaps means (some part of?) Scandinavia.⁸⁸ Theodoricus, quoting this, is uncertain what is meant by Scythia inferior, but says that ‘illam procul dubio volens intelligi superiorem, quam nos Suethiam appellamus’.⁸⁹ Saxo

tradition in general, see Heusler, op. cit. (note 17 above) and A. Holtsmark, *Studier i Snorris Mytologi* (Oslo, 1964), pp. 55–60.

⁸² Ed. cit. (note 58 above), p. 185.

⁸³ *Antiquités Russes* (Copenhagen, 1850–52), II, 444 and 447. Cf. also *Alexanders saga*, ed. Finnur Jónsson (København, 1925), p. 125; *Stjórn*, p. 78; *Alfræði*, I, 36.

⁸⁴ *Hauksbók*, pp. 155, 165; *Alfræði*, I, 8.

⁸⁵ *Etymologiæ*, XIV, 3–4 (*Patrologia Latina*, 82, 500 and 504).

⁸⁶ *Alfræði*, I, 12.

⁸⁷ ‘Ipsi autem Svecia (sic specialius dicta) de nomine earum regionum nomen inditum, unde Odinus cum suis primum emigravit. Huilche ssum ligger Norden for palude Moeotide, og de gammel Norshe kallede Su(i)thiod hin Store eller Kolde’ (Arngrímur Jónsson, *Opera*, I, 333; the second sentence is presumably mostly Arngrímur’s gloss). The name of the original home of the Æsir is not mentioned in *Upphaf allra frásagna* (*Danakonunga sögur*, p. 39). *Ynglinga saga* follows *Skjöldunga saga*, and there the name is *Svíþjóð in mikla eða in kalda* (*Heimskringla*, I, 9). Cf. ‘Scythia frigida’ in *Alfræði*, III, 72.

⁸⁸ *Excerptiones*, I, X, 10, *Patrologia Latina*, 177, 284. According to Dudo of S. Quentin, *De gestis Normanniæ ducum*, II (*Patrologia Latina*, 141, 631), Rollo went to Scandsa insula before invading southern Europe.

⁸⁹ *Monumenta historica Norvegiæ*, ed. G. Storm (Kristiania, 1880), p. 4. Cf. Heusler, op. cit. (note 17 above), pp. 44–5 (114–15).

Grammaticus appears on one occasion conversely to use Svetia to mean Scythia and Adam of Bremen seems to use Scythia to include the whole of Scandinavia as well as other parts of northern Europe.⁹⁰ Other etymological associations that reinforced the connection of Scandinavia with south-east Europe were those of the Dani with the Daci (and Danai) and of the Gautar with the Getæ.⁹¹

The similarity of the words Æsir (Ás-) and Asia undoubtedly encouraged Icelandic speculations on the migration from the south-east, and perhaps led to the particular Icelandic version where the leaders of the migration were (euhemerised) gods. In *Skjöldunga saga* there also seems to have been some association of the gods with the Goths: ‘En þá váru þessi lǫnd er Asiamenn bygðu kǫlluð Goðlǫnd, en folkið Goðþjóð.’⁹² The name Manheimar in *Háleygjatal* implies a Goðheimar, and Snorri in *Ynglinga saga* introduces both names: ‘Þessa Svíþjóð kǫlluðu þeir Mannheima, en ina miklu Svíþjóð kǫlluðu þeir Goðheima.’⁹³ This seems to be an attempt to combine the Goðlǫnd of *Skjöldunga saga* with the account in *Háleygjatal*. Snorri adds the further identification of Tanakvísl (the Don) with a presumably invented Vanakvísl, and an associated Vanaland or Vanenheimr where the Vanir lived.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ *Gesta Danorum*, IX, iv, 29, ed. cit. (note 56 above), I, 259 (here *Suetiæ* is emended to *Scithiæ*); Adam of Bremen, *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum*, I, 62 (64), II, 1, IV, 21, Schol. 130 (125) (pp. 232, 234, 462). Further examples in Heusler, op. cit., p. 44 (114) and Leake, op. cit. (note 81 above), index: ‘Scythia . . . associated with Scandinavia.’ Adam also (op. cit., IV, 21, p. 462), apparently misunderstanding Orosius, *Historiæ*, I, 2 (*Patrologia Latina*, 31, 686) and Solinus, *Collectanea rerum memorabilium*, XX, 1 (ed. T. Mommsen, Berolini 1864, p. 107), gives a description of Svetia that really applies (at least in part) to Scythia; cf. his further account in IV, 25 (p. 468).

⁹¹ See Leake, op. cit., pp. 71 ff. and 98 ff. Paul the Deacon, in his story about Óðinn and Frigg (*Historia Langobardorum*, I, 9, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, *Scriptores rerum Langobardicarum et Italicarum* (Hannoverae, 1878), p. 53), makes the following remark, which might have suggested to a casual reader that the Æsir originated in Greece: ‘Wotan . . . ipse est qui apud Romanos Mercurius dicitur . . . qui non circa haec tempora, sed longe anterieus, nec in Germania, sed in Graecia fuisse perhibetur.’ (The *qui* probably relates in fact to Mercurius rather than Wotan.)

⁹² *Upphaf allra frásagna, Danakonunga sögur*, p. 39.

⁹³ *Heimskringla*, I, 21–2.

⁹⁴ *Heimskringla*, I, 10. The name Tanakvísl otherwise seems only to be mentioned in GkS 1812 4to (*Alfræði*, III, 72), though Tanais (the Don) is often mentioned (*Alfræði*, I, 44, 49, *Hauksbók*, p. 150; see Isidore, *Etymologiæ*, XIV, 4, *Patrologia Latina*, 82, 504).

It is in fact the Vanir who first appear in Icelandic sources in connection with the idea of migration from south-east Europe. The first hint of the idea is found in Ari's genealogy in *Íslendingabók*, which begins 'Yngvi Tyrkjakonungr, Njörðr Svíakonungr'. Ari may be assuming a Thracian origin for the Germanic nations, in accordance with the classical writings quoted above, and perhaps described the inhabitants as Tyrkir because of the similarity in sound between Tyrkir and Trakia; but of course there were Turks near Thrace in his time. But he may also have chosen the Turks because in pseudo-Fredegar both Franks and Turks are said to have been descended from survivors of Troy, and the Turks to have settled near the Danube in the Thracian area; the Turks may also have been associated with the Teucri.⁹⁵

The account of the geography of the world in *Hauksbók* known as *Heimslýsing*, which may have been compiled in the twelfth century, in a passage which otherwise contains standard information similar to that in Isidore's *Etymologiæ*, specifically locates the Turks in Thrace, and claims that from there Sweden was settled.⁹⁶ In the compilation of genealogies from which AM 1 e β II fol. is derived, Óðinn was said to be a king of the Turks.⁹⁷ In *Skjöldunga saga* the Æsir were said to have come from Scythia, perhaps because of the similarity of the name Æsir with Asia, though in the fragment *Upphaf allra frásagna* there is a compromise by which the settlers of the north are described as 'Tyrkir ok Asiamenn'.⁹⁸ In *Ynglinga saga* the Æsir are said to have come from Asia 'fyrir austan Tanakvísl', but they still have connections with Tyrkland.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ See note 108 below. The association of Turci and Teucri in Richard of S. Victor, *Excerptiones* 1. X 1 (*Patrologia Latina* 177, 275 f.) seems, however, to be editorial rather than authorial. Cf. Richard de Saint-Victor, *Liber Exceptionum*, ed. J. Chatillon (Paris, 1958), p. 203. The Turks were already noted as living in the Black Sea area by Pomponius Mela (*De Chorographia*, I, 19, ed. G. Ranstrand (Göteborg, 1971), p. 23), and Aethicus Hister (*Cosmographia*, 32, 57, 62–4, ed. H. Wuttke (Lipsiae, 1853), pp. 18–19, 35, 42–3) gives a lengthy account of them.

⁹⁶ *Hauksbók*, p. 155; *Etymologiæ*, XIV, 4, 6 (*Patrologia Latina*, 82, 505).

⁹⁷ Cf. *Alfræði*, III, 58.

⁹⁸ *Arngrimi Jonæ Opera*, I, 333; *Danakonunga sögur*, p. 39. The clearest statement of the etymological connection of the Æsir with Asia is in AM 162 m fol. (*Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* (Hafniae, 1848–87), II, 636). If this fragment is connected with Sæmundr fróði and is derived from the same source as some of the material in *Skjöldunga saga*, it may be an indication that the theory of the origin of the Æsir in Asia originated with Sæmundr, who in his stay in France could have learned of the Frankish origin legend. Cf. Stefán Karlsson, op. cit. (note 49 above).

⁹⁹ *Heimskringla*, I, 11, 14, 27. There are echoes of the migration legend in

Since the Turks and Trojans are often connected in medieval writings,¹⁰⁰ the connection with Troy may have been implicit already in Ari. But it is only in *Snorra Edda* (and the genealogies that use material derived from the prologue to *Snorra Edda*) that Troy and the Trojans are actually mentioned (and although in the prologue the Æsir come from Troy, i.e. Asia minor, Thrace is still kept in the picture as the realm of Þórr, pp. 3–4). The descent of the Æsir from Priam of Troy in the prologue may simply be the result of the author connecting the statements in Ari and the genealogy from which the lists in AM 1 e β II fol. are derived that the Norse gods were descended from Turks, with the use in *Trójumanna saga* of Tyrkir as a name for the Trojans.¹⁰¹ But it is likely that in introducing Troy as the place of origin of the ancestors of the Scandinavian dynasties he was also influenced by one or more of the many European traditions of the origin of various nations from survivors of the Trojan war.

The model for all such legends of national origins was probably Vergil's account (and those derived from Vergil) of the Trojan settlements in Italy under Æneas and Antenor. But other classical writers suggest that survivors of the fall of Troy were later found dispersed in various areas; Solinus, *Collectanea rerum memorabilium* II 51 and Dio Cassius LI 27 speak of Dardani in Illyria/Dalmatia and Moesia, i.e. the Thracian area (from which in the Middle Ages the Getæ/Goths were supposed to have originated, see above). Such statements gave an opportunity and an excuse for historians of all nations to claim descent from the Trojans. In later times there was a persistent tradition that Britain was founded by Britus or Brutus, grandson of Æneas.¹⁰² (This Britus however seems to have been a rather disreputable lone fugitive, not accompanied by a large following of Trojans.) According to the Book of Hyde, Alfred the Great

Oddr Snorrason, *Saga Ólafs konungs Tryggvasonar*, ed. P. Groth (Christiania, 1895), p. 85; *Ólafs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta* II, ed. Ólafur Halldórsson (København, 1961) p. 136; *Flateyjarbók*, I, 275, 397; cf. Heusler, op. cit. p. 37 (108). In *Alfræði*, I, 49 the words *á hans dögum hófz Svíþjóðar ríki* are followed by *þar réð fyrst sá sem Thaneus hét, við hann er kend á sú er Thanais [heitir], hon skilr Asiam ok Evropam*, so that Svíþjóð here means Scythia rather than Sweden.

¹⁰⁰ Besides pseudo-Fredegar, Aimoin, *Historia Francorum*, I, 2 (see note 112 below); Richard of S. Victor, *Excerptiones*, I, X 1, *Patrologia Latina*, 177, 275 f.; Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum Historiale*, II, 66.

¹⁰¹ Occasionally in *Trójumanna saga* 1963, never in *Trójumanna saga: The Dares Phrygius version*, 1981 (in both the usual term is *Trójumenn*). On the date of *Trójumanna saga* see below.

¹⁰² Nennius, *Historia Brittonum*, pp. 154–5; Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Historia regum Britanniae*, I, 3–16 (pp. 224–49).

was of Trojan descent, for there the genealogy of the West-Saxon kings is linked to British genealogy.¹⁰³ Dudo of S. Quentin, writing about 1020, has the Danes originating from the Trojans, and connects the Dani with both Danai and Daci (again the Thracian area), but makes them descendants of Antenor.¹⁰⁴ He is followed in part by William of Jumièges (c.1070).¹⁰⁵ Widukind, also writing in the eleventh century, reports a tradition that the Saxons originated from the scattered remnants of Alexander the Great's army, while Otfrid had mentioned one that the Franks were related to Alexander himself.¹⁰⁶

One of the most widely reported of such legends is that of the Trojan origin of the Franks. The starting point for this may have been Ammianus Marcellinus, who speaks of traditions that Gaul was settled by scattered Trojans.¹⁰⁷ The earliest accounts of the tradition in the Middle Ages are those in the pseudo-Fredegar chronicle of the seventh century, II 4–6 and III 2.¹⁰⁸ There are a number of striking parallels between these accounts and Icelandic sources. They mention a Memnon or Menon as a supporter of Priam, and tell of the hostile encounters of the infant Frankish nation with the Romans under Pompey, and of a sister-nation also originating from Troy called Torci or Torqui who settled in the Thracian area.¹⁰⁹ According to the second account, the Franks on their arrival in

¹⁰³ *Liber Monasterii de Hyda*, ed E. Edwards (London, 1866; Rolls Series, 45), pp. 28–9.

¹⁰⁴ *De gestis Normanniæ ducum*, I, *Patrologia Latina*, 141, 621.

¹⁰⁵ *Gesta Normannorum ducum*, I, 3, ed. J. Marx (Rouen, 1914), p. 8.

¹⁰⁶ Widukind, *Res Gestæ Saxonicae*, I, 2, ed. P. Hirsch (Hannover, 1935), *Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum* 60, p. 4; *Otfrids Evangelienbuch*, I, 1, 88, ed. O. Erdman (Tübingen, 1957), p. 13.

¹⁰⁷ *Res Gestæ*, XV, 9.5: 'Aiunt quidam paucos post excidium Troiae fugitantes Graecos ubique dispersos loca haec (Gaul) occupasse tunc vacua.'

¹⁰⁸ Ed. B. Krusch, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, *Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum*, II (Hannoverae, 1888), pp. 45–6 and 93. There are good general accounts of Frankish tradition in K. L. Roth, 'Die Trojasage der Franken,' *Germania*, I, ed. F. Pfeiffer (Stuttgart, 1856), pp. 34–52; and M. Klippel, *Die Darstellung der Fränkischen Trojanersage in Geschichtsschreibung und Dichtung vom Mittelalter bis zur Renaissance in Frankreich* (Marburg, 1936).

¹⁰⁹ Cf. *Snorra Edda* 4 (Munon/Mennon); *Heimskringla*, I, 14 (Romans drive Æsir north); *Snorra Edda*, *Codex Wormianus*, p. 6 (Pompey as leader of the Romans); AM 1 e β II fol., 85v, 86v (= *Alfræði*, III, 58; Óðinn king of the Turks, flees from Romans); Ari's genealogy in *Íslendingabók* (Yngvi king of the Turks); *Heimslýsing*, *Hauksbók*, p. 155 (Turks in Thrace). Cf. the passages from Solinus and Dio Cassius referred to above.

Europe built a new Troy near the Rhine.¹¹⁰ According to *Liber Historiæ Francorum* fugitives from Troy under Priam and Antenor settled in the Scythian area north of the Black Sea before migrating further into Europe.¹¹¹ Many of these details reappear in later writers, such as Aimoin (d. 1008), *Historia Francorum* I 1 and 2.¹¹²

A rather different story appears in Aethicus Hister and the ‘Origo Francorum’ that is found as a preface to the *Lex Salica* and is briefly referred to in some manuscripts of pseudo-Fredegar in an interpolation that is attributed to ‘Dares Phrygius’.¹¹³ Here Francus and Vassus, descended from the royal line of Troy, fight Romulus, are overcome, and flee to Germany to found the nation of the Franks.

References to the Trojan origin of the Franks are found widely throughout the Middle Ages (and later), e.g. in Paul the deacon, *Historia Langobardorum* VI 23 and *Liber de episcopis Mettensibus*;¹¹⁴ Otto von Freising, *Chronica* I 25–6, IV 32, VI 28;¹¹⁵ Honorius Augustodunensis, *De imagine mundi* I 29;¹¹⁶ Godfrey of Viterbo, *Pantheon*;¹¹⁷ Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum Historiale* II 66 (where their sister-nation the Turks also appear again).

It is not at all certain that the tradition of the Trojan origin of the Franks was known in medieval Iceland, at least in the detailed form in which it appears in pseudo-Fredegar. In spite of the parallels noted above in Icelandic sources, the story of the origin of the Æsir in Troy in the prologue to *Snorra Edda* is not really very similar to any of the Frankish accounts; some of the details in the prologue that seem similar are better explained as the result of the influence of *Trójumanna saga* and *Breta sögur* (see below; this applies to the name Munon/Mennon and the building of the new Troy). Others are perhaps the result of coincidence and do not really

¹¹⁰ Cf. *Snorra Edda*, 6–7; but the prologue’s account of the new Troy is likely to be influenced more by *Breta sögur* and *Trójumanna saga*, see below.

¹¹¹ Ed. B. Krusch, op. cit. (note 108 above), pp. 241 ff. The book is sometimes called *Gesta (regum) Francorum*. Cf. *Skjöldunga saga*, *Arngrimi Jonæ Opera*, I, 333.

¹¹² *Patrologia Latina*, 139, 637–9.

¹¹³ *Passiones Vitaeque Sanctorum Aevi Merovingici*, ed. B. Krusch and W. Levison, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, *Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum*, VII (Hannoverae et Lipsiae, 1920), 524–8; pseudo-Fredegar, *Chronica*, ed. cit. (note 108 above), pp. 199 f.

¹¹⁴ *Historia Langobardorum*, ed. cit. (note 91 above), p. 172; *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, *Scriptores in folio*, II (Hannoverae, 1829), 264.

¹¹⁵ Ed. cit. (note 69 above), pp. 56–9, 224, 291.

¹¹⁶ *Patrologia Latina*, 172, 130.

¹¹⁷ *Patrologia Latina*, 198, 919–20 and 1028; *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, *Scriptores in folio*, XXII (Hannoverae, 1872), 201 and 301.

point to pseudo-Fredegar as a specific source. Moreover, when the author of the prologue wished to include the Franks in his account, the genealogy by which he links them to the other Germanic and Scandinavian nations is not a Frankish one and is totally unrelated to Frankish sources: it is the Völsung genealogy, which is only found in Icelandic sources.

In fact only two of the European legends about Trojan ancestry seem to be mentioned in vernacular Norse writings, the Roman and the British. The former appears in *Veraldar saga*, in one version of *Rómverja sögur*, and in the version of the prologue to *Snorra Edda* in Codex Wormianus.¹¹⁸ Both are found in *Breta sögur* (which is a translation of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia*), and both are mentioned in *Trójumanna saga* and in AM 764 4to (the story of Britus/Brutus is referred to at the end of the same fragment that also contains *Upphaf allra frásagna*, thought to derive from the beginning of *Skjöldunga saga*).¹¹⁹

Breta sögur and *Trójumanna saga* appear side by side in manuscripts and there seem to be verbal echoes of both in the prologue to *Snorra Edda*. Óðinn's establishment of the Æsir in Sweden is described in the prologue as follows:

Skipaði hann þar höfðingjum ok í þá líking sem verit hafði í Tróju, setti xii höfuðmenn í staðinum at dæma landslög ok svá skipaði hann réttum öllum sem fyrr höfðu verit í Tróju ok Tyrkir varu vanir.¹²⁰

At the end of *Trójumanna saga* we find:

Þau Helenus ok Antromaca tóku ríkit ok efldu þar mikla borg í eptirlíking Trojam.¹²¹

In *Breta sögur* the foundation of London is described thus:

Brito lét borg gera í líking eptir Tróju . . . hann lét þá borg kalla Tróju ena nýju.¹²²

¹¹⁸ *Veraldar saga*, pp. 46 ff.; *Rómverja sögur*, ed. cit. (note 58 above), pp. 382 and 385; *Snorra Edda*, *Codex Wormianus*, 6.

¹¹⁹ *Breta sögur*, ed. Jón Sigurðsson, *Annaler for nordisk Oldkyndighed og Historie* 1848, pp. 102 ff. and 124 ff.; *Hauksbók*, pp. 231 ff. and 238 ff.; *Trójumanna saga*, pp. 215 and 238; *Fornmanna sögur*, XI, 416; see Jónas Kristjánsson, *Um Fóstbræðrasögu* (Reykjavík, 1972), p. 249.

¹²⁰ *Snorra Edda*, 6–7 (cf. also 20/4 ff.).

¹²¹ p. 235. See Vergil, *Aeneid*, III, 335 ff., 349 ff., 497 f.

¹²² Ed. cit., p. 140; *Hauksbók*, p. 244 (Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Historia regum Britanniae*, I, 17, p. 252, where however there is nothing corresponding to the words *í líking eptir Tróju*). Cf. the pseudo-Fredegar chronicle, III, 2 (ed. cit., note 108 above, p. 93).

The idea of a new Troy/Ásgarðr is implied also in Snorri's phrases *í Ásgarði inum forna, Ásgarð hinn forna ok þau ríki er þar liggja til, inn forna Ásgarð*.¹²³

In the prologue Þórr/Tror is described thus:

Svá var hann fagr álitum er hann kom með öðrum mǫnnum sem þá er fílsbein er grafit í eik.¹²⁴

In one version of *Breta sögur* Askanius is described thus:

Svá var til jafnað hans fegrð ok bjartleik hjá öðrum mǫnnum sem hit hvítasta fílsbein væri skorit í surtar brand.¹²⁵

It is rather surprising to find Þórr of all the gods described in such terms, but it is worth noting that the description in *Breta sögur* also refers to a man; such hyperbolic descriptions usually relate to women, as in the account of Estrilldis in the same saga:

Svá var hon hǫrundljós at því var til jafnað sem nýfallinn snær eða fílsbein eða gras þat er lilium heitir.¹²⁶

Trójumanna saga is based principally on Dares Phrygius, *De Excidio Trojæ* and the Latin version of the *Iliad* by the author known as Pindarus Thebanus, sometimes called Homerus Latinus.¹²⁷ It is uncertain when the saga was compiled, but in manuscripts it is associated with *Breta sögur*, and both may have been written about 1200 (Gunnlaugr Leifsson, d. c.1220, is said to be the author of *Merlínússpá*, a verse translation of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Prophecies of Merlin*, and it is likely that *Breta sögur* was either already in existence or was written soon after). *Veraldar saga* and *Trójumanna saga* share some divergences from Dares Phrygius

¹²³ *Snorra Edda*, 10, 17; *Heimskringla*, I, 22. Cf. *Snorra Edda*, 16/20 and footnote: *Ásgarðr, þat kǫllum vér Troja*.

¹²⁴ *Snorra Edda*, 4.

¹²⁵ Ed. cit., p. 116, note 3, corrected (= Vergil, *Æneid*, X, 135–7).

¹²⁶ p. 142, cf. notes 8 and 9 (Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Historia regum Britanniae*, II, 2, p. 254). Both these quotations are of the text of the saga as it appears in AM 573 4to. Cf. *Forn sögur Suðrlanda*, ed. G. Cederschiöld (Lund, 1884), p. xxiii, where other comparable descriptions of both men and women in romances are quoted.

¹²⁷ *Daretis Phrygii De Excidio Troiae Historia*, ed. F. Meister (Lipsiae, 1873); *Homerus Latinus id est Baebii Italici Ilias Latina*, ed. F. Vollmer (Lipsiae, 1913; *Poetae Latini Minores*, II, 3, second edition). See H. Dunger, *Die Saga vom trojanischen Kriege* (Leipzig, 1869), pp. 74 ff.; W. Greif, *Die mittelalterlichen Bearbeitungen der Trojansage* (Marburg, 1886), pp. 147 ff; and further, the article *Trójumanna saga* in *Kulturhistotisk leksikon for nordisk middelalder*, XVIII (København, 1974), 652–5.

that could mean that *Trójumanna saga* was known to the author of *Veraldar saga* (fragments of which survive in manuscripts written about 1200).¹²⁸ *Trójumanna saga* is also thought to have been known to the authors of *Gunnlaugs saga* and *Vápnfirðinga saga*, and perhaps also to the author of *Skjöldunga saga*, though in the case of the last it may have been the Latin original that was used.¹²⁹ So there is no reason to think it impossible for chronological reasons, on the evidence at present available, that the prologue to *Snorra Edda* was both influenced by *Trójumanna saga* and written by Snorri Sturluson (d. 1241).

What is rather surprising about the account of the origin in Troy in the prologue, especially if the author used *Trójumanna saga*, is that it gives such a curious picture of the Trojan background, which lacks all details about the Trojan war and mentions none of the well-known Trojan or Greek heroes except Priam. Those names that do appear have no authority in any of the traditional accounts of the Trojan war. It is perhaps possible that the author thought *Trójumanna saga* was well enough known for him not to need to mention any of the standard details of the story, so that he could just introduce the figures he needed for his genealogy. But the result looks rather more like the consequence of ignorance or confusion than selection. There is not even any mention of the fall of Troy itself, or of the Greek invaders, and the migration to Scandinavia, which takes place many generations after the time of Priam, has very weak motivation (in the version of the prologue in Codex Wormianus, as in *Ynglinga saga*

¹²⁸ See *Veraldar saga*, p. xlvi. It is thought that *Veraldar saga* was compiled soon after the middle of the twelfth century, and certainly before 1190. There are reasons, however, to doubt whether there is a literary connection between *Trójumanna saga* and *Veraldar saga* (*Trójumanna saga* 1981, p. LII).

¹²⁹ See *Íslenzk fornrit*, III (Reykjavík, 1938), liii, and XI (Reykjavík, 1950), xvii and xxvi f.; Bjarni Guðnason, op. cit. (note 16 above), p. 261. Maureen Thomas, in unpublished work on *Breta sögur*, has found indications that *Breta sögur* was known to the translator of *Tristrams saga* (supposed to have been compiled in 1226). It seems also to have been known to the author of *Egils saga*, see Bjarni Einarsson, op. cit. (note 27 above), pp. 234–5. On the connection of *Trójumanna saga* with *Vápnfirðinga saga*, see Jon Helgason, 'Paris i Troja, Þorsteinn på Borg och Brodd-Helgi på Hof,' *Nordiska Studier i Filologi och Lingvistik, Festskrift tillägnad Gösta Holm* (Lund, 1976), pp. 192–4. The correspondences between *Snorra Edda* and *Trójumanna saga* seem generally to relate to what seems to be the later version of the saga. But even though the archetype of the two versions of the saga is likely to have been written not much before 1250 (*Trójumanna saga* 1981, p. LVI), many scholars still believe that the translation was originally made about 1200.

and the compilation of genealogies from which AM 1 e β II fol. is derived, it is the hostility of the Romans that causes the Æsir to travel north—a detail in which these sources seem to show affinity with the pseudo-Fredegær account of the origin of the Franks). The name Tyrkir is frequently used in *Trójumanna saga* for the Trojans and Tyrkland is occasionally used for their country (cf. note 101 above), but the only Trojan name that has any classical basis in the whole of the account in the prologue is that of Priam. The other names seem to have been picked more or less at random and the accounts given of the persons they are attached to have no connection with genuine tradition at all. There is no known source for any part of the Munon/Mennon story.

The one really specific piece of information about Troy given in the prologue, that there were twelve kingdoms and twelve languages, also has no authority.¹³⁰ The number recurs in the account of the new Troy later in the prologue, and in *Gylfaginning* there are said to be twelve Æsir, though to make the following list tally it is necessary to count Óðinn as separate and leave out Loki (or include these two and leave out Njörðr and Freyr, who were not Æsir but Vanir; though Njörðr is counted among the Æsir when he is introduced).¹³¹ In *Skáldskaparmál* the list of twelve Æsir similarly excludes Óðinn (and Baldr and Höðr, though since Nanna is among the Ásynjur this cannot be because the episode takes place after Baldr's death), but has in addition Hœnir and includes Loki.¹³² Óðinn is given twelve names in *Gylfaginning*.¹³³ In *Ynglinga saga* there are said to be twelve *hofgoðar* (v.l. *hofðingjar*) among the Æsir, in Snorri's *Óláfs saga helga* twelve advisers to the king at Uppsala, and there are twelve *spekingar* in *Heiðreks saga*.¹³⁴ The number twelve in these places was presumably used to recall the New Testament.

¹³⁰ *Snorra Edda*, 4/2–4. All manuscripts read *hofuðtungur* at 4/4, and it is not at all certain that this is an error for *hofðingjar*. *Þessir hofðingjar* in the next sentence could well refer back to the twelve kings implied by 4/2, and the author of the prologue elsewhere shows great interest in questions of language and language differences (3/4, 7/15–19; note also all the alternative names in the prologue, where the author gives supposedly native and foreign forms side by side). The author may well wish us to believe that the twelve kings who ruled over many nations (*mörg þjóðlond*) all spoke different languages.

¹³¹ *Snorra Edda*, 7/1, 27/11, 30/4; cf. also 20/8.

¹³² *Snorra Edda*, 78. Cf. *Gautreks saga*, *Fornaldar sögur Norðrlanda*, ed. C. C. Rafn (Kaupmannahöfn, 1829–30) III, 32 and *Hyndluljóð*, 29 (*PE*, 293).

¹³³ *Snorra Edda*, 10/13 ff.

¹³⁴ *Heimskringla*, I, 11, II, 152; *The Saga of King Heiðrek the Wise*, ed. C. Tolkien (London, 1960), p. 31. Cf. Holtmark, *op. cit.* (note 81 above), p. 58; F. Jónsson, *Den oldnorske og oldislandske Litteraturs Historie*, II (København, 1923), 682–3.

Trójumanna saga was also used by the compiler of the interpolations in the version of the prologue to *Snorra Edda* in Codex Wormianus. Some of the information about classical mythology there uses an account similar to that in the mythological preface to the saga now only preserved in *Hauksbók*; details about Cerberus and the impregnability of Troy by ordinary means (i.e. except by treachery) correspond to later parts of the saga.¹³⁵

Troy appears in four other places in *Snorra Edda*. In two places in *Gylfaginning* there is reference to old Ásgarðr, expressly identified in the second case in three of the four manuscripts with Troy.¹³⁶ Even without this identification however, the *borg í miðjum heimi* and *Ásgarð hinn forna ok þau ríki er þar liggja til* clearly refer to the prologue.¹³⁷ Then at the end of *Gylfaginning*, the myths that have been related are said to be allegories of events at Troy, and Þórr is now identified with Hector and Loki with Ulixes. These two names could have been taken from *Veraldar saga* or *Trójumanna saga*, and as in the prologue there is no great knowledge of the Troy story shown, except for the information that Ulixes was especially hated by the Trojans. This passage is not in the Uppsala manuscript. Finally, in the so-called epilogue in *Skáldskaparmál* there is a longer passage (also lacking in the Uppsala manuscript), again stating that Norse myths are allegories of events in the Troy story.¹³⁸ Here more knowledge of the story is shown: the killing of Hector by Achilles, of Achilles by Alexander, and of Priam by Pyrrhus, and the burning of Troy are all mentioned. This information could all have come from *Trójumanna saga*.¹³⁹ There are also some remarkable misunderstandings and lack of correspondence: no source is known for Röddrus, and the words *ráku í braut Elenum* conflict both with *Trójumanna saga* and *Veraldar saga*, where Helenus is the supporter of Hector's sons in their recovery of Troy.¹⁴⁰ Nevertheless, *Trójumanna saga* was certainly known to the author

¹³⁵ *Snorra Edda*, Codex Wormianus, 4–6; *Trójumanna saga*, 1–4, 30–34, 97/2–4, 217–8. For the earlier interpolation in Codex Wormianus (pp. 2–3), cf. *Veraldar saga*, p. 14; *Heimsaldrar, Alfræði*, I, 49; and *Stjórn*, pp. 64, 66–7, 100–02. See Heusler, op. cit. (note 17 above), pp. 73–4 (138).

¹³⁶ *Snorra Edda*, 10 and 16–17. Cf. *inn forna Ásgarð* in *Ynglinga saga* (*Heimskringla*, I, 22).

¹³⁷ *Snorra Edda*, 3/20–4/3.

¹³⁸ *Snorra Edda*, 86/20–88/3.

¹³⁹ pp. 231, 183, 209, 229, 201. Codex Wormianus has correctly that Alexander killed Achilles; Codex Regius and the Utrecht manuscript make Elenus also responsible.

¹⁴⁰ *Snorra Edda*, 87/17 and 88/3; *Trójumanna saga*, 236–7, *Veraldar saga*, p. 46.

of this passage, as is shown by the name Volucrontem, found otherwise only in the *Hauksbók* text of the saga, where it is an error for Polypoetes.¹⁴¹ This part of *Hauksbók* is in Haukr's own hand and was probably written between 1302 and 1310. The oldest manuscript of *Snorra Edda* that contains the account of Volucrontem is the Codex Regius, written in the first half of the fourteenth century. Many scholars hold that the 'epilogue' is an addition to Snorri's text of *Skáldskaparmál*, but it could have been written by him, and the spelling Volucrontem could have been known to him from an earlier manuscript of *Trójumanna saga* that no longer survives. The mention of *fyrir stalla Þórs* as the place where Priam was killed is also obviously derived from the saga.¹⁴²

All the references to the Troy story in *Snorra Edda* are thus a strange mixture of genuine tradition and fantasy or ignorance. The author had no excuse for ignorance of the Troy story. Even if he did not know Latin, and even if *Trójumanna saga* was not available, there was a perfectly good summary of the story in *Veraldar saga*.¹⁴³

There are some unusual features about the Icelandic migration legend. Unlike the comparable European stories, it uses euhemerised gods as leaders of the migration, and this is reminiscent of Irish tradition.¹⁴⁴ They travel, according to the prologue to *Snorra Edda*, because with their gift of prophecy they foresee that their future lies in the North. They are said to have brought a new language with them. This makes the legend seem rather like a dim memory of some real migration in pre-historic times, but the obvious influence of written learned continental traditions, though undigested, makes it unlikely that it is any more than a rather unusual imitation of them.

The first and last parts of the prologue to *Snorra Edda*, which discuss the origin of heathen religion and tell of the settlement of northern Europe, are, in the context of medieval philosophy and historiography, admirable pieces of writing. But the middle part, with its muddled Troy story and obviously artificial genealogy, is, like the 'epilogue' in *Skáldskaparmál*, such a confusion of fact and fantasy that scholars have been reluctant to believe it is actually Snorri's work. It has been thought unlikely that so sophisticated a writer would be guilty of such naive nonsense, especially when he had

¹⁴¹ *Snorra Edda*, 87/8, *Trójumanna saga*, 179. The other manuscripts of the saga have here Volocroerthen and Voluentem. At *Trójumanna saga*, 61 the forms Poliberius and Polidares appear for the same person.

¹⁴² *Snorra Edda*, 87/32, *Trójumanna saga*, 209 and 229.

¹⁴³ *Veraldar saga*, pp. 44–6. Cf. also *Hauksbók*, p. 155 and *Alexanders saga*, ed. cit. (note 83 above), pp. 15–16.

¹⁴⁴ See A. Nutt, *The Voyage of Bran* (London, 1895–7), I, 232–3, and II, 165 ff.

access to reliable sources of information. In fact the inept introduction of Troy into an account of Norse mythology has probably been the chief reason why the prologue has so often been assumed to be mainly the work of a later redactor of Snorri's work, while the more restrained *Ynglinga saga*, which virtually excludes all non-Norse matter, has been thought much more typical of the 'real' Snorri. It might, however, be maintained that the middle part of the prologue to *Snorra Edda* is no more naive and muddled than the pseudo-Fredegar chronicle or Nennius's *Historia Brittonum* or Dudo of S. Quentin. Even the strangely unheroic action of Tror/Þórr in killing his foster-father is in fact reminiscent of the career of Britus/Brutus, founder of Britain, who killed his own father and had to flee.¹⁴⁵ Nor does it seem possible to assume that the story is intended to be a joke, or a deliberate falsification of tradition (there seems no good motive), though the introduction of the plausible-sounding alternatives Munon/Mennon (along with Tror/Þórr, Óðinn/Voden) looks suspiciously ingenious; or that the author is deliberately trying to portray heathen tradition as childish and unworthy of respect. Whether or not the prologue is Snorri's work, it is a less mature piece of writing than *Ynglinga saga*.

It is not necessary to assume a close relationship between the various versions in Old Icelandic of the tradition of the origin in the south-east and either the Frankish or any other particular continental version of the idea. The first suggestions for the idea of a migration to Scandinavia from the Black sea area could have come from the scattered references in classical and later authors to the origins of the Germanic nations, particularly the Goths, there; the localisation in Troy could have been a rather naive imitation of any of the continental accounts of Trojan origin, aided by the association of Turks, who happen to have been chosen by Ari as the nation from which the Scandinavian gods originated, with Trojans in *Trójumanna saga* and elsewhere. It is thus that Icelandic genealogies go back not only to Norse gods but also to the Trojans, as well as tracing the line of the Trojan kings back through Greek gods to Noah and Adam. They have as noble an ancestry as anyone in Europe.

¹⁴⁵ *Snorra Edda*, 4. See Nennius, *Historia Brittonum*, p. 155 and Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Historia regum Britanniae*, I, 3 (p. 224); *Breta sögur*, ed. cit. (note 119 above), p. 124. The prophecy by which Óðinn is directed to his new realms in the north (*Snorra Edda*, 5) might also be compared with the prophetic dream that directs Britus/Brutus to Britain (*Historia regum Britanniae*, I, 11, p. 239; *Breta sögur*, 132). The name Loricus (*Snorra Edda*, 4) is rather similar to Locrinus, the name of Brutus's son in Geoffrey of Monmouth and *Breta sögur*; in one place the *Hauksbók* text actually has the form Loricus (*Breta sögur*, 144).

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Originally published in *Mediaeval Scandinavia* 11 (1978–9 [1983]), pp. 92–125. Now corrected and with many additional references.