



SAGA-BOOK

VOL. XXI

VIKING SOCIETY FOR NORTHERN RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON

1982-85

SAGA-BOOK OF THE VIKING SOCIETY

Vol. XXI 1982-1985

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TWO LOST SAGAS

By JUDITH JESCH

THE lost literature of medieval Iceland has left behind various traces. Some of these are notes or scribbblings in the margins of manuscripts, or on their blank pages, cryptic references to sagas we no longer can identify; others can be found in those texts which have survived into our time. Such traces can be analysed to obtain evidence of this lost literature. The purpose of such a study is not merely accumulative, however, to add to the glory of Iceland and the Icelanders by increasing the number of sagas. Studying lost sagas forces us to look more closely at those which still exist, and sheds oblique light on the surviving literature. This article¹ will consider two instances in which scholars have proposed a lost *Íslendingasaga* as the source of an existing text.

Positing a lost source is often a refuge of commentators trying to explain the inexplicable. In the study of Old Norse literature, the question of sources, whether they were written or oral, native or foreign, has been a major topic of discussion and has figured in most of the academic dogfights of the last hundred years. When there is so much dissension about the status of existing sources, the investigation of those which are lost would seem a difficult and unrewarding exercise. Yet most lost sagas are only accessible if they were used, to a greater or lesser degree, in works that still exist, so their investigation cannot be separated from the general problem.

Before a lost saga is posited as a source for a particular work, it should first be shown that the work made use of sagas still extant; there must be very good reasons for postulating a lost saga as a source for a text that did not otherwise, as far as we know, draw on earlier works. It is also useful to investigate the way in which extant sagas were used, as this can provide indications as to how the author might have treated a putative lost source.

The first place to look for the influence of a lost *Íslendingasaga* is in other *Íslendingasögur*, since their interrelationship and dependence on one another are widely acknowledged. In the case of existing sources, specific verbal parallels can show that the author of a later work was influenced by an earlier one, but this course is not available when the source is a postulated lost saga.

In the absence of an argument from verbal parallels, all other possibilities must be exhausted before a lost saga can be assumed with confidence as a source for an existing one.

I believe Sigurður Nordal did not have strong enough reasons for his, admittedly hesitant, assumption that there was once a **Porsteins saga Kuggasonar* which was a source for *Bjarnar saga Híttdælakappa* (*Borgfirðinga sögur* 1938, lxxxiii-iii). The possibility that such a saga once existed cannot be denied but most of the points that suggest such a possibility can be explained in some other way. Þorsteinn is introduced in ch. 27 of *Bjarnar saga*:

Þorsteinn hét maðr ok var Kuggason; hann bjó í Ljárskógum. Hann var auðigr maðr at fé ok vel kynjaðr ok þótti vera ójafnaðarmaðr; hann var mægðr við gøfga menn ok góða drengi. Þorfinna hét kona hans ok var næstabrœðra Þórdísi, konu Bjarnar.

He plays a major part in the rest of the story; first he is co-opted on to Þórðr's side of the feud, then he attempts to mediate between Bjørn and Þórðr, and finally he makes a settlement for Bjørn's death. According to Nordal (*Borgfirðinga sögur* 1938, lxxxii), the way in which Þorsteinn is introduced suggests that the author knew more about him than he thought necessary to relate, particularly as Þorsteinn's genealogy in the saga is so sketchy. Nordal also believed that some of the characters in the latter part of the work may have come from a lost **Porsteins saga*, arguing that the section which begins with the arrival of Þorsteinn on the scene, is much the best part of the saga, in terms of style and artistry (*Borgfirðinga sögur* 1938, lxxvi).

One of the major problems when dealing with *Bjarnar saga* is that it exists in only one medieval fragment, and several early modern copies, none of which are complete. Even when these are put together, we find the first five chapters of the saga are summary, and there is a lacuna in the middle. The lack of a detailed introduction for Þorsteinn and his sketchy genealogy may therefore have something to do with manuscript preservation: it is conceivable that such information was in a part of the original text now missing. It is not unknown for a character to be introduced in the beginning of a saga, and then reintroduced when he first plays an active part in events if that is much later.

In ch. 34 of *Bjarnar saga*, Þorkell Eyjólfsson, who plays a major role in the settlement which concludes the narrative, is described as a *frændi* and *bræðrungr* of Þorsteinn Kuggason, but the relationship is not explained in more detail. However, Þorkell is a well-known figure from other sagas (he is Guðrún's fourth husband in

Laxdæla saga) and both he and Þorsteinn were grandsons of Þórð gellir, and thus members of a well-known family. The author of *Bjarnar saga* may not have felt the need to explain such a well-known relationship. Moreover, Nordal himself assumed that the author of *Bjarnar saga* made use of local genealogies from Breiðafjörður as a source (*Borgfirðinga sögur* 1938, lxxx), and if this was so, he need not have turned to a lost **Þorsteins saga* to discover the relationship with Þorkell Eyjólfsson.

Nordal thought (*Borgfirðinga sögur* 1938, lxxxii-iii) that the names of the people (in *Bjarnar saga* ch. 27) visited by Þorsteinn before he was waylaid by the storm at Björn's farm could have come from the lost saga:

Um vetrinn eptir, fyrir jólin, bjósk Þorsteinn til ferðar til at sækja jólaveizlu til Dálks ok ríðr nú á Ströndina út til Þorgeirs Steinssonar, frænda síns, á Breiðabólstað, ok latti hann Þorstein suðrferðar, ef hann vildi hans ráð hafa. Þorsteinn vill ekki annat en fara, ok fór hann með tólf menn. Þar var Þorfinna, kona hans, með honum; hon var dóttir Vermundar ór Vatnsfirði. Þau fóru á Dunkaðarstaði til gistingar, til Qzurar, fður Kálfs, en fara um daginn eptir suðr á Knappafellsheiði, en gistu á Hafsstöðum í Knappadal. Þar bjó sá maðr, er Hafr hét.

Hafr sounds suspiciously like a character made up on the basis of a farm-name, and there is no reason why the author of *Bjarnar saga* should not have done this himself. It is not clear why these people are mentioned at this point. The author could just as easily have made them up to create some artificial suspense, as introduced them merely because they were in his source. In any case, we know so little about saga-authors' sources for their innumerable characters, that three minor characters who are no more than names and who could come from local Breiðafjörður traditions or genealogies do not justify our assuming a lost saga as a source.

According to Nordal (*Borgfirðinga sögur* 1938, lxxvi), the last part of *Bjarnar saga* (chs. 27-34), starting with the appearance of Þorsteinn, is "langbeztu hluti sögunnar", where "höfundi vex megin í stíl og list". He also thought the section including Þorsteinn brought "meiri stórmennska, meiri listarbragur" into the tale (*Borgfirðinga sögur* 1938, lxxxiii). Such aesthetic judgments are of course subjective, whether we are concerned with the beauties of the saga's style or of Þorsteinn's actions. It is not possible to use such literary judgments as an argument for a lost source. It may simply be that the author really did increase in skill as he got further into the saga, or it may be that he found the events in the latter part more interesting. Perhaps someone else finished the

saga? The possibilities are many.

Þorsteinn Kuggason appears in several other sagas, where he is always a minor character, or is only mentioned in passing. In *Eyrbyggja saga* ch. 65 (1935, 180) he is described in the same breath as Þorgils Hǫlluson:

Snorri goði bjó í Tungu tuttugu vetr, ok hafði hann fyrst heldr ǫfundsamt setr, meðan þeir lifðu stórbokkarnir, Þorsteinn Kuggason ok Þorgils Hǫlluson ok enn fleiri inir stærri menn, þeir er óvinir hans váru.

Now it seems fairly likely that there once existed a saga about Þorgils Hǫlluson, since it is named in *Laxdæla saga* ch. 67 (1934, 199):

Sæzk var á víg þessi, sem í sögu Þorgils Hǫllusonar segir.

There is, of course, a temptation to think there was one about Þorsteinn, too. Nordal (*Borgfirðinga sögur* 1938, lxxxii) considered that the silence of the author of *Eyrbyggja saga* about these feuds might indicate that he felt they had been treated adequately elsewhere, which might perhaps suggest there were sagas about these men. This, again, is pure conjecture. One could just as easily argue that he wrote no more about Þorsteinn and Þorgils because he knew no more about them.

Þorsteinn is mentioned a few times in *Laxdæla saga*, and appears in a longer scene in ch. 75 along with Þorkell Eyjólfsson, in the episode in which the cousins try to force Halldórr Ólafsson into selling some land by sitting on his cloak, one on either side of him (1934, 218-21). This episode has a literary purpose in that it contrasts Þorsteinn's hot temper and Þorkell's good sense and cool-headedness, thus reinforcing our favourable view of him as a husband for Guðrún. The contrast is underlined by Halldórr's prophecy that Þorsteinn will die an ignoble death. In the next chapter, Þorkell dies tragically, but innocently, by drowning. The author of *Laxdæla saga* clearly used the family relationship between the two men as a base on which to build the contrast of personalities his narrative required. It is therefore unnecessary to seek the source of Þorsteinn's appearances in *Laxdæla saga* in anything other than the author's imagination.

Þorsteinn also appears briefly in chs. 7 and 8 of *Fóstbræðra saga* (1925-7, 39-44), in which he prosecutes and outlaws Þorgeirr Hávarsson for the killing of Þorgils Máksson. There seems no reason to suppose that the source for this was a lost **Þorsteins saga*.

Apart from *Bjarnar saga*, the work in which Þorsteinn appears

most often is *Grettis saga*, which is not surprising, since Þorsteinn and Grettir were second cousins. The author of *Grettis saga* made use of quite a few sagas which still exist, and it is tempting to assume that he also knew a lost saga about Þorsteinn Kuggason. However, there is also much in *Grettis saga* which cannot have had any other source than the author's imagination. Moreover, his attitude to his known saga-sources was quite free. This can be seen in chs. 26 and 27, which relate the same episode as the one in *Fóstbræðra saga* chs. 7 and 8. Jónas Kristjánsson (1972, 230-3) has established that *Fóstbræðra saga* was a source for *Grettis saga* and that must be where the episode comes from. Yet a comparison of the two sagas shows that the author has embroidered the scene and made it much longer.

Þorsteinn appears regularly in *Grettis saga*, giving refuge and help to Grettir in his outlawry. This is probably adequately explained by their relationship, but could also have been due to influence from *Bjarnar saga*, which was known to the author of *Grettis saga*, since it is cited in ch. 58. In ch. 57, it is described how, on one occasion, Þorsteinn sent Grettir to stay with Björn Hítðelakappi, when he no longer felt able to hide him:

Fór hann þá vestr til Borgarfjarðar ok þaðan til Breiðafjarðardala ok leitaði ráða við Þorstein Kuggason, hvert hann skyldi þá á leita. En Þorsteini þótti nú fjölgask mótstöðumenn hans, ok kvað fá mundu við honum taka, – “en fara máttu suðr á Mýrar ok vita, hvat þar býr fyrir.” Grettir fór nú suðr á Mýrar um haustit.

Nordal (*Borgfirðinga sögur* 1938, lxxxi) felt that this suggested there might have been another source besides *Bjarnar saga* which described the friendship between Þorsteinn and Björn. According to *Bjarnar saga*, he argued, Grettir stayed with Björn before Björn's acquaintance with Þorsteinn began, so that version of events gave no grounds for thinking that Þorsteinn sent Grettir to Björn. This interpretation, however, assumes that Þorsteinn did not know Björn before their meeting in the storm, but that is neither stated nor implied in *Bjarnar saga*, nor is it likely that the two men, who were fairly important in the district, did not at least know of each other. In any case, Þorsteinn does not actually send Grettir to Björn, but only *suðr á Mýrar*.

The longest reference to Þorsteinn Kuggason is in ch. 53 of *Grettis saga*, which tells of an occasion when Grettir stayed with him at Ljárskógar. It describes a fantastic bridge Þorsteinn made, hung with rings and bells, which rang and gave warning if anyone crossed the bridge. Þorsteinn finally sends Grettir away because he is not willing to work. Although there are parallels to this

fantastic bridge in the *Hauksbók* preface to *Trójumanna saga* (1963, 5), and in *Piðreks saga* (1905-11, II 239), it is not clear what the immediate source for this chapter was. The episode seems most likely to have been put together by the author of *Grettis saga*. The chapter serves to reiterate Grettir's laziness when faced with work, and fits this into a pattern which recurs in the saga — that of Grettir going from farm to farm, and always having to leave when his enemies hear that he is there.

The death of Þorsteinn Kuggason is mentioned in ch. 67, with no further details given, and he is thus "out of this saga".

Since the author of *Grettis saga* knew and used not only *Bjarnar saga*, but also *Laxdæla saga* and most likely *Fóstbræðra saga* (*Grettis saga* 1936, xxv-vi; Jónas Kristjánsson 1972, 230-3), it seems probable that his source for the character of Þorsteinn Kuggason was a combination of these and his copious imagination.

There seem to be no compelling reasons for believing that there once was a saga about Þorsteinn Kuggason. Even the editors of the *Íslenzk fornrit* series, famous for hunting every possible source down to the ground, usually reach a point where they can assume no more written sources, and must assign what is left to oral tradition or to the author's imagination. It is in these two latter categories the information about Þorsteinn Kuggason should be placed. This is especially true of the references to him in *Bjarnar saga*, a work for which almost no written sources have been found, and for which no one has made a convincing case that it is based on any other known sagas; but it also applies to the others as well. Þorsteinn must have been a fairly well-known character, and no specific source need be sought for his brief appearances in the sagas mentioned. There are a number of characters in *Íslendingasögur* who are not major protagonists, but more than just names, and who crop up in a number of sagas. Gestr Oddleifsson and Ásgrímur Elliða-Grímsson are two examples. Þorsteinn Kuggason probably belongs in this category. Although Nordal was full of praise for Þorsteinn's actions in *Bjarnar saga*, it is difficult to see what he did that was sufficiently remarkable or extensive for a saga to have been written about him.

One negative result does not however disprove the general assumption that there were *Íslendingasögur* which once existed and are now lost. Other *Íslendingasögur* may not be the ideal place to look for traces of them, since it is hard to separate the "literary" traits of a saga that was a source from the "literary" interests of the author making use of that source. However, characteristically

“saga-like” traits will show through when a saga is used as a source for a text in another genre. An example is the group of texts that go under the collective name of *Landnámabók* (*Ldn*). The relationships and preservation of these texts will be briefly reviewed, since they are complicated and particularly important for the question of lost sagas.²

Ldn exists in five redactions, three medieval and two early modern, all representing various stages of adaptation of a hypothetical original no longer extant. Four of the five are related to each other by varying degrees of derivation. The oldest manuscript of *Ldn* comprises the 14 leaves of the autograph copy of *Hauksbók* (*Hb*), written by Haukr Erlendsson in the first years of the fourteenth century. The nearly complete text of this redaction was copied by Jón Erlendsson in the seventeenth century. In the epilogue (ch. 354), Haukr indicates that he used two books as his sources, one written by Styrmir the Wise, and one by herra Sturla the lawman. *Styrmisbók* has not survived, but *Sturlubók* (*Stb*) has been identified as the text of a vellum which was lost in the fire of 1728, but which survives in a seventeenth-century copy, again by Jón Erlendsson. This is then the second medieval redaction of *Ldn*. The third survives in only two leaves called *Melabók* (*Mb*). From these two leaves alone, it is possible to see that this redaction is much shorter than the other two and often different in content. It is usually thought, for various reasons, that *Mb* is very like the lost *Styrmisbók*, the source of *Hb* (and, it is thought, of *Stb* too), and that it therefore represents an earlier stage in the development of *Ldn*. However, there are indications that *Mb* has been shortened in comparison with its source, whatever that was. It is important to remember this when using *Mb* as an indication of what an early *Ldn* might have been like. Besides the two leaves of vellum just mentioned, some more of the contents of *Mb* are accessible through a comparison of the two early modern redactions of *Ldn*. The first of these is *Skarðsárbók* (*Skb*), which was compiled from *Hb* and *Stb* by Björn Jónsson in the mid-seventeenth century. This in turn was used as a source for *Pórðarbók* (*Pb*) by Þórður Jónsson, who also used *Mb* when it was nearly whole. Thus, although Þórður also made additions and changes of his own, it is generally true that the parts of *Pb* not from *Skb* must be from *Mb*.

The greatest number of additions and changes to his source, however, was made by Sturla Þórðarson in *Stb*. These additions and changes are often revealed by inconsistencies in the text, such as discrepancies of detail or fact which appear when two or more

chapters are compared, or incomprehensibility in a chapter which may indicate an inept summary of another source. The fact that Sturla made a change or addition will also show up when the relevant chapter in *Stb* is compared with its counterpart in *Pb(Mb)*, representing an earlier stage in the development of *Ldn*. That which is new or different in *Stb* can often be traced to a particular saga. A good example of one such used by Sturla is *Egils saga*. In *Stb* chs. 29-30, he summarised its account of Skalla-Grímr's journey to Iceland and settlement there, thus, incidentally, ascribing to him a much larger land-claim than in the earlier *Ldn* tradition. Which sagas were used by Sturla is to some extent uncertain, since it is not always possible to distinguish between a saga which was a source for *Ldn*, and one for which *Ldn* was a source, and the list is occasionally altered by new research (Jónas Kristjánsson 1977). However, the principle that Sturla used *Íslendingasögur* as a supplementary source for *Stb* has not been challenged. Thus it is reasonable to assume that he also used some sagas which are now lost. This is particularly so in parts of *Stb* which show signs of additions or changes which cannot be derived from any known source. The supposition is of course helped by the fact that some lost sagas are named in *Stb* (e.g. *Þórðar saga gellis* in ch. 97, *Íslendingabók*, *Landnámabók* 1968, 140).

Even when a lost saga is not named, it is possible to show that it very likely existed and was used as a source for *Stb*. One such saga has been called **Hróars saga Tunguða*.

The first half of ch. 284 in *Stb* tells of a settler called Uni Garðarsson:

Uni son Garðars, er fyrst fann Ísland, fór til Íslands með ráði Haralds konungs hárfagra ok ætlaði at leggja undir sik landit, en síðan hafði konungr heitit honum at gera hann jarl sinn. Uni tók land, þar sem nú heitir Unaóss, ok húsaði þar; hann nam sér land til eignar fyrir sunnan Lagarfjót, allt herað til Unalækjar. En er landsmenn vissu ætlan hans, tóku þeir at ýfask við hann ok vildu eigi selja honum kvikfé eða vistir, ok mátti hann eigi þar haldask. Uni fór í Álptafjörð enn syðra; hann náði þar eigi at staðfestask. Þá fór hann austan með tólfta mann ok kom at vetri til Leiðólfs kappa í Skógahverfi; hann tók við þeim. Uni þýddisk Þórunni dóttur Leiðólfs, ok var hon með barni um várit. Þá vildi Uni hlaupask á braut með sína menn, en Leiðólfr reið eptir honum, ok fundusk þeir hjá Flangastöðum ok þorðusk þar, því at Uni vildi eigi aptr fara með Leiðólfi; þar fellu nokkurir menn af Una, en hann fór aptr nauðigr, því at Leiðólfr vildi, at hann fengi konunnar ok staðfestisk ok tæki arf eptir hann. Nokkuru síðar hljóp Uni á braut, þá er Leiðólfr var eigi heima, en Leiðólfr reið eptir honum, þá er hann vissi, ok fundusk þeir hjá Kálfagröfum; var hann þá svá reiðr, at hann drap Una ok fönunauta hans alla.

From *Pb* we can see that the adventures of Uni were told in a very

different way in *Mb*, and hence in the original *Ldn*. A marginal note in *Pb* (cf. *Íslendingabók, Landnámabók* 1968, 299) beside the corresponding chapter refers to “Landnáma”, which Jón Jóhannesson has shown (1941, 25-6) almost always indicates copying from *Mb*:

Uni danski Garðarsson vildi leggja Ísland undir sik eða Harald konung hárfagra. Hann bjó at Ósi ok nam þar eigi yndi ok fór at kanna víðara landit ok þá vetrvið at Leiðólfi, segir Landn.

At the end of the first half of the chapter corresponding to *Stb* 284 is another addition, also from *Mb* (*Íslendingabók, Landnámabók* 1968, 300):

Landn. segir á aðra leið, einkum svo: Uni þýddisk Þórunni dóttur hans ok vildi hafa í burt með sér, en Leiðólfr reið eptir honum, ok þorðusk þeir við Kálfagrafir, ok fellu menn ór hvárstveggja liði. Þá skildu þeir, en Uni fór skammt undan, áðr Leiðólfr kom eptir honum, ok þorðusk þá í annat sinn, ok fell þar Uni ok forunautar hans.

This quotation must follow on the previous one, since the phrase “dóttur hans” depends on the mention of Leiðólfr in the previous sentence. These two passages from *Pb*, then, represent the chapter as it must have been at an earlier stage in the development of *Ldn*.

It is obvious that the *Stb* account is much fuller and more dramatic. In it, Uni leaves his first home not simply because he is not contented, but because he is driven away by the trading sanctions of his neighbours, who are opposed to his political ambitions. The episode also reflects an antipathy to Haraldr hárfagri which is very common in *Íslendingasögur*, and could be described as a literary motif. Uni’s brief stay in Álptafjörðr is not mentioned in the shorter version, and it was probably invented for the longer version in order to increase suspense and draw out the tale. The detail that Uni travelled “með tólfta mann” is a typical saga-like embellishment, as twelve is the most common number when someone sets out on an important journey. Finally, Uni’s escape attempts and the fights have clearly been dramatised and made more suspenseful in the *Stb* version. Here, Uni does not want to elope with Þórunn, but to escape from her father. Whereas in the shorter version the two fights between Uni and Leiðólfr take place on the same occasion, in *Stb* Leiðólfr manages to force Uni back to the farm, and only when he escapes a second time does Leiðólfr kill him. In comparing the two versions, we can also see traces of an author’s hand in motivating the behaviour of his characters: the neighbours drive Uni away because they learn of his intentions, and Leiðólfr kills Uni because he is “reiðr”. Thus,

we begin to suspect that this chapter of *Stb* reflects a source which had such characteristically literary interests.

The second half of *Stb* ch. 284 deals with Hróarr Tungugoði, the son of Uni and Þórunn:

Sonr Una ok Þórunnar var Hróarr Tungugoði; hann tók arf Leiðólfs allan ok var et mesta afarmenni. Hann átti dóttur Hámundar, systur Gunnars frá Hlíðarenda; þeira son var Hámundur enn halti, er var enn mesti vígamaðr. Tjörvi enn háðsami ok Gunnarr váru (systur)synir Hróars. Tjörvi bað Ástríðar manvitsbrekku Móðólfsdóttur, en bræðr hennar, Ketill ok Hrólfr, synjuðu honum konunnar, en þeir gáfu hana Þóri Ketilssyni. Þá dró Tjörvi líkneski þeira á kamarsvegg, ok hvert kveld, er þeir Hróarr gengu til kamars, þá hrækði hann í andlit líkneski Þóris, en kyssti hennar líkneski, áðr Hróarr skóf af. Eptir þat skar Tjörvi þau á knífsskepti sínu ok kvað þetta:

Vér höfum þar sem Þóri,
þat vas sett við glettu,
auðar unga brúði
áðr á vegg of fáða.
Nú hefki, rastakarns, ristna,
réðk mart við Syn bjarta
hauka skopts, á hepti
Hlín qlbækis mínu.

Hér af gerðusk víg þeira Hróars ok systursona hans.

It is difficult to know exactly how much of this account was in *Mb*, but it is likely that at least the verse was in it, since *Pb* provides an alternative text for it, probably from *Mb*. The addition at the end of the corresponding chapter in *Pb* probably represents most of what was in *Mb*, as it is a summary of the events described in *Stb* ch. 284 (*Íslendingabók*, *Landnámabók* 1968, 302-3):

Hér af gerðisk fjánskapr þeira meiri, ok vágu þeir synir Móðólfs, Ketill ok Hrólfr, ok Brandr frá Gnúpum fǫðurbróðir þeira ok Þórir Ketilsson, er átti Ástríði, Hróar goða ok Tjörva ok Kolbein.

It is noteworthy that in *Pb* the three men killed are called Hróarr goði, Tjörvi and Kolbeinn. Kolbeinn was probably the correct name of Tjörvi's brother, and the Gunnarr of *Stb* a mistake arising from the mention of another Gunnarr a few lines earlier.

Hróarr Tungugoði is also mentioned in *Stb* ch. 325, here in his rightful geographical place, following a description of his grandfather Leiðólfr. There are no helpful additions to *Pb* at this point to show what *Mb* might have said. However, on reading *Stb* ch. 325, it is hard to escape the conclusion that only the first part of it properly belongs to a *Ldn* text in terms of content and style. The rest of the chapter reads like a summary of a much longer narrative. It is not easy to decide where the summary begins: Hróarr and his children may properly be mentioned in a *Ldn* chapter about

Leiðólfr and his descendants, but such information would also have been included in a saga about Hróarr. However, with the preliminaries over, events follow helter-skelter:

Leiðólfr kappi hét maðr; hann nam land fyrir austan Skaptá til Drífandi ok bjó at Á fyrir austan Skaptá út frá Skál, en annat bú átti hann Á Leiðólfsstöðum undir Leiðólfsfelli, ok var þar þá mart byggða. Leiðólfr var faðir Þórunnar, móður Hróars Tunguþóða. Hróarr átti Arngunni Hámundardóttur, systur Gunnars frá Hlíðarenda. Þeira börn váru þau Hámundr halti ok Ormhildr. Vébrandr hét son Hróars ok ambáttar. Hróarr tók Þórunni brún, dóttur Þorgils ór Hvammi í Mýdal; Þorfinnr hét son þeira. Hróarr bjó fyrst í Ásum; síðan tók hann Lómagnúpslönd af Eysteini, syni Þorsteins tittlings ok Auðar Eyvindardóttur, systur þeira Móðólfs ok Branda. Praslaug var dóttir Þorsteins tittlings, er átti Þórðr Freysoði. Qnundr tǫskubak, frændi Þorsteinsbarna, skoraði Hróari á hólmi á Skaptafellsþingi ok fell at fótum Hróari. Þorsteinn Upplendingr tók Þórunni brún ok flutti útan. Hróarr fór ok útan. Þá drap hann Þrǫst berserk á hólmi, er nauðga vildi eiga Sigríði, konu hans, en þeir Þorsteinn sættusk. Móðólfssynir váru at vígi Hróars ok Þórir mágr þeira, Brandi frá Gnúpum ok Steinólfr búi hans. Hámundr hefndi þeira Hróars.

This sequence of events is clearly connected with those related in ch. 284, as Hróarr keeps getting entangled with people from the same family, first the sons of Móðólfr, then his nephew. It is typical of *Íslendingasögur* that the causes of and motivations for a feud are compounded until the tensions build up to such an extent that a major killing is unavoidable. The dispute with Eysteinn, a simple argument over land, probably set things in motion. The fact that Hróarr killed a relative of Eysteinn, Qnundr tǫskubak, who was presumably dragged into the dispute because he was “frændi Þorsteinsbarna”, must have increased the frustration of his opponents. Hróarr’s involvement in Tjǫrvi’s affairs would then have given them a good excuse to kill him. In the meantime, however, Hróarr travelled to Norway. It is not stated why he went. It could have been that he was exiled for the killing of Qnundr, but it was most likely his purpose to chase the Þorsteinn who had kidnapped Þórunn brún, since it is said they were later reconciled. He also killed a *berserkr* who had been paying unwelcome court to a lady. This is an adventure typical of saga-heroes, especially when they are abroad in Norway, and it is common enough to be described as a literary motif. It may be noted that such duels often take place “á Upplöndum” (Liestøl 1929, 154), and Hróarr may have got involved in it while chasing Þorsteinn Upplendingr. The lady herself, Sigríðr, is a mystery, since we do not know whether Hróarr married again and she is his wife, or whether she is the wife of someone else, whose name has been omitted in this extract. In either case, she does serve to indicate that this chapter is a summary

of a longer text in which such facts were explained.

Putting *Stb* chs. 284 and 325 together, we obtain the outline of a narrative which can be called, after its main character, **Hróars saga Tungugoða*. The story of Uni would have had a natural place in the saga as a preface or introduction to his son's story. Sagas often begin with the history of a settler who was the ancestor of one of the main characters. As well as being Hróarr's father, Uni was also his literary forerunner or prefiguration, since both of them seem to have had traumatic and active love-lives. Judging from the summary in *Stb*, **Hróars saga* was a fairly typical example of the genre, with a plot centred on proposals, marriages, disputes over land, trips to Norway, and fights with berserks, all culminating in the death of the eponymous hero and concluding with his son's revenge. It was probably a relatively early saga; not only does it seem to have been a source for *Stb*, but there is also a possibility that it was known to and used by the author of *Reykðæla saga* (Jón Jóhannesson 1941, 120).

The Tjörvi episode may show the influence of *Tristrams saga* (Schach 1969, 98-9), the Hall of Statues scene providing a model for Tjörvi's drawing of Ástriðr and her husband, and his kissing of her likeness (*Tristrams saga ok Ísondar* 1878, 94-5):

. . ok jafnan sem hann kom inn til líkneskju Ísondar, þá kysti hann hana svá opt sem hann kom, . . . en þá var hann hryggr ok reiðr, er hann mintist á harm þeirra, vás ok vesaldir, er hann þöldi fyrir sakir þeirra, er þau hrópuðu, ok kennir þat nú líkneskju hins vándra ræðismanns.

If so, this would provide a *terminus post quem* for **Hróars saga*. The exact relationship between **Hróars saga* and *Tristrams saga* is however difficult to determine, as we have only the *Stb* summary of the former, and most of the latter, including the Hall of Statues episode, exists only in seventeenth-century copies, which have been shown to be revisions of the original translation (Schach 1957-61, 104-12). There is therefore no textual likeness on which to base any conclusions.

The events of **Hróars saga* take place mainly in the south of Iceland, an area that is otherwise hardly ever the scene of *Íslendingasögur*, other than *Njáls saga* and *Flóamanna saga*, both late. It has been pointed out that the Oddaverjar, the main family in the south in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, were more European in outlook than any other Icelanders of the time, and that this can be seen in the names they gave their children (Einar Ól. Sveinsson 1936). It may be that **Hróars saga* was written in such a milieu, open to the new cultural influences from

Europe. The *Stb* summary also suggests that **Hróars saga* had a strong preoccupation with relationships between the sexes, and this may also have been influenced by the romantic atmosphere from Europe. The reason for the lack of sagas from the south of Iceland has not yet been found. It has been suggested (Sørensen 1977, 149-50) that *Íslendingasögur* arose as a counterpoint to sagas of kings and bishops, in order to provide similar histories for other men of rank. The dominant families in the south, at Haukadahl and Oddi, were so closely connected to the protagonists of the kings' and bishops' sagas that they did not feel this need for legitimation. However, **Hróars saga*, if it did exist, along with two other instances in which *Stb* made use of sources which probably were lost sagas concerning the south of Iceland (*Íslendingabók*, *Landnámabók* 1968, 348, 350, 352-5, 374-9), suggests that it may be merely an accident of history that southern Iceland is so badly represented in existing sagas.

This study of the lost saga of Hróarr Tungugoði has moved into the realm of speculation, but such speculation does show the sort of perspectives on existing saga-literature that an investigation of lost sagas can give. We may also wonder why a saga such as Hróarr's got lost. A possible practical reason springs to mind. Many of the sagas we have today are preserved in only one medieval manuscript or a set of later copies ultimately derived from a single medieval text. One shipwreck, during the period when manuscripts were being transferred to Denmark, could have deprived us of any of these, and may have deprived us of **Hróars saga*. Whether, on the other hand, it was lost because it eventually fell from popular favour, because it was not a good saga, I leave to the reader to judge from the traces it left behind in *Stb*.

Notes

¹ Slightly edited from a lecture given at the Viking Society meeting in Birmingham on 17 May 1980.

² The *Ldn* manuscripts are described and the relationships between the various redactions are outlined in Jón Jóhannesson (1941) and *Íslendingabók*, *Landnámabók* (1968, l-xcvi). All quotations from *Ldn* are taken from the 1968 edition.

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BEINTA OG PEDER ARRHEBOE: A CASE-STUDY IN FAROESE ORAL TRADITION

By JOHN F. WEST

THE nature and the reliability of the oral traditions crystallised in historical legends have long been the subject of both speculation and learned research amongst scholars. For ancient legends, there is seldom any historical or archaeological evidence from which we may form a judgement how far they transmit a true account of past events. It is useful, therefore, to consider comparatively recent oral traditions for which materials do exist. The oral traditions of the Faroe Islands constitute an excellent body of legend for this purpose. Some of the best Faroese stories purport to relate events of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and were first recorded in writing at the very end of the nineteenth century. Here we will concentrate on the most saga-like story in the Faroese corpus, *Beinta og Peder Arrheboe*, as published by Jakob Jakobsen in 1898-1901 (I use the second edition, Jakobsen 1961-4, 166-80, 502-8; see the bibliographical list). The principal events on which this story is based lie between 1714 and 1726.

The oral transmission of stories within a community is not a purely historical or artistic activity. It is true that before radio and television, story-telling in such isolated communities as those of Iceland and the Faroe Islands had great importance as entertainment. But stories may also have practical functions in the transmission of important skills, in the division of resources between man and man, and not least in the preservation of the ethical standards of the community, for instance standards of resourcefulness, wisdom, courage and fair dealing.

Faroese stories used to be transmitted principally in the *kvøldseta* or working evening (Hammershaimb 1891, I 389-91), an institution comparable with the Hebridean *ceilidh* (Barding 1977). A *kvøldseta* was an informal, sociable gathering at which those present would card, spin and knit wool, while entertaining themselves with songs and stories. The Faroese *kvøldseta* is now quite extinct, and I doubt whether one worthy of the name has been held within the past fifty years. However, some transmission of oral tradition still takes place in the villages of the Faroe Islands, particularly in those villages lacking road links to urban centres,

where the social stratification of the generations is less pronounced, and where working relationships between old and young are more common.

I have myself heard traditional stories, albeit short ones, told amongst the groups of older and younger men gathering on summer evenings on one or other of the large logs which form improvised seats overlooking Nólsoy harbour. A favourite narrative was of the loss in 1836 of a boat bringing timber from the Monopoly in Tórshavn for the erection of the first schoolhouse in the village — only one man surviving from a crew of six (Nolsø 1929; West 1980, 83-4).

Stories are also still told amongst working groups either at sea or while shepherding in the hills. Many stories are linked to place-names, as Mikkjal á Ryggi wrote in 1940 (1965, 5-6):

About 25 years ago the society Sólarmagn asked me to write down the place-names of Miðvágur and record them on the map. I went to the old and knowledgeable men, and all of them were enthusiastic about telling me names or going into the outfield to show me the places. With some of the old men it was rather slow work at first, but I was very soon amazed to see the way the life entered into them when they called the old names to mind; it seemed to me as though they had grown young once again — and perhaps they felt the same too. I did not need to ask for information; when they knew anything about a place or a name, they came out with it quite spontaneously. Usually it was something short, and then I wrote it down with the name. But sometimes there were whole stories, and then I would ask them to save the information for me until I had a better opportunity of writing it down. Yes, they would agree to tell me again later, but in the mean time they would not remain silent — the flow had begun, and would not cease till all was out.

In his novel *Fastatøkur*, based on his boyhood experiences, Heðin Brú has the same tale to tell about stories linked to place-names. He describes oral transmission of stories in a working setting (Brú 1935, 134):

Høgni listens to him, not out of necessity, but out of interest. And he gets the impression of how much *at home* his father is up here in the mountain pastures. Not just because he knows all about the sheep that live up here, but he knows every stone, every hollow, every hummock. Some have names, and some have no names, but it is all the same to him, every little thing has as it were its own life for Sakir, reawakening for him particular thoughts and feelings. Every time something happens on the mountains, a stone, a tussock, or something like that will take it to itself, and preserve its memory. The generations carry this forward from father to son, the places constantly increase in number, and before you realise it, the mountain is quite alive.

Stories may at times have a highly practical significance. In the mountains, a story may form a charter for the precise location of

a boundary or a right of way. Only in our own times has this been replaced by the work of the Faroe Islands land registry office, supported by aerial photography. Even the tale of the loss of the Nólsoy boat in 1836 has several features containing practical instruction for the listeners — details of the play of tidal currents in the fjord, and the practicability of a strong swimmer making shore from a capsized boat in a certain position with given conditions of wind and tide. The genealogical content of traditional stories in Faroese villages may have a practical application in easing the task of dividing the wool take or the lambs destined for slaughter after a communal round-up of a jointly-owned flock (Rasmussen 1949, 83-6; Joensen 1968, 13-37; 1979, 131-40).

Such stories are likely to live in the oral tradition of the future. The use of stories for the transmission of ethical standards and as a form of winter entertainment, is likely to die with the present generation, except as far as the schools take over a literary recension for use in the classroom. It is to be hoped that they will do so, because although the historical accuracy of the latter type of story is seldom near the standard of those relating to place-names, their language is nevertheless concise and pithy, and their literary quality is often considerable. This applies above all to the story *Beinta og Peder Arrheboe*, which has indeed already formed the basis of three literary renderings, the most celebrated being Jørgen-Frantz Jacobsen's novel *Barbara*, published in 1939 (for the others see Bruun 1893 and Djurhuus 1927).

The central action in *Beinta og Peder Arrheboe* is the tale of how the Vágur priest, Peder Ditlefsen Arrhboe (as he signed himself), quarrelled with an important parishioner and behaved so scandalously that he was unfrocked and exiled from the rectory village of Miðvágur, and went to live in Sandavágur. Attached to this theme are two other story sequences — about his wife, the so-called “evil Beinta”, and about his servant Kristoffer í Húsi. The traditions about Peder Arrhboe have a large measure of historical basis. Some of the details about Bente (as her name is correctly spelled) can be confirmed historically, but her character has been handled very unsympathetically, and there is reason to suspect much distortion — doubtless due to her being type-cast as the model of an evil woman. The material about Kristoffer is largely supernatural and was probably added to the legend for its entertaining character — the one or two details which may be soundly based being of an entertaining nature also.

Jakob Jakobsen recorded and arranged the Miðvágur traditions

during his Faroe journey of 1898. To these he added material current in Viðareiði in the Northern Islands, to make up the legend as it appeared in print. Before Jakobsen made his collection, the Miðvágur material had been used by the Vágur priest Emil Bruun in the historical novel referred to above, published in Tórshavn in 1893. This latter publication contains traditions highly damaging to the memory of Bente, and led to the private recording of a much more favourable tradition about her in the village of Kvívík (Thorsteinsson 1982; Petersen 1963, 362-3).

Jakobsen's narrative begins with Bente. We are told that she was the daughter of a *sorenskriver* (under-judge), and that she was successively married to three priests, all of whom suffered misfortune. She was renowned for her beauty, and deceived many men. On the arrival of ships bringing new priests from Denmark, she would go down to the shore in all her finery. But beautiful as she was, evil was incarnate within her.

Apart from the moral strictures, there is nothing to dispute so far. Bente Kristina Broberg was the daughter of Peder Sørensen Broberg, *sorenskriver* in the Faroe Islands from 1669 to 1695, and his wife Birgitte Marie Jensdatter Bøgvad (1647-1714), who had earlier been the housekeeper of the notorious *landfoged* (provincial bailiff) of the Gabel period, Søren Pedersen Skougaard. By Skougaard, Birgitte had had an illegitimate son, Friederich Severinsen Skougaard (c. 1665-1751), who was adopted by Broberg, and who in 1705 himself became *sorenskriver*. There is a high degree of probability that Bente was a beautiful woman, and if she did go down to the shore in her best clothes when ships were arriving from Denmark, it would be no more than every other good-looking woman in Tórshavn might be expected to do.

Jakobsen follows with an account of Bente's first marriage, to *harri* Jonas, priest of the Northern Islands. This marriage took place about 1692, when Bente was about 23 years old. Her husband was Jonas Jonassen Færøe, at that time between 30 and 35, and recently widowed. He had a son of about 3 years old. Bente bore him a further son, Friderich Jonassen, born in 1700, in which year Jonas died (Andersen 1895, 122, 215, 369-71).

The traditions which Jakobsen collected from Viðareiði about Bente while she was married to *harri* Jonas are that she was overbearing with the servants, and that by placing earth from his first wife's grave under his pillow, she caused her husband to be haunted by her, so that he went out of his mind. She is further said to have treated her husband unkindly on his deathbed.

In general, Bente is accused of having expected too much work from her servants, and of depriving them of food if their work was badly done. This character of a harsh mistress is unlikely to have any historical basis. The Kvívík tradition, which is derived from a womanservant who lived with Bente for many years at the Miðvágur rectory, speaks of Bente as having been an efficient but kindly housewife, who looked after the well-being of her servants (Thorsteinsson 1982; Petersen 1963, 362-3).

One detail shows the historical worthlessness of the Viðareiði traditions — the story that Bente forbade the servants to break the spines of the fish they were given for supper, in order to be able to charm the fish back on to the bone and use it again. Only when the servants disobeyed her, and broke the spines in three, did they become fat and healthy, it is related. This obvious folk-tale motif grafted on to the story in fact occurs elsewhere in the Jakobsen collection, told in almost exactly the same way, in the legend of *Óli seyðamaður* (Jakobsen 1961-4, 80-2).

A supernatural incident does not in itself, however, form evidence of a folk-tale accretion. The story of the haunting of Viðareiði rectory is intriguing, because it does seem to have some slight historical basis, though certainly not in the form in which it appears in the *Beinta og Peder Arrheboe* legend. The haunting appears in a very different form in the legend *Guttormur í Múla*. Here it is told that the sister of Jonas's first wife came to the rectory on a visit, and at her request, Jonas had the coffin dug up so that she could take a last look at her sister's face. The dead woman resented this treatment and started haunting the rectory. The priest himself was unable to exorcise his wife's ghost, but had to call on the help of Guttormur, a noted white wizard, to do the job for him. This version of the story was written down by a Faroese priest as early as 1750 (Jakobsen 1961-4, 127; Andersen 1895, 371).

The origin of the tale of the haunting may well lie in a third tradition, recorded by the Northern Islands local historian, J. Símun Hansen (1975, 139):

The priest's former wife died shortly before the great tempest which broke down the church and washed away much of the churchyard, including the coffin with his former wife Anna. This coffin and much else was driven ashore at Sandoyri up the strait in Hvannasund, but the coffins were all rowed or carried back north to Viðareiði and buried a second time. This account also makes it more credible that her sister should have been present when Anna was buried the second time. The events took place between 1692 and 1698.

Such a disturbance to the dead would undoubtedly have created a

great impression in the village, and in a superstitious age, a few bad dreams by the priest or strange noises in the dark would be more than enough to give rise to the stories of a haunting.

One difficulty remains. The traditions used by J. Símun Hansen all concur in dating the storm which demolished Viðareiði Church to the incumbency of *harri* Jonas (1688-1700). Documentary evidence unknown to him dates the demolition of the church to 23 January 1709, long after Jonas's death and Bente's remarriage.¹ It may be that the churchyard was damaged in an earlier tempest, and that village tradition has conflated the two events.

After the death of Jonas, we are told in Jakobsen's text, Bente was betrothed to the Eysturoy priest, Anders Knudsen Lemvig, but he broke off the engagement when she reproved him for not being strict enough with the farm servants. This story is unsupported by any documentary evidence, but it is certainly possible. Anders Lemvig became curate to his predecessor in 1691, and married the old priest's daughter. In 1700 he succeeded to the Eysturoy living, and was left a widower two years later. The betrothal, if it did take place, would have been late in 1702 or in 1703.

Bente's second husband, Niels Gregersen Aagaard, received his letter of appointment to the Vágur pastorate on 8 September 1702, and would probably not have arrived in the Faroe Islands before the spring of 1703. Bente probably married him in 1704, when he was 32 and she was about 35. The couple had one daughter, born in 1706, Christine Marie Nielsdatter Aagaard. Niels Aagaard died on 18 April 1706 (GS f. 85). Bente was now around 37, and had two children, Friderich Jonæssen, aged 6, and Christine Aagaard who was still an infant (Andersen 1895, 423-4; Petersen 1963, 363).

The traditions recorded by Jakobsen about the marriage between Niels Aagaard and Bente are that the priest was a weak man who let her have her way in order to have peace; but that this merely made her worse. On two occasions she offered violence to him. On the first occasion she struck at him with a candlestick and hit the beam instead, so that a piece fell out of the candlestick's base. On a second occasion she locked herself into a room with him to beat him, but their servant broke down the door, picked her up, carried her out and ducked her in the urine tub (a barrel used to hold urine for fulling woollen goods). Historical sources tell us nothing of the character of Niels Aagaard or of his relationship with Bente. The story of the urine tub is a very unusual one. I know of no other account, historical or legendary, in which a urine

tub features in any way, and I am inclined to suspect that some truth must lie behind the tale. Whether the brass candlestick (one of two) which has stood on the altar of Miðvágur Church since the middle of the seventeenth century suffered its damage in a marital quarrel, there is no way of knowing. Damage was visible until 1951, when, regrettably, it was repaired in such a way as to wipe out all trace of the alleged family drama.²

The traditions recorded by Jakobsen concerning *harri* Niels's death are that Bente was jealous of the Lawman's beautiful daughters in the neighbouring village of Sandavágur, and she insisted that after taking the service in Sandavágur Church, he should not stay the night with the Lawman at Steig Manor, but should ride home to Jansagerði, the Miðvágur rectory. One winter night, when he was returning, he fell from his horse and broke his leg. The break healed well, and after a time the priest was able to sit in a chair with the leg supported. One day, when he was so sitting, a servant came in and said that a boat was pulling up on the beach — probably one of the important people from Tórshavn. Bente jumped up and rushed off, and in doing so knocked away the support from her husband's leg, causing it to break once again. He was taken to the surgeon in Tórshavn, but this time the leg did not heal, gangrene set in, and he died. Before he died, he laid a curse on Bente.

Apart from the dying curse, and perhaps the extent of Bente's jealousy of the Steig family, this narrative bears the hallmark of truth. At the time the Lawman had only one daughter of marriageable age, but later on he had others, and inaccuracy over this detail is of small importance. Common talk could well conclude that jealousy was the motive for Bente wanting her husband to hurry home — it could equally well have been affection. The fall from the horse is localised to a particular point on the shore; and the accident leading to the second breaking of the leg is also very circumstantially described, so there is in each case a strong probability of a true account of the facts, though there is no documentary confirmation. The Kvívík tradition, however, confirms the story of the second breaking of the leg, but exonerates Bente from any blame (Petersen 1963, 360; Thorsteinsson 1982, 26-7).

Bente's third husband, Peder Ditlefsen Arrhoe, was born on 23 November 1675 in Vester Velling, a village in Jutland about 12 km west of Randers. His surname, meaning "inhabitant of Ærø", was inherited from his father, who was born in Ærøskøbing. His father

was the priest of Vester Velling, Ditlev Hansen Arhboe, and his mother, the priest's second wife, Dorthé Pedersdatter. Like his elder brother Hans, Peder attended the Latin School in Randers, and from there matriculated to Copenhagen University in 1696, where his name is given as Petrus Ditlevii Karmarchius. The surname here given is taken from a locality within the pastorate where he was born. He was issued with his letter of appointment to the Vágar living by King Frederik IV on 5 July 1706.³

In Denmark and the Faroe Islands at this time, it was common for an incoming priest to marry his predecessor's widow, and Peder Arhboe, a priest's son himself, would certainly know this, and would probably have expected to marry Bente even before he left Denmark. Bente was then about 37, and he was 30, so the difference in age between widow and incoming priest was not great by the standards of the time. Peder Arhboe probably reached the Faroes some time in August 1706. He became betrothed to Bente on or before 16 October 1706, on which date Bente's two children passed into his legal guardianship. At the inheritance proceedings for Niels Aagaard's estate on 21 January 1707, Peder Arhboe is described as *hendes festemand* (GM f. 72; GS f. 85). He took charge of Bente's business affairs with both energy and success. He seems to have married her before 28 November 1707.⁴

The traditional account reported by Jakobsen tells that after the death of *harri* Niels, Bente had the dower farm of Kálvalið, but stayed mostly with her mother in Tórshavn. When *harri* Peder arrived from Denmark, she displayed herself to him in all her finery, so that from that moment he fell in love with her. On his first journey to his pastorate in Vágar, Bente accompanied him from the ferry-landing at Fútaklettur, and steered him past Steig Manor (where he had intended to call on the Lawman) for fear of the Lawman's daughters. They married the second winter Peder was in the Faroe Islands.

The tradition is, as usual, searching out a dark side for Bente's motives. It is perfectly understandable that Bente should have preferred her mother's house to the dower farm of Kálvalið. She was not the only clerical widow in the pastorate. Anna Joensdatter, the widow of Niels Aagaard's predecessor Rasmus Olesen, did not die until 1714, and thus also had the right of residence in Kálvalið. There was only one marriageable daughter at Steig, and extravagant precautions to prevent *harri* Peder from meeting her would hardly be necessary for a woman in the advantageous position of clerical widow. By Christian V's Norwegian Law 2-13-1, Bente

had the right of one year's income from the glebe farm from the date of *harri* Niels's death, and the duty of providing the incoming priest with board and lodging. The one point where the tradition is almost certainly accurate is the date of the marriage. The charming little love-poem attributed to *harri* Peder is surely also a genuine tradition, though I know of no early written copy.⁵

The next traditions reported by Jakobsen tell how Bente, after her marriage, ceased to treat Peder lovingly, but mistreated him in a number of ways. She threw water over him; she tried to put all the tallow into her own blood-pudding and none into his — but was foiled in this by the women-servants who changed round the sausage-pins she used as markers. On one occasion when he went to the church to get a little peace from her, she sent a servant dressed in a sheet to pretend to be a ghost and frighten him. *Harri* Peder, however, began to exorcise the supposed ghost, driving him down into the church floor. When half-way down, the servant called out to *harri* Peder, saying who he was — but by this time it was too late. The priest could only continue to drive him down, presumably to hell.

We can easily dispose of this farrago, which like so much else is designed to type-cast Bente as the evil woman. Directly or indirectly, the story of Xanthippe throwing water over Socrates and his disciples is perhaps the origin of the first persecution. Over-filling one's own blood-pudding with tallow at the expense of one's husband's is equally certainly a native Faroese female delinquency, but the whole tale bears the mark of ingenious fiction. As for the servant pretending to be a ghost, Jakobsen himself (1961-4, 507) gives references to the appearance of the motif in Danish folk-tale collections.

Jakobsen's tale now leaves Bente's supposed misdeeds, and concentrates on Peder Arrhoe himself. He is described as having been a very learned man, eloquent, and skilled in the secret arts. A story is told of how he detected a thief by solemnly threatening to throw the altar-book from the pulpit so that it would strike the thief's forehead — whereupon the thief revealed himself by swooning away. As Peder Arrhoe, in his own lifetime, was reputed *at duga meira enn at mata seg* "to understand the black art", such a feat is far from incredible.

Peder Arrhoe is now described as a quick-tempered man, and it is said that he contracted a disease that made him mentally deranged for a time, and although he recovered, he suffered periodic recurrences of the trouble.

Considerable contemporary documentation survives on Peder Arhboe's insanity and outrageous behaviour. Apart from the records of the civil and ecclesiastical courts, there is a set of reports of a less formal character, submitted to the *stiftamtmand* in 1720. Admiral Peder Raben, *stiftamtmand* of Iceland and the Faroe Islands, visited Tórshavn from 29 August to 10 September 1720. During his stay Bente, loyal to her husband's interests, urged his case in two eloquent petitions. (By this time he had been unfrocked, and had no regular means of support.) Bente now had three children by *harri* Peder: Biritá, Durita and Hans Christian, as well as the two children by her previous husbands (Petersen 1963, 373).

Naturally, Raben asked both *landfoged* Diderik Marcussen, and Peder Arhboe's successor in the Vágur living, Anders Morten Surland, for their comments. Marcussen submitted copies of affidavits from the pastorate which he had sent to the bishop two years before. The originals perished in the Copenhagen Fire of 1728, but the copies are amongst the *stiftamt* papers now preserved in Tórshavn.⁶

From the documentation it is clear that *harri* Peder's insanity first appeared in 1711, when at times he seemed rational enough, but at other periods he was unquestionably deranged. As the men of Miðvágur related:

Whether he was mad at the time a watch had to be kept over him here we do not know, but God in Heaven knows; but it is true that he conducted himself like a frantic man there, and in his sermons Hr. Peder used to say, "You say the priest is mad; no, the priest is not mad, he has a better intellect than any of those who say he is mad".

His wife and children had much to endure. At times he used to run around half-naked, chasing them out of the house.

At the time when Hr. Niels Aagaard's inheritance had been divided in 1707, Peder Arhboe had undertaken to bring up his stepson Friderich Jonæssen *til ære og lære* "to honour and learning". However, from the very beginning of his guardianship, *harri* Peder had him spreading dung in the fields, fetching in peat and making hay; and when he was older, cutting peat and rounding up the sheep.⁷

It is not surprising that in these circumstances, Bente and the children eventually left the rectory. Exactly when they did so is uncertain, but it was probably between the summer of 1715 and the spring of 1716. Part of the time they lived in Tórshavn, and part in the dower house of Kálvalíð, which was now empty.

It was in the pulpit that Peder Arhboe's conduct was at its most

outrageous. The Miðvágur men reported that often in his sermons he would denounce the congregation as robbers and murderers and accuse them of consorting with harlots. In his funeral sermons he was at his worst. The men of Bøur complained of one sermon "that it was more painful than comforting for the bereaved to listen to". The men of Miðvágur complained not only of unseemly accusations, unsupported by anything they knew about the deceased, in more than one sermon, but told how Peder Arhboe had wrongfully refused the sacrament to a man in his last sickness, so that he went weeping home from the church. The man was afterwards bedridden, but Peder Arhboe refused to visit him unless a horse was brought for him on which to ride, although this meant someone would have to fetch down a horse from the outfield to enable the priest to make a journey so short that one could shout from one house to the other.

The constant accusation that Peder Arhboe made of his parishioners was that they were "thieves, robbers and murderers in my house". What had given the deranged man the idea that the peaceful villagers of Miðvágur were like this we shall never know. But like all priests in the Dano-Norwegian realm at this period, he had arrived at his pastorate in debt — the investment represented by a newly-qualified priest was considerable. The Faroese glebe farms were large, and there would eventually be a good return on the investment, but initially a priest had to stand out for every penny of his rights. Peder Arhboe, at the first *vaarting* (district sessions) after his arrival, held in Miðvágur on 8 March 1707, issued a serious warning to the people of his pastorate, outlining what he considered to be his rights (P ff. 28-9). The document seems to depict a clear-thinking and able young man with some business sense, but with a high opinion of his status and his rights. The spread of interest in land that Peder Arhboe acquired by his marriage, moreover, was bound to bring him to law with one or another of his parishioners before long. A sober and sane priest might have managed his legal disputes without developing personal animosity against his antagonists. But when Peder Arhboe's stiff self-righteousness lapsed into outright insanity, one of his chief symptoms was a violent persecution complex.

Peder Arhboe dismissed the churchwardens of Bøur, Sørvágur and Miðvágur churches, and took their task upon himself. Many priests acted as churchwarden of their home church, but it was unusual for a priest to act as Peder Arhboe did. And although in his serious warning of 8 March 1707, Peder Arhboe had

reprimanded the parishioners for using the churches for secular purposes, he himself took to using the buildings to store his tithe wool, to the great inconvenience of the congregations, for the churches were all very small. Moreover, Peder Arhboe so neglected the upkeep of the buildings that after his suspension, his successor hardly dared to hold services in them (LC f. 5).

The traditional account given by Jakobsen of how Peder Arhboe came to be unfrocked tells that a quarrel arose between the priest and the farmer of Ryggur, Jógvan Rasmussen, nicknamed Prest-Jógvan. The original cause was that one of the farmer's cows had broken its tether and trampled the priest's cultivated land, and this led to hard words by the priest. Next, Bente, who was a spendthrift and often short of money, sold a pair of Peder's silver buckles to one of the villagers, and this man resold them to Prest-Jógvan. Peder missed the buckles, and asked Bente for them, but she concealed what she had done and said they must have been stolen. When Peder saw Jógvan in these buckles, he at once accused him of being a thief. The farmer threatened the priest with a court action if he did not beg his forgiveness for these words.

Harri Peder was three times on his way to Ryggur to come to a reconciliation with Jógvan, Jakobsen's story continues, but each time he was turned back by the scorn of Bente, who said it was unworthy of him to beg pardon from a pack of peasants. He ought rather to drink a bottle of spirits, take an axe, and break open Jógvan's door. The priest did so. He fuddled himself with drink, went over to Ryggur with an axe, broke down Jógvan's door and once again called him a thief. Then Jógvan started legal proceedings, but died before the case ended. Three men now came to the priest, wanting to know whether Jógvan had gone to heaven or to hell, as he had died so suddenly. *Harri* Peder replied that he was not yet dead. A little later, as they were standing with him, he clapped his hands and said, "Right now he is going to hell". It was later found that the farmer had been put into the coffin only apparently dead, and had then died from suffocation.

We are finally told in Jakobsen's text that *harri* Peder delivered the funeral sermon over the farmer, and used even more outrageous words than he had done before. His first words at the graveside were, "I am now treading on the grave of a thief". When he cast earth on the grave, he said: "A thief you lived, a thief you died, and as a thief you will rise again." At this, Jógvan's widow swooned away and had to be led home.

Whether the quarrel between Peder Arhboe and Jógvan Ras-

mussen did originally arise from the trampling of a cow is very doubtful. The court records do not mention this, but they do mention a number of other causes of ill-feeling on Peder Arrhboe's part — and this being so, there could well at some time have been a quarrel about the intrusion of a cow that led to high words subsequently remembered in the village. The story of the silver buckles, however, can be rejected out of hand. The ownership of gold and silver objects was so well known in such a small community that they were never stolen. It is true that Peder Arrhboe repeatedly called Jógvan a thief, but he never accused him in court of stealing the buckles. The story is an obvious accretion in order to explain the quarrel and to blacken Bente still further. The other obvious accretion is the incident of the apparent death of the farmer and his suffocation in the coffin. This is plainly a folk-tale theme, though I do not know of any parallel to it. It is true that the priest was outrageous in his funeral sermon, but it is doubtful whether he used the words attributed to him. But in other respects the legendary account has a close connection with the truth.

The court proceedings in which Peder Arrhboe was involved over the quarrel with Jógvan Rasmussen were: a *hjemting* (local sessions) which sat in Miðvágur from 4 to 6 September 1715, and delivered judgement on 18 October 1715 (VV ff. 72-9, 84-5); and ecclesiastical court sittings on 18 March, 29-30 April, and 10-12 June 1716 (GM ff. 67-71). Consequential ecclesiastical court sittings followed on 13-14 January and 26-27 May 1717, and 15-18 February 1718 (GM ff. 71-9). The reason for this complexity of hearings was that the local sessions was empowered to hear evidence, but could not pass judgement on Peder Arrhboe as an ecclesiastic.

The account of the witnesses called at Miðvágur makes it clear that on 13 July 1715, Peder Arrhboe set out from the rectory with an axe in his hand. Bente followed him and asked him where he was going. He replied that he was going over to Ryggur to kill Prest-Jógvan the thief and Heine of Ryggur, the old thief, also (the latter was Jógvan Rasmussen's father-in-law, Heine Johansen). There is no report of any reaction by Bente to this threat, and she appears not to have hindered him from going on his way.

On arrival at Ryggur Farm, Peder Arrhboe struck with his axe on the door of the *glasstova* (glazed parlour), and shouted: "Open up, you thief!" Jógvan, however, was out in his fields weeding. Peder Arrhboe now slung his axe over his shoulder, and went in through an open door into the *roykstova* (living-room), where

Jógvan's wife Elsebeth and a servant-girl were smelting train-oil from pilot-whale blubber in a large pot. Peder Arhboe asked where "the thief" was, but did not name anyone. Not surprisingly, the two women ran away, and Elsebeth took refuge on the farmhouse roof. Here she was joined by her husband, who had returned from the fields at the alarm. Peder Arhboe again hacked at the *glasstova* door with his axe and demanded entry. When Jógvan asked him what he wanted within doors, the priest replied: "I want to see what you, you thief, feed yourself and your thieving boat's crew with." He then struck Heine Johansen's *hjallur* twice with his axe. (A *hjallur* is an outhouse with at least one slatted side, used for the drying and storage of mutton carcasses and fish.) Before *harri* Peder left Ryggur Farm, he repeatedly called Jógvan a thief, threatened him with his axe, and said that he did not care about the *sysseľmand* (district sheriff), or about Jógvan's thieving brother-in-law, Hr. Anders, "the thief and the murderer in his house". He also abused Jógvan's father, the priest Hr. Rasmus, "the thief in his grave and the gambler".⁸

The wild accusations seem to indicate that Peder Arhboe was drunk at the time of his intrusion, as the traditions recorded by Jakobsen maintain; but nevertheless some sense can be made of his actions and words. Right from his arrival in Vágar, and no doubt partly out of necessity, the priest had been a very hard man over money matters. His serious warning to his parishioners over his clerical rights has already been mentioned. At the time of his predecessor's probate, he skilfully defended the interests of his stepdaughter, and secured her a much better deal than his clerical colleagues had at first intended to give her. When the royal commissioners sent to resume the Gabel family *len* (fief) on the Faroe Islands in 1709-10 enquired about pilot-whale tithes, Peder Arhboe submitted a far-reaching claim on the valuable Miðvágur killings, beyond anything his clerical colleagues had ventured.⁹ As he became more and more unbalanced, Peder Arhboe interpreted any resistance to his pretensions as deliberate evil intent.

The abuse levelled at Jógvan's dead father arose from a game of cards in 1680 between Hr. Rasmus Olesen, then Vágar priest, and Bente's father, the *sorenskriver* Peder Sørensen Broberg, when the priest was lucky enough to win 4 gylden of land on Mykines. In 1691, Broberg's children tried to redeem the land, without success, and when Peder Arhboe arrived as priest he made a further attempt on his wife's behalf to recover the 4 gylden, which were now in the possession of Jógvan Rasmussen (Andersen 1895, 366;

P f. 28).

The animosity against Heine Johansen and the “thieving boat’s crew” arose from a convention in Faroese villages having the force of law, though not formalised until 1813, that regulated the ownership and crewing of fishing-boats. The farms with ancient rights to operate boats had priority in crewing them, and newcomers could only crew boats if population had grown and enough men were left over. In a written submission to the court dated 4 September 1715, obviously penned by an unbalanced man but in this respect clear enough, Peder Arrhboe tells how Jógvan Rasmussen operates one boat, his brother a second, and even the aged Heine Johansen a third, while he himself is lamed both at shore and on sea (VV ff. 73-4). The economic frustration in these two matters sufficiently explains his wild notion that his parishioners, in particular Jógvan Rasmussen, were thieves and robbers bent on his ruin.

The funeral sermon which Peder Arrhboe delivered was not quite as dramatic as tradition suggests, and contained no parody of the ritual, as far as the documentary evidence witnesses. It was, however, in the last degree objectionable, and the dead man’s widow did swoon away and have to be carried home. Peder Arrhboe insisted on payment for his sermon in advance, and received the very large sum of 8 gylden (equivalent to a month’s wages for a labourer). His sermon is thus described:¹⁰

Then Hr. Peder Arrhboe came and delivered the funeral sermon over the dead man, to the grief and distress of his wife and children, whereas, as a priest, he was supposed to comfort the survivors. He began in the same sermon to abuse the dead man, saying that God had withdrawn his blessing from this congregation because of this ungodly fellow; he has been a robber and a thief in my house, he has summoned me to the court for an axe that did no harm, and he meant to make my wife a widow and my children fatherless. Now God has cut him down with the axe of his wrath, and made his wife a widow and his children fatherless. God be praised that I stand here a man yet — I have the key [i.e. of the kingdom]. Then the late man’s wife fell into a swoon and fainted, and was carried out of the church like a dead person. Then Hr. Peder said, it does no harm — it is her conscience.

The traditional account asserts that for his unseemly conduct Peder Arrhboe was sentenced to the loss of his living. Coming straight after the account of the funeral sermon, this implies that the sermon was one of the chief charges against the priest. The legend is here in error — the sermon is nowhere mentioned in any of the court documents. Yet we may well suppose that a contemporary tale has here been accurately transmitted.

Jakobsen's account finally tells how Peder Arhboe stayed in the Jansagerði rectory for a year and half after he had been unfrocked, and that his successor, Surland, had to hire a house in the village. Tradition is here reporting a fact accurately, but understandably fails to tell why Peder Arhboe was able to stay in the house. Legally, the rectory belonged partly to the king and partly to Peder Arhboe. One of Peder Arhboe's predecessors had built an extension to Jansagerði, which had been taken over by successive priests at a valuation. After being unfrocked, Peder Arhboe could thus not easily be ejected from the extension, which was his, though on land which was not his. Surland obviously did not want to live so close to a madman with violent propensities. The ecclesiastical court finally confirmed Peder Arhboe's unfrocking and managed to banish him from Miðvágur as a punishment for re-entering the "king's house", and interfering with Surland's animals (GM ff. 74-9).

In Jakobsen's text there now follows a long section on how Kristoffer í Húsi was plagued by a *hulda* woman, and was helped by Peder Arhboe, a section which need not trouble us, since Kristoffer's supposed first master, Magnus of Bøur, did not take over the leasehold until 1733, long after Kristoffer's supposed supernatural troubles (Mikkjal á Ryggi 1965, 162). A story has simply been added on to the legend, somewhat as the Viðareiði sequence has been.

However, Kristoffer í Húsi was a historical person. *Kristoffers trøð* "Kristoffer's intake" and *Kristoffers krógv* "Kristoffer's peat-store" are known locations in the village territory of Miðvágur (Mikkjal á Ryggi 1965, 162). The tradition of his very powerful voice, including his feat of shouting a whale-alarm from Oyrargjógv to Vestmanna, a distance of about four kilometres, sounds genuine, though I know of no independent confirmation. I am disposed also to credit the tale that he used to go to Tórshavn on trading errands for people, but would not carry out the errand if anyone tried to tell him the requirements more than once.

After the Kristoffer í Húsi sequence follows the story of how Peder Arhboe helped the whale-hunt in Skálafjørður. This tradition forms a cautionary tale against rejecting stories with an element of the supernatural out of hand. The legend tells that after *harri* Peder was unfrocked, a large school of pilot-whales came to Skálafjørður in Eysturoy, then a noted killing-place. The hunters had difficulty in getting it beached, and the men of Skáli went to Vágur to ask for Peder Arhboe's help in getting the school

killed, promising him the largest whale as payment. *Harri* Peder agreed, and with his help it was finally beached. However, the Skáli men cheated the priest, and in revenge *harri* Peder vowed that never again should pilot-whale schools be killed in the fjord.

Since Peder Arhboe's time, indeed, Skálafjørður has been totally unsuccessful as a whale-killing beach, and schools are now always driven up the straits to Hvalvík and Oyri instead. While few persons today would be inclined to lay the blame for this on the way the Skáli men are supposed to have cheated the unfrocked priest, it is nevertheless a historical fact that Peder Arhboe's help was enlisted for a Skáli pilot-whale killing. On 5 October 1720, the *landfoged*, Diderik Marcussen, sent a letter to Peder Arhboe, saying that the hunters believed that some enchantment of Satan was on the sand, hindering the beaching of the whales, and promising him a large payment if he could dispel the evil influence. The *landfoged* likewise sent a letter to the *Vágar sysselmand*, Zacharias Joensen, to arrange for free transport for the unfrocked priest, and for a guard to be set over his house while he was away — Peder Arhboe's persecution complex would demand this (LC f. 44; Jakobsen 1961-4, 606-7).

The final details of the legend report traditions of Peder Arhboe's and Bente's life after he was unfrocked. Tradition is correct in saying that Peder Arhboe was allowed a pension from the *Vágar* living. The account of his having engaged in fishing, and discovered at least one *mið* (rich ground) gains strength from traditions gathered in the present century by Mikkjal á Ryggi, who tells us that Jakobsen's name *Prestmið* is a mistake for *Krossmið*, and also attributes to *harri* Peder the discovery of another *mið* called *Pers-Tobbi* (Mikkjal á Ryggi 1965, 162). This last has the strength of a place-name tradition.

Other details of their later life are obviously unreliable, for instance the alleged begging-trips by Bente, and her persecution of the pupils that her husband taught in Sandavágur. But tradition is correct in reporting that Peder did outlive his wife, and a pathetic half-Danish, half-Faroese appeal by the old man to the milking-women to help him with his cow seems to have the stamp of truth on it.

The Peder Arhboe stories must have passed through the hands of at least some story-tellers of consummate literary skill, Jakob Jakobsen being the last of the line — leaving us with a fascinating blend of genuine historical tradition, ethically-oriented type-casting, and supernatural slapstick. The legend is unusual also for the

number of details which can be checked against historical records. Obviously, no rigorous method exists for sorting out the different elements in traditional stories for which no historical documentation survives. But it is the author's hope that this case-study will aid others in the difficult task of distinguishing the possibly true from the definitely false in the wealth of historical legend in Scandinavia and elsewhere.

Notes

¹ *Regnskab for Viderø Sogn 1694-1789*, f. 9, Kirkeinspektionsarkiv VIII, Sjællands Landsarkiv, Copenhagen.

² It was a common female task to trample on woollens in a urine tub (*tvagtunna*) to clear the grease from the wool. Such a tub in actual use is depicted in a late eighteenth-century sketch, reproduced in *Mondul* (1977, part 3, 9). It would be easy for any strong man to put a woman into a vessel of this kind. It may be, however, that what was meant was a storage vessel such as the tub now standing in the porch of the dower house in Kálvalið in Miðvágur. It would be very hard for a single unaided man to duck a struggling woman into a high-sided barrel like this. For the candlestick, see Degn (1934, 130) and Horskjær (1970, 177-8).

³ Heilskov (1938, 160-3); Birket Smith (1894, 221); and a typescript by H. Friis-Petersen, *Studenterne ved Københavns Universitet 1668-1739* in the Statsbibliotek and the Rigsarkiv, Copenhagen. (I am indebted to Dr. Povl Skårup of Århus University for the foregoing references.) See also Andersen (1895, 424) and Degn (1934, 130-1).

⁴ Peder Arhboe was very diligent in defending his stepdaughter's interests, and active also in the redemption of land which Bente or her mother had sold, but over which they still had *odel* rights. See GS ff. 85-93, and P ff. 42-5 and other later Vágar sections.

⁵ Andersen (1895, 423); Petersen (1963, 360). The poem runs as follows (Jakobsen 1961-4, 170):

Min smukke,
 min dukke,
 min lyst og min del!
 min jordiske engel og sødeste sjæl!
 du haver betaget mit hjerte og alt
 med dine gebærder og yndig gestalt.
 Dine hænder ere hvide og bløde som uld,
 din hals er som perler, dit hår er som guld.

⁶ The Vágar affidavits dated 12 September 1718, Bente's 1720 petitions, the letter to Raben in reply by Anders Morten Surland, and other relevant documentation, are all in SIB. The text of the passage quoted runs as follows:

Om hand var gal dend tiid her maatte holdis vagt over hannem det veed vii iche men Gud i Himmelen ved det, men at hand anstillede sig som et rasende Meniske der er sante og udj sine Prædicher sagde her Peder, I siger Præsten er gal, nei, Præsten er iche gal hand haver bedre forstand end nogen af dem der siger hand er gal.

⁷ The undertaking appears in GS f. 91. It is quoted against Peder Arhboe in GM ff. 72-3.

⁸ The VV evidence is well summarised in Andersen (1895, 424-7). See also Petersen (1963, 365-6). The *sysselmand*, Jógvan Zachariassen, and the provost, Hr. Anders Lemvig, were both brothers-in-law of Jógvan Rasmussen.

⁹ Degn (1934, 79-81); *Rentekammeret* 372.21, report by J. C. Klein dated 30 October 1709, ff. 14-17, Rigsarkivet, Copenhagen.

¹⁰ SIB. The original text runs:

Saa kom Hr. Peder Arhaboe og gjorde Lig-Prædichen, over den Salige mand, hans hustru og børn til sorrig og bedrøvelse i den stæd hand som een Præstemand Skulle trøste de efter levende. Noch begynte hand i same Prædichen at skielde paa den afdøde at Gud hafde taget sin Velsignelse fra denne Meenighed for denne ugudelige Kropskyld hand har været een Røver og een tyv i mit huus, hand har stefned mig indtil tinge for en øxe som gjorde ingen Skade, og agtede at gjøre min Kone enche og mine børn faderløse. Nu har Gud afhugged hannem med sin vredis øxe, og gjort hans hustru enche og hans børn faderløse. Gud Ske lov ieg staar mand endnu ieg har bindenøgelen, saa falt den Si: mands hustru i besvimelse og Daanede og blef baared af Kirchen for et død Meniske da sagde Hr. Peder det skader icke det er Samvittigheden.

Abbreviations for documents in Føroya Landsskjallasavn cited more than once.

GM Gejstlige Mødeprotokol 1669-1803

GS Gejstlige Skifteprotokoller 1679-1729

LC Landfogderi Copibog 1717-31

P Panteprotokol 1706-23

SIB Stiftamt Indkomne Breve 1720-1

VV Vaagøe Vaartingsprotokol 1714-17

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CHRISTIAN AND PAGAN REFERENCES IN
ELEVENTH-CENTURY NORSE POETRY: THE
CASE OF ARNÓRR JARLASKÁLD

By DIANA EDWARDS

SKALDIC poetry composed by Icelanders associated with Scandinavian courts around the millennium veers quite dramatically away from the extreme elaboration of diction and word-order characteristic of the mid and late tenth century, and the coincidence of this development with the Christian missionary activities of the two kings Óláfr Tryggvason (995-1000) and Óláfr inn helgi Haraldsson (1015-30) has long been noted and discussed (e.g. Paasche 1948, 36-9 and Turville-Petre 1974, 13).¹ Many factors support the thesis that the two Olafs, for religious and political reasons, disapproved of poetry which too clearly flaunted its pagan descent. Not least, the poems composed under their ægis, and well preserved because of their association with the kings, are modest in their use of kennings and poetic appellations (*heiti*) which contain pagan allusions. Thus when Hallfreðr vandræðaskáld after his conversion fashions praise of Óláfr Tryggvason he is sparing with pagan references compared with his earlier praise of the pagan Hákon jarl, and this well reflects his view of Óláfr as a destroyer of heathen temples (*hørgbrjótr*, Hfr 2, 3).² Again, in Sigvatr Þórðarson's poetry expressions such as *mjǫð-Nanna* "goddess Nanna of mead [lady]" (Sigv 3, 15) or *sóknar Njǫrðr* "god Njǫrðr of battle [warrior]" (Sigv 13, 3) are rather few, and at least twice in his memorial lay (*Erfidrápa*) for Óláfr helgi the pagan allusions are pointedly turned against paganism. In v. 1 the hanging of twelve Swedes — presumably heathen — is expressed as their "riding the horse of Sigarr [a legendary sea-king] to Hel"; and when in v. 27 Sigvatr lays down his sword for a pilgrim's staff, "sword" is expressed by the kenning *Gjallar vǫndr* "wand of the valkyrie Gjöll".

If there was royal pressure on poetic fashion, it probably coincided with purely artistic impulses and added to their strength. The time was ripe for a reaction to the kenning-encrusted artifice of late tenth-century pagan poets such as Einarr skálaglamm or Tindr Hallkelsson which, however superb, was not easy to follow.

The more positive result of the conversion of Scandinavia is that

Christian material begins to feature more or less prominently in skaldic compositions. Dating is often difficult, but the new infusion was already in evidence in the later tenth century. Eilífr Goðrúnarson, for example, composer of the last known poem about Þórr, also refers in a *dróttkvætt* fragment to the Christian God (*Róms konungr*) and his conquest of heathen lands (Eil 3), and in the same verse states that God is said to sit by the spring of the Fate-goddess Urðr (*kveðja sitjal sunnr at Urðar brunni*, following *Skjald* BI 144; *NN* §470 differs). This verse manifests the same spirit of eclecticism as the tenth-century stone sculpture of England and Man, most notably the Gosforth cross, with its stirring juxtaposition of Christian Crucifixion with pagan Ragnarøk and the punishment of Loki. It also anticipates the readiness of Eilífr's successors to let the new faith infuse but not choke the poetic habits of the pagan world.

Already evident, too, at this early date is the fact that amongst the Christian utterances some focus directly on Christian themes and practices whilst others give new direction to conventional poetic motifs by fusing them with Christian notions. Thus Þorbjörn díarskáld, in a four-line fragment thought to belong to the end of the tenth century, focusses directly on Christian ritual when he refers to the receipt of *gipta Hvítakrists* "the White Christ's grace/good luck" in baptism (Þdís 2), whilst Þorleifr jarlsskáld Rauðfeldarson fuses the notion of God's *gipta* with worldly flattery when he attributes the success of Sveinn Tjúguskegg (d. 1014) against the English to the good fortune bestowed on him by God, prince of the sky's radiance (*gipta qðlings himins røðla*, Þjsk 2). Similarly, two poets of Knútr inn ríki Sveinsson (d. 1035), Hallvarðr háreksblei and Þórarinn loftunga, gave a Christian turn to their praises which will be mentioned below.

Among the early skaldic works which bear a Christian stamp, those of Hallfræðr vandræðaskáld have a peculiar intensity which springs both from his personal bond with his liege and from his exposure to the new faith at that liege's behest. At the close of his *Erfridrápa* for Óláfr Tryggvason he refers to Óláfr twice as his godfather and utters a prayer for him (see p. 39 below), and in his occasional verses (*lausavísur*) his anguished conversion from the worship of Óðinn and Freyr bears copious artistic fruit. (On Hallfræðr and his conversion, see Strömbäck 1975, 68-88, and, on the authenticity of his Christian verses, van Eeden 1919, 82 and Bjarni Einarsson 1977, cxxviii-cxxix; 1981.)

As a counter-example it might be noted that Þórðr Kolbeinsson

(b. 974 according to *Borgfirðinga sögur* 1938, lxxxvii), father of Arnórr jarlaskáld, is not — to judge from his surviving corpus of 230 lines — among the skalds who quickly registered the coming of Christianity in his verse. Indeed, the few intrusions of the supernatural into his poetry, although vague, are of a polytheistic cast. The most explicit is a petition for a bloody victory against his rival Björn Hítðelakappi which is addressed to all the powerful beings who created the sun and the moon and their course (*allar rammar véttir, þærs skópu hlýrn ok skeið þeira*, ÞKolb Lv 9, ordered as prose). There is also a reference to plural fates (*skopp*, ÞKolb 1, 2) and to fate in the impersonal (*skapat vas mér*, ÞKolb Lv 2).

The skalds' inclusion of Christian references no doubt gained impetus from the fall of Óláfr Haraldsson at Stiklastaðir in 1030, which so rapidly acquired an aura of martyrdom. It was probably no more than two years after the battle that Þórarinn loftunga referred in his *Glælognskviða*, a *kviðuháttir* poem addressed to Sveinn Knútsson (alias Alfífuson), to miracles at Óláfr's shrine in Niðaróss: the incorrupt body, the healings, the spontaneous ringing of bells and the flaring of candles (vv. 5-8). That Óláfr has the ear of the Almighty is suggested as Þórarinn advises Sveinn to enlist the support of Óláfr, *goðs maðr*, for his rule in Norway (v. 9). Similarly, Sigvatr Þórðarson's *Erfidrápa* for Óláfr imbues Stiklastaðir with a spirit of crusade (v. 22) and reports miracles at Óláfr's shrine (vv. 23-4).

Nevertheless, the evidence does not suggest that pious declarations were an obligatory component of poetry composed during Óláfr's lifetime and within his orbit. There are none in the extant verses by his devoted liegeman Þormóðr Kolbrúnarskáld, whilst by contrast many pagan mythical names are embedded in Þormóðr's kennings; there is only one scrap of overt piety in the Head-Ransom (*Höfuðlausn*) with which Óttarr svartí appeased the king (*þik remmir goð miklu . . . gagni* "God strengthens you with a mighty victory", Ótt 2, 18); and there are none in the verses credited to Óláfr himself.

In the generation after Sigvatr and Hallfreðr, with Christianity, at least in name, well established in Norway and Iceland,³ one might expect to find a more intensive use of Christian reference coupled with one of two tendencies: either a still more complete rejection of the verbal trappings of heathendom, or else some restoration of these, now emptied of whatever sacral meaning they formerly possessed. Of the skalds patronised by Óláfr helgi's

son Magnús inn góði (1035-46/47) and half-brother Haraldr inn harðráði Sigurðarson (c. 1045-66), only Arnórr Þórðarson jarlaskáld and Þjóðólfr Arnórsson have left a sizeable legacy of preserved verses, but from the fragmentary corpus it appears that the inclusion of Christian or pagan allusions was still an area in which the individual tastes of skalds could differ importantly. Þjóðólfr Arnórsson several times draws upon pagan myth for his conceits and refers to a plurality of gods in *Dǫnum vǫru goð . . . grǫm* "the gods were angered with the Danes" (ÞjóðA 4, 13; the grammatically singular v.l. *var* in MS *Hrokkinskinna* appears to be a secondary variant). Although this need not be taken as more than a form of words, it tallies with the fact that Þjóðólfr's surviving poetry includes only one Christian sentiment. It occurs in his *lausavísa* 26, where, declaring support for Haraldr's sons if the king should perish, the poet adds: "It will go as God wills" (*Gengr sem goð vill*). A similar idiom was used earlier in the 1060s by Þorleikr fagri when composing in expectation of a sea-battle between Haraldr Sigurðarson and Sveinn Ulfsson at the Gautelfr (Göta älv): *Par má goð valda, hvárr nemr enn annan ǫndu eða löndum* "There God can decide who finally deprives the other of life or lands" (Þfagr 2, ordered as prose). Of Arnórr's remaining contemporaries, Stúfr inn blindi and Steinn Herdísarson include Christian utterances which will be mentioned below, whilst the extant poetry of others, such as Þolverkr Arnórsson, Valgarðr á Velli or King Haraldr himself, contains none at all. Pagan allusions, meanwhile, are on the whole sparse in the works of the last-mentioned poets and their contemporaries, and are limited to stereotyped references in kennings to gods such as Óðinn (under names which include Yggr, Gautr and Hǫarr) and to valkyries such as Gunnr and Hildir.

In the present connection the work of Arnórr jarlaskáld (after 1011-after 1073) is of particular interest, for it is rich in both Christian and pagan references. The extant corpus consists of 451 lines of *dróttkvætt* verse, 130 in the *hrynhent* metre, and an isolated three-syllable kenning.

It seems from the character of Þórðr Kolbeinsson's poetry, mentioned above, that this could not have been the stimulus to Arnórr's inclusion of Christian material in his own poetry, and this difference between the compositions of father and son agrees with the spirit of the anecdote in *Bjarnar saga Híttdælakappa* ch. 23, in which the young Arnórr expresses moral distaste for Þórðr and

Björn's duel of verses about each other's wives (*Borgfirðinga sögur* 1938, 174). Doubtless Arnórr was temperamentally predisposed to favour the new faith which must have powerfully confronted him in his early adulthood at the courts of Magnús of Norway and the Orcadian jarls Rognvaldr and Þorfinnr, and possibly of Knútr inn ríki of Denmark (on the evidence of *Skáldatal*, printed in *SnE* 1848-87, III 258 and 267). Certainly one of the formative influences in this matter must have been the poetry of Hallfreðr vandræðaskáld and Sigvatr Þórðarson, with which — as verbal parallels show — Arnórr was at least partially acquainted (cf. de Vries 1952).

The Christian utterances in Arnórr's poetry are striking for their number and variety. He makes nine references to the Christian god, three times using the word *goð* (in *Hryn* 19, *Þdr* 24 and 25), and six times using a kenning.⁴ (For comparison, Paasche 1948, 53 estimated that God or Christ is mentioned some 48 times in the poetry of c. 990-1050, 12 of these by means of a periphrasis.) Most of Arnórr's six kennings amount to "lord of heaven/the skies": *sóltjalda stillir* "ruler of the sun's awnings" (*Rdr* 3), *himna þengill* "the skies' prince" (*Hryn* 18), *himins skapvörðr* "heaven's shaping guardian/natural guardian" (*Mdr* 10), *dags grundar konungr* "king of day's land" (Fragment about Hermundr Illugason) and *sólar hjalms tyggi* "sovereign of the sun's helmet" (*Frag* 1). In *Girkja vörðr ok Garða* "guardian of Greeks and of Garðar [N.W. Russia]" (*Hdr* 19), however, Arnórr presents God specifically as ruler of the realms where Haraldr Sigurðarson first displayed his daring leadership. It has also been suggested that the kenning hints at the fact that Haraldr was long at odds with the papacy and followed an ecclesiastical policy which in some respects resembled that of Byzantium and Russia (Johnsen 1969, 50).

One of the supreme contributions of the new faith to the conceptual world of the Scandinavians was the powerful emphasis on eternal life as a solution to the problem of mortality, and five of Arnórr's references to God are embedded in prayers for the soul of a hero. An example is the two-line fragment *Rdr* 3:

Sannr stillir, hjalp snjöllum,
sóltjalda, Rognvaldi.

True ruler of the sun's awnings, help
the valiant Rognvaldr.

(Here as elsewhere it is not possible to produce an exactly parallel translation.) Again in two of the other prayers, for Hermundr Illugason (in the two-line fragment about him) and for Þorfinnr jarl (in *Þdr* 24), the skald calls upon God to "help" (*hjalpa*) the

hero. Sigvatr, in a *lausavísa* composed in the 1020s (Sigv 13, 11), had offered a petition for Óláfr Haraldsson using the verb *hjalpa*, and this verse conceivably influenced Arnórr's *Rdr* 3 (Olsen 1954, 191-2). *Hjalpa* also occurs in several prayers on rune-stones from the early Christian period in Scandinavia, which commonly take the form (in normalised orthography) *guð hjalpi sólu/önd hans* (see, e.g., Lange 1958, 72n; also Kuhn 1981, 301 on the possibility of West Germanic influence on the use of *hjalpa* in Christian contexts).

In *Pdr* 25 Arnórr makes a two-fold and more explicit petition:

Ættbæti firr ítran	The splendid ennobler of sovereign
allríks – en bið'k líkna	Torf-Einarr's kin [Porfinnr] – and I pray
trúra tyggja dýrum –	true mercies for the precious prince –
Torf-Einars goð meinum.	God keep far from harms.

The use of the first person pronoun in the interjected *en bið'k* . . . gives the prayer a very personal character, and the same is true of the prayer in *Hdr* 19:

Bœnir hef'k fyr beini	I raise up prayers for the dealer of war-
bragna falls við snjallan	rriors' deaths to the wise guardian of
Girkja vörð ok Garða;	Greeks and of Garðar; so I repay the
gjöf launa'k svá jöfri.	prince for his gift.

Arnórr is remarkable for the frequency with which he includes a prayer in his *erfidrápur*, but he is not the first to pray for a patron. That Sigvatr prays for the soul of Óláfr helgi in a *lausavísa* has already been mentioned, and he does so again in his *Erfidrápa* (v. 22). Still earlier, about 1001, Hallfreðr vandræðaskáld prayed for the safe-keeping of Óláfr Tryggvason's soul (*Hfr* 3, 29):

kæns hafi Krístr enn hreini	may the spotless Christ have the wise
konungs önd ofar löndum.	king's soul, above the world.

The split refrain (*klofastef*) of Stúfr's *drápa* for Haraldr harðráði (c. 1067) so closely echoes Hallfreðr's lines that one might suspect direct influence:

Hafi ríks þars vel líkar . . .	May the soul of the mighty Haraldr have
Vist of aldr með Kristi . . .	a dwelling in eternity with Christ above
Haralds önd ofar löndum.	the earth, where it is bliss.

What Hallfreðr and Steinn present in the form of a petition is confidently stated by Arnórr in *Hdr* 18:

Hefr afreka en öfra	The holy land above has the hero.
.....	
heilög fold.	

Despite textual difficulties (three MSS read *ens ofra*, one *ens aurva*)

this seems a clear avowal of belief in heaven and the after-life. It is reminiscent of Þórarinn loftunga's affirmation in *Glælognskviða* 4 (c. 1032) that Óláfr Haraldsson won himself a place in heaven. Evidently, then, Arnórr and other early Christian skalds felt no anomaly in referring to a Christian immortality in the context of memorial poems which themselves seek to endow heroes with the immortality of posthumous glory.

The most concentrated theological passage in Arnórr's poetry is *Frag* 1, on the judgement of mankind by God and St Michael:

Mikjáll vegr þat's misgort þykkir,
mannvitsfróðr, ok allt et góða;
tyggi skiptir síðan seggjum
sólar hjalms á dæmistóli.

Michael weighs what seems wrongly
done, ripe with wisdom, and all that is
good; then the sovereign of the sun's
helmet separates out men at his judge-
ment-seat.

This is the earliest skaldic context in which the archangel Michael is named (except for *Mikálsmess*a in *Okík* 1, 1, c. 1046); but there is evidence from rune-stones and other sources that he was widely venerated in Scandinavia from early times, and in particular that his rôle of weighing good and evil was known (cf. Jansson 1969, 489). According to the later saga accounts of the conversion of Iceland (c. 1000), there was reference to Michael in the earliest Christian teaching there, and the words of the missionary Þangbrandr as reported in *Njáls saga* contain close resemblances to Arnórr's *hrynhent* lines: "hann skal meta allt þat, sem þú gerir, bæði gott ok illt, ok er svá miskunnsamr, at hann metr allt þat meira, sem vel er gort [v.l. at/er honum þykkir vel]", "it is for him to weigh all that you do, both good and evil, and he is so merciful that he gives more weight to all that is rightly done [v.l. that seems well to him]" (*Brennu-Njáls saga* 1954, 257).

It is most tantalising that we do not know the wider poetic context from which Arnórr's *hrynhent* fragment comes. It is possible that it is from a poem in which Gellir Þorkelsson's church at Helgafell was described, for the author of *Laxdæla saga* (1934, 229) reports that Gellir "had a very fine church built at Helgafell, as Arnórr jarlaskáld testifies in the memorial poem he composed for Gellir, and he speaks clearly about this." Guðbrandur Vigfússon and F. York Powell (1883, II 184), taking up this clue, suggested specifically that Arnórr's verse refers to "a painting or hangings on which the last Judgement is figured", and one could add the possibility that a carving was the stimulus.

The prompting of skaldic composition by visual representations of narrative scenes is evidenced from the ninth and tenth centuries

by the shield poems of Bragi Boddason, Þjóðólfr ór Hvini and Egill Skalla-Grímsson, and in the next two centuries Þorfinnr munnr, Oddi litli and Rognvaldr kali (the last two in rivalry) described fine hangings in a hall. Ulfr Uggason's *Húsdrápa* (c. 985), meanwhile, describes scenes on the walls of Óláfr pái's new homestead at Hjarðarholt; most of the scenes transposed into verse are mythological.

An iconographical stimulus for *Frag 1* is further favoured by the probability that visual representations of St Michael would have been available to eleventh-century Icelanders, either at home or abroad (cf. Selma Jónsdóttir 1959, esp. 18, 20, 22-3 and 42-3), and by the fact that the only biblical references to St Michael are in *Jude* v. 9, where he disputes with the Devil about the body of Moses, and *Revelation* ch. 12, vv. 7-8, where he vanquishes the dragon which is the Devil.

If, then, Arnórr's *hrynhent* fragment takes its inspiration from the visual arts, it can be seen as a Christian representative of a flourishing tradition of Norse picture-describing poems. As for the exposition of so specific a Christian theme, it is rare in skaldic poetry of this time, but not unparalleled. A fragment by Skapti Þóroddsson (d. 1030) presents Christ as creator, and *Sigv 12*, 28 treats of Christ's baptism in the Jordan.

The Christian threads are often well integrated with the more traditional fabric of Arnórr's poetry. In *Hdr 19*, quoted above, the skald follows his prayer for Haraldr's soul with the words: *gjöf launa'k svá jöfri* "so I repay the prince for his gift". Earlier skalds (including Bragi) had composed whole poems in gratitude for a gift, but Arnórr modifies the tradition, not only making a poem in memory of Haraldr but also adding a devout plea on his behalf.

A similar effect is obtained by Steinn Herdísarson, when, addressing his *Óláfsdrápa kyrra* more to God than to men, he transforms the traditional "call for a hearing" into a prayer (Steinn 3, 1, c. 1070).

Christianity even tinges the political bias of poet and poetry when Arnórr celebrates the career of Magnús Ólafsson "the Good", for he not only expresses warm approbation, but further suggests that the king enjoys divine favour. In particular, Magnús's campaign against the Wends is subtly endowed with the character of a crusade. The Wendish foes are an "evil tribe, heathen host" (*óþjóð, heiðit folk, Hryn 12*) and "wrong-doers" (*illvirki, Mdr 8*), and when the bodies of the slain are burned at Jóm it is over their

“unbaptised foreheads” (*óskírð enni*) that the flames run (*Mdr* 8). Meanwhile, God is on the side of Magnús, as when Magnús drives the Wends from Danish territory at Hlýrskógsheiðr (Lyrskovsheden) in *Mdr* 10:

en skipti
skapvörðr himins jörðu;

and heaven's shaping guardian allotted
earth;

and in *Hryn* 13 the words “victory of the stout lord was fated to you” (*vas þér sigr skapaðr grams ens digra*) probably allude to the legend that King Óláfr, appearing to Magnús in a dream, gave him the strength to triumph at Hlýrskógsheiðr. (Cf. Magnús's words in *Flateyjarbók* 1860-8, III 279: *ver sköllum sigr faa þuiat hinn helgi Olafr konungr fer med oss* “we shall win victory for the holy king Óláfr goes with us”; also *ESk* 6, 30 (1153): *sigr gaf sínum . . . frömmum arfa* “[Óláfr] gave his bold heir victory”.)

In presenting Magnús in this way Arnórr is, I believe, both expressing personal convictions and continuing a long-established literary tradition, for the skalds of heathen times frequently saw the hand of gods (especially Óðinn), norns and valkyries in human fortunes, and particularly in dealing out victory or death (e.g. *Gráf* 12, c. 970, *Vell* 9, c. 986, and *Edáð* 9, c. 1010; *Kveld*, c. 878 and *TorfE* 2, c. 900; *Finng*, anon., tenth century). Since the early eleventh century these notions had been giving way to their Christian counterparts, as witness the verse by Þorleifr jarlsskáld mentioned on p. 35 above.

Arnórr takes his exaltation of Magnús so far as to proclaim him second only to God in his subjects' hearts (in *Hryn* 19):

Eyðendr fregn'k at elska þjóðir
græði lostins goði et næsta
geima vals í þessum heimi.

I hear that men love him who strips
. . . the ocean-steed [ship, hence sea-
warrior], lashed by the surge, next after
God in this world.

(*Eyðendr*, grammatically plural base word to the kenning designating Magnús, may be consciously ingratiating.) Exact pagan parallels to this encomiastic flourish do not, to my knowledge, exist, although the ancient notion of divinely-descended rulers bringing years of prosperity to their lands is not conceptually distant. Christian precedents, meanwhile, can certainly be found. Arnórr's phrase *et næsta* recalls Hallvarðr háreksblesi's slightly opaque statement that no ruler on earth is “nearer” (*næri*) God than Knútr (*Hallv* 7), and indeed early comparisons of Scandinavian sovereigns with God are numerous enough to suggest that this had already achieved the status of a laudatory topos. The resemblance between *Hallv* 8:

Knútr verr jorð sem ítran
alls dróttinn sal fjalla

Knútr defends land as the lord of all
defends the splendid hall of the fells
[heaven]

and Þloft 1:

Knútr verr grund sem gætir
Gríklands himinríki

Knútr defends land as the keeper of
Greece defends the realm of heaven

suggests imitation. Compare also Gunnlaugr ormstunga's praise of the English Æðelred (Gunnl 1, c. 1001):

Herr sésk allr . . .
Englands sem goð þengil.

All men fear the prince of England as
they fear God.

(*Þengil* emended from MSS *eingill/þeingils*.) Arnórr may well have known these verses — especially since he reputedly composed for Knútr himself — and consciously placed his praise in the newly-established tradition in order to place his hero at least as high as those of the immediate past.

Hryn 18 further illustrates the use of Christian allusions to compliment the hero in a memorably extravagant, and now more novel, way:

Mönnum lízk, es mildingr rennir
Meita hlíðir sævar skíði,
unnir jafnt sem ósamt renni
engla fylki himna þengils.

It seems to men, as the ruler makes
the ski of the ocean [ship] skim Meiti's
slopes [the sea], just as though skim-
ming the waves with him were the angel-
host of the skies' prince.

It also demonstrates how imaginatively Arnórr is able to integrate these allusions with the surrounding material, for the comparison here continues, and harmonises with, the comparisons in *Hryn* 17. There, the bright trappings of Magnús's ship are compared with the sun and with flaring beacons, and although the images are not specifically Christian, they endue the ship, and hence the person of Magnús, with an almost supernatural radiance. The legendary sea-king Meiti is such a shadowy figure as to be a not uncomfortable companion to angels within the half-strophe.

Hryn 18 is among the earliest skaldic contexts in which angels are mentioned, but it is not the earliest. Sigvatr mentions angels in his *Erfdrápa* for Óláfr helgi (v. 28), and Þrándr í Gøtu is credited with the following words in his "Kredda" (*Færeyinga saga* 1967, 110):

Gangat ek einn út
.....
fjórir mér fylgja
fimm goðs englar.

May I not/I do not go out alone; four or
five angels of God accompany me.

The traditional ascription of this, and its dating in the eleventh

century is, however, questionable (see Foote 1974a, 78). Arnórr's phrase *engla fylki* otherwise only appears in later Christian didactic works such as the *Norwegian Homily Book* and the biblical paraphrase *Stjórn*, where it may be a calque on the Latin *chorus angelorum* (so Paasche 1914b, 43).

Apart from a new conception of the after-life, there is little evidence here of a radical shift in ethical values or in sensibilities as a result of Christian influence. Whether out of artistic tact or whether because the impact of Christianity was shallow, Arnórr shows little or no inclination to confront the New Testament values of charity, humility and peace, still less to attempt to square these with the old warrior ideal of dauntless and ruthless courage for which he so energetically praises his heroes. There are verses on the pity of war, when he mourns the clash between the Orcadian jarls Þorfinnr and Rognvaldr with words such as: *óskepnan varð uppi* "a monstrous thing came to pass" (*Pdr* 20) and: *ór þrifusk mein at meiri* "my pain grew the more" (*Pdr* 21, "my" for *ór* indicated by the context), but his intense grief springs from the tragedy that kinsmen and friends are in conflict and that his own loyalties are torn.

Only once does Arnórr come close to questioning the values so long praised in skaldic, as in other early Germanic, poetry. This is when he states that Haraldr Sigurðarson's death at Stamford Bridge was caused by his *ofrausn*, lit. "overmagnificence" (*Hdr* 13). As with the celebrated *ofermōd* "high courage/overweening pride" which makes Byrhtnōþ give up his strategic advantage over a Viking army in the Old English *Battle of Maldon* (*ASPR* VI 9, l. 89), the moral overtones of the word are extremely elusive, but the evidence of usage elsewhere would suggest that Arnórr means the word to indicate a tragic, if heroic, flaw. Sigvatr Þórðarson, for instance, uses the word pejoratively when reproaching Magnús Ólafsson in *Bersögulísvísur* for violently destroying his subjects' homes (*Sigv* 11, 11):

ofrausn es þat jofri
innan lands at vinna.

it is an excessive show of force in the
king to fight in his own realm.

The reference of Arnórr's *ofrausn* could be specifically to Haraldr's presumption in marching from the ships without armour, his decision to tackle the superior English host which surprised him, or his reckless zeal once the fighting was under way; or else more generally to Haraldr's overweening ambition in invading England — compare Þjóðólfr Arnórsson's comment that it was

þarflaust “needlessly” that Haraldr called up troops for the expedition westwards (ÞjóðA 4, 27), and the forebodings in anonymous *Drömm- og varselsvers* 8-11 (1066). I believe, then, that *ofrausn* probably expresses disapprobation, and that the disapprobation may be moral. The possibility remains, however, that Arnórr’s criticism is merely pragmatic, pointing out the political and military folly of the expedition.

To conclude the discussion so far, the poetry of Arnórr jarlaskáld cannot quite be said to be pervaded by Christianity, yet incidental Christian references are sufficiently plentiful and forceful to give an individual stamp to his work and to imply a genuine piety in the skald. Some of the references take the form of flamboyant and, as far as can be told, novel images. Many, on the other hand, find precedent (usually general rather than precise) in the works of earlier poets, both Christian and pagan.

There is never in post-Conversion Scandinavia quite such a potent fusion of the traditional poetics with the new faith as is found in Old English biblical paraphrases such as *Exodus* and *Judith* or treatments of New Testament themes such as *The Dream of the Rood* (or the Old Saxon *Heliand*) but in both cultures the Old Testament conception of God as giver of victory happily coincided with the warlike preoccupations of traditional poetry, and Arnórr’s treatment of Magnús góði well illustrates this. Further, the rich preservation of pre-Christian poetry in Scandinavia makes it possible to venture to trace the Christian poets’ fusing of piety with heroic panegyric back to the days when victory was ordained by Óðinn and administered by valkyries.

Arnórr both inserts self-contained Christian materials, notably prayers, into his poems, and imparts a Christian colouring to otherwise secular descriptive and encomiastic motifs. His approach is still far from the conception of poetry as a vehicle for Christian devotion and didacticism which is evinced in varying degree by twelfth-century poems such as Einarr Skúlason’s *Geisli*, Gamli kanóki’s *Harmsól* or the anonymous *Plácítusdrápa* and *Leiðarvísan*, but it nevertheless contributes to the progress of Norse poetry in that direction.

Before proceeding to the pagan-derived materials in Arnórr’s poetry, it is fitting to mention here a group of images which may owe inspiration to either or both of the pagan and Christian worlds. In *Pdr* 24, a verse apparently influenced by *Vqluspá* (vv. 41 and

57) and the poetry of Hallfreðr vandræðaskáld (Hfr 3, 25, 26 and 29), a series of *adynata* referring to the end of the world produce a climax of praise, as Arnórr declares that the world will be engulfed by the great cataclysm before a finer lord than Þorfinnr is born in the Orkneys:

Björt verðr sól at svartri,
sökkur fold í mar dökkvan,
brestr erfiði Austra,
allr glymr sær á fjöllum,
áðr at Eyjum fríðri
– inndróttar – Þorfinni
– þeim hjalpi goð geymi –
gæðingr myni fæðask.

The bright sun to swart will turn, earth
will sink in the dark ocean, Austri's
toil [sky] will be rent, all the sea will
roar over the mountains, before in the
Isles a finer chieftain than Þorfinnr –
God help that guardian of his retinue
– will be reared.

(*Fríðri*; *myni* emended from MSS *fridum*; *minni*.)

Similarly, in *Hryn* 1 the much more compressed *unz himinn rifnar* “until the sky is riven” caps a flamboyant assertion of Magnús Ólafsson's pre-eminence and the wish that it will remain:

hverr gramr es þér stóru verri;
meiri verði þinn an þeira
þrifnuðr allr, unz himinn rifnar.

every prince is far below you; may
your whole success surpass theirs,
until the sky is riven.

It is noticeable that Arnórr has not used unambiguously pagan notions such as that of the wolf swallowing the sun (attested in *Vafþr* 46-7 and *SnE* 1931, 70) — perhaps, in *Þdr* 24, because they would have grated against the intercalated prayer. Indeed, only one of his images — that of the earth sinking into the sea — was considered by Orlík, in his study of Ragnarøk motifs (1902, esp. 289-90), to be of heathen origin, and even this has been disputed. Martin (1972, 129-30) regards it as “a purely natural theme, in no way associated with a mythological theme or character”. For the rest, the images in *Þdr* 24 and *Hryn* 1 (including the sun turning black) are reminiscent of Christian eschatology as presented in the *Book of Revelation*, although they need not derive from there.

The allusions to pagan myth in Arnórr's poetry are of quite a different kind from the Christian, for they are condensed and indeed fossilised, confined to traditional *heiti* and kennings and capable of stimulating no more than a fleeting recollection of a figure from the religion of pagan Scandinavia.

Arnórr's extant verses contain six references to Óðinn, under the names Yggr “Terrible One” (in *Hryn* 5, 6 and 15 and, emended from MSS *yggialhyggjar*, in *Mdr* 11), Próttir “Mighty One” (*Þdr* 22) and Alfaðir “All-father” (*Þdr* 4). Yggr, as pointed out by de

Vries (1934, 49), occurs some ten times in poetry composed in the years 1000-1050, and both it and *Próttir* are among the *Óðinn heiti* whose use increases, rather than decreases, after the conversion of Norway and Iceland. De Vries (1934, 56-9) suggests that these and similar names, being of a broadly descriptive character, could be used more happily by Christian poets than names such as *Rögnir* and *Hróptr* which were more intimately bound with the person of *Óðinn* and had more specifically religious connotations. Another factor in the popularity of *Yggr* may have been metrical usefulness. In all four cases when Arnórr uses the *heiti* it participates in the *hending*, and Kahle's catalogue (1892, 267-8) of recorded *hendingar* shows it to be a popular source of rhymes on *-ygg-*.

By contrast with *Yggr* and *Próttir*, *Alfaðir* is a rather bold term for a heathen god on the lips of a Christian skald — more so since *Óðinn* names based on “father” are extremely rare in ON poetry, except in the mythological poems of the *Edda* (cf. de Boor 1930, 71-3). Snorri in *Gylfaginning* (*SnE* 1931, 10 and 17) mentions *Alfǫðr* first of all the names of *Óðinn* and explains that he is so called because he is father of all gods and men and of all which was fashioned by him. In *Skáldskaparmál* (*SnE* 1931, 88) he places Arnórr's verse first of all his skaldic quotations, citing it to illustrate the *Óðinn heiti*.

Alfaðir is used by Arnórr in the *tvíkennt* or doubled kenning *Alfǫður hrosta brim* “All-father's mash-surf [ale, hence poetry]” (*Pdr* 4), and Kreutzer (1977, 115-16) remarks that, of the pre-twelfth-century skalds whose work bears a Christian stamp, Arnórr alone uses a kenning for poetry containing a reference to *Óðinn*. Kreutzer and de Boor (1930, 77) see this kenning as an elegant conceit without religious meaning, which it undoubtedly is, although I would stress that it does specifically recall *Óðinn*'s rôle as god of poetry and the entertaining tale of his recovery of the mead of poetry (*SnE* 1931, 83-5). That it was fashioned with deliberate artistry is suggested by the fact that it is wittily juxtaposed within the exordium of Arnórr's *Porfinnsdrápa* with references to literal drinking, and in particular with the “ale” kenning *fen hrosta* “swamp of mash” (*Pdr* 2) which shares the element *hrosti* “mash [malt and water used in brewing]”. (According to my reconstruction of *Pdr*, the verses here referred to as *Pdr* 4 and 2 would be consecutive as *Pdr* 1 and 2, although given the fragmentary state of the lay no one reconstruction can be conclusive.)

Similarly, it is specifically as god of battle that *Óðinn* figures in Arnórr's kenning *Yggjar veðr* “*Óðinn*'s gale [battle]” (*Hryn* 15),

whilst *Yggjar mör* "Óðinn's gull [raven]" in *Hryn* 6 alludes to the myth of Óðinn as raven-god (*hrafnagoð*), who daily sends his two sacred ravens Huginn and Muninn "Thought" and "Memory" out over the world in search of news (*Gri* 20; *SnE* 1931, 42-3). Arnórr uses one of these names in *Pdr* 5 in the kenning *fetrjóðr hugins* "Huginn's/the raven's foot-reddener" (i.e. warrior, the one who spills his enemies' blood, in which the carrion-birds then dabble).

On the other hand, the reference to Óðinn in "warrior" kennings such as *rimmu Yggr* "Óðinn of battle" (*Hryn* 5) is without mythological precision, and other gods' names could be substituted, as in Arnórr's *göndlar Njörðr* "Njörðr of battle" (*Rdr* 1) and *unnar Baldr* "Baldr of the sword" (*Pdr* 14). The fact that an Óðinn name can be used in the plural in *hjaln-Þróttar* "helmet-Óðinns [warriors]" in *Pdr* 22 strengthens this sense of imprecision.

Óðinn's handmaid on the battlefield, the valkyrie, figures in the "raven" kenning *Hlakkar haukar* "hawks of Hlökk/the valkyrie": *Hlakkar lætr þú hræloq drekkal hauka* "hawks of Hlökk you allow to quaff the corpse-sea [blood]" (*Hryn* 14). *Hlökk* also occurs in ON as a common noun for "battle", as do *Göndul* and *Hildir*, also used by Arnórr in the expressions *göndlar Njörðr*, mentioned above, and *gekk hildir at mun* "the battle went according to his wish" (*Hdr* 11). It seems possible that Arnórr's audience would have apprehended these words simultaneously as common nouns and valkyrie names, but if so the poet must have been relying on his audience's knowledge of myth and/or of earlier poetry (*Göndul*, for instance, is a thoroughly active valkyrie in *Hák* 1), for he does nothing to reinforce the element of personification.

The same applies to a group of words meaning "sea/wave": *bára*, *dúfa*, *kolga* and *unnr*, in *Hryn* 4, *Pdr* 19, *Hryn* 6 and *Hryn* 18 respectively. Snorri (*SnE* 1931, 116 and 175; *bára* lacking at 175) maintains that in myth these were among the nine daughters of the sea-deities Ægir and Rön, but even if this is so, they can only have had the most shadowy existence for an eleventh-century audience, for there is scarcely any sign in ON poetry that they were conceived of as animate beings, and again Arnórr treats them no differently from common nouns. *Unnr*, for example, is used in the plural in *Hryn* 18 (p. 43 above). With the *heiti ægir* Arnórr probably refers to the mighty sea-god as well as the ocean, for there is a touch of personification in his statement that Þorfinnr never ceased to contend with *ægir*: *eigi þraut við ægi/ ofvægjan gram bægja* (*Pdr* 13). However, it is no more than a light touch: compare Egill Skalla-Grímsson's impassioned presentation of Ægir as the malevolent

opponent who has killed his son Þoðvarr by drowning, and against whom he is powerless to take revenge (*St* 8).

Arnórr's kenning *Alfþoður hrosta brim* "poetry" has already been mentioned in connection with Óðinn, and others of his kennings contain precise allusions to mythical narratives. *Ymis hauss* "Ymir's skull" (*Mdr* 19) and *Austra erfíði* "Austri's burden" (*Þdr* 24), both kennings for "sky", refer to the myth of creation according to which the sky is fashioned out of the skull of the giant Ymir (*Vafþr* 21; *Gri* 40-1) and held aloft on the shoulders of the dwarves Norðri, Suðri, Austri and Vestri standing at its four corners (see *SnE* 1931, 113 on the kennings, 15 on the myth). The only possible skaldic precedent for "Ymir's skull" is the textually puzzling *Hymis hauss*, in *Hymis hausreytir* "picker of Hymir's [or Ymir's?] skull", *Harkv* 2. *Austra erfíði* is matched only by *Norðra niðbyrðr* "burden of Norðri's kin" (*Hfr* 3, 26 and 28). Both Arnórr's "sky" kennings, therefore, are of a rare enough type to suggest that he introduced them deliberately to lend an antique grandeur to his encomiastic statements.

Miðgarðr, in the phrase *und Miðgarði* (*Hdr* 18), is another vestige of the pagan world-picture, in which the "Middle Enclosure" of men lies between Niflheimr, the dark realm of Hel or the dead, and Ásgarðr, the realm of the gods, although it also fits readily, like the Old English *middangeard*, between the Christian Heaven and Hell. Again the usage is rare. *Miðgarðr* occurs in the poetry of the *Edda*, and in the *fornyrðislag* verse carved on the runestone at Fyrby, Sweden (*Sm*, no. 56 c. 1030), but the only other skaldic verse in which it is recorded is *Pfagr* 7, c. 1051.

Hel, in *Hel klauf hausa fólva* "Hel clove pallid skulls" (*Mdr* 10), is primarily the name of a battle-axe, but there is also a punning reference to the pagan goddess and her abode — a grimly suitable destination for the pagan Wends. The skald's deliberate wit here is further attested by the fact that the two words immediately preceding *Hel* in *Mdr* 10 are "heaven" and "earth" (*himins; jǫrðu*).

Another possibly pagan conception, that troll-women ride wolves as their steeds (as in *SnE* 1931, 65),⁵ is fossilized in the "wolf" kenning *áleggjar Yggjar vífs marr* "steed of the spouse of the Óðinn of the river-limb" (*Mdr* 11), in which the "river-limb" is rock and its "Óðinn" or "god" a troll, and again in *varðrúnar vigg* "troll-wife's steed" (*Hdr* 13). The notion of a "troll-wife/ogress" appears again, expressed by the *heiti rýgr*, within an extended kenning in *Mdr* 12: *rógskýja rýgjar regn* "rain of the ogress

of strife-clouds”, in which “strife-clouds” are shields, the “ogress” of shields is an axe and the “rain” of the axe, battle. (My analysis of *Mdr* 12 differs from that in *Skjald* BI 314). Two kennings which refer to gold as a dragon’s lair (*orma látr*, *Hdr* 13, and *ormsetr*, *Mdr* 1) reflect the ancient belief in dragons as denizens of grave-mounds and guardians there of treasure-hoards. Finally, it is probable that some myth underlies the kenning *gífrs veðr* “she-troll’s gale [mind, thought]” (*Mdr* 3), but it cannot be recaptured from the extant literature.

To conclude, the pagan allusions in Arnórr’s poetry, like the Christian, are more numerous and more variegated than those of most of his contemporaries, although the fragmentary state of the surviving corpus makes accurate comparison impossible. They are of three kinds: precise references to mythical narratives, mythical names not necessarily related to particular narratives, and words for phenomena such as “sea” or “battle”, which may be taken either as common nouns or as references to mythical beings.

Arnórr does not introduce the “paganisms” which are the inherited resource of skalds merely out of inertia, but probably with conscious design. This we can infer from the rarity of some of them (e.g. *Alfaðir*, mentioned on p. 47 above), and from the wit with which they are set in context (e.g. *Alföður hrosta brim* and *Hel*, pp. 47 and 49 above).

The contexts of the two last-mentioned examples suggest that whimsy occasionally enters into Arnórr’s use of pagan allusion, and indeed there are no grounds for believing that it constitutes anything more than “literary heathendom”, to borrow Noreen’s phrase *litterära hedendomen* (1922, 27). The literary effects, however, are by no means confined to wit and whimsy. Although presumably not an object of reverence to Arnórr, the pagan world could be used to lend universality and dignity to encomia. Thus in both *Hdr* 18 and *Mdr* 19, the context of the pagan allusion is an encomiastic topos which declares the pre-eminence of the hero. In *Hdr* 18 Haraldr is said to know he is unsurpassed in all the world (*und Miðgarði*), whilst in *Mdr* 19 Magnús’s bounty is said to be unmatched for all time, and the pagan kenning *Ymis hauss* and its epithet *gamall* splendidly conveys the notion of timeless glory:

Ungr skjöldungr stígr aldri
jafnmíldr á við skíldan
– þess vas grams – und gömlum
– gnóg rausn – Ymis hausi.

Never will a young king so bounteous
board a shield-hung bark beneath the
ancient – ample was that lord’s glory
– skull of Ymir.

Similarly, in *Hryn* 15 the kenning *Yggjar veðr* “Óðinn’s gale” adds

a kind of divine flourish to the statement that the fame of Magnús's victory off Helganes will last for ever.

Even when pagan-derived diction bears no obvious sign of being carefully matched to its particular context (as when Porfinnr jarl is called *unnar Baldr* "Baldr of the sword" in *Pdr* 14 or *fetrjóðr hugins* "foot-reddener of Huginn/the raven" in *Pdr* 5), its presence gives an exotic and elevated ring to the poetry. Like Arnórr's passing allusions to legendary heroes such as the Burgundian Gjúki, his son Hogni, and Volsungr, ancestor of Sigurðr (in *Hryn* 9, *Mdr* 14 and *Hdr* 16 respectively) it adds variety and splendour to the poetic presentation, flattering eleventh-century rulers by the suggestion that their deeds partake of a glorious tradition stretching back to gods and heroes of ancient times.

Thus the pagan element in Arnórr's poetry differs from the Christian in belonging merely to the level of form, not that of content, and as such it cannot be regarded as religious in intention or effect. It shares with the Christian the quality of broadening the scope and heightening the dignity of the poetry.⁶

Notes

¹ For general discussion of the impact of Christianity on skaldic poetry, see Paasche (1914a), Noreen (1922, 18-30) and Lange (1958, 48-74).

² Except for the poetry of Arnórr jarlaskáld (see note 4), Norse poetry is presented as follows throughout the present article. Abbreviated references follow the conventions of *LP*. Skaldic quotations follow the *Skjald* BI text, as do the dates of poets and poems, unless otherwise stated. Quotations from eddaic poetry follow the text of *Edda* 1962.

³ For a convenient review of the events of the conversion of Iceland, see Strömbäck (1975), Jón Jóhannesson (1956-8, I 227-36) and Kuhn (1971). The Icelanders' assimilation of Christianity and attitudes to the pagan past are examined by Foote (1974a and 1974b).

⁴ The text and translation of Arnórr jarlaskáld's poetry is quoted from Edwards (1979); my interpretations of the verses are explained in the Commentary there. Although my reconstruction of Arnórr's poems, and hence verse numbers, differ somewhat from those of Finnur Jónsson in *Skjald* (AI 332-54, BI 305-27), I preserve his numbering here for ease of reference. The titles of Arnórr's poems are abbreviated as follows. *Frag*s = *lausavísur*/unidentified fragments, *Hdr* = *erfidrápa* for Haraldr harðráði, *Hryn* = *hrynhent* poem for Magnús Ólafsson, *Mdr* = *Magnússdrápa*, *Rdr* = *Rognvaldsdrápa*, *Pdr* = *Porfinnsdrápa*.

⁵ Jacoby (1974, 90) notes that this conception is not attested from the Germanic area until the tenth century, and considers that, together with other superstitions concerning wolves, it may well reflect ancient Christian traditions.

⁶ I would like to record my gratitude to Professors P. G. Foote and R. N. Bailey for the interest they have shown in the present paper.

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“THE COURTLY OLD CARLE”: SIR HENRY HOLLAND AND NINETEENTH-CENTURY ICELAND*

By ANDREW WAWN

ON a wild and wet August day in 1871 two of Victorian England's most celebrated Icelandophiles met, probably for the first and almost certainly for the last time, in a small house in the middle of, appropriately, Reykjavík (Morris 1911, 178). Their hostess for the evening was María Einarsdóttir, sister-in-law of the distinguished Icelandic bibliophile Eiríkur Magnússon, and the two travellers were William Morris, literary collaborator and friend of Eiríkur, and Sir Henry Holland (cf. Holland 1872; Grimbale 1951; Steindór Steindórsson 1960) by then best known as a world traveller, physician to Queen Victoria, and nephew to Mrs. Gaskell. Morris, accompanied by Eiríkur, was near the end of a six-week visit, his first, to the “grey minster of lands” (‘Gunnar’s Howe above the House at Lithend’, l. 2, in Morris [1891], 109) whose hold over his increasingly harassed spirit had become profound, and whose saga literature had fascinated him since his days as a student in Oxford (Harris 1975; Marshall 1979, 168). He and Eiríkur had, by 1871, already produced translations of several saga narratives, and the 1871 expedition now enabled Morris to go “as pilgrim to the holy places of Iceland” (Morris 1911, 67); that is, to the sites associated with such sagas. Indeed, on August 22, when Sir Henry Holland’s ship berthed in Reykjavík, Morris himself was trekking up the fertile valley of the Hvítá in Borgarfjarðarsýsla in search of Gilsbakki (Morris 1911, 157-9), the farm at the heart of *Gunnlaugs saga ormstungu*, a translation of which he and Eiríkur had published in the *Fortnightly Review* in January 1869.

Whether, as Morris claims in his journal, it was because of an exhaustion induced by extended exposure to

the sight of this desolate strand,
And the mountain-waste voiceless as death
but for winds that may sleep not nor tire

* I am happy to record my particular thanks to Mr. David Holland, for allowing me access to unpublished letters of Sir Henry Holland in his possession; to Mr. David Moore of the Natural History Museum in London, Dr. Robert Kark of Chicago, Miss Pamela Bright of London and Dr. Benedikt Benedikz of Birmingham University for valuable correspondence and discussion; and to Pálmar Arnarsson for much generous help.

(‘Iceland First Seen’, ll. 18-20, in Morris [1891], 40), or whether, as seems equally likely, it was because of the apparent absence of any sympathetic visionary gleam in Holland’s venerable and urbane countenance, the meeting seems not to have proved a happy one. Morris’s journal records (1911, 178):

To Mrs Maria’s house again, where was dinner, and the courtly old carle, Sir Henry Holland, whose age (eighty-four) I thought was the most interesting thing about him. I was rather low, after all, and cowed by the company, and a sense of stiffness after our joyous rough life just ended. So to bed.

Morris’s insensitivity towards the “courtly old carle” seems less surprising and more significant when set beside the account, also recorded in the 1871 journal, of his visit to the great Geysir in Haukadalur, some weeks before. Morris (1911, 68) makes no attempt to hide his impatience and disgust at the “stinking steam” of the “beastly place”:

“Let’s go home to Haukadal,” quoth I, “we can’t camp in this beastly place.”

“What is he saying,” said Eyvindr to Gisli [the guides]:

“Why I’m not going to camp here,” said I:

“You must,” said Eyvindr, “all Englishmen do.”

“Blast all Englishmen!,” said I in the Icelandic tongue.

Beneath the discomforts of the moment, this scene, and indeed the subsequent unhappy meeting in Reykjavík, hints at a significant contrast of sympathies between two generations of British Icelandophiles. Whilst Morris was repelled by hot springs, but stirred by the romantic wildness of saga with its haunting echoes of his personal agonies, an earlier generation, motivated by the more forensic severities of experimental science, had made straight for Geysir, then regarded as one of the wonders of the world, and had been relatively little touched by Iceland’s great literary past. Sir Joseph Banks (cf. Halldór Hermannsson 1928; Rauschenberg 1973), John Thomas Stanley (Wawn 1981) and Sir George Mackenzie (Wawn 1982) had been amongst the most prominent of this earlier generation.

The young Henry Holland was in a sense a transitional figure, for whilst it was unquestionably science which had drawn him to Iceland, he was also responsible for what is arguably the best informed and most influential analytic discussion of Icelandic literary culture written in Britain in the early nineteenth century. It is particularly ironic, therefore, that it was Holland of all the early enthusiasts for Iceland who was to be exposed to the loftiness of Morris’s weary disdain, for it was Holland’s own writings which had helped to promote and extend interest in some of the great

saga texts which were later so to intoxicate Morris. His was a major contribution to British understanding of and interest in Icelandic life and letters over the period ranging back from his meeting with Morris in 1871 to his membership of Sir George Mackenzie's notable expedition to Iceland, a remarkable sixty-one years earlier. Morris may have been unaware of Holland's distinction, but there were others — both English and Icelandic by birth — who were fully aware of it. The present paper, using a range of unpublished manuscript material, seeks to assess the nature and extent of Holland's contribution to nineteenth-century British Icelandophilia.

Henry Holland was born in Knutsford, in the south-east of Cheshire, and so, indirectly, was his interest in Iceland. More than one Cestrian had shown an active interest in the island towards the end of the eighteenth century. Thomas Falconer (1736-92), the Recorder of Chester, had corresponded enthusiastically (Dawson 1958, 318-19) with Sir Joseph Banks about the possibility of an expedition there: "the truth is I revolved in my mind very frequently the topic of a Northern Voyage, but alas to very little purpose" (Banks Correspondence, Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew I 35). Though the voyage came to nothing, Falconer's curiosity about volcanoes persisted: "The periodical rising of steam at Geiser hath so puzzled my little philosophy that after several attempts I have given up the point & shall wait impatiently for y^r further answer" (Banks Correspondence, Kew I 34). Falconer lived long enough to learn about the visit to and analysis of Geysir by another Cestrian from nearby Alderley Edge, John Thomas Stanley. In 1789, the young Stanley undertook a brief but remarkable expedition to Iceland, chiefly in order to examine the hot springs of Reykir and Haukadalur. Though Stanley published only two short scientific papers relating to that visit (Stanley 1794), in spite of persistent urgings of friends to do more, his was a lifetime's absorption. He maintained to the end an unobtrusive, practical and supportive interest in the Icelandic voyagings of others (cf. Landsbókasafn MS 604 fol., a letter written forty-five years after his own expedition to help the 1834 explorer John Barrow). It is clear that Stanley, who in all likelihood was already acquainted with Dr. Peter Holland, Henry's father, soon became a friend of young Holland who had been only two years old when Stanley himself set sail for the North. It was through Stanley's influence (Holland 1872, 21) that Holland was invited to prepare an important report on the agriculture of Cheshire, which was published

in 1808, and the capable way in which Holland discharged this assignment undoubtedly played its part in helping him at an early age to establish a national reputation, and this celebrity was to serve him well in Edinburgh where he commenced his medical studies in October 1806. It was indeed as a young man of already significant achievement and greater promise that he was approached by Sir George Mackenzie (Mackenzie 1811, xiii) in 1810 as a potential member of his forthcoming Iceland expedition. Holland's manuscript journal of that trip (Landsbókasafn MSS 3875-6 4to) makes frequent reference (Journal I 21, 67, 111, 115, 119; II 61, 65, 72) to his Cestrian mentor Stanley — both to his findings from 1789, and to the affection in which he was still held by Icelanders who remembered meeting him at that time (Steindór Steindórsson 1979, 17-19). Holland, in the preparation of his own Iceland journal, certainly had access, no doubt through Stanley's help, to diaries and sketchbooks from the 1789 voyage — the entries for July 1 (Journal I 119) and August 3 (Journal II 72), for example, both refer to the diaries of John Baine (cf. West 1976). Thus, Holland's Cheshire background and connections undoubtedly provided him with an important and influential Icelandophile friend, known in and knowledgeable about both the Edinburgh where Holland was to be educated and the Iceland through which he would travel.

There were, however, two other influences of Henry Holland's youth which may have prepared the way for the subsequent focussing of his imagination on the "costes colde" (*Libelle* l. 805) of Iceland. Firstly, in 1803-4, he went at the age of sixteen to the Reverend J. P. Estlin's school on St. Michael's Hill in Bristol, where he joined his future Iceland companion Richard Bright (cf. Kark and Moore 1981, 120-1), "my most intimate friend" (Holland 1872, 11) of the time, and later to become a doctor famed for his study of what became known as Bright's Disease. Estlin's education had been at the dissenting academy in Warrington,

the seat where science learnt to dwell,
Where liberty her ardent spirit breathed

(quoted Kark and Moore 1981, 120), and it is clear that the same atmosphere of broad and humane learning later prevailed at Estlin's own school. Estlin's circle of friends, the Bright family, Coleridge, Southey, Priestley and Joseph Cottle amongst them, make it apparent that young Henry Holland was educated in a notably stimulating intellectual environment.

The surviving records of borrowings from the holdings of the Bristol Library Society (the following discussion is based on my examination of Bristol Reference Library MSS B 7473-6, for the years 1803-6) provide a glimpse at least of this enlightened environment. Though neither Holland nor his friend Richard Bright junior were enrolled as members of the Library Society, Estlin and Richard Bright senior were members of the organizing committee which ordered new books, and were regular borrowers. Indeed the borrowings of the Bright family over the period of Holland's stay in Bristol can be taken as representative of the kind of literary and cultural influences which could have washed over young men such as Holland and Bright. These borrowings reveal characteristic tastes of the Enlightenment — an earnest and voracious curiosity about and appetite for books on travel and antiquities, interspersed with occasional borrowings of works reflecting developments in exciting new sciences such as mineralogy, as well as of works of dogged domestic practicality on topics such as gardening. Only two items catalogued as "belles lettres" were borrowed by any of the Bright family in the period around 1804 — Godwin's newly published *Life of Chaucer* and, significantly, a volume entered in the register as "Runic Poetry". This book was, almost certainly, a copy of Bishop Percy's influential *Five Pieces of Runic Poetry* (1763), the first translated selection of Norse poems which had been available to English readers. In the years immediately before Holland's arrival in Bristol, this had not been the only work of Norse literary and antiquarian interest which had been available to and borrowed by members of the Estlin/Bright circle in Bristol, as British interest in Scandinavian antiquities developed (cf. Farley 1903; Cowan 1972; Omberg 1976; Wawn 1981, 1982). Robert Southey, Coleridge and Joseph Cottle had been frequent and enthusiastic borrowers of the first volume (1787) of the great Copenhagen edition of *Edda Sæmundar hinns Fróða* (1787-1818), and of Percy's *Five Pieces of Runic Poetry*. Coleridge was also amongst those who borrowed Amos Cottle's *Icelandic Poetry; or the Edda of Sæmund, translated into English verse* (1797), a version whose "rhapsodical effusions" and "ludicrous bombast" (Percy 1847, 374) offended many contemporary reviewers and stern Victorian critics alike, all of whom were conscious of the distortions of the Copenhagen *Edda*, both of letter and of spirit, which jostled one another for attention in the volume. The work, complete with Southey's prefatory poem, had been printed in Bristol by Cottle's brother Joseph, whose own lumbering epic *Alfred* (1804), in the

course of substantially outstaying its welcome, exhibits a certain arthritic imaginative engagement with the bloodstained world of Scandinavian antiquity. Other influential works relating to the North and its antiquities which were available to borrowing members of the Bristol Library Society included Bishop Thomas Percy's 1770 translation of Paul Henri Mallet's seminal *Introduction à l'Histoire de Dannemarc* (1755), William Coxe's *Travels in Poland, Russia, Sweden and Denmark* (1784) and James Johnstone's *Antiquitates Celto-Scandicæ* (1786). There was additionally much to be gleaned from reviews in the periodical literature of the time (Tucker 1962-5).

Thus, with travel, mineralogy, antiquities and Norse literature amongst the enthusiasms of those in whose company and under whose direct or indirect influence Holland spent his time in Bristol, it is not difficult to imagine his sharing their fascination with such topics. Such influences extended over the school holidays, too. These were spent away from Bristol with Dr. Aikin (Holland 1872, 12; Rodgers 1958), an old friend of Henry Holland's father, who lived at Stoke Newington and in London. Dr. Aikin senior, a friend of Southey, had been afflicted by a paralysing stroke in 1798 and no doubt therefore it was the Aikin children who exercised the greater influence on their young guest. The elder son Arthur (1773-1854) was a founder editor of *The Annual Review*, a short-lived periodical to which Southey and William Taylor, another enthusiast of the "gothick", the "eddict" and the "runick" (Farley 1903, 137-43), gave support. Arthur Aikin's other particular interest was mineralogy and, as well as publishing several works on the subject, he played a major part in the founding of the Geological Society of London in 1807 (Rudwick 1962-3), a society with which Holland was to have significant dealings after his return from Iceland (Kark and Moore 1981, 128-30; NLS 3.vi.1811). The younger son Charles (1775-1846) had trained as a doctor and took over his paralysed father's London practice. His published work included a collaborative (with his brother) work on geology and also in 1800 a treatise on cow pox.

It may thus be appropriate at this point to set the list of identifiable Bristol and London influences on the adolescent Holland — Norse antiquities, geology, medicine in general and cow pox in particular — alongside what can be discovered of his subsequent career: the passionate interest in geology whilst he was studying in Edinburgh; his decision to train as a doctor in Edinburgh; the demonstrable fact that his journey to Iceland had three impulses

behind it — first, the search for geological specimens to further his theoretical work; second, research into diseases in Iceland for his M.D. dissertation, with a particular interest in cow pox (a disease he sought to eradicate by reintroducing vaccine crusts into Iceland — Mackenzie 1811, 410); third, curiosity about Icelandic learning and literature, the fruits of that curiosity appearing in the form of a scholarly, discriminating and influential account of Icelandic cultural history which acted as a “Preliminary Dissertation” to Sir George Mackenzie’s *Travels in the Island of Iceland during the Summer of the Year 1810* (1811).

Yet if Holland’s brief period of formal schooling in Bristol had sown the seeds of a potential interest in travelling in general and the North in particular, it was the exuberance of intellectual life in Enlightenment Edinburgh which, from the time of his arrival at the University late in 1806, nourished that interest, as had previously been the case with his mentor John Thomas Stanley. Holland had spent the winters of 1804-5 and 1805-6 studying at Glasgow University, a period about which his *Recollections of Past Life* (1872) is characteristically and frustratingly vague (pp. 19-20), but it was Edinburgh which was to provide the specific impetus through which Holland and Iceland were brought together. An important collection of twenty-one unpublished letters (now in the National Library of Scotland, Accession 7515 — there is one stray letter from the sequence in Landsbókasafn MS 4925 4to) from Henry Holland to his father in Knutsford, covering the years 1810-11, offers a vivid glimpse of the social and intellectual ferment and bustle of a great city with a spring in its cultural stride (cf. Chitnis 1976). So many things clamoured for Holland’s eager attention, as revealed in the letters — a Handel concert (NLS 10.iii.1811), a new tragedy by Joanna Baillie (NLS 6.ii.1810, 25.i.1811), a new poem by Sir Walter Scott (NLS 3.vi.1811), visits to the fashionable picturesquenesses of Stirling Castle (NLS 11.ix.1811), gossip about politics and professorial amatory entanglements, new issues of important journals (NLS 4.iii.1810), the latest books — from “Wilson on Febrile Diseases” (NLS 25.i.1811) to “Mrs Leadbeater’s *Cottage Dialogues*” (NLS 26.i.1811), uproar at the Medical Society (NLS 4.iii.1810), the health of French prisoners-of-war (NLS 31.iii.1811), patent remedies for chest colds (NLS 24.iii.1811), and, seemingly, every breakfast, tea and dinner passed in the company of this learned or that noble companion. Amidst this invigorating whirl of social and cultural ephemera scattered through the sequence of letters, two themes assume a dominant

importance — mineralogy and Iceland. Indeed, as the letters make clear, the one was to lead directly to the other.

It was in February 1810 at a meeting of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, appropriately, that the suggestion was first put to Holland that he might care to venture to Iceland (NLS 6.ii.1810). In the bracing if frequently acrimonious atmosphere of the Wernerian-Huttonian mineralogical debate on the origins of rocks which pulsed through intellectual circles in Enlightenment Edinburgh (cf. Davies 1969, 145-96; Porter 1977, 157-215), the Royal Society had taken a leading role in supporting the Huttonian proposition that rocks were formed by subterranean heat acting under pressure on debris of various kinds. Huttonians rejected the Wernerian notion that rocks had been deposited from solution when the Great Flood had subsided. Sir George Mackenzie was a prominent supporter of the Huttonian position and it was in the hope of finding specimens and other evidence which might confirm the thesis that Sir George was drawn towards Iceland (Mackenzie 1811, xi; Chitnis 1970, 92). Holland's letters to his father early in 1810 reveal a persistent and inquisitive engagement with mineralogical debate and controversy, and it is thus unsurprising that he should have jumped eagerly at the opportunity of joining the expedition. He writes to his father (NLS 17.ii.1810):

Every thing, in fact, concurs to render it probable that such an expedition would be productive at once of pleasure & advantage. The pleasure seems to me to be secured by — agreeableness of associates, novelty of scene, & the many objects of interest which would occur to us — The profit . . . would be derived partly from the opp^y of cultivating some desirable branches of knowledge, as mineralogy . . . partly perhaps from the sort of *notoriety*, which might possibly be connected with the accomplishment of the scheme.

The invitation accepted, Holland's energies thereafter were appropriately directed; drawing lessons (NLS 17.ii.1810); studies of relevant rock collections and "geological walks" undertaken impartially in the company of the Wernerian Robert Jameson and the Huttonian Sir James Hall; meetings (NLS 17.ii.1810) with an Icelandic medical student Ólafur Loptsson (1783-?) who was to be the mercurial, unreliable and disreputable guide for the expedition, spreading misinformation amongst the visitors and venereal disease amongst the natives (Jón Espólin 1821-55, XII 49); catching up on the gossip surrounding the farcically unsuccessful 1799 Iceland expedition of Brougham, a venture which got no further than Ullapool (Brougham 1871, 110-12; Dawson 1971, letter dated 21.vii.1799); writing lengthily and impulsively to his friend Maria

Edgeworth to inform her of his plans (ME 20.ii.1810); and keeping a close eye on Mackenzie's arrangements for their passage to the North. The Holland letters also reveal that Sir George himself, travel arrangements apart, had time to have discussions (NLS 25.iv.1810) with the publisher Archibald Constable about the publication of any subsequent book-length account of the trip, and to correspond with the Danish governor of the island, Count Trampe, and with Sir Joseph Banks, and with W. J. Hooker, newly returned from an engrossing but ultimately calamitous expedition to Iceland the previous summer (NLS 17.ii.1810). It had been during this summer that Jørgen Jørgensen's spectacular though abortive revolution against Trampe's authority had played itself out, the vibrations from which were still to be felt by the 1810 travellers (cf. Hooker 1813, II 1-102, pro-Jørgensen; Mackenzie 1812, 474-81, pro-Trampe; McKay 1973; Trausti Ólafsson 1974).

The vibrations in fact were immediately in evidence — with the very ship in which Holland and Mackenzie travelled to Iceland — and they were fully recorded in the illuminating manuscript journal, as yet unpublished in English, which Holland kept during his memorable trip. The *Elbe* was on charter to the London merchant Samuel Phelps who, during the 1809 summer in Iceland, had played a significant part in supporting Jørgensen's daring but doomed revolt. After the inevitable overthrow of the quixotic Jørgensen, both men set sail for England along with W. J. Hooker, whose vessel the *Margaret and Ann* foundered and burned up shortly after its departure. Hooker's entire collection of Icelandic memorabilia — geological and botanical specimens included — was lost in the shipwreck, as indeed would have been his life, had it not been for Jørgensen's courageous and long remembered (by both men) intervention (Hooker Correspondence, Kew — Australian Letters 1834-51, letter dated 28.x.1836; Australian and New Zealand Letters 1835-43, letter dated 4.x.1840). In the event, all prominent passengers survived and returned safely to England, Phelps having left behind in Reykjavík two agents, James Savignac and Westy Petraeus, to guard warehouses crammed full of that produce which he had been forbidden by the Danish authorities to sell to the needy Icelanders. Now, a year later, the *Elbe* was northward bound again, carrying, in addition to Sir George Mackenzie's party, another of Phelps's agents, Michael Fell, who was to take over from Savignac and Petraeus.

The early pages of Holland's journal (Journal I 33, 35) indicate that Fell's arrival was less than rapturously received by the two

incumbent, resentful and (it transpired) unscrupulous agents. Mackenzie and Holland had stumbled on an Icelandic hornets' nest, unrecorded in Mackenzie's later account:

On our return towards Reikiavik, we heard the report of a cannon fired from the Elbe — Re entering the town, we found the utmost confusion there — all the warehouses of Mess^{rs} Phelps & Co guarded by sea men from the ship, armed with musquets & blunderbusses — assemblages of people in different parts of the town . . . a storm had burst which for some time past had been brewing . . . It would appear that these gentlemen [Savignac and Petraeus] had availed themselves of the remoteness of their situation to forward their own interests at the expence of their employers. They of course viewed the arrival of M^r Fell, as a superior agent, with no small concern; and his activity in looking into all the details of their transactions, increased their hostility towards him. This feeling was pretty well smothered for some time, venting itself only in some little asperities of language — but certain occurrences to day at once threw off the veil — Savignac & Petraeus, after throwing out threats, some of them of a serious nature, seized by force, during M^r Fell's momentary absence, the keys of the warehouses. Immediately a signal was hoisted to the ship — 12 or 15 armed men were sent on shore, — the warehouses were broken open, & M^r Fell's locks placed upon the doors — and a strong guard paraded in the vicinity during the night. Matters therefore continued in the same state till the morning. We slept with loaded pistols in the house, — a measure dictated by some expressions which M^r Savignac had employed.

Nor were these the only kind of hostilities encountered during the trip. Unsurprisingly, the travellers were frequently confronted with the twin consequences — Icelandic deprivation and Danish acrimony — of the Anglo-Danish war which had rumbled on inconclusively since the British had destroyed Danish goodwill, not to mention Grímur Thorkelín's library, through the bombardment of Copenhagen in 1807 (Ryan 1953; Bodleian MS Douce d.23, letter dated 23.v.1819, in which Thorkelín refers wryly to the incident). Thus, even at the farewell banquet for the departing Englishmen, Holland discerns and records a chill beneath the surface glow of Danish civility (Journal II 96).

These two incidents are not mentioned by Mackenzie in his book, and, notwithstanding his access to and use of Holland's journal, neither is much else besides. Holland's journal, as yet published only in an Icelandic translation (Steindór Steindórsson 1960; the present writer is preparing an English edition) assumes a new importance when set against what Holland came to regard as the narrative and scientific inadequacies of Mackenzie's lavishly produced volume. Holland's letters to his father during 1811 reveal a frustration, shared by Arthur Aikin and Richard Bright, at having to collaborate with Mackenzie on the Iceland book. There was

frustration at Mackenzie's monopolisation of the mineralogical chapter and scorn at the result (NLS 22.vii.1811); indignation at Mackenzie's presumed or suspected intention of claiming as his own work lengthy sections produced by his long suffering collaborators (NLS 24.iii.1811); annoyance at the inappropriate truncation of individual sections such as that relating to the ascent of Hekla and the journey to Geysir (NLS 3.vi.1811); and determination to impose a kind of editorial quarantine around Sir George's own contributions by ensuring that material contributed by Bright and Holland was, as far as possible, sectioned off with authorship clearly identified (NLS 24.iii.1811). Above all, Holland's recognition that (ME 19.iv.1811):

It would require power of no common kind, to place before the mental eye of the reader the strange & uncommon objects which form the scenery of Iceland, and those discordances of nature which rivet the mind more than her fairest proportions & harmonies

did not prevent his lamenting Mackenzie's persistent failure, as he saw it, to rise to the challenge of the narrative sections. Holland had doubts about "the efficacy of descriptive writing" (ME 19.iv.1811) in general, and indeed the genre was the subject of much critical scrutiny during this heroic age of travel writing (cf. Batten 1978, 82-101). Certainly for Holland, sporadic and entertaining bouts of crusty aristocratic disapproval of personalities encountered along the way were an inadequate substitute for that full and clear-sighted observation which alone could do justice to the sublimities, as he regarded them, of Iceland. Small wonder that Holland expresses relief (NLS ?.iv.1811, 7.ix.1811) at the success of the colour prints and vignettes in the text — one picture being worth, he had come to feel, at least a thousand of Sir George's words.

In no area of study was detailed observation more crucial than mineralogy. Holland's journal is packed with geological information — both in the narrative and, especially, in the facing-page notes about specimens. It is indicative of the priorities which the journal set itself that the first "appearances" recorded, as the *Elbe* rounded the Reykjanes peninsula, are geological ones — references to the volcanic origins of the area (Journal I 9). Throughout the two volumes of the journal, Holland is more thorough in observation and less tendentious in analysis than Mackenzie (cf. Wawn 1982). Indeed the cautious mineralogical conclusions which Holland draws from sifting and assessing his observations and specimens are mainly to be found in later papers, delivered at

learned societies after his return — at the Geological Society of London (MS now in Department of Minerals, British Museum, Natural History) and, more briefly, at the Royal Society of Portugal at Lisbon in July 1812 (Landsbókasafn MS 4275 4to). This latter paper, the distillation of much fastidious observation and reflection, adopts an unmistakably Huttonian stance with its stress, firstly, on the role of subterranean heat under superincumbent pressure rather than aqueous precipitation in the creation of volcanic masses; secondly, on the volcanic nature of Obsidian; and thirdly, on challenging the Wernerian theory that volcanic fires were based on underlying coal deposits. Yet, absorbed as he was in scientific speculation, Holland, who during the trip had encountered Jón Þorláksson's 1798 Icelandic translation of Pope's *Essay on Man* (Mackenzie 1811, 463-4), could share that poet's sense of awe and humility in the face of nature's infinite mystery (Landsbókasafn MS 4275 4to, 12):

In the present state of philosophical research, the conceptions of man are scarcely adequate to that vast scale of operation, which exists in the phenomena of the mineral world. We can trace with scientific calmness the gradual development of an insect or a flower; but shrink back, almost with terror, from those great and sublime workings of nature, which seem to bring us a step nearer to the greatness & sublimity of the Deity himself.

Holland, then, needed no reminder that the proper study of mankind was as much man as it was minerals. In the journal accounts of the three major journeys undertaken during the Iceland visit (to the South-West, to the Snæfellsnes peninsula, and to Hekla and Geysir), many prominent or at least singular characters are arrestingly depicted. In a letter to Maria Edgeworth (ME 2.viii.1811), Holland expresses the fear that "I am not blessed with the faculty of condensation in a suitable degree", yet his letters and journal provide many moments when a keen sensibility, a concentrated gaze and (not infrequently) an urbane wit and fascination with the grotesque severally serve him well. So for instance in the journal entry for Sunday August 5 (Journal II 89, 91), with the whisky-priest of Eyvindarmúli, spirit submissively willing, flesh subversively weak:

The priest at length made his appearance — a tolerably good looking man, from whose countenance we at once premised that he dealt not in religious austerities — and this supposition was speedily confirmed to us . . . the service began — Psalm singing, readings from the Bible, and prayers formed the first part of it . . . He beckoned us towards him, & made us take seats on each side of the altar. Shortly afterwards, while still proceeding in the service, he handed to me a snuff box of no small dimensions, inviting me by his gestures to partake

in what it was evident he himself considered a very good thing. Snuffing, however, was not his only extra-occupation during the service. A dram bottle, well provided, stood upon the altar; to which while engaged in singing, he had recourse three several times — Just before the sermon, he went out of the church, & motioned us to follow him — Through the Latin interpretation of the student, he then told us, that he should esteem it a great honour to ride to Hlidarende with us, if we could possibly wait till the conclusion of the service — He informed us that he had already shortened the Psalms by 7 or 8 verses, in our behalf, and that he would abridge the sermon, as much as it was possible . . . he mounted the pulpit, & with his head almost touching the roof of the building, delivered a discourse of somewhat more than $\frac{1}{2}$ an hour — by the noise of which we were abundantly impressed, though wholly ignorant of the meaning . . . he again returned to the altar, & with many minutiae of ceremony, delivered to the people kneeling around, the wafers & wine — being careful himself not to allow any liquor to remain in the cup after the communicants had partaken of it. The whole over . . . we set off towards *Hlidarende* . . . When advanced scarcely $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile from the church, he took a large dram bottle out of his pocket . . . & after soliciting us to take a part, consoled himself for our refusal by liberally partaking of it himself. This potation was so often repeated, that before we reached Hlidarende, the bottle was nearly exhausted . . . Urged by the bottle, he even made some attempts to talk to us in Latin — here, however, his conversation soon came to a pause.

It would be easy to dismiss the tone of such an account as a reflection of heedless aristocratic disdain for a primitive society. Such was very far from being the case with Henry Holland. In his M.D. dissertation *De Morbis Islandiæ* (1811), he remarks (p. 6): “Natura terræ et cæli, non ratione vel mentis cultura, Island sunt barbari.” When contemplating the chill desolation of Iceland and its inhabitants, admiration and even awe are never far from the surface of his remarks. Thus in his ‘Memoir on the Mineralogy of the Island of Iceland’ delivered in Lisbon in July 1812, Holland notes (Landsbókasafn MS 4275 4to, 1):

Whilst their condition with respect to all the comforts or necessities of life is scarcely superior to the savage state, their moral & intellectual qualities raise them to a level even with the most civilized communities of Europe — and amidst the deserts which surround them, they still keep alive much of that spirit of literary pursuit, which in the 10th, 11th, & 12th centuries gave to their ancestors so much celebrity among the northern nations.

Or again, to Maria Edgeworth (ME 30.i.1811):

The toils of a day’s travel over lava & cinders, without sight of a human habitation or human face — the hasty repose of a few minutes sleep, either on the rude & rocky flooring of a cave, or beneath the open face of a cold & tempestuous sky — the evening’s scanty meal of stock fish, rye bread & curds — & the nightly abode in a small damp & gloomy church . . . all these events of almost daily occurrence were in the first instance recommended by novelty — afterwards rendered tolerable by habit. Occasionally indeed a sort of desolation of thought arose

amidst the dreariness of surrounding nature; but it was akin to the feeling of the sublime, and its presence might almost have been solicited by the mind . . . The spectacles presented . . . are probably as magnificent as any on the surface of the globe . . . There is a singular disparity between their physical & moral condition; such as probably is found in no other community. They have little good turf & no good potatoes — they live amidst all the asperities of soil & climate, the face of nature is to them everywhere dreary and desolate — they are deprived not merely of all the luxuries, but even of what are deemed the essential comforts of life — yet these people have good temper & cheerfulness of mind — they have warm domestic & social affections, they have a high sense of moral rectitude, and an admirable observance of moral restraints — they have an excellent system of education throughout all the classes of the community

. I have heard Latin spoken with Ciceronian elegance, & have known poetry composed on the purest models, by men who earn a part of their subsistence fishing upon the stormy sea which surrounds their native island.

Holland's absorption with the results of the "excellent system of education" is constantly in evidence throughout his journal. He might allow himself, in the same letter quoted above, the romantic extravagance of claiming that during his stay in Iceland:

no other books than those of external nature & of human character were open to me, yet I would not exchange the results of this reading for those of any studies which might have engaged me, had I remained within the quiet pale of domestic occupation;

but in fact books and bookishness are constant reference points in the journal. Holland is careful to note the presence of foreign (especially English) books in Icelandic households — Charles Rollin's *Histoire Ancienne* (Journal I 15); Danish translations of Samuel Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison* (Journal II 19); Joseph Addison's *Cato*, and Edward Young's ubiquitous *Night Thoughts* (Journal I 47); the Jón Þorláksson translation of Pope's *Essay on Man*, found in the Latin school at Bessastaðir amidst shelves packed with works by eighteenth-century German theologians (Journal I 47); an English text of Tobias Smollet's *Roderick Random* (Journal II 1); and (as a result of Holland's gift to the influential Magnús Stephensen) James Thomson's *The Seasons* (Journal I 31).

The journal also indicates the interest of Holland and his companions in Icelandic books. Whilst his friend Richard Bright was the purchaser of a magnificently bound bible printed at Hólar in 1637 (now in the Bodleian Library, with a note in Bright's hand describing the circumstances of its purchase), and the dedicatee of a fine copy of part of Bishop Hannes Finnsson's *Lexicon Islandico-Latinum* (Bodleian MS Icel.e.3), and also acquired manuscripts of a fifteenth-century prayer book (Bodleian MS Icel.g.1), and

of the lawbook of King Magnús Hákonarson, from Guðmundur Jónsson at Staðarholt (Bodleian MS Icel.e.2), Holland himself was presented with a copy of Rúnólfur Jónsson's *Grammaticæ Islandicæ Rudimenta* (1651). The donor was Finnur Magnússon, whose subsequent efforts to supplement his income led to the sale of countless valuable Icelandic manuscripts to collectors in Britain and further afield (cf. Jón Helgason 1959). Holland visited Leirá (Journal I 95), site of what had become the only printing house in Iceland, autocratically controlled by Magnús Stephensen (Benedikz 1969, 35-48). Among its publications were the Proceedings of the Lærdómslistafélag (Icelandic Educational Society — cf. Halldór Hermannsson 1918, 12-17), fourteen volumes of which, along with other unnamed titles, were purchased by Holland from the book stall at a Reykjavík market at the end of his visit (Journal II 93).

It is conceivable that amongst those unnamed titles was a copy of the 1786 Copenhagen edition of *Víga-Glúms saga* and certainly, whether purchased in Reykjavík or back home in Britain, Holland's ownership was to provide a striking focal point for a rather pathetic (as it turned out) meeting back in Scotland in the Spring of 1811. Holland had been asked whether he knew about an Icelander who, stranded in Leith on his way back to his wife and ten children in Iceland, had fallen seriously ill. The man, he was told, was intending to publish in England a Latin-Icelandic lexicon "with a view to making a little money", only to be confronted by his physician at Leith who had "represented to him the impossibility in this country of deriving any profit from such a work" (NLS 17.iii.1811). On visiting the man, Holland discovered him to be a "Mr Peterson" and it is possible to identify that this was in fact Guðmundur Pétursson, the brother of the popular playwright and poet Sigurður Pétursson (1759-1827), well known to Holland through visits to his lodgings in Reykjavík at Bishop Geir Vídalín's house (cf. Bogi Benediktsson 1881-1932, IV 787-91; Stefán Einarsson 1957, 217-18). Holland learnt that Guðmundur intended to go to London (NLS 24.iii.1811):

He has the idea that by the assistance of Sir Jos. Banks, to whom he has an introduction from Prof. Thorkelin, he shall be enabled to publish his Icelandic Lexicon . . . a supposition which the poor man will find (I hope not too late) to be entirely erroneous. I shewed him some of my specimens & sketches, with which he was highly delighted.

In the same letter to his father, Holland continues:

I wish, however, you could have seen his still more vehement rapture, when he

accidentally took up a work of his own, published at Copenhagen about 20 years ago, which I happened to have lying upon the table. He was almost ready to hug me upon the discovery — an effect which not even my frequent experience of such things in Iceland would have enabled me to relish.

Guðmundur Pétursson was, Holland would then have realised, the editor of the 1786 *Víga-Glúms saga*, one of the important group of Icelandic texts edited and published in Copenhagen towards the end of the eighteenth century, texts which were to become eagerly sought after in Britain early in the nineteenth century, not least in the Edinburgh to which Holland had returned at the end of the 1810 expedition.

In the year that followed his return, Icelandic matters continued to occupy much of Holland's time. There was correspondence with other Icelandic friends made during the trip, amongst whom must be counted the intriguing Guðrún Duks-Einarsdóttir (Wawn, forthcoming), former intimate companion of the luckless Jørgensen (and several others), who was eventually abandoned and intimidated in London in the summer of 1814 by the then British consul in Reykjavík, a (by Icelandic accounts) wretched man called John Parke. With Holland apparently out of the country at the time, Guðrún, following a necessary moonlight flit from London, found hospitality and friendship with Holland's old mentor John Thomas Stanley in Cheshire, while she waited for a passage from Liverpool back to Iceland. For Holland in 1811 there were also dinner parties, at which Iceland was the main topic of conversation. There were visiting Icelanders to greet — for instance, Halldór Þorgrímsson, a son by marriage of Bishop Geir Vídalín, who boosted Holland's morale by assuring him that he (Holland) "had left a high character behind amongst the Icelanders" (NLS 7.ix.1811). There were also learned society meetings to attend and papers on Iceland to give and to listen to. There were plans to make a visit to Mount Etna, to continue the study of volcanic rocks which had played so prominent a part in Holland's Northern voyage. There was the M.D. thesis *De Morbis Islandiæ* to finish and latinize, complete with its twin fulsome dedications to Bishop Geir and to Dr. Thomas Klog, the island's chief physician whom Holland had come to know during his visit. The chief priority, though, in 1811 was the preparation of material for Mackenzie's book and, latterly, as confidence in Sir George diminished, in ensuring that Holland's sections — on the diseases of Icelanders; on government, laws and religion in Iceland; and, most notably, the Preliminary Dissertation — should be clearly identified as his

work alone and, as far as possible, made distinct from Sir George's contributions.

The Preliminary Dissertation is a major achievement and was recognised as such by discriminating readers and reviewers of the volume. It was praised by the Stanleys, no admirers of the Mackenzie volume as a whole (Adeane 1900, 336; Landsbókasafn MS 4925 4to, letter dated 2.viii.1811), extensively extracted in the *Annual Register 1811* (pp. 426-40), and commended in the *Edinburgh Review* (XIX, 1811-12, 432). Essentially a work of synthesis and distillation, the range of authorities cited, and the confidence with which they are handled, is formidable. Holland claims (ME 30.i.1811) that in the preparation of the Dissertation:

I have bestowed much minute attention upon all the more important records of the histories & antiquities of the north, and have held my patient course through page after page of wearisome, monotonous detail.

The text certainly confirms the effort expended if not the tedium experienced. The extensive and fastidious footnotes reveal a remarkable breadth of reading, both ancient and modern — from Saxo Grammaticus to Snorri Sturluson, from Ari Þorgilsson to Arngrímur Jónsson, from Björn of Skarðsá to Þormóður Torfason, from Hackluyt to Hálfdan Einarsson, from Ole Worm and Grímur Thorkelín to the hapless Amos Cottle. The works of several of these writers had been known in England fifty years earlier as Thomas Gray prepared his Norse odes for publication in 1768, but latterly the task facing writers who shared Gray's Northern enthusiasms was lightened by the publication in Copenhagen of major editions of Icelandic prose and verse texts, with generous annotation and with facing-page Latin translations. This latter provision was of particular benefit to Holland who knew little Icelandic. We know that Holland owned the 1786 edition of *Víga-Glúms saga* (as did John Thomas Stanley) — other Copenhagen texts available included *Kristni saga* (1773), *Landnámabók* (1774), *Sagan af Gunnlaugi Ormstungu og Skald-Rafni* [sic] (1775), *Hervarar saga* (1785), *Eyrbyggja saga* (1787), and most notably the first volume of the great *Sæmundar Edda* (1787). Use was also made of texts printed during the eighteenth century in Iceland itself — at Leirárgarðar, Hólar, and Hrapsey, as well as of newly published English translations of seminal reference works such as Eggert Ólafsson and Bjarni Pálsson, *Reise igiennem Island* (1772), which had become available in a somewhat truncated English version — *Travels in Iceland* (1805). Notwithstanding the truncation, here was an authoritative volume in English which could

transcend the eccentricities of Niels Horrebøw's *Natural History of Iceland* (1758) and could supplement Bishop Uno Von Troil's awkwardly organized though still popular *Letters on Iceland . . . made during a voyage undertaken in the year 1772* (1780), a new edition of which appeared in 1808 (Pinkerton 1808, 621-734). The doggedly utilitarian English version of *Reise igiennem Island* would have taught Holland much about Iceland but little about its literature — the equal length of sections entitled 'Of steeped and macerated fish' (p. 16) and 'Of their sagas and historical recitations' (pp. 25-6) was indicative of the work's priorities! Another publication often cited by Holland, less specifically Icelandic, more determinedly literary, and immensely influential, was Bishop Thomas Percy's *Northern Antiquities* (1770), a translation (albeit sometimes an amplified and realigned one) of Paul Henri Mallet's authoritative *Introduction à l'Histoire de Dannemarc* (1755). Percy's translation, supplemented by the inclusion of his *Five Pieces of Runic Poetry* (previously published in 1763) was published in a new edition in Edinburgh in 1809. Holland also makes occasional use of William Herbert's *Select Icelandic Poetry* (1804-6), a two-volume collection of texts, translations and extensive and learned footnotes by another leading English scholar of Northern antiquities.

"Wearisome and monotonous" as the process of assimilating these diverse source materials may have been, the resulting essay, perceptive, engaged and ambitious, is impressive. Holland identifies three stages of Icelandic cultural development — the golden age after the Settlement period; the decline into lethargy until the end of the sixteenth century; and the subsequent revival of learning, of which the Copenhagen texts cited above were both symptom and cause. In some respects the essay reveals Holland to be a man of his time. The period of the great Eddic poems and of the great historical writing (which for Holland meant sagas as much as it meant Ari) was set against a characteristically romantic and Whiggish backcloth — brave Norwegian exiles from the "despotic sway" (Mackenzie 1811, 17; all further references are to this text) of tyrannical royalty at home had settled a desolate land and made it fertile, bringing with them their mythology "propitious to poetic fiction and ornament" (p. 17), which was then Icelandicized, poetized and, along with the sagas, written down in circumstances the contemplation of which stirs and steers Holland's imagination in recognisably Wordsworthian directions (p. 18):

The summer sun saw them indeed laboriously occupied in seeking their provision from a stormy ocean and a barren soil; but the long seclusion of the winter gave them the leisure, as well as the desire, to cultivate talents, which were at once so fertile in occupation and delight. During the darkness of their year, and beneath the rude covering of wood and turf, they recited to their assembled families the deeds and descent of their forefathers; from whom they had received that inheritance of liberty, which they now dwelt among deserts to preserve.

Holland was, however, only too aware that for those hungering for the “native woodnotes wild”, Old Icelandic literature returned a blank stare. With the Eddic poetry “it is difficult now to appreciate the beauty or propriety of these alliterations” (p. 22), whilst, with the prose, there is frequently “minute and wearisome description of events” (p. 29) in overgenerous profusion. Yet sometimes the poetry can yield, amidst its artful and jagged complexity, and even if only by accident, a “homeliness and simplicity of story” (p. 21) attractive to Holland, whilst the sagas at their best offer (p. 29):

pictures of manners and feelings in which simplicity itself is the charm, and where the imagination is insensibly back to the times, and the scenes [of Iceland].

There is no doubt that Holland’s imagination was particularly engaged by *Gunnlaugs saga ormstungu*. In this he was not alone amongst his contemporaries — the same saga inspired (if that isn’t too generous a term) a modest poem by Landor (Wheeler 1933, 91-102); a magnificently dreadful self-parody of a play by Sir George Mackenzie (Henry E. Huntington Library, California MS Larpent LA 1751, cf. Wawn 1982), a piece unredeemed by Sir Walter Scott’s Prologue; and an extended plot summary by William Herbert (Herbert 1804-6, I 65-70). Holland knew of Herbert’s account of the story (p. 32):

Were it less interesting, as a specimen of the manners and literature of the ancient Icelanders, the repetition of what he has so ably done, would not have been attempted.

Holland’s own summary in the Preliminary Dissertation transcends mere repetition, however. Behind the placid decorousness of the prose, there are hints of a vivid engagement with the narrative, far removed from the blandness of Herbert’s account. Thus the tensions and the pathos of Gunnlaugr’s arrival at the uneasy wedding celebrations for Helga and Hrafn, a scene completely ignored by Herbert, are strikingly characterised (p. 31):

Gunnlaug shewed himself on a sudden among the assembled guests, eminent above all from the beauty of his person and the richness of his apparel. The eyes of the lovers hung upon each other in mute and melancholy sorrow; and the bitterest pangs went to the heart of the gentle Helga. The nuptial feast was

gloomy and without joy. A contest between the rivals was prevented by the interference of their friends, but they parted with increased animosity and hatred.

The decline of a literature of such precocious achievement exercised Holland a good deal in the Preliminary Dissertation. Mallet's explanations for the rise of Icelandic literature were well known and often cited (for instance by Coxe 1802, V 153), but the decline had been little considered. Holland offers three reasons. First, as native European literature burgeoned, there was no further need for the services of the itinerant Icelandic skalds who previously had been feted in the courts of Scandinavia and further afield — skalds such as Gunnlaugr and Hrafn themselves. An impetus to poetic creativity, Holland argues, had been removed (p. 54). Second, Holland, a Unitarian, required little encouragement to associate himself with that group of romantic critics who believed unswervingly that the Catholic church had exercised a baleful influence on medieval literature. Holland argues that, in the Icelandic context, its corrupting wealth, the unhappy influence of its crude miracle stories and hagiographic traditions and the decay in secular jurisprudence occasioned by overmuch attention to the rites and formalities of the church, had collectively sapped the native literary spirit (p. 55). Third, he offers an interesting variant on the thesis favoured by late romantic critics well into the present century — namely, that surrender of Icelandic independence to the tyranny of the Norwegian throne in 1262 crushed the native individualism of the Icelanders' creativity. Holland suggests that 1262 represented "rather an alliance than a timid surrender of rights" (p. 48) and that the subsequent Norwegian and Danish royal rule was "lenient and forbearing" (p. 51). That, Holland felt, had been the problem (p. 50):

Had the foreign yoke been a tyrannical one, the primeval spirit of the Icelanders might possibly have been maintained by the persecution which laboured to suppress it.

As things turned out (p. 51):

Repose and security succeeding to internal broils, produced a state of comparative apathy and indolence. The same call was not made for individual exertion, nor the same rewards proposed to its successful exercise. Rank and property became more nearly equalized among the inhabitants; and, all looking up to a superior power, the spirit of independence declined, and they expected from others the support and protection which they had once afforded to themselves.

It is worth remarking in the context of this essay that amongst those who might have been expected to share Holland's view that external hostility had caused early Icelandic cultural creativity to

be leaner and fitter was William Morris, who came to recognise in Iceland an irresistible icon for his belief in creativity energised by hardship ('Iceland First Seen', ll. 53-6, in Morris [1891], 41-2):

" . . . amid waning of realms and their riches
and death of things worshipped and sure,
I [Iceland] abide here the spouse of a God,
and I made and I make and endure."

The final stage of Iceland's cultural development, the halting of the late medieval decline, was activated, argues Holland, by the Reformation spiritually (p. 58), and by the printing press technically (p. 57). Hence his chivalrous, in the context of the then active Anglo-Danish conflict, praise for the Danish efforts to publish some of the great monuments of Iceland's literary past (pp. 68-9). In the analysis which Holland offers of this stage, and of both the earlier stages, it is not the sometimes uncertain nature of the claims and explanations offered which is important so much as the fact that explanations were attempted at all. The evidence suggests that this section did not come easily. In the documentary appendices to Holland's manuscript journal, an account of Icelandic literature is announced, but the subsequent pages were left blank (Journal II 118-27). It seems that belatedly the Preliminary Dissertation served to provide this missing section. Holland's essay could have turned into a leaden-footed trudge through the lifeless contents of half-read books. It was his ambition, learning and sympathy which prevented this.

However, the Dissertation was, no doubt, far from Holland's mind by the time the revised edition of the Iceland volume was published in 1812. In the narrative sections, Mackenzie had, under pressure from Holland (Landsbókasafn MS 4925 4to), substituted the seemly modesty of impersonal verbs or "we" for the earlier characteristic egotism of "I" and had toned down the pungently anti-Wernerian stance of much of his mineralogical speculation, but for Holland there were new travels to occupy him to the full. By the date of publication of the revised edition, he had already set out on his next European venture, later chronicled in his *Travels in the Ionian Isles, Albania, Thessaly, Macedonia 1812-13* (1815). Exactly two years after he stood at the summit of Mount Hekla he was to stand at the summit of Mount Etna. Thereafter it was inevitable that the hectic and colourful life-style of a society physician was not able or indeed inclined constantly to admit Iceland to the forefront of its attention. There are, however, a number of hints which indicate the benefits derived by Holland

from his Iceland trip, and which show the influence that his own writings on Iceland were to exert, and that he neither forgot nor was forgotten by Iceland.

Holland's autobiography acknowledges that significant honours and social acceptance immediately resulted from his Icelandic and European travels (Holland 1872, 97). He was elected as a member of the Lisbon Academy of Science during his visit in 1812, and his subsequent election as Fellow of the Royal Society in 1816 was "due to my travels in Iceland and Greece, and to my acquaintance with Sir Joseph Banks" (Holland 1872, 211). At this time he was in London "pursuing medical studies, whilst also enjoying a very desirable society, to which the repute of having travelled in Iceland and Greece mainly contributed" (Holland 1872, 111). Lord Byron, Sir Humphry Davy and Madame de Stael were amongst those with whom Holland became familiar in this way.

The most substantial evidence of influence of Holland's writings relates to the immediate effects of the publication of the Mackenzie/Holland volume in 1811. It is clear that the book was much in demand amongst educated readers, particularly after it had enjoyed considerable exposure in the 1811 *Annual Register* and other periodicals. The Bristol Library Society records (Bristol Reference Library MSS B 7480-5) again offer illuminating and representative detail as to influence and popularity. The volume was ordered for the Society on 29 January 1812, and first borrowed on 17 February. Over the next two years it was taken out by some twenty-eight subscribers, often being returned and borrowed again the same day. It is likely that Holland's association with the volume did much to commend it to the Bristol readership, for his earlier survey of Cheshire agriculture was regularly borrowed during the period 1808-11. The popularity of the Iceland volume, when set against the borrowings of other available volumes of obvious Northern interest, is striking. In the same period, the Van Troil account of Sir Joseph Banks's 1772 expedition, published in 1780, was borrowed three times; Bishop Percy's translation of Mallet's *Northern Antiquities* was borrowed twice; the 1787 Copenhagen *Edda* three times; Amos Cottle's Icelandic translations twice; William Herbert's translations twice; Saxo Grammaticus and Johnstone's *Antiquitates Celto-Scandicæ* once each. In the nine-month period from the 1813 publication of W. J. Hooker's account of his 1809 expedition to Iceland, the Hooker volumes were borrowed six times whilst Mackenzie/Holland was borrowed seven times.

There is, moreover, the strong suggestion from the borrowing records that the popularity of the Mackenzie/Holland volume not only reflected a taste for travel literature, but created or more accurately recreated a taste for things Icelandic amongst the Bristol readership. In 1808-9, Van Troil's Iceland book was not borrowed. In 1810, the year of the Mackenzie/Holland/Bright expedition, it was borrowed three times — first by the father of young Richard Bright, no doubt in order to learn more of the distant land to which his son was to travel later that summer; thereafter it was borrowed a good deal more frequently. Again, over the two-year period up to November 1810, the 1787 Copenhagen *Edda* was not borrowed. Thereafter, a steady trickle of borrowings re-occurs. Further, before the publication of the Mackenzie/Holland volume, there were no borrowings of either the Amos Cottle translations, or the William Herbert volumes, or of Percy's Mallet. In 1812 each text finds at least one Bristol borrower. The cumulative evidence suggests that local Bristol interest in the 1810 expedition, due to the participation of young Richard Bright, together with the publication of the Mackenzie/Holland text, strongly supported by Holland's known reputation, was responsible for renewed Bristolian interest in Icelandic literature and antiquities.

As for Holland's continuing involvement with Icelandic exploration, there is evidence from later years. In 1814 he found time in a break from his European travels to present a set of geological specimens from Iceland to the Geological Society of London — seven of which still survive. Again, in 1834, John Barrow's *A Visit to Iceland . . . in the Summer of 1834* (1835) warmly acknowledges (pp. xx, 184, 222, 309) the help which Holland had afforded him by allowing him access to the 1810 expedition journal. Then, in 1842, the publication of a revised (by Mackenzie) and less expensive edition of the 1812 edition of the Iceland book ensured that Holland's writings reached a new and wider audience, including those potential Iceland travellers whose ardour had not been dampened by Sir George's new Preface which stressed, deadeningly, that any voyage to Iceland involved "resigning everything connected with what is so highly prized in Britain — comfort". One such traveller, the American Pliny Miles, knew the "distinguished" Dr. Holland's "learned dissertation" well, and in his *Nordurfari, or Rambles in Iceland* (1854) was happy to acknowledge Holland as "one of the most learned travellers that ever visited Iceland" (p. 225). There is evidence too, that towards the end of his life, it was the turn of Icelanders visiting London to seek out the by now

venerable “old carle”. Guðbrandur Vigfússon was one such visitor in March 1865. He writes to Bjarni Þorsteinsson (Landsbókasafn MS 342c fol., letter dated 6.iii.1855):

Eg var hissa að sjá mann, sem eg hélt að væri löngu kominn undir græna torfu . . . Eg hlakka til að sjá Sir Holland aptr og tala við hann.

Guðbrandur had no doubt that Banks, Mackenzie, Holland and Ebenezer Henderson were the “bestu ferðamenn sem á Islandi hafa verið fyrir utan Rask og Maurer”.

Lastly, there was Holland’s astonishing return to Iceland in the summer of 1871 at the age of eighty-three accompanied by his second son. It was during this trip that Holland became acquainted with William Morris’s travelling companion Eiríkur Magnússon and, on his return to England, was amongst Eiríkur’s supporters when the Icelander sought a post in the University Library in Cambridge (Stefán Einarsson 1961, 50, note 9). Much had changed over sixty years in the Reykjavík to which Holland returned — a restored cathedral, a new college, more people, better trade, finer houses, more productive domestic cultivation. But memory provided some continuities. Bishop Geir’s house was now occupied by “my excellent friend Dr. Hyaltalin — a child of three years old when I slept in his father’s church [at Saurbær] on the shores of the Hual-fiord” (Holland 1872, 32). Moreover, the children and grand-children of former friends showed much kindness and warmth to an old man whose recollections, he was convinced, had been “matured rather than enfeebled by a long intervening life” (Holland 1872, 31).

Another celebrated English Icelandophile, of the twentieth century, also returning to Iceland after a long absence, wrote (quoted in Sigurður Magnússon 1977, ix):

To me Iceland is sacred soil. Its memory is a constant background to what I am doing. No matter that I don’t make frequent references to the country; it is an equally important part of my life for all that . . . It is a permanent part of my existence . . . Iceland is the sun colouring the mountains without being anywhere in sight.

It is not difficult to imagine that Sir Henry Holland would have understood the feelings to which W. H. Auden, a younger and less “courtly carle”, sought to give expression.

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LONGINUS, CHARLEMAGNE, AND ÓDINN:
WILLIAM OF MALMESBURY, *DE GESTIS REGUM
ANGLORUM* II, 135

By THOMAS D. HILL

WILLIAM of Malmesbury's account (1887-9, I 150) of the reign of Athelstan¹ includes a description of the embassy from Hugh Capet concerning the prospective marriage between that noble and Athelstan's sister. When the head of this embassy, a certain Adulf, made his plea, he offered Athelstan magnificent gifts, both valuable objects and precious relics, and among the latter was a certain lance which Charlemagne had carried in battle. It was also reputed to be the spear which Longinus had used to pierce Christ's side. William describes it as follows:

. lanceam Caroli magni, quam imperator invictissimus, contra Saracenos exercitum ducens, siquando in hostem vibrabat, nunquam nisi victor abibat; ferebatur eadem esse quæ, Dominico lateri centurionis manu impacta, pretiosi vulneris hiatu Paradisum miseris mortalibus aperuit.

. . the spear of Charles the Great, which, whenever that most invincible emperor, leading an army against the Saracens, hurled it against the enemy, never let him depart without the victory; it was said to be the same which, driven by the hand of the centurion into our Lord's side, opened by the gash of that precious wound Paradise for wretched mortals (Whitelock 1955, 282).

The first point I would like to emphasize is that, odd as it may seem, William of Malmesbury is indeed saying that Charlemagne *threw* this precious spear against his Saracen enemies. The Latin verb *vibrare* has two primary meanings. The first is "to shake" or "to set in tremulous motion" as in the English cognate "vibrate". The second, however, is "to hurl" or "launch". Thus Quintus Curtius speaks of the Persians fighting Alexander "conferti et quasi cohaerentes tela *vibrare* non poterant", "pressed, virtually joined man to man, they could not hurl their spears" (III, xi, 4). Lucan in the *Bellum Civile* describes an African Temple and remarks: "Stat sortiger illic/ Iuppiter, ut memorant, sed non aut fulmina *vibrans*/ Aut similis nostro . . .", "There stands, so they say, oracular Jupiter, but . . . neither hurling lightning bolts nor similar to ours" (IX, 513). Again, by extension, Catullus speaks of how if his lady would restore him to her favour he would cease "truces *vibrare* iambos", "to dart fierce iambics" (36, 5). And finally,

Virgil speaks of a sudden and unexpected bolt of lightning as *vibratus*, i.e. “hurled”: “namque improviso vibratus ab aethere fulgor/ cum sonitus venit”, “for suddenly a bolt of lightning, hurled from heaven, appeared with a crash” (*Aeneid* VIII, 524). This usage was recognized by medieval Latin lexicographers in that the twelfth-century authority Hugutio of Pisa glosses *vibrare* as “concutere ad iaculandum vel iaculari”, among other meanings.²

If the word *vibrare* can mean “hurl” or “throw”, the phrase *in hostem vibrabat* would, in this context, most naturally mean that Charlemagne “used to hurl [this spear] against the enemy” or something to this effect. That is, at any rate, the interpretation of both Dorothy Whitelock (1955, 282) and the nineteenth-century scholar J. A. Giles (1847, 135), and if the argument of this paper is cogent, there are more than the conventional linguistic arguments for believing that these translations are correct.

William Chaney (1970, 145) has commented on the possible association of the victory-bringing spear and the cult of Óðinn, but he does not discuss the most striking parallel between William’s account and a specific cult practice associated with Óðinn — the fact that Charlemagne *threw* the precious relic against his enemies. This detail does correspond strikingly with a custom specifically associated with the cult of Óðinn in Old Icelandic literary texts. In *Völuspá* (*Eddadigte* I 1962, 6) the first war, the conflict between the Æsir and the Vanir, begins when Óðinn hurls his spear over his foes:

Fleygði Óðinn
ok í fólk um skaut,
þat var enn fólkvíg
fyrst í heimi;
brotinn var borðveggr
borgar ása,
knátto vanir vígspá
völlu sporna.³

In *Eyrbyggja saga* (1935, 122) when Snorri and his men are about to begin battle against Steinþórr and his supporters, Steinþórr opens the battle by throwing a spear over his enemies.

En er flokkinn Snorra gekk neðan skriðuna, þá skaut Steinþórr spjóti at fornunni síð til heilla sér yfir flokk Snorra, en spjótitt leitaði sér staðar, ok varð fyrir Már Hallvarðsson, frændi Snorra, ok varð hann þegar óvígur. Ok er þetta var sagt Snorra goða, þá svarar hann: “Gott er, at þat sannask, at þat er eigi jafnan bezt, at ganga síðast.” Eptir þetta tóksk þar bardagi mikill.

As the language of this passage makes clear, Steinþórr’s gesture is not simply a warlike act, but a specifically religious one. He

throws the spear *over* Snorri's men, "at fornum sið til heilla sér", "according to the old custom in order to bring luck for himself". And another story preserved in *Styrbjarnar þáttur* (*Flateyjarbók* 1860-8, II 72) tells of how Eirekr sacrificed to Óðinn for victory:

Pa nott hina somu gek Æirekr j hof Odins ok gafst honum til sigurs ser ok kuat a tiu uetra frest sins dauda. morgu hafde hann adr blotat þuiat honum horfde vuænna. litlu sidarr sa hann mann mikinn med sidum hetti sa sellde honum reyrspota j hond ok bad hann skiota honum yfir lid Styrbiarnar. ok þat skylldde hann mæla. Odinn a ydr alla. ok er hann hafde skotit þa syndizst honum gaflak a lofti ok flo yfir folk Styrbiarnar ok þegar slo blinde a lid Styrbiarnar ok sidan a sealfan hann ok eftir þat urdu suo mikil undr at skrida brast upp j feallit ok hliop ofan a lid Styrbearnar ok drapst allt hans folk.

The similarity between William of Malmesbury's account of Charlemagne's use of the precious relic and this motif associated with the cult of Óðinn seems quite clear. It could of course be argued that the Germanic cult custom involves throwing a spear *over* the enemy whereas Charlemagne simply threw his sacral spear *at* or *against* the Saracens. But this discrepancy is not as serious as it might appear. To begin with, William of Malmesbury was a twelfth-century historian, not an ethnographer. Since he did not fully understand the significance of the information which he was recording, the distinction in question would hardly have seemed important to him. Secondly, while the handbooks define this custom as throwing a spear *over* one's enemies, it is not at all clear, in the instances of it which are commonly cited, that the spear in question is actually thrown *over* the enemy army in the sense which a literal interpretation of the modern English phrase would require. In the passage from *Völuspá* Óðinn shot his spear *í fólk*, "against [his] opponents", and in the passage from *Eyrbyggja saga* the spear which Steinþórr throws does not go over his opponents; it strikes and kills one of Snorri's followers. Admittedly he is not in the first rank of the host, but if Steinþórr had thrown his spear completely *over* his enemies, he would not have hit anyone. It would, after all, be a rather minor engagement if one warrior could cast a spear over the heads of the entire enemy host.

But if the correspondence itself seems relatively clear, the problem of determining the significance of this parallel is a delicate one. As I have said, William of Malmesbury himself was probably unaware of the origin of the pagan motif encapsulated in his account of the spear, and there are at least two possible ways in which it could have come to him. On the one hand, the pagan West Germanic peoples, like their North Germanic co-religionists,

may have thought it appropriate in certain instances to hallow an enemy host by casting a spear over them, thus dedicating the enemy to *Woden* or *Wuotan*. This possibility is of some interest in itself since we know relatively little about West Germanic pagan *cultus*, and the degree to which West Germanic and North Germanic pagan practice coincided is a matter of some controversy. After the conversion the practice itself should logically have been discontinued, but one can imagine the preservation of the memory of this usage in folklore and folk belief long after it ceased being a specifically religious act. The historical Charlemagne would, no doubt, have avoided any custom he recognized as pagan, but the persons who commemorated his exploits in oral tradition would not have been so scrupulous, and the motif could easily have been assimilated to the legendary history of Charlemagne.

Alternatively, William's description of the way in which Charlemagne used the spear might have been superimposed on the original Frankish account. There was a great deal of opportunity for North Germanic influence at the Anglo-Saxon royal court; at one juncture in their history the Anglo-Saxons had a Danish king for many years. The relic was presumably part of the royal treasure, and its legend could have been augmented by a North Germanic visitor to whom the "old custom" of hallowing an enemy army with a spear was generally familiar.

But whatever the source of the motif may have been, this originally pagan usage has been thoroughly resacralized in its new Christian context. Charlemagne used the spear, according to William's account, against Saracens — that is, when he was fighting what was thought to be a holy war, at least by William's time. And the victory-bringing spear itself is associated with the crucifixion, even though it could be argued that William's usage suggests that he was doubtful about this association. He does not say that this spear *was* the precious relic itself but that it *was said* (*ferebatur*) to be. But whatever William himself made of the story, his brief account of the spear given to Athelstan offers a fascinating glimpse of the process of accommodation and assimilation which the conversion of early medieval Europe entailed. For if this relic was once portrayed by tradition as a remnant of the cult of Óðinn (or Wodan/Wuotan, to give the god his West Germanic name), by the time it reached Athelstan it had made, as it were, a detour by way of Jerusalem and was no longer the victory-giving spear of the god of war, but a Christian relic which derived its power from Christ's sacrificial death upon the cross.

Notes

¹ For discussion of William of Malmesbury's interest in continental history see Thompson (1981). On the problem of William's sources for this portion of his history see Lapidge (1981).

² The classical Latin texts are quoted from the Loeb Classical Library, but the translations, which are deliberately quite literal, are my own. The gloss of Hugutio of Pisa is quoted from the *Summa Britonis* . . . (1975, II 833). The full gloss reads: *vibro, bras dicitur resplendere, crispere, concutere ad iaculandum vel iaculari, sicut solemus cum minuta virga. Ita dicit Huquitio*. The text is found in the later Latin dictionary of Guillelmus Brito, which incorporates to a large degree the work of Hugutio.

³ For an authoritative and meticulously careful commentary see *Völuspá* (1978).

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UNFRIÐ: AN APPROACH TO A DEFINITION*

BY CHRISTINE E. FELL

IN order to examine the semantic range of Old English *unfrið* it is obviously necessary to start by analysing the range of *frið*. Unfortunately it is not possible to look at *frið* without examining also the word *gríð* since most of the scholars who have commented on these words have insisted on taking them as a pair, and pointing out the ways in which they — apparently — differ.

The first attempt to distinguish the two words made by a scholar of some repute is that of Benjamin Thorpe in 1840 (see *Glossary* s.v. *Gríð*) where his definition runs:

Peace, protection, particularly that granted by the king or other high official to those requiring it; also the privilege of security within a certain distance, i.e. within the verge of the king's court. It differs from "frið," the latter signifying the general peace and security of the state, also that existing between one state and another; the two terms seem, however (as in the instance of "church-frið" and "church-gríð"), to be sometimes used indiscriminately.

His entries on *frið*, not in the *Glossary*, but in the *Index to the Anglo-Saxon Laws*, are set out with precise and helpful distinctions of usage. But he has, though with sensible modifications subsequently ignored, laid down here a distinction between *gríð* as peace within a limited framework and *frið* as a more general word. It is a misleading distinction which has unfortunately persisted.

Bishop William Stubbs (1891, 199-201) argues the case more fully:

The *grith* . . . is a limited or localised peace, under the special guarantee of the individual, and differs little from the protection implied in the *mund* or personal guardianship which appears much earlier; although it may be regarded as another mark of territorial development. When the king becomes the lord, patron and *mundborh* of his whole people, they pass from the ancient national peace of which he is the guardian into the closer personal or territorial relation of which he is the source. The peace is now the king's peace . . . the *frith* is enforced by the national officers, the *grith* by the king's personal servants; the one is official, the other personal; the one the business of the country, the other that of the court. The special peace is further extended to places where the national peace is not fully provided for: the great highways . . . are under the king's peace.

I should not have quoted this particular specious piece of

* Presidential Address, delivered to the Society in Nottingham, 4 June 1982.

nonsense so fully were it not that it is cited in exactly that form in Bosworth-Toller's *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* s.v. *grið*, without query or qualification, and this is a place where more philologists are likely to see and even believe it than its original context. Bishop Stubbs has, after all, no more than the average historian's control of the vernacular languages, and for a lexicographer to quote a historian invests these statements with a spurious authority.

A caveat is entered by Chadwick (1905, 132, note 1) where he writes:

It may be well however to mention here that I have not been able to find any evidence for the existence of "national officers" as distinct from royal officers. This idea, like that of a "national peace" as distinct from the "king's peace," seems to be due to the erroneous assumption that royalty was a comparatively late institution in the English nation.

Nevertheless the notion persists that *grið* is a local term and *frið* a general term. The *Glossary* to ASC says s.v. *grið* (I 353): "peace limited in time or place; truce, protection, asylum. (often coupled with the more general word: *frið*)." Similarly Gordon's note on *grið* in his edition of *The Battle of Maldon* (1937, 45) tells us that this word is "less general in sense than *frið* . . . *grið* was truce or protection from hostility within definite conditions; *frið* was 'peace' in general."

The basis of this distinction is, I take it, etymological. Old English *frið* and its Old Norse cognate *friðr* belong to a group of words dealing with abstract concepts such as peace, friendship and love. Old English *freond* and cognates belong here. The full range is of course listed in Pokorny (1959-69, I 844). Old Norse *grið* links etymologically with a more humdrum range of words dealing with household subsistence. Pokorny (1959-69, I 441) for example lists words for "greed" in various Germanic languages deriving from the same root. In the Cleasby-Vigfusson *Icelandic-English Dictionary* *grið* is given two major areas of meaning: "A . . . a domicile, home, with the notion of service", where the sense is most clearly illustrated by the compounds. *Griðkona* is defined as "a housemaid", *griðtaka* as "a hiring of servants", *griðvist* as "lodging". Under **B** the dictionary offers: "In pl[ural], metaph[orical] a truce, peace, pardon". Gudbrand Vigfusson goes on to make the same distinction everyone else has made between *grið* and *friðr*: "*friðr* is the general word, *grið* the special, deriving its name from being limited in time or space (asylum)."

Clearly this distinction has some etymological validity. The concept of *grið* as "peace" must have developed from the sense

“protected member of a household” or perhaps more precisely “protection afforded by being a member of a household”. But there remain so many points to probe here that it is difficult to know where to begin. In the first place does the distinction remain valid in general Old Norse usage? In the second place does *grið* enter Old English with the same full and clearly defined range of meanings that it had in Old Norse? In the third place, whatever the range of meanings with which *grið* was borrowed into Old English, did it keep them, or did it go on to develop independently from its Old Norse counterpart? In the fourth place, though Old English *frið* and Old Norse *friðr* are obviously cognates, were there any differences, slight or important, in usage? In the fifth place, since *grið* did not enter the English language until the tenth century, how were the Anglo-Saxons managing to preserve the clear distinctions between these two terms before they had both of them?

It is easier here for us to analyse the range of Old English since Toronto has issued its complete concordance on microfiche, and my analysis of the Old Norse material is dependent on a somewhat more haphazard range of references. Nevertheless some conclusions emerge. In the Old Norse material *friðr* does appear to be used more commonly as the abstract concept, *grið* in the terms of limited truce. Yet this is only a generalization and there is a good deal of overlap most noticeable in the compounds. *Griðsamr* and *friðsamr* may both be translated as “peaceable”. In asking for quarter in battle one might ask for either *grið* or *friðr* and it seems unlikely that the petitioner would keep in his head a clear distinction between the implications of asking for the one rather than the other. *Friðarstilli* is defined in Cleasby-Vigfusson as “a peace settlement”, *griðsetning* as “truce-making” but in practical terms this must have been a distinction without a difference. *Jólafríðr* and *jólagrið* are both used for the limited concept of “Christmas-peace” i.e. a peace to last for a specified duration of the festival, and the legal term *annfriðr* is defined in Cleasby-Vigfusson as “‘work-peace,’ work-truce, commonly during April and May, the time when there were to be no lawsuits”. It is clear that though there may be a distinction in etymology, meaning and usage between the two Old Norse words, it is not one that we can apply rigorously in our reading and translation.

In Old English texts the earliest occurrences of *grið* are in *The Battle of Maldon*, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and in Wulfstan’s homilies, records from the very end of the tenth or the first part

of the eleventh century. One supposes that it passed into speech somewhat earlier. Other usage in the Anglo-Saxon period is fairly heavily concentrated in the laws, but the word and its compounds survive into common Middle English. It should therefore be possible to see if there is any development.

There is virtually no indication in English usage of *grið* in the primary Cleasby-Vigfusson sense of domesticity. It arrives in England, I take it, without etymological support, as one of the words the Vikings used in their interminable discussions of truces and treaties. The first noticeable use, in *The Battle of Maldon* (1937, 45), is particularly rich in overtones. It is put into the mouth of a Viking invader suggesting that the East Saxons might buy off their attack:

we willað wið þam golde grið fæstnian

“we are willing to establish *grið* for that gold”. Gordon may be right in arguing that *grið* has here the precise and not the general meaning. But Fred C. Robinson (1976, 26) adduces this speech as possibly “the first literary use of dialect in English”, and it is certainly arguable that the poet is using *grið*, not in order to distinguish it from *frið* which he also uses in the same speech, but to impart a Viking flavour to the challenge, consciously choosing certain words and constructions at once familiar and foreign. Professor Robinson concludes dramatically that the challenge may have been delivered in “the alien accents of a living, speaking Norseman”.

In the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* I find it hard to see any way in which *grið* is clearly distinguished or distinguishable from *frið*. For years in entry after entry the Vikings accepted *frið* (*namon*), kept *frið* (*heoldon*), broke *frið* (*bræcon*) etc. We still, I think, do not have an adequate understanding of the degree to which these two peoples were mutually intelligible, or what language and languages were involved every time Alfred and the Danes (and possibly some Swedes and Norwegians) sat down together to sort out yet another treaty. Clearly the word *frið*, intelligible to everyone on both sides, may yet have had slightly different implications for both sides. *Grið* which, to the Norse speakers at any rate, may have seemed capable of more precise definition, must have been introduced very frequently into these discussions for it to have been adopted as an English noun. In its early appearances in the *Chronicle* it seems to me to be used quite indiscriminately alongside *frið*, and I can find no evidence at all

that the *Chronicle* compiler is distinguishing clearly between them. There appears also in English with remarkable speed a verb *griðian*, evidently formed on analogy with *friðian*, but again not clearly separable in meaning. Both *frið* and *grið* are used by the *Chronicle* writer in the sense of “a treaty”; both are used in the sense of “protection”, both are used in the general sense of “peace”; and there are inevitably a great many occasions where it is not clear to the modern translator which of these senses is uppermost in the writer’s mind. In A.D. 1002,¹ which is the year in which the word *grið* appears first in the *Chronicle*, men accept *frið* in one sentence and establish *grið* in the next. It might be possible to argue here that the writer is drawing a distinction between agreeing to a peace in the first instance and then formulating a treaty. I doubt however whether it would be possible to insist on such a clear cut division in my next example. In 1004 Ulfcytel advises that peace be made with the *here*, the Danish army, which in one manuscript is *friðian* and another *friðes ceapian* “to buy peace” (ASC, I 134-5). In the next sentence both manuscripts refer back to this as *under þam griðe* where the use of the demonstrative makes it quite clear that the *frið* which was bought or established is synonymous with “that” *grið*. When in 1006 the king expresses the hope that there might be *grið* between the two forces this seems self-evidently to be used in the general sense of “peace” and it can certainly make no difference to our understanding or translation of that sentence that *grið* is used rather than *frið*. Nor I think can the speaker have been implying a subtle distinction in that he hoped for *grið* rather than *frið*. Had the same sentence occurred slightly earlier in the *Chronicle* the word *frið* would have been used automatically.

The verbs *friðian* and *griðian* are equally difficult to distinguish for the modern reader and I suspect for the original audience. We have no evidence at all of what the Norsemen made of this invented verb — our Old Norse records do not indicate that they adopted it. The *Chronicle* uses the verb *friðian* in the annal for 921. Garmonsway’s translation (1972, 103) says that the Danish host in East Anglia swore to Edward “that they wished all that he wished, protecting all that he protected, by sea and land”. Whitelock’s translation (1961, 66) has different implications: “that they would agree to all that he would, and would keep peace with all with whom the king wished to keep peace, both at sea and on land”. Later we find *griðian* sometimes with the restricted meaning of “to afford protection”, but presumably in the following example

with the general sense of "to make peace". At the end of the *Chronicle's* annal for 1016 (ASC, I 153) the Londoners *griðede wið þone here* and bought *frið*. Both Garmonsway and Whitelock translate *griðede* as "came to terms with" and *frið* as "peace" but it seems unlikely that their translations would have been different if the words had been in reverse order, and equally unlikely that the writer of the original was intending distinctions of meaning. When the verb is used in the *Chronicle's* 1070 annal of Earl Walpeof who *griðede wið þone cyng* Whitelock translates "made peace with", Garmonsway "made his peace with". The implications can in any case hardly be "made a truce" or "made terms", nor can they be "to give protection", though they might be "to accept protection" which would be a new and interesting extension of meaning.

Grið and *griðian* are used fairly intensively in the post-millennium section of the *Chronicle*, but this was very probably a simple matter of semantic fashion. In the *Chronicle's* annal for 1009 Canterbury asked the *here* for peace and all the men of Kent made peace with the *here* and paid them three thousand pounds. In the majority of manuscripts they *frið genamon*. In the eleventh-century manuscript known as the F version they *gegriðedan wið hi* and gave them three thousand pounds *to griðe* (Thorpe 1861, I 261). The evidence suggests, not that *frið/grið* and *friðian/griðian* were carefully distinguished in the minds of the Anglo-Saxons, but that the noun *grið* gradually began to pervade the language, and to take on the full range of meanings formerly associated with *frið*; and that the newly coined verb *griðian/gegriðian* similarly began to take over from *friðian*.

There is one very neat piece of gloss evidence that supports this theory. In Aldhelm's *De Virginitate* (1919, 267) there is an invigorating story of a saint who rescued people from the jaws of a boa constrictor *a letiferis bestiae flatibus eripuit*. In the eleventh-century glosses *eripuit* is translated by Latin *liberavit* and English *griðode* (Napier 1900, 67; Goossens 1974, 305). *Griðian* in the sense of "to rescue" or "to set free" is a perfectly possible development from the other senses of the word, "to come to terms", "to make peace", "to protect", but it is not a necessary or an automatic one. Old English *gefriðian* is however common in this sense and is used to translate Latin *eripere* twice in the Psalms. In Psalm 7 verse 1 *libera me. . . et eripe me* becomes *alys me. . . and gefriða me* (Bright and Ramsay 1907, 10); in Psalm 33 verse 4 *ex omnibus tribulationis meis eripuit me* becomes *of eallum minum earfoðum*

he me gefriðode (Bright and Ramsay 1907, 72). The use of *griðian* in this sense in the eleventh century can only be another example of its adopting the semantic range of *friðian*.

If we turn to the evidence of the law-codes it is clear enough that *grið* and *griðian* have been fully and formally adopted into English legal terminology. But the legal status given to *grið* can even so be a development that took place only after its naturalization as an English word, since the legal concern is very largely with church-*grið*, a concept that can hardly have been brought over by pagan Vikings. It is tempting to speculate that the importance of *grið* in these late law-codes may be construed as an attempt to define the sanctities of the church for the benefit of new, semi-pagan settlers. There is certainly here an extension of meaning from that of the word in its native Old Norse environment.

By the time we find it in Middle English it is absolutely clear that *grið* has taken over all the ranges of meaning that dictionaries and commentators have insisted should be associated rather with *frið*. It is God's peace, the king's peace, national peace, peace in general, peace on earth. The briefest look at the *Middle English Dictionary* of Kurath *et al.* s.v. *grith* demonstrates this: "Jesu . . . sette griþþ on erþe Bitwenenn Godd & menn" is one only of multiple examples. The pairing of words is also instructive. Old English frequently allies the concepts peace and kinship in the phrase *frið and sibb*; Old Norse, late Old English and Middle English all link the rhyming pair *frið* and *grið*, English linking also the rhyming verbs *friðian* and *griðian*; Middle English links also *pees* and *grið*, and develops a few interesting forms on its own account such as *grithful*, *grithliche* and *grithsergeaunt*. It is clear that in general English usage from the time *grið* enters the language, *grið* and *frið* operate as interchangeable synonyms, or to put it another way, if *grið* did enter the language with a more precisely determinable semantic range than *frið*, that precision was very rapidly eroded.

Remembering also the delight of the eleventh-century writers in rhetoric we may suspect that *frið* and *grið* are quite frequently linked, not because they represent different concepts, but because they are rhetorically impressive as a rhyming pair. Wulfstan (Whitelock 1963, 57) also uses the phrase *Godes grið* "God's peace" and anyone familiar with Wulfstan's style is bound to feel that the choice of *grið* rather than *frið* here is determined by the alliterative value, rather than any concept of lexical precision. It is precisely such rhetoric as Wulfstan's that spreads semantic

inaccuracy, and it is indubitably owing to Wulfstan's influence that we find the growth of such rhetorical expression in the laws.

I return now to analyse the semantic range of *frið* before *grið* was introduced to confuse the issue, but my main concern with *frið* is not with the word itself, but with its negative *unfrið*. If we have been conditioned into thinking that *frið* must always be a vague term for peace in general, our translation of *unfrið* will be similarly conditioned as the absence of peace, i.e. enmity or hostility. If however it can be demonstrated that *frið* was used for the more limited range of concepts such as "protection", "the terms of a treaty", "safeguards in travelling" etc. then *unfrið* may also be interpreted as the absence of such safeguards or protection, and not only in the generalized sense.

There is plenty of evidence that one possible meaning of *frið* was the general "peace" and also that one possible range for *unfrið* was hostility. But equally there is plenty of evidence for *frið* as peace limited by time or space. The heading *Be ciricene frið* in Alfred's laws (Liebermann 1903-6, I 51) and the subsequent provisions deal with *frið* in specialized legal circumstances. I turn now to some of the *Chronicle* usage in the pre-1000 period before the word *grið* had begun to infiltrate the records. There are a handy group of entries in the annals for the first half of the tenth century. In 903 (or 4 or 5 depending on the manuscript, see Whitelock 1961, 59, note 11) Æthelwold seduced the East Anglians into *unfrið*. Whitelock translates "to break the peace", Garmonsway "to begin hostilities". In the Parker text for 911 the *here bræc . . . þone frið, ond forsawon ælc frið* which King Edward and his *witan* offered them. In other manuscripts (ASC, I 96-7 and note 6) they *forsawon ælc riht*. Garmonsway translates the Parker text as "the host . . . broke the truce, and rejecting with scorn whatever peace . . ." and translates *ælc riht* as "whatever fair terms". Whitelock has "broke the peace and scorned every privilege". It is self-evident that *ælc frið* must refer to various offers of varying sets of terms.

In the annal for 921 referred to earlier where the *here* wished to *friðian* all that the king wished to *friðian* the translators varied in their interpretation between the ideas of protection and of keeping the peace. The implications must be — as in the Law of Æthelred which I discuss below — that if a man has *frið*, whether legal rights, safe-conduct, protection or peace in a number of specified ways in King Edward's areas of direct control, then he enjoys the same range of rights and privileges in areas under the *here*'s control, and vice versa. The *here* swore *anness* which Garmonsway translates

“union” and Whitelock “agreement”. Its literal meaning is “oneness”. As anyone present at the time might have observed: “Þat mon verða satt, es vér slítum í sundr lugin, at vér monum slíta ok friðinn” (*Íslendingabók, Landnámabók* 1968, 17).

Obviously the possible limitations of *frið* can be partially determined by the range of its grammatical contexts. Where it is controlled by adjectives or demonstratives it must be specific not general. *Ælc frið* is one example only of a whole range of references to what can be done under this *frið* or that *frið* in both *Chronicle* and law. A common link is with verbs of travelling and the preposition *mid*, which suggests that the Anglo-Saxons wisely thought of the word in these contexts as defining the actual safeguards or protection under which they journeyed, rather than the vague and general idea of going in peace. I doubt whether they would have subscribed to the notion that to travel hopefully is better than to arrive. Byrhtnoð in *The Battle of Maldon* (1937, 54) does not pray that his soul may have peace in heaven, he asks that it may be permitted to travel there in safety — *mid friðe ferian* — and without the devils getting at it on the way. It is obviously the same suggestion of a *frið* limited by time and place that Gunnhildr claims Egill Skallagrímsson is asking. Arinbjörn suggests Egill should have *frest ok fararleyfi um viku sakar*. Gunnhildr defines this as permission for Egill to ride *viku í brott í friði* (*Egils saga* 1933, 184).

The idea of a *frið* limited in place is clearest of all in the compounds. Geographical limitation is the distinguishing feature of a *friðstow*, *friðstol*, *friðsplott*, *friðgeard*, *friðhus* etc. The difficulties of precise semantic analysis are neatly illustrated by the different occurrences of *friðgeard*. It occurs in the *Law of the Northumbrian priests*, 54 (Liebermann 1903-6, I 383; trans. Whitelock 1968, 438):

Gif friðgeard sy on hwæs lande abuton stan oððe treow oððe wille oððe swilces ænigge fleard, þonne gilde se ðe hit worhte lahsliht, healf Criste healf landrican.

If there is on anyone's land a sanctuary round a stone or a tree or a well or any such nonsense, he who made it is then to pay *lahslit*, half to Christ and half to the lord of the estate.

It is self-evident that *friðgeard* here is used of some kind of pagan sanctuary or at any rate that the creation of one was regarded as an anti-Christian superstition, and the practice was frowned on by the church. The word itself however has no such overtones, for the poet of *Christ* (ASPR, line 399) can use it of the courts of heaven. Such a degree of difference between legal usage and poetic

usage is confusing. To the compiler of the law a *fridgeard* is a small precise area, to the poet an image of eternity. The law takes it for granted not only that everyone knows the nature and function of the kind of *fridgeard* against which such legislation is formulated, but also that everyone knows such a *frid* and *fridgeard* are from the Christian point of view reprehensible. But when the poet uses the word it has become associated with that general concept of "heavenly peace" which so many people assure us is the normal range of the word. I find it more difficult to decide which is normal and which is aberrant, and I turn my attention now to *unfrið*.

In that well-known passage in the Old English *Orosius* (Orosius 1980, 14) describing the voyages of Ohthere we have a description of Ohthere coming round the North Cape and on into the White Sea area until there was a great river *up in on þæt land*. Alan Binns (1961, 49) and others have plausibly identified this as the Varzuga. Up to this point Ohthere has been describing his voyage in the first person singular, which is to say that the scribe has written *he for, he cwæð* etc. In a sentence containing his first use of the plural pronoun he claims that they turned to the river because they did not dare to sail on past it *for unfriðe* "because of *unfrið*" since the land was fully settled on the far side. The implication is that this is the first proper settlement site the travellers have encountered in their voyaging as distinct from the temporary camps of the *Finnas*.

For unfriðe is normally translated "for fear of hostility". Hakluyt (1598, 4), using Laurence Nowell's translation, prints "for feare of the inhabitants of the land". John Spelman's Latin text (1678, 205) similarly offers *metu incolarum*. Barrington (1773, 11) translates "on account of the inhabitants being hostile". In no recent publication on the text has this translation, as far as I know, been challenged.

It is not however a translation which makes very much sense. It remains unclear why Ohthere, seeing the land inhabited on the far side of the river should have judged himself so much less vulnerable to hostile attack by turning into the river rather than sailing on beyond its estuary. The prudent course if his fears were of this kind would have been to turn back instantly, and indeed the Hakluyt translation assumes, with logic on its side, that this is what he did: "At the entrie of which river he stayed his course, and in conclusion turned backe again, for he durst not enter thereinto for feare of the inhabitants of the land."

In the second place it is obvious from the subsequent text that

Othere remained in the area long enough to get on friendly terms with these people, to ascertain the name of the tribe, and to listen while they told him *fela spella* "many stories". It seems faintly surprising that a man should admit to fears of hostility in one breath and acknowledge in the next that he stayed around long enough to get on chatting terms with the putative enemy. Ross's monograph (1981, 19, note 26) contemplates the problem:

There is a discrepancy here: Othere did not dare to set foot on the territory of the Beormas and yet "they told him many tales." The most probable solution would appear to be that Othere landed at an up-river settlement of Terfinnas on their frontier with the Beormas to which, doubtless for reasons of trade the latter were in the habit of coming peacefully.

What Othere knows about the *Beormas* is the name of the tribe and the many stories which either he did not tell Alfred or Alfred and his scribes did not consider worth recording because "he did not know how much was truth, since he had not observed for himself". This is an excellent comment on the scholarly approach of either Othere or his interrogators to the nature of the evidence. He has had time to observe enough about the *Beormas* and the *Finnas* to comment on the similarity of their languages. He went there most of all for the walruses, which suggests that he was hoping to establish some kind of hunting or fishing or trading rights in the area. The *Beormas* may well have been expected to be hostile if foreigners were interfering with the ivory trade, and any normal merchant venturers must have been expecting to establish some agreement in the matter, rather than risk being driven off as poachers.

It is not possible to establish how far Othere and Alfred would have probed what either of them meant by the concepts of *frið/friðr* and *unfrið/ófriðr*, though Alfred's career suggests he would have had ample opportunity to worry about how far Norse and English terms were synonymous here. We do know that Alfred was sensitive to the problems of translation and nuances of language. We can also tell from the text of Othere's voyage as we have it that we are being given one side of a question and answer dialogue. The abrupt transitions from point to point suggest the occurrence of an untranscribed question. The dialogue that occurred at the point under discussion was probably on the lines of: "Why didn't you go further?" answered by: "We couldn't because we didn't have *frið*", rather than: "We were afraid the natives might be hostile".

There are in Old Norse a number of helpful occurrences of

the compound *friðland*. When the hero of *Gunnlaugs saga* (*Borgfirðinga sögur* 1938, 78) gets on bad terms with Jarl Eiríkr of Norway but subsequently composes an elegant poem of praise about him, the jarl lets word go round that Gunnlaugr would *friðland hafa í hans ríki*. When in *Egils saga* (1933, 120) the brothers Þórólfr and Egill arrive in Halland the jarl there sends a message to discover whether they wanted *þar friðland hafa eða hernað*. Two brothers in *Sturlunga saga* (1878, 3) intending to give up Viking raids and settle in Norway *æluðu hafa þar friðland*, but the king has other ideas. It is clear that from the viewpoint of the average Viking to have *friðr* or *friðland* in a given place was largely a matter of personal relationships, not a matter of whether two countries were at war. This is not to say that *ófriðr* could not be used of a state of war. It obviously was so used. A state of war between two countries might also affect the individual *friðr* arrangements of merchants. But that there were such individual arrangements seems indisputable. When Egill after being outlawed from Norway observes ironically that things look *heldr ófriðvænt fyrir í flestum stöðum* (*Egils saga* 1933, 166) he means quite literally that there isn't much expectation of *friðr*, not that the outlook is generally hostile. It is a typical and witty understatement.

It is I think a reasonable possibility that Ohthere would have thought in terms of personal *frið*, and it remains to be considered whether his Anglo-Saxon audience would have understood the term in this sense. The most complex and intensive use of *frið* and *unfrið* compounds occurs in Æthelred II, the law of 991 commonly called his treaty with the Vikings (Liebermann 1903-6, I 220-4; trans. Whitelock 1968, 401-2). It was obviously of maximum importance that all the *frið* references should be comprehensible to both sides. I note in passing that *grið* is not used here, though it is in Æthelred's later laws.

From this document, though somewhat hampered by *Quadripartitus* the twelfth-century Latin translation printed by Liebermann as a parallel text, we can endeavour to puzzle out distinctions between various kinds of *frið*. We shall not, however, get very far if we assume as *Quadripartitus* does that whatever is *unfrið* is *inimicus*. Æthelred II, 2 reads:

and ælc ceapscip frið hæbbe, ðe binnan muðan cuman, ðeh hit unfriðscyp sy, gyf hit undrifen bið.

A merchant ship that is to have *frið* even though it happens to be an *unfriðscip* cannot possibly be the *navis inimicorum* "ship of

enemies” that *Quadripartitus* calls it. Whitelock’s lengthy phrase “belonging to a region outside this truce” is closer. Æthelred II, 3, 1 reads:

Gyf Æðelredes cynges friðman cume on unfriðland, and se here ðærto cume, hæbbe frið his scip and ealle his æhta.

The bafflement of *Quadripartitus* is demonstrated by his Latinization, but his explanation must still be erroneous:

Si regis Æþelredi friðmannus ueniat in unfriðland (id est in hostilem terram) . .

The implications are clearly not that the country is in general hostile, but that it is outside the area of agreement, and that a *friðman* retains his personal *frið* status regardless of the *frið* status of the locality. This is the only occurrence in English of the compound *friðland* in positive or negative form, although it is so common in Old Norse, but it seems unlikely that it was newly coined or borrowed for the occasion. A law can hardly be convincing if it relies heavily on unfamiliar phraseology, and though most of the *frið* compounds in this law occur only here, it seems probable that they were conveying familiar concepts to both parties involved. It is self-evident that whether a man, a ship or a district are referred to as *frið*- or *unfrið*- here has nothing to do with whether they are friendly or hostile, but depends entirely on whether they are covered by the appropriate section of the *frið* agreement, a situation which fits with other uses of *frið* and its compounds in both Old Norse and Old English.

The phrase *for unfriðe* is recorded twice only in Old English, once in the passage from Ohthere under discussion, and once in the *Law of the Northumbrian priests* (Liebermann 1903-6, I 383; trans. Whitelock 1968, 438), a text relating to an area and period of intensive Viking settlement. Part of the provision under section 56 reads:

and for unfriðe man mot freolsæfenan nide fulfaran betweenan Eferwic and six mila gemete.

Whitelock translates:

and in case of hostility one may travel because of necessity between York and a distance of six miles on the eve of festivals.

Bosworth-Toller offer the translation “on account of hostilities” for the two occurrences, though there are other phrases in which *unfrið* clearly must be rendered “outside the *frið* area”. In Æthelred II, section 6 an *ealdordom* is *on unfriðe*. *Quadripartitus* translates as *preter pacem* and Whitelock as “excluded from the truce”.

I am not clear why there should be a special provision for anyone to put a distance of six miles between himself and York on the eve of festivals in case of hostility, but the law in question needs to be probed very much more fully on several counts. In the first place as translated the phrases "in case of hostility" and "because of necessity" seem to me to be tautologous, and most laws are more noted for their elliptical nature than for over-anxious explanation. In the second place though the compound *freolsæfen* may be perfectly clear, it does not occur elsewhere, and neither, more importantly, does the verb *fulfaran*. Whitelock's translation assumes the ordinary verb *faran*. In the third place though *nide* might mean "because of necessity" the previous clause has the phrase *for neode* which is translated in the same way. One must ask oneself also whether the provision of the law here is for the protection of York from undesirables, or for the protection of the individual who finds himself in York on a festival eve in some kind of unfavourable circumstances.

Fulfaran must mean something other than "to travel" and the prefix *ful* usually implies a sense of completion or achievement. A possible meaning of *nide* is "from force", "under compulsion", and the compound *nidfara* means "one who journeys under compulsion"; there are also many other compounds where the first element *nid* has the same sense. It is possible that this law means "if a man does not have *frið* he may on the eve of festivals be forced to go right out of York for a distance of up to six miles". I am still not clear why such a provision should be made though various possibilities suggest themselves, but whatever the implications of the law or whoever it is designed to protect its relation is not and cannot be to a vague "in case of hostilities". It must relate to provision for a character not covered by the appropriate *frið* in the appropriate time and place.

It might be argued that legal language has little bearing on a continuous prose narrative such as Ohthere's voyage, but legal terminology may best suit the situation Ohthere was trying to make explicit. I think he stayed outside the territorial waters of the *Beormas* not "for fear of hostility" but as a matter of diplomatic courtesy because he did not have a *frið* agreement with them. For a merchant such courtesy would be normal prudence. Beowulf in the poem of that name (1950, lines 245-6) did not need to observe such courtesies. With all the panache of a hero he comes straight into Danish waters and disembarks. It seems however to take the coastguard by surprise:

ge leafnesword
guðfremmendra gearwe ne wisson.

A colloquial translation might be “you do not have *frið* here”. The comment indicates that such rashness ought not to be held typical of sailors like Ohthere voyaging in foreign waters.

Notes

¹ The problems of dating the annals are not relevant to my discussion, and all references to entries in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* are to the year as given in ASC.

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REVIEWS

INTRODUKTION TIL SAXO. By ANKER TEILGÅRD LAUGESSEN. *Gyldendal*. Copenhagen, 1972. 90 pp.

SAXOSTUDIER. Edited by IVAN BOSERUP. *Opuscula Græcolatina (Tillæg til Museum Tusculanum) Nr. 2. Museum Tusculanum*. København, 1975. 200 pp. + 8 plates.

SAXO GRAMMATICUS. A MEDIEVAL AUTHOR BETWEEN NORSE AND LATIN CULTURE. Edited by KARSTEN FRIIS-JENSEN. *Danish medieval history & Saxo Grammaticus. A symposium held in celebration of the 500th anniversary of the University of Copenhagen, volume II. Museum Tusculanum Press*. Copenhagen, 1981. 173 pp.

SAXO GRAMMATICUS. KOMPOSITION OCH VÄRLDSBILD I GESTA DANORUM. By KURT JOHANNESSEN. *Lychnos-Bibliotek. Studier och källskrifter utgivna av Lärdoms-historiska Samfundet, 31. Almqvist & Wiksell International*. Stockholm, 1978. 348 pp.

KVINNOR OCH MÄN I GESTA DANORUM. By BIRGIT STRAND. *Kvinnohistoriskt arkiv nr 18. Kompendiet*. Lindome, 1980. [viii]+365 pp.

SAXO GRAMMATICUS. THE HISTORY OF THE DANES. BOOKS I-IX. Edited and translated by HILDA ELLIS DAVIDSON and PETER FISHER. *D. S. Brewer. Rowman and Littlefield*. Cambridge [U.K.] and Totowa, New Jersey, U.S.A., 1979 and 1980. Volume I: English text, translated by Peter Fisher, edited by Hilda Ellis Davidson, vi+297 pp.; volume II: Commentary by Hilda Ellis Davidson and Peter Fisher, xiv+209 pp.

SAXO GRAMMATICUS: DANORUM REGUM HEROUMQUE HISTORIA, BOOKS X-XVI. THE TEXT OF THE FIRST EDITION WITH TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY IN THREE VOLUMES. Edited and translated by ERIC CHRISTIANSEN. *BAR International Series 84, 118(i) and 118(ii)*. B.A.R. Oxford, 1980-1981. xx+961 pp.

Teilgård Laugesen's little book has four short chapters on Saxo's forerunners, his identity, his characteristics as a stylist and as a narrative artist, which introduce a more substantial Chapter 5 on Saxo the historian. He follows this with further brief sections on Saxo's work in the manuscript age and in the age of printing and on 'Saxo problems', concluding with a bibliography and a succinctly annotated index of the medieval authors and works cited in his discussion. He writes smoothly and quotes copiously (using Winkel Horn's translation). He is well read in the medieval historians and, as well as an introduction to Saxo, his work will serve to give a student beginner a clear idea of some major viewpoints and conventions of early authors. He begins his short survey of 'Saxo problems' by referring to a series of colloquys held in Copenhagen in the winter 1969-70, and he singles out those fields which need especial attention because of neglect or inadequate research or controversy: criticism of the 'standard' edition by Olrik and Raeder, the sources of Saxo's 'legendary' material, appreciation of Saxo's artistry, identification of his foreign connections and of native elements, written or oral, an analysis of his political and religious attitudes, and possible reflections of contemporary society — these last items in particular require an exhaustive study of the semantics of Saxo's Latin. He notes two major tendencies in recent approaches to Saxo: there is an effort to bring him out of his Nordic isolation and find him a place in a twelfth-

century European world of letters and ideas; and there is greater willingness than hitherto to credit him with a free and creative part in shaping his Danish history. It is encouraging to find that a decade has seen some advance on most fronts.

Someone took thought to record the 1969-70 colloquys and they were published in 1975 in connection with a Saxo exhibition in the Royal Library, Copenhagen. The papers fall into three groups: on genre, date and transmission; on language, style and models; and on attitude, methods and source value. A major problem faced in papers in the first set is how and where to place Saxo in a Latin tradition: was his ornate and complex Latin an individual accomplishment or was there a Danish school and audience that thrived on such opulence? Professor Franz Blatt, author of the admirable glossary accompanying the Olrik-Raeder edition, takes us some way to an answer against a Carolingian and twelfth-century background; while Inge Skovgaard Pedersen is interested in defining the genre to which *Gesta Danorum* properly belongs — as happens with *genre* enthusiasts, the categorization is in danger of becoming a Procrustean bed.

Of the papers in the second set, the one by Kr. Hald on names in Saxo is of most interest to the student of West Norse, chiefly because of the fresh attention he pays to the Brávellir catalogue of warriors. He follows Seip in thinking Saxo must have had a written source from Southeast Norway, but instead of Tønsberg suggests Bohuslän — ancient Østfold — as its place of origin and specifically Konungahella as the centre from which it travelled to Saxo in Denmark and the author of *Sogubrot* in Iceland. Hald's views are opposed by Stefán Karlsson, who agrees with conclusions reached by Bjarni Guðnason in a paper in *Skirnir* 132 (1958), 82-128. Seip's linguistic evidence from Norwegian sources is extremely sparse and of much later date than the putative date of the written *pula* (1100-1150?); there is a better case to be made for Icelandic origin because of the Icelandic personal and place-names in Saxo's list, because the linguistic and palaeographic phenomena can be explained in Icelandic terms, and because use of an Icelandic text can be reconciled with what Saxo says about his sources and with what we know of early Norwegian literary history. (Bjarni Guðnason has continued his studies in Saxo's relations with Icelandic sources, notably in 'Saxo och Eiríksdrápa', *Nordiska studier i filologi och lingvistik. Festskrift tillägnad Gösta Holm*, 1976, 127-37, and *Fyrsta sagan*, 1978. In the former he argues that Saxo knew the *Eiríksdrápa* by Markús Skeggjason, who died in 1107, and follows Magnus Olsen in thinking that the poem probably accompanied Jón Qgmundarson on his visit to Lund in 1106 to be consecrated first bishop of Hólar. In the latter he makes a case for believing that Saxo knew Eiríkr Oddsson's *Hryggjarstykki*.)

In the third set of papers is one of particular interest by Niels Skyum-Nielsen. He considers *Gesta Danorum* as a source of information about slavery and the *hird* as institutions in Saxo's contemporary world. He decides that with due critical care Saxo can be utilized by the historian — and if he can be, he should be. He points out that Saxo's information about the military *leding* is certainly of value and demands further study. This paper caused more discussion than any other at the symposium because it led to some fresh evaluation of the critical work of the Weibulls. Their general conclusion — though they did not always abide by it quite strictly — was that as a narrative historian Saxo should be disregarded completely. In Skyum-Nielsen's opinion, acutely maintained, Saxo's later books can be critically treated not merely as a 'relic', a high-and-dry monument, but as a narrative source. This conclusion is obviously of encouraging significance for people interested in social and institutional history.

In 1979 another symposium was held in Copenhagen, in connection with the five-hundredth anniversary of the University, this time with international participation. The papers, published in 1981, pay much more attention to Saxo's vernacular sources and the West Norse dimension. Bjarni Guðnason briefly draws together his arguments about Saxo's Icelandic sources; Joaquín Martínez-Pizarro (publishing a paper he gave at the Munich Saga Conference also in 1979) attempts to show that behind Saxo's account of Ericus disertus in Book V is a lost *Eiríks þáttur málsþaka*; Birgit Strand compares Saxo's and Snorri's treatment of Sigríðr in stórráða (where Snorri comes out rather well from the point of view of a humane student of *kvinnohistoria*); and Hilda Ellis Davidson argues that 'wit and eloquence in the courts of Saxo's early kings' can be traced in large part to vernacular models and to native appreciation of 'the craft of the spoken word and of verbal games and contests'. On a different line is a well-written and persuasive approach to 'the place of fiction' in Saxo's later books by Eric Christiansen. It can be taken as an oblique but constructive comment on Kurt Johannesson's book discussed below. He concludes:

Rather than starting from concepts, and working through the various literary devices towards an exposition of those concepts in history, I see him beginning with a collection of narratives and then refashioning them in the way that would evoke the greatest number of intellectual repercussions. It was here that the art of history and the art of fiction converged; in the diffraction rather than in the deliberate perversion of the data.

We perhaps do well always to bear in mind the length of time — twenty or thirty years? — that Saxo worked on the *Gesta Danorum* and the evidence we have of his continuing revision to give it 'the most accomplished and sophisticated form', as demonstrated by Ivan Boserup in his paper on the Angers fragment in this symposium volume. Saxo's stature as a poet is also becoming better appreciated — see the paper here on 'The Lay of Ingellus and its classical models' by Karsten Friis-Jensen, who ably argues that the classical elements in Saxo's verse must be clearly distinguished before we proceed, with Orlík, to analyse the vernacular poetry Saxo built on. The varying depth of Saxo's intentions and the discrepancies in the views he appears to express from time to time may be related to his poetic talent and to his stylistic opportunism.

Saxo's intentions are rated very deep indeed by Kurt Johannesson in his book of 1978 (a short guide to his thinking may be found in his paper on 'Order in *Gesta Danorum* and order in the Creation' in the 1981 symposium volume). He maintains that Saxo's work is to be read not only as an anthem to Danish glory, a mirror for princes, a guide to Latin verse-making, an *ars militaris* — and so on — but at profounder levels still. He finds his narrative, especially in the first half, permeated with symbol and allegory related to Christian-Platonic ideas of chaos and order, of inchoate matter and informing spirit; the cardinal virtues dictate the organization of the books; and theories of number, astrology and, above all, grammar — from elementary significances through two-faced dialectic to queenly rhetoric — are constantly and secretly at play behind the colourful descriptions and dramatic events. Once the lid of such a box is opened, there is small hope of shutting it again — the ideas will buzz about — but unfortunately, in spite of frequent use of 'perhaps' and 'possibly', there is not always clear distinction made in the discussion between interpretations that are necessary, those that are probable, those that are plausible, and those that are conceivable. The first chapter, and the longest, is 'ett försök at teckna en helhetsbild av Saxos språk, hans estestiska ideal och

kompositionen i *Gesta Danorum*', but here we are faced by assertions based on *a priori* grounds — or quicksands — which would have more influence if they were, or could be, presented as conclusions flowing from a cool analysis of the text. The last chapter, and the shortest, deals admirably with the date of *Gesta Danorum*, its ideology and background, and gives Saxo a *persona* and a milieu. Something on these lines might have made a better introduction to the book, preceding or changing places with the present Chapter 1, though it would still be necessary to find more evidence than is at present available to sustain Kurt Johannesson's general thesis. We should like to know who could possibly have shared the arcane nods and winks of the profound and subtle allegorist Saxo is supposed to have been. Saxo is commonly and blatantly sententious — why then should he be so unlike himself, and certainly unlike other major medieval allegorists, philological or theological, in not helping the reader to discern his deeper purposes? In this connection it may be said in passing how desirable it would be to have a new issue and fresh studies of Anders Sunesen's *Hexaemeron* — the only other major Latin work which can give us an inkling of Danish intellectual interests and standards in Saxo's time. We may believe that the Archbishop appreciated *Gesta Danorum*; that he did so because he found what Kurt Johannesson finds in it seems less likely.

In spite of the crippling doubts one may have about Kurt Johannesson's interpretation, his book remains an impressive contribution. It is lucidly and engagingly written and reveals genuine delight in Saxo's creative powers and Latin command. Without comprehending Saxo's art, we are never likely to succeed in discerning where his emphases lay and what his relations with a contemporary audience were, and Kurt Johannesson has brought Saxo the poet and stylist, Saxo the superb *grammaticus*, to the forefront of our attention.

Birgit Strand's book is of a very different kind. It is built on an elaborate and schematic analysis of the characterization and function of the women in *Gesta Danorum*. There are introductory chapters on Saxo studies, Saxo and his contemporary world, the Church's view of women, attitudes to women apparent in 'courtly' literature, *fabliaux* and Icelandic sagas, and the portrayal of women by medieval historians, including Sven Aggesen and Snorri. After the presentation of the substantial material from *Gesta Danorum*, Saxo's treatment is compared with that found in older and contemporary literature, followed by final chapters on Saxo's purposes, his description of individuals, his attitudes to his work and the process of composition. There is a good English summary on pp. 349-58. (Her paper in the 1981 symposium volume will also serve to show the lines of her study.) Among numerous points of interest that emerge we may note that in Saxo's episodes a woman abducted or seduced does not suffer in personal value but her family is injured — which is in keeping with the general attitude found in other Nordic legal and narrative sources; and that the shadowy, passive lady of courtly ideal is hardly to be seen in his pages. As we might expect, we learn nothing about the real existence of Danish women in Saxo's lifetime, but we do learn about current attitudes to women: they were by nature inferior to men and in the order of things subordinate to their families, represented of course by fathers, husbands and guardians. How narrowly confined these attitudes were to the upper reaches of society and the clerisy is hard to say. Snorri and the authors of *Íslendingasögur* move in a world where differentiation between the sexes was less marked: perhaps members of the Danish 'middle classes' were in much the same state? Some insight into the theme of the correlation between the sexes might have come from further consideration of Saxo's masculine failures. How far can it be said that Saxo's good

women resemble typical men, while his bad men resemble typical women, or is there an individual residue in either sex?

We may give an unreserved welcome to the new translations of Saxo now available. Peter Fisher gives a review of his practice as a translator in the 1981 symposium volume and reading this in conjunction with the translation we can see that his felicitous style and fastidious accuracy result from a superior command of English, a keen ear and a high regard for Saxo's Latinity rather than from the application of any mechanical theory. The English version reads consistently well. Each Book is helpfully introduced by a short description which keeps the reader in easy touch with the progress and divagations of the narrative to come. In the companion volume Dr. Ellis Davidson gives a short and lucid review of Saxo scholarship — up to Kurt Johannesson's book — and 150 pages of commentary, followed by generous bibliography and indexes, with a final index of 'subjects' — from 'actors' to 'wounds' — not the least useful among them. A novel explanation of *svínfylking* (see pp. 36-7, 120-3, 130) is particularly interesting, and there is ample other reference to Norse-Icelandic matter. The use of vernacular sources is inevitably eclectic and the unwary reader may get the impression that these are more contemporary and homogeneous than they actually are — as if they were not the variegated fruits of over half a millennium of literary history. (An undifferentiated view of Icelandic sources is sometimes betrayed by Danish medieval historians too.) There are also examples of speculative interpretation where folklorist enthusiasm is not adequately tempered by philological or historical caution.

Eric Christiansen's translation of Books X-XVI, with extensive commentary, is a massive achievement. It deserves better proof-reading and presentation than it has in these three volumes, but it is certainly far better to have it in this form than not at all. They are in folio and he solves the problems posed by the acknowledged inadequacies of the Olrik-Raeder edition by reproducing in facsimile the text of the *editio princeps* of 1514 (from a Bodley copy), with each page of this surrounded by his translation. One has to make one's own minor emendations to the Latin as one goes along, but for convenience of reference the plan could not be bettered. The general comment is erudite, sensible and incisive, informative on all manner of subjects — see, for example, the note relating to Erik Ejegod's pilgrimage in Book XII or the notes on Wendish paganism that go with the description of the capture of Arkona in Book XIV. The aids to the reader are complemented by genealogical tables, maps and indexes, not beautifully prepared but serving their purpose. The separate introductions to each book are typically divided into sections on content, construction and style, sources and, where appropriate, chronology. The most elaborate are those before Books X and XIV, in each case serving to a large extent as general forewords to the following books as well as to the immediate one. The student with literary and West Norse interests will learn most from the sections on structure, style and sources. Eric Christiansen uses the twelve varieties of composition described by Priscian as guidelines: his economic analysis of Book X shows, for example, that it is a sequence of narratives interspersed by anecdote, both 'enlivened or weighted by *sententiæ*, commonplace, comparison, eulogy, description, *quæstiones civiles* and, in one case, legislation' (p. 148). He distinguishes surviving written sources, lost written sources (used directly or through an intermediary) and oral information. Of putative West Norse texts in the second group he says that 'they may have contained the same stories that Saxo used, but there is no reason to suppose that he read them' (p. 220). His conclusion on Markús Skeggjason's *Eiríksdrápa* differs from Bjarni Guðnason's: 'I have been unable to

deduce from Saxo's text that he had any direct acquaintance with the *drápa* (p. 261). He suggests instead that the poem may have influenced traditions about Erik Ejegod — but it was these traditions and not the poem itself that Saxo knew. Book XIV is more closely examined because 'its range of topics is so wide that it offers an exemplar of most of the author's characteristic prose mannerisms' (p. 687), and so he provides a skilful analysis of categories of composition, patterns of argument and patterns of diction, ending with a brief and necessarily inconclusive discussion of what signs may be found of oral style, the spoken word. Here he looks especially at jokes and witticisms, a subject which Dr. Ellis Davidson has tried to elaborate with reference to Saxo's early books in the symposium paper noted above.

Altogether Eric Christiansen's work provides an invaluable tool for the historian and no less for the general medievalist and the student of Norse-Icelandic literature. If perhaps in ten years' time we could have it in a revised, updated and properly produced version, there is every prospect that it would then sit authoritatively on our shelves for generations. I say 'updated' because we can reasonably expect that the Saxo 'industry' is not going to stand still, and it is particularly to be hoped that efforts will be doubly bent to studies that will produce an improved consensus on a number of issues, not least those to do with the nature of Saxo's vernacular sources, Danish, Norwegian, Icelandic. Advance in this field will need fresh and rigorous study of Icelandic *foraldarsögur*. There is plenty to do.

PETER FOOTE

SPECVLVM NORROENVM. NORSE STUDIES IN MEMORY OF GABRIEL TURVILLE-PETRE. Edited by URSULA DRONKE, GUÐRÚN P. HELGADÓTTIR, GERD WOLFGANG WEBER and HANS BEKKER-NIELSEN. *Odense University Press*. Odense, 1981. 509 pp.

This memorial volume contains essays touching on most of the many aspects of Old Icelandic studies to which Gabriel Turville-Petre made a contribution. Although it is not possible to discuss all of the thirty-two articles in the *Festschrift* here, even a selective survey of the contents suggests something of the range and substance of the book. Discussions of poetry account for the lion's share of the essays. Theodore Andersson argues that the gap in *Codex Regius* was filled with one 'long lay of Sigurðr', a revision of older tales adapted from Germanic tradition. Jakob Benediktsson calls into question the early dating of *Hafgerðingadrápa* (and of the metre *hrynhenda*). An annotated text of Sigvatr Þórðarson's fifteen *Vikingarvísur* is presented by Christine Fell. Roberta Frank suggests that Snorri's account of the origin of the poetic mead is based on misinterpretations of five kennings, and typifies the readiness of thirteenth-century mythographers to find mythological allusions in early poetry. And Klaus von See presents further arguments in support of his theory that the tradition that Þormóðr Bersason recited *Bjarkamál in fornu* at Stiklastaðir is modelled on William of Malmesbury's reference to the singing of *La Chanson de Roland* at the Battle of Hastings. Other essays on poetry include Hans Kuhn's study of the use of internal rhyme in some skaldic stanzas of the late tenth century, Jonna Louis-Jensen's re-examination of the verse *Yqndr er Mária mynduð* in Óláfr Þórðarson's *Málskrúðsfræði*, Bridget Gordon Mackenzie's discussion of possible Irish influence on skaldic verse, and Folke Ström's treatment of the political background of panegyrics composed in honour of Jarl Hákon. The volume includes several studies of mythology. David

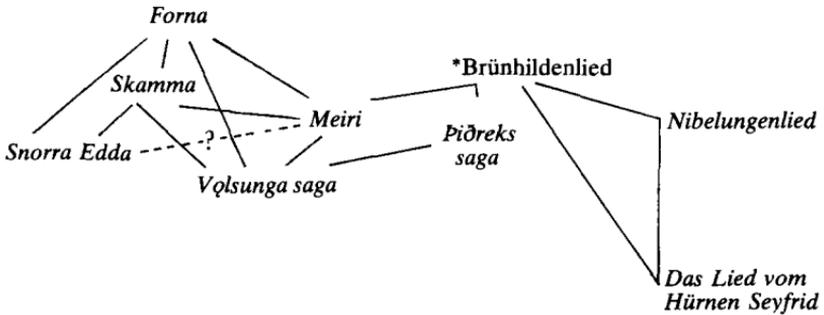
A. H. Evans argues convincingly that King Agni and his wife Skjálf, mentioned in *Ynglingatal*, v. 10, were legendary figures engendered by folk-etymologies for certain Swedish place-names. John Stanley Martin looks at some parallel myths of a primordial being whose body provides material for the creation of the world. (He compares Snorri's story of Ymir with the Iranian *Pahlaví Riváyat*, but does not mention the more obvious parallel with the medieval Latin tradition of the 'eight parts of Adam'.) Kurt Schier suggests that the eschatological emphasis in Snorri's *Prose Edda* is determined by his use of tenth-century verses of the heathen skalds of Hlaðir, whose treatment of mythological themes reflects a reaction to Christian millenarianism. Saga studies are introduced by Michael Chesnutt's treatment of the last four chapters of *Orkneyinga saga*, which he reads as a coherent, though consciously selective account of King William the Lion's attempt to usurp Earl Haraldr Maddaðarson's dominion in north-eastern Scotland. Ursula Dronke examines some apparent reminiscences of *Rígsþúla* in *Víga-Glúms saga* and in a skaldic verse preserved in *Bjarnar saga Hítðælakappa* and *Eyrbyggja saga*. R. G. Finch, 'Atlakviða, Atlamál, and *Völsunga saga*: A study in combination and integration', compares the narratives of all three works in order to demonstrate how the author of *Völsunga saga* incorporates most of the variant themes of the poems into his work without detracting from its artistic unity. (The darker side of 'combination and integration' is manifested in Finch's own unfortunate habit of combining several sentences into one grotesque whole, e.g.: 124¹⁶⁻³¹, 125²¹⁻¹²⁶³, 133²⁶⁻¹³⁴⁴, 134¹⁰⁻²⁵, 135³⁸⁻¹³⁶¹⁴.) Peter Foote investigates the learned background of an episode in *Guðmundar saga Arasonar* and *Prestssaga Guðmundar* in which a crew seeks to save themselves from shipwreck by invoking the highest name of God. And Gerd Weber demonstrates how certain commonplace characteristics of heroic figures in the *fornaldarsögur* — particularly their disdain for heathen religious practices (the 'Josaphat topos') and their faith in their own 'might and main' (the 'fortitudo topos') reflect the deliberate idealization by Christian authors of heroes of the pre-Christian period. In an intrepid but ultimately unconvincing paper, Dietrich Hofmann attempts to defend the authenticity of the attribution of *Yngvars saga víðfjara* to Oddr Snorrason in the colophon found in the principal manuscripts of the work (both from the fifteenth century). Perhaps Hofmann's most astounding suggestion is that Snorri's account in *Ynglinga saga* of the *margs konar þjóðir ok margar tungur* of *Svíþjóð in mikla* recalls the many references to foreign languages in *Yngvars saga* and indicates that Snorri 'dürfte [die *Yngvars saga*] schon in seiner Jugend in Oddi kennengelernt haben' (221). Yngvar's schooling in foreign tongues is a *Bildungstopos* also found in other late sagas (e.g. *Qrvar Odds saga*, c. 2; *Konráðs saga*, c. 1), and it seems far more likely that the references to *margar tungur* in both *Ynglinga s.* and *Yngvars s.* are simply meant to suggest the 'barbarousness' of the places described — the home of many of the 'tongues and nations' dispersed after Babel. Essays on various other aspects of Nordic research include Kristján Eldjárn's study of the 'bronze image from Eyrarland' (which he suggests is not, as is commonly assumed, a figure of Thor, but a gaming-piece from a *hneftafl*), and Sven B. F. Jansson's interesting and well-documented account of the history of a Swedish rune-stone from Torsåker in Gästrikland. Ludvig Holm-Olsen argues that the Prologue to *Konungs skuggsiá* is not an integral part of that work, but a later addition by an Icelandic author. This interesting paper is marred by a few unfortunate errors. Due to a confusion of 'D.' = 'Datierung' with 'd.' = 'død'/'defunctus', most of the dates of medieval *specula* drawn from H. Grabes, *Speculum, mirror und looking-glass* (1973) are incorrect. The author also repeats

(225) Grabes's mistaken identification of William of Pagula's *Speculum regis* as the work of Simon Islip. More puzzling is Holm-Olsen's inclusion (231-2) of the word *gengiligr* (used in a paraphrase of Matt. 7:15) in a list of relatively young words attested only in the Prologue to *Konungs skuggsiá*. The word is found in Einarr Helgason's *Vellekla* (c. 986), v. 28. (He might also have considered the very similar adjectives *ágengiligr* and *gengr* in paraphrases of Matt. 7:15 in *Barlaams ok Josaphats saga*, ed. M. Rindal, 1981, 60³⁴, 61²⁵). Lars Lönnroth examines the use of the collocation *iqrð/upphiminn* and its cognates in Old English and Old High German, and suggests that the formula is associated with a fixed set of 'cosmic' themes. It is hard, however, to see why Lönnroth assumes that the formula was in use 'among the early Germanic tribes', since all his examples date from the Christian period and most are overtly Christian. (His suggestion, p. 315, that the author of the Old English poetical paraphrase of Ps. 101:26 in the Paris Psalter 'transformed' the plural *cæli* of the Vulgate into a singular *upheofon* 'so as to conform with the previously existing usage' seems remarkably wrong-headed.) Finally, Jónas Kristjánsson presents a critical examination of Marius Nygaard's pioneering article, 'Den lærde stil i den norrøne prosa'. It is regrettable that no other paper in *Specvlvm norroenvm* deals with the early translated prose, a body of literature whose importance Turville-Petre repeatedly emphasized. Nevertheless, the collection remains a fitting tribute to a great scholar.

DAVID and IAN McDOUGALL

THE LEGEND OF BRYNHILD. By THEODORE M. ANDERSSON. *Islandica, XLIII*. Cornell University Press. Ithaca and London, 1980. 270 pp.

'Brynhild is the paramount figure of Germanic legend, but she has been subordinated more often than not to the male object of her passion. Her story is thus normally referred to as the legend of Sigurd or, in German circles, the legend of Siegfried. The title of this book is intended to make the point that the legend sings principally of the woman, not the man,' writes Andersson in his preface. After thus circumspectly casting a sop in the direction of feminism, he soon turns to what must surely be the real substance of the book, a reassessment of the intricate Norse and German traditions which 'have made the Nibelung question into the North European equivalent of the Homeric question'. The complexity of the task of disentangling the various strands of the Brynhild legend and of delineating its genesis and development is indicated by a listing of the texts to be examined. Andersson distinguishes seven texts or groups of texts: (1) a number of poems in the *Poetic Edda* (*Gripisspá*, *Reginismál*, *Fáfnismál*, *Sigrdrífumál*; *Brot af Sigurðarkviðu* [*Sigurðarkviða in forna*], *Sigurðarkviða in skamma*, and the lost *Sigurðarkviða in meiri*; the three 'Lays of Gudrun', *Helreið Brynhildar*, and *Oddrúnargrátr*); (2) *Völsunga saga*, which serves as the primary source for the reconstruction of *Sigurðarkviða in forna* and the lost *Sigurðarkviða in meiri*; (3) *Snorra Edda*; (4) *Piðreks saga*; (5) the German *Nibelungenlied*; (6) the early sixteenth-century *Lied vom Hürnen Seyfrid*; and (7) a group of Faroese ballads, particularly 'Brynhildar tåttur'. The principal texts Andersson believes to be interrelated in the manner shown here (p. 23):



Quellenkritik is somewhat out of fashion as a scholarly endeavour today. The emphasis now is on what extant texts have to say on their own account, and there seems to be a feeling that problems of genesis are incapable of resolution, even if they can be deemed worthy of the literary critic at all. There is also a sense of awe before the monumental schemes devised by great scholars of a past generation which set out to chart the development of the material. Nibelung studies, for instance, have been dominated by the names of men like Hermann Schneider and Andreas Heusler whose views coincided in large measure. Schneider's *Germanische Heldensage* and Heusler's *Nibelungensage und Nibelungenlied*, both written more than half a century ago, have — despite the submission of alternative schemes devised by Georg Baesecke and Dietrich von Kralik — remained influential, finding acceptance by such scholars as Julius Schwietering and Friedrich Neumann. From time to time minor adjustments have been proposed — see for instance Arthur Hatto's scheme in his Penguin translation of the *Nibelungenlied* — but on the whole the established edifices remain virtually unchallenged. Yet how salutary a radical rethink can be is illustrated by Joachim Heinze's reassessment of the transmission of the German Dietrich cycle (*Mittelhochdeutsche Dietrichepik*, 1978), and Andersson's book on Brynhild shows it once again.

Andersson's analysis of the texts is divided into seven chapters: 1. The Eddic Sigurd Poems; 2. Sigurd's Youth; 3. The Sequel to Sigurd's Death; 4. *Piðreks saga*; 5. The Sources of the *Nibelungenlied* part I; 6. The Composition of the *Nibelungenlied* part I; and 7. *Das Lied vom Hürnen Seyfrid*.

The boldest achievement in Ch. 1 is Andersson's attempted reconstruction of the lost *Sigurðarkviða in meiri*, one of the songs of the lacuna in the Codex Regius, which largely has to be done on the basis of *Völsunga saga*. He shows that *Meiri* was probably composed in such a way as to integrate a number of features from the German version of the story: the prior betrothal (suppressed but still detectable in *Piðreks saga* [= *Ps*] and the *Nibelungenlied* [= *Nl*]), the assault on Brynhild's stronghold (*Ps* 168), the falcon dream (*Nl*), Sigurd's military campaign with the Gjukung (cf. *Nl*), the double wedding (*Nl*), and the quarrel in the hall (*Ps*) all look like concessions to the German tradition. In Andersson's view there is an analogy here with the way *Atlamál* represents a recasting of *Atlakviða* to bring it into line with the story as told in Germany. If he is right in his analysis, *Meiri* is revealed to be 'a full-fledged love story' (p. 75) created from heroic tradition and thus the only romance in Iceland sprung from native seed. What a pity it is not preserved!

The most important aspect of Andersson's discussion of the accounts of Sigurd's youthful exploits is his hypothesis that the complex relationship of *Reginismál* and

Fafnismál is best explained by the postulation of three sources. Whereas Heusler had assumed a 'Hortlied' and a 'Vaterrachelied', Andersson believes that in addition there was a variant of the 'Hortlied' in *fornyrðislag* ('Hortlied B', 'Hortlied A' being in *ljóðaháttur*) (pp. 92-4).

Ch. 3 concerns the events following Sigurd's death. Despite the brilliant insights provided by Wolfgang Mohr into the Eddic elegies (in *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum* 75 (1938), 217-80, and 76 (1939), 149-217), the dating of the 'Lays of Gudrun' and their relation to *Skamma* and *Meiri* have remained problematical. Andersson is, however, surely right to follow de Vries in seeing *Guðrúnarkviða* I as dependent upon *Guðrúnarkviða* II. He proposes the following chronology of the poems: *Skamma*, *Meiri*, *Guðrúnarkviða* II, *Guðrúnarkviða* I.

The reassessment of the story as it appears in *Piðreks saga* is important. It is, for instance, interesting to see that when Andersson tabulates the events of Sigurd's youth in *Ps* according to their provenance from Norse or German tradition (p. 140 f.), the late *Lied vom Hürnen Seyfrid* (not attested until ca. 1530) is shown to contain a lot of old material — a matter about which there has been much debate.

Chapters 5 and 6 concerning the *Nibelungenlied* throw interesting new light on the poem. Andersson believes (p. 156) that the early *âventiuren* owe much more to tradition than has previously been thought — though there are here numerous points that will inevitably be taken up in debate. For instance: Can str. 26 really be held to refer to the prior betrothal? Can Siegfried's parents' anxiety over his intention to woo Kriemhild really be something carried over from the traditional perils of Siegfried in his wooing of Brynhild (p. 160)? Is Siegfried's hostility on his arrival at Worms really a reflex of *Ps* 168 and *Oddrúnargrátr* 18? All this will certainly stimulate a renewed debate on *âventiure* 3. Andersson sees a close link between *Meiri* and *Nl* (p. 177), which in itself lends support to Heusler's theory of the 'Brünhildlied', but this hypothesis is buttressed even more securely when one examines the outline of a common source of *Ps* and *Nl* set out on pp. 201-4. In this Andersson champions Heusler against (for instance) Joachim Bumke's views as set out in 'Die Quellen der Brünhildfabel im Nibelungenlied', *Euphorion* 54 (1960), 1-38 (on which see also Henry Kratz, 'The proposed sources of the *Nibelungenlied*', *Studies in philology* 59 (1962), 615-30), though this does not mean that he necessarily accepts Heusler's construct in every detail. Indeed, he sets out the differences between his and Heusler's conception of the 'Brünhildlied' (p. 213), and it must be said that Andersson's scheme has the advantage of economy — Heusler needed to posit additional sources which hardly seem essential. (Similarly Andersson convincingly demonstrates that there is no necessity to posit connexions between the French *chanson de geste Daurel et Beton* and *Nl*; with H. Schneider, P. A. Becker, and J. Bumke and against S. Singer and Heusler he dismisses the alleged parallels as a mirage (p. 212).) But Andersson does attach more importance to the *Lied vom Hürnen Seyfrid* than Heusler did; thus he writes: 'it [the *Hürnen Seyfrid*] supports the likelihood that the "Brünhildlied" included a fair amount of detail on Siegfried's childhood' (p. 235). As for Bumke's assumption that a second source had to be posited in addition to the 'Brünhildlied', Andersson shows it to be ill-founded: his outline of what this 'second source' could have contained (p. 216) demonstrates that it would have been a song devoid of content. One final insight concerning the composition of the *Nibelungenlied* links up with ideas Andersson presented in his article 'The epic source of Niflunga saga and the *Nibelungenlied*', *Arkiv för nordisk filologi* 88 (1974), 1-54, in which he showed that eleven of the *âventiuren* in the second part of *Nl*, though often expanded, were largely traditional,

deriving from the 'Ältere Not', while five (äv. 26, 29, 30, 32, 37) were largely new. The poet of *Nl*, wishing to bring the first part of the poem into balance with the second, had to expand the former quite substantially: to the eleven *åventiuren* with a core of traditional material eight largely new ones (äv. 5, 9, 11-13, 15, 18-19) were added, and — and this is the important point that Andersson makes here — as a listing of these innovations on pp. 226-7 reveals, what is significant is that a strikingly high proportion of them represent borrowings from the 'Ältere Not'.

And Brynhild? The author has not lost all sight of her. After 235 pages she reappears, in the brief thirteen-page concluding chapter headed 'The literary fortunes of Brynhild'. For Andersson, the investigation has served to distinguish for him two variants of the Brynhild legend. In the North she was portrayed as a spirited heroine, in Germany as a vindictive Amazon. We cannot retrieve the unified prototype behind these two variants though features such as her martial stature and her sybilline gifts appear to antedate the separation. The Norse variant originated as 'a story of Brynhild's determination to have the greatest man, her deception, and her subsequent revenge' (p. 242). For Andersson it is the element of will that sets the story of Brynhild apart from all other Germanic tales of forceful women; indeed, he says, even among male heroes 'only Egill Skallagrímsson has some affinity to her as a paradigm of determination' (p. 243) though 'only in Brynhild is it stylized on a grand scale. This celebration of will is unique in Germanic prose and poetry. Elsewhere action is a reflex of the social code, not of character.' (p. 244). In contrast with this, the German variant showed Brynhild as the sexually betrayed woman. Her victimization is emphasized by the use of the motif of the prior betrothal, a motif not known to the Norse variant and which, even in Germany, the *Nibelungenlied* poet later 'suppressed . . . without regrets, leaving only tantalizing indications of the first meeting between Brynhild and Siegfried' (p. 239). The German variant exerted an influence in the North: the *Skamma* poet emphasized the sexual crisis by introducing the motif of Brynhild's suicide (p. 241; see also Hans Kuhn, *Kleine Schriften*, vol. 2, 1971, pp. 80-87), while the *Meiri* poet systematically harmonized the Norse and German variants, giving Brynhild's character added depth and complexity. Thus while in Iceland Brynhild came to be portrayed with sympathy and admiration, in Germany she alienated the poets so that her role is diminished — to the extent that in the *Lied vom Hürnen Seyfrid* she does not even appear.

For all Professor Andersson's efforts, Brynhild remains a shadowy, nebulous figure. One leaves the book having learnt a great deal about the problems of sources but surprisingly little about Brynhild. But there can be no doubt that this is a challenging book which will provoke further debate. Scholars have good reason to be grateful for it, not least because it is a model of clarity of thought and lucidity of presentation. In wrestling with the complexities of the Brynhild legend and the jungle of scholarship surrounding it Professor Andersson had need of the courage of a Sigurd and a bill-hook of the quality of a sword forged by Reginn. The task was daunting, the encounter heroic, and the outcome — well, not unimpressive.

JOHN L. FLOOD

SÓLARLJÓÐ. TYDING OG TOLKINGSGRUNNLAG. By BJARNE FIDJESTØL. *Universitetet i Bergen. Nordisk institutts skriftserie, 4. Universitetsforlaget.* Bergen, Oslo and Tromsø, 1979. 74 pp.

This book does not, as its author states in his preface, add yet another interpre-

tation of *Sólarljóð* to those which already exist. It seeks to evaluate existing interpretations and to lay a foundation for reinterpretation of 'diktets dunkle og vakre tale' by means of the practical application of hermeneutics. In one sense Fidjestøl's goal is a modest one in that he aims to provide the reader with a number of insights into the form and meaning of *Sólarljóð* rather than with a fully-formed literary reading, which, he would argue, detracts from the poem's many-faceted nature. In another sense, however, the claims of literary hermeneutics are far from modest, for they aim, in the case of a poem like *Sólarljóð* that has always been considered difficult if not obscure, to delimit the individual set of literary signs that specify the work in its presumed historical and linguistic context and thus to put our understanding of it on a much firmer basis than it was before.

Literary hermeneutics, as it is currently applied by liberal practitioners, of whom I would judge Bjarne Fidjestøl to be one, seems little different from rigorous literary and textual scholarship conducted with its eyes open to the total cultural context of both the work studied and the scholar who studies it. Yet it has the disadvantage, vis-à-vis a more eclectic approach, of insisting on the primacy of the principle that we must understand the whole of a text from its details and the details from the whole (see p. 15), thereby throwing the study of literature in upon itself more often than is desirable. Fidjestøl does his best to escape the toils of the so-called hermeneutic circle in which the reader's perception of earlier literature is inextricably bound up with the standards and conventions of his own cultural milieu. He sees what he calls the 'filologiske disiplinær' as our major means of approaching an understanding of a literary work as a contemporary audience may have done (pp. 7-8) and he rightly concentrates, in the first instance, on an analysis of *Sólarljóð*'s structure and then of its probable genre in his attempt to give us a firm foundation for literary interpretation.

In the light of his examination of the poem's structure, Fidjestøl is able to point to distortions of literary perspective upon *Sólarljóð* as a consequence of its early connection with *Draumkvæde*-studies. Like *Draumkvæde*, *Sólarljóð* has often been placed firmly in the genre of vision-literature. However, Fidjestøl's analysis of the poem's tripartite structure is convincing not only in its upholding of the view that it has literary and thematic unity but also in its demonstration that it belongs to a deliberately heterogeneous genre-composite. Fidjestøl characterizes *Sólarljóð* as a 'moral læredikt, byggt opp på ei rekkje didaktiske undergenrar' (pp. 30-31). He sees the composite of genres on which the poem is built as befitting its subject-matter, which is life on earth considered partly from the perspective of mundane ethics, partly from that of the world beyond the grave, then death and the transition of the 'I' of the poem from this world to the next and finally the nature of the world after death. In each section the relationship between existence on this side of death's divide and on the other is a central poetic preoccupation.

Fidjestøl's interpretative base for understanding the many enigmatic details of *Sólarljóð* is his premise that the poem is fundamentally indeterminate in its canonical interpretation, and that this indeterminacy lies between views of the textual material that were in fact historically available to its putative medieval audience. (The dating of *Sólarljóð*, which is not extant in any medieval manuscript, would be, Fidjestøl concedes (p. 8), the fitting subject of another hermeneutic exercise, and is not considered in the present work.) Thus, he concludes, many of the poet's images, particularly in the third part of the poem dealing with the world beyond the grave, are deliberately sketchy (p. 35 — the audience must complete the picture) or deliberately ambiguous (pp. 38-42 and 47-8) both morally and in

point of conceptual reference. Thus, by sensitively appraising the poem's internal evidence for its dominant modes of thought, Fidjestøl is able to side-step some of the difficulties encountered by Falk, Björn M. Ólsen, Paasche and others in trying to find a wholly consistent line of argument in *Sólarljóð*.

Chapter 3, on the poem's genre, I consider the weakest of the book. Here the author's hermeneutic principles serve him least well, for it is in the assessment of the work's genre that one is obliged most insistently to step outside the poem itself to its cultural context. Fidjestøl properly draws attention to the probable influence of medieval preaching styles on the presentation of the series of *exempla* in the poem's first section, as well as to that of the didactic verse modes of Eddaic poetry. However, in his analysis of the generic affinities of the second and third parts of *Sólarljóð*, a controlled but wider-ranging appraisal of vision and wisdom-literature in early Germanic vernaculars might have enabled him to draw together his diverse remarks on the poem's aesthetic effect. (I am thinking, as an example, of the collection of Old English poems edited by T. A. Shippey in his *Poems of wisdom and learning in Old English* (1976).) As it is, the only close comparison is with *Hávamál*, and the result of this exclusiveness is, I think, an overvaluation of the similarities between the two poems.

Fidjestøl follows and enlarges upon Björn M. Ólsen's suggestion that *Hávamál* might be the literary model for *Sólarljóð* in the light of Klaus von See's (1972) analysis of the former poem. Clearly, both poems are examples of cognate literary genres, but Fidjestøl's presentation of *Hávamál* as a literary model pushes their similarities too hard at the expense of a more broadly-based understanding of the aesthetic force of early Germanic verse which moves from a set of rules for living in this world to a revelation of the occult and of divine wisdom. For example, the nature of the relationship between the 'I' of *Sólarljóð* and his addressee, whom he calls an *arfi* in strophe 78, whether or not this is to be taken literally, is of a different order from that of the 'I' of *Hávamál*, who may consistently be Óðinn, and its completely unpersonalized 'you', though Fidjestøl sees the one as the probable paradigm for the other (pp. 32-3). Again, is there really a close parallel between the assertion *Veit ek at ek hekk / vindga meiði á / nætr allar níu (Hávamál 138/1-3)* which is, according to Fidjestøl, 'mutatis mutandis ei erfaring av døden', and the statement by the 'I' of *Sólarljóð* *Á norna stóli / sat ek níu daga / þaðan var ek á hest hafinn (51/1-3)*? Although, in the context of the world picture presented by a poem such as *Völuspá*, the seat of the Norns may validly be construed as a source of numinous knowledge (cf. *Völuspá*, strophes 19-20), in the context of the second section of *Sólarljóð*, the 'I's transition to the world beyond the grave, the seat of the Norns is far more likely to be part of the furniture of that hostile realm than an allusion to *Urðar brunnr*. A broader examination of Germanic wisdom literature might also have obviated the necessity Fidjestøl feels apropos strophes 19 and 24 to adopt an ironic reading of the former's *Óvinum þínum / trú þú aldri, / þó fagrt mæli fyr þér* in the light of the divine perspective of the latter, for much of this literature places a low value on the humble or unfortunate man, like the *Sorli* of this particular *exemplum*, and does not seem to see this as inconsistent with Christian morality.

Fidjestøl's study includes a text of *Sólarljóð* based on Falk's 1914 edition but without most of his emendations together with Severin Eskeland's 1928 translation into Norwegian. In spite of my caveats about some aspects of this book's methodology, I consider that in general it is both full of literary insight and honest in its declaration of the limitations placed upon interpretation by the powerful but

abstruse nature of *Sólarljóð* itself. In Fidjestøl's review of research bearing on *Sólarljóð* (Chapter 1), I miss reference to Guðbrandur Vigfússon's views and to Michael Barnes's thorough evaluation of *Draumkvæde* scholarship (1974). I noted one significant error: C. F. Hennerberg's treatise on the organ in medieval Scandinavia (1934), correctly designated in the bibliography, is attributed to one Hammerberg on p. 57.

MARGARET CLUNIES ROSS

ORIGINALE RIDDARASÖGUR ALS TEIL ALTNORDISCHER SAGALITERATUR. By ASTRID VAN NAHL. *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Germanistik und Skandinavistik, herausgegeben von Heiko Uecker, Band 3. Verlag Peter Lang. Frankfurt and Bern, 1981. iv+291 pp.*

The prose literature of medieval Iceland and Norway never ceases to inspire attempts at classification and categorization. Here the 'original *riddarasögur*' of the title are those Icelandic romances more commonly known as *lygisögur*, and the aim of the book is to slot them into a generic position between *fornaldarsögur* (tales of legendary Northern heroes) and what the author terms 'translated *riddarasögur*' (from Old French epic and romance). Astrid van Nahl limits her scope to a survey of those features of plot and character which she sees as common to these three varieties of saga, such that the major part of the book consists of a laborious, threefold consideration of certain narrative features (beginnings and endings; the hero's departure; the treatment of love, combat, the supernatural, character, and setting) first as they appear in 'original *riddarasögur*' (Chapter II) and then, according to the same formula, by comparison with *fornaldarsögur* (Chapter III A) and 'translated *riddarasögur*' (Chapter III B). A rapid glance at the mixed contents of a number of manuscripts by way of indirect supporting evidence for the argument (Chapter IV) is followed by extended lists of apparently randomly selected motifs, many of which are found in 'original' and 'translated' *riddarasögur* and in *fornaldarsögur*; for example, 'farewell presents', 'feasts', 'music'. As such, a good deal of the book reads like a motif-index, expanded in part by synopses of plot and incident. It is hardly surprising that this somewhat sketchy survey, which offers little or no stylistic analysis, yields the results that it does: in all three saga types there are heroes who live in splendid courts and have fantastic adventures and battles in exotic locations, often motivated by love. But what does this tell us about the nature of these Norse narratives in particular? It could just as easily be argued that these conventions and motifs are part and parcel of medieval romance in general and that the problem of grouping and classification raised by the author could be resolved simply by pinning this label on the sagas under discussion. Van Nahl concludes that, on the basis of these shared characteristics and despite some variation, 'original *riddarasögur*' have sufficient in common with *fornaldarsögur* and 'translated *riddarasögur*' to warrant positioning them 'zwischen Fornaldarsaga und übersetzter Riddarasaga' (pp. 255-56) in that they derive what she regards as their 'heroic' element from the former and chivalric trappings from the latter. Rudolph Meissner played another version of this literary 'shell game', with greater skill and sensitivity, some eighty years ago when he described the style of the (translated) *riddarasögur* as 'etwa die mitte zwischen dem stil der heimischen saga und der erregten, ausmalenden weise der fremden dichtung' (*Die Strengleikar*, 1902, p. 135).

The potentially interesting issues raised in the book are the very variations which the author dismisses, for her purpose, as trivial, such as the differing structural and

thematic significance of the hero's adventures in the three types of saga and the more superficial portrayal and understanding of chivalry in 'original *riddarasögur*' than in those translated from French romances. A more thorough investigation of these distinctions, or a detailed study of one or two representative sagas from each group, might have made for a more stimulating book. There are one or two doubtful points, like the assertions that the pursuit of married ladies without hope of consummation is a common practice among the heroes of 'courtly' romance (p. 193) and that 'translated *riddarasögur*' like *Erex saga* and *Parcevals saga* are so free in the treatment of their sources as to be barely recognizable as such (p. 254). Nevertheless, the author has brought attention to a number of relatively unknown works, and, by disputing the critical tendency to isolate 'original *riddarasögur*' into a group distinct from other saga types, she presents another perspective, whether one agrees with its premises or not, on the current controversy over the question of genre in Old Norse literature.

GERALDINE BARNES

LITURGICA ISLANDICA. Edited by LILLI GJERLØW. *Bibliotheca Arnamagnæana*, vols. XXXV-XXXVI. C. A. Reitzels Boghandel A/S. Copenhagen, 1980. I. Text: xv+241 pp.; II. Facsimiles: vii+135 pp.

DER WIENER PSALTER. COD. VIND. 2713. Edited by HEIKO Uecker. *Editiones Arnamagnæana*, series B, vol. 27. C. A. Reitzels Boghandel A/S. Copenhagen, 1980. cxiv+262 pp.

When the words they bore were no longer valued or were valued less than the vellum on which they were written, the manuscripts of the Middle Ages were, in a manner of speaking, recycled. Especially after the Reformation parchment which had borne liturgical Latin was, if not erased for copying, cut up to be used in binding and covering other works. Even in Iceland, 'the old "useless" books', as Lilli Gjerløw puts it, 'were made into new, useful ones'. Árni Magnússon, the great collector, was himself a destroyer, and we can detect in his comment on a psalter manuscript that he had dismembered, 'það er nu eyðilag', no remorseful sense that something precious had been lost. Dr. Gjerløw's *Liturgica Islandica*, the most recent addition to the *Bibliotheca Arnamagnæana* series, cannot make good the loss, but her patient and skilful gathering of a number of the remaining fragments renders it less complete. As the many references to previous studies in her work indicate, a good deal of careful detective work has already gone into searching out and, where possible, reassembling the fragments now scattered among the libraries of Scandinavia. Her chosen task has been to gather together and arrange in their proper categories the most interesting of those that preserve remnants of Catholic liturgical texts. The general picture that emerges is of a church with a certain national character which was nevertheless very much part of European Christendom. Since palaeographic descriptions are presented for each of the manuscripts and many are reproduced in the companion facsimile volume, *Liturgica Islandica* could almost function as a palaeographic primer. But its chief contribution is rather in the identification and ordering of the fragments. All are discussed at least briefly and related to the larger European context. Of some little can be said, for, in Dr. Gjerløw's apt remark, 'the secret life of these prayers through the centuries cannot be charted.' But more frequently they can be. Thus so short an oration as *Corda nostra* is here traced through dozens of sacramentaries

and missals. Medieval life was, as we are never likely to forget in studying this collection, extraordinarily diverse in its influences and intricate in its structures. An example of this impulse towards complexity is to be found in the fifteen-unit psalter to which Dr. Gjerløw assigns the term *Pater Noster Psalter*, which is elsewhere recorded in Icelandic sources. A discussion of this liturgical arrangement of the psalms as a quasi-breviary forms the centre of the present study. The fullest text of this psalter is preserved in the manuscript which survives fragmentarily in *AM 241a fol.* and *AM Access. 7d Psalter 1*, but a score of other fragments including several in Oslo and Stockholm contain parts of a psalter divided into fifteen parts *per decadas*. Although divided psalters, even fifteen-unit psalters, were known throughout medieval Europe, no prototype for the *Pater Noster* version has been found and the possibility remains that it originated in the North, perhaps in Norway. Its popularity in Iceland is attested not only in the many manuscripts but in the references to its penitential use to atone for sins of adultery and voluntary homicide.

That *Liturgica Islandica* is not a book for the common reader goes without saying. It is rather a source book intended for specialists and no serious academic library can well do without it. It does not wear its erudition lightly, and it would be inappropriate to expect it to do so. But if we wonder to what ideal audience, to which specialists it addresses itself, it might be well to note the specific ignorances to which Dr. Gjerløw makes concessions: she writes in English and, although she assumes a knowledge of Latin, she offers a translation of the Icelandic version of the enlarged creed noting that it may be welcomed by the reader unfamiliar with Old Icelandic. Similarly her introduction supplies a synopsis of Icelandic religious history rather than a guide to medieval liturgical practice. Clearly the work has been conceived with the international scholarly community, particularly liturgical experts, in mind. Non-experts, and I speak as one, who may regret that the interpretative comments here are not more extended, will perhaps be rebuffed for demanding of the work something that it never pretended to offer. Nevertheless, the texts presented do raise larger questions. And Dr. Gjerløw's terse observations dispersed throughout the volume suggest she is the person to provide the answers. It is to be hoped that she will turn to this larger audience in her next book.

The manuscript now known as Cod. Vind. 2713 was copied out, according to recent scholars, including its present editor, Heiko Uecker, early in the second half of the thirteenth century somewhere in England, possibly East Anglia. The Gallican version of the Latin psalter contained in the manuscript, although it exhibits a fair number of corrupt readings, is rather finely decorated with initials of various sizes indicating original three and eight part divisions. Somehow during the five hundred years before it appeared in the Austrian National Library about eighty of its original leaves were lost. Today sixty-eight remain and these preserve part or all of Psalms 16-26, 37-56, and 62-103. But in the latter years of the sixteenth century the manuscript acquired an interlinear Icelandic translation. Interestingly, as Dr. Uecker shows, this translation is not of the Vienna Psalter's Latin text. In fact, it is clear that the Icelanders who inserted it copied and occasionally 'improved' an earlier translation of a better Latin psalter. Lexical evidence suggests that this translation pre-dates the Reformation, perhaps by many decades. Thus this is the earliest Icelandic psalter.

In his very full introduction, Dr. Uecker provides for the Latin text a brief, and for the Icelandic text an extended, palaeographic and orthographic description. And the examination of the Icelandic text, in its relation to the relevant Latin versions, reveals that it is not without translation and copyist's errors, all of which

are carefully examined. The study of other manuscripts assigned to the major Icelandic scribe, together with a consideration of names added in margins and certain dialectal features in the Icelandic, leads to the tentative conclusion that the translation was copied into the manuscript chiefly by Árni Ólafsson, in 1570 the pastor at Þingmúli in Skriðdalur in the east of Iceland. It is likely, according to the editor, that the interlinear gloss was designed originally and served ultimately as a means to teach Latin. As Dr. Uecker remarks, 'ihr trockenens und wenig geistvolles Gepräge belegt, dass das Interesse des Übersetzers weit mehr auf dem Gebiet der Grammatik als auf dem der Erbauung lag' (p. cl). The present edition, which is characterized by all the meticulous professionalism that we associate with the *Editiones*, displays the Latin and Icelandic texts on facing pages. It seems important, in this circumstance, to bear in mind the image of the manuscript itself — and several photographs are provided — lest we forget the curious symbiosis that an interlinear translation comprises and fault the pedestrian vernacular. But in any case the word-for-word relation between the texts is taken over by the two excellent glossaries that carry us back and forth between the languages and which alone are worth the price of the book.

JOHN TUCKER

DAS PARTIZIP PERFEKT DER SCHWACHEN JA-VERBEN. DIE FLEXIONSENTWICKLUNG IM ISLÄNDISCHEN. By JÓN HILMAR JÓNSSON. *Monographien zur Sprachwissenschaft*, 6. Carl Winter · Universitätsverlag. Heidelberg, 1979. 121 pp.

The inflection of the past participles of weak verbs Cl. I, the so-called *ja*-verbs and (wrongly) *ia*-verbs, is irregular in Old Icelandic; it is rather more irregular, and in rather different ways, in the modern language. The present monograph represents the first attempt to discuss the development of the modern inflectional system in detail and with substantial documentation. It bears all the marks of a dissertation (though this is nowhere acknowledged); thus tables of forms, which could surely have been banished to appendices, largely swamp the author's discussion, which is interesting, and frequently both original and convincing.

The discussion of the origins of the Old Icelandic inflectional system is brief and unsatisfactory. The author slavishly follows Krahe-Meid in assuming a Primitive Germanic weak verb stem-formative suffix **-eje-/ejo-*, beside **-jo-*, and then cites as an example of this suffix Gothic *nasjan*, which in almost all its forms must be derived from **-jo-* (see Wilhelm Streitberg, *Urgermanische Grammatik*, repr. Heidelberg, 1974, p. 306); virtually all weak verb Cl. I present stem formations can satisfactorily be derived from **-jo-*. The author's brief discussion of the *-að/-uð(-)* alternation in the past of weak verbs Cl. II is also misleading. He identifies it with 'der phonologische *u*-Umlaut' (though it is unclear whether he means this in a synchronic or historical sense), and gives a phonological rule:

$$a \rightarrow u / \text{_____} C + u. \\ \text{[-Akzent]}$$

This will serve as a synchronic morphophonemic rule for forms such as *kølluðu*, but it is of course inadequate as a description of forms such as *kølluð* (past. part. nom. fem. sg., nom. acc. neut. pl.). It is also historically misleading, in that the development of the medial vowel is almost certainly not directly related to Norse *u*-mutation, but is a much earlier, shared North Germanic and West Germanic development of unaccented medial *ō > ū* before following *u*. The most serious deficiency of this part of the work, however, is the total lack of any discussion of

the origins of the distinction between the invariable inflection of past participles of (originally) long-stemmed weak verbs Cl. I (e.g. *færðr*, *færðan*, *fært*, etc.), over against the variable inflection of those of short-stemmed weak verbs (e.g. *bariðr*, *barðan*, *barit*, etc.). This distinction has never been satisfactorily explained. The author's discussion of invariable short-stemmed participial inflection (e.g. *hvattr*, *gladdr*) is, however, rather more satisfactory.

The meat of the monograph lies in its documentation, analysis and discussion of the development of the short-stemmed variable inflection at each stage from the earliest manuscripts to the 18th century. This is interesting, careful and fairly satisfactory. Apart from some irregular verbs, there are two main problems. These are firstly a tendency, especially strong during the 14th-16th centuries, to level variable inflection in favour of the syncopated *-ð-* forms, giving forms such as *barðr* beside *bariðr* etc. This tendency is later entirely reversed. Secondly, there is the intrusion of the (originally strong) *-in-* suffix into the non-syncopated forms of weak variable inflection, giving the modern variable paradigm, e.g. *barinn*, *barðan*, etc. The first of these two tendencies is clearly due to the influence of long-stemmed invariable inflection (e.g. *færðr*, *færðan*, etc.); its reversal in the 16th century is equally clearly due to the influence of variable inflection in the *-in-* forms of strong verbs. So the reversal of the first influence may be caused by the second influence. This is not discussed by the author. His discussion, however, of the motivation for the intrusion of *-in-* forms is particularly interesting. Although early forms occur (his dismissal of *þakinna næfra*, *Hávamál*, v. 60, is not entirely convincing, however), he argues plausibly that early identity of form in neut. nom. acc. sg. between strong and variable weak inflection (e.g. *alit*: *barit*) is insufficient to motivate the entire development. He further considers the relationship between 'weak present' strong verbs Cl. VI and variable weak inflection (e.g. *hefja*, *hafit*: *berja*, *barit*), and the possible influence of adjective-formation in *-in-*. Most interestingly, however, he relates the extension of these intrusive *-in-* forms to the late classical change of final unaccented *-t>-ð*. The identity of forms in both strong and variable weak inflection in neut. nom. acc. sg. is now *-ið*, and the *-ð* so produced can be related to the original *-ð-* of the rest of the weak inflection. So influence from strong to weak verb paradigms, e.g.:

hafið: barið
hafins: bariðs
hofnu: bqrðu

can give:

hafið: barið
hafins: barins
hofnu: bqrðu.

This does not wholly explain why strong forms penetrate weak inflection, rather than the reverse. However, the failure of *n*-forms to penetrate syncopated *ð*-forms in weak variable inflection (e.g. *bqrðu*) may be explained by the influence of the weak invariable *ð*-inflection of long-stemmed weak verbs Cl. I, e.g. *færðr*, *færðan*, *fært*, etc., which because of the failure of the change of unaccented *-t>-ð* was less open to influence from strong verbs. This also is not discussed by the author.

The book is photo-offset printed from typescript; it is extremely clear and contains very few typing errors. Carl Winter's press ought, however, to be able to find a machine capable of typing *þ* and *ð*. The monograph will be fundamental to any future discussion of the development of Modern Icelandic participial inflection.

PAUL BIBIRE

DUDO. NORMANDIETS HISTORIE UNDER DE FØRSTE HERTUGER. Translated into Danish with a commentary by ERLING ALBRECHTSEN. *Odense Universitetsforlag*. Odense, 1979. 192 pp.

The study of the Scandinavians in Normandy before c. A.D. 1000 is severely hampered by the scarcity of reliable contemporary sources. The later Norse sources often mention Viking visits to Normandy, but, surprisingly perhaps, tell very little of any verifiable events there; even the account of Gøngu-Hrólfir ceases after the announcement that he 'vann Norðmandí; frá honum eru Rúðujarlar komnir ok Englakonungar'. Continental and English annals and histories, of course, tell of many Viking incursions in north-west Europe and frequently mention the Scandinavian settlers in northern France, but these sources are fraught with their own problems of bias and interdependence and those that are most closely concerned with, and written in the closest proximity to, the Norman settlers do not cover the whole period from their arrival to the end of the 10th century. In Normandy itself our material is largely confined to some loanwords and place-names, a very small amount of literary and documentary evidence and Dudo of St. Quentin's *De moribus et actis primorum Normanniæ ducum*.

For the period after c. 1000 we are much better off. The Norman settlers in southern Italy were well described by e.g. Amatus of Monte Cassino (*Ystoire* written c. 1071-86), William of Apulia (*Gesta Roberti* c. 1095-99) and Geoffrey Malaterra (*De rebus gestis Rogerii* c. 1099-1101). They record much of interest on this branch of the Normans, but, alas, hardly anything of their forebears. The third Norman conquest, that of England in 1066, led to the writing of some excellent histories of the Anglo-Norman kings. Many, of course, also tell of earlier events in Normandy, but on that subject they are not always as independent or informative as we might have wished. William of Jumièges began his *Gesta Normannorum ducum* by retelling Dudo's work in a shortened form and continued himself, reliably and well, up to the time of writing c. 1070. William of Poitiers's *Gesta Guillelmi* (written c. 1071-74), in its extant version, covers events in France, Normandy and England from c. 1035 to 1067. Orderic Vitalis's *Historia ecclesiastica* (c. 1137) is an important and comprehensive source for Anglo-Norman history. Much of Orderic's information on the Normans before the conquest of England is, however, derived from the works of William of Jumièges and William of Poitiers and, in any case, when he writes about Normandy he is mostly concerned with events relating to the monastery of St. Évroul to which he was attached. Among the other important later sources on the Normans are *Roman de Rou* (by Wace until 1106, Benoit until 1135), *Brevis relatio de origine Willelmi Conquestoris* (written c. 1100-35) and the histories of Florence of Worcester (d. c. 1118) and William of Malmesbury (d. c. 1143). In these and other works we have a series of admirable histories of the Normans in and after the 11th century. For the period before c. 1000, however, we are mainly confined to contemporary records compiled outside Normandy, the later Anglo-Norman historians and to the work of Dudo.

De moribus was written between 1015 and 1030 and purports to give a complete and coherent account of the ancestry, settlement and acts of the Norman dukes over the period from c. 850 to 996, based on information derived directly from the ducal family. In his preface Dudo writes that, on one of his many visits to the court of Duke Richard I of Normandy, Richard commissioned him to write a history of the Normans. Richard died two years later in 996, but Dudo carried on with the work, encouraged by Richard's successor, Richard II, and by his half brother, Count Rodulf of Ivry. Dudo mentions Rodulf twice in his introductory verses as

his informant and tells of no other informant or source. Two charters, one wholly and the other partly in Dudo's hand, are evidence of his continued links with the ducal family, certainly until 1015, and suggest that he enjoyed some respect among its members. The author of *De moribus*, although not himself a Norman, would seem to have been in a unique position to record both recent and contemporary events in the duchy, as well as Norman traditions, as preserved among the descendants of Rollo and his followers. The work, which should thus be a most valuable source, has, however, throughout the entire period of modern scholarship been depreciated by the greater number of historians as being more or less worthless — a gross panegyric, a piece of political propaganda without any factual basis, a jumble of information which Dudo largely culled from non-Norman annals (that survive anyway) and which he rearranged at will and padded out with fiction. Although some of Dudo's critics admit that the work may contain a few genuine pieces of Norman tradition, the prevailing opinion has been that, if this is so, it is so deeply buried as to be virtually inaccessible and so distorted that hardly anything can be learnt from it. The scarcity of contemporary Norman sources does, however, not permit us to dismiss anything that may prove of value, albeit possibly limited, and, furthermore, although Dudo's critics may be right in some respects, we may be precipitate if we accept their judgement without a closer examination of both the work itself and the arguments for its rejection as a source.

In the two first books of *De moribus* Dudo relates that one Hasting led an exodus from 'Dacia', occasioned by overpopulation in that country, and describes Hasting's exploits in France and Italy. A second exodus is led by Rollo, who, after some years in England, Flanders and France, is granted a vaguely defined area in northern France, in which he settles with his followers. The last two books tell of the lives of Rollo's son William and grandson Richard and finish with Richard's death. The work is written in an unwieldy and ponderous style, introduced and interspersed with prolix verses, and although Dudo displays a certain amount of learning, he does not seem to have any great mastery of it. *De moribus* is clearly a panegyric to the dukes and, judging by those matters on which Dudo either lays great stress, or is vague or even silent, it also appears that he had certain specific aims in mind when writing his history, whether of his own or the Norman's choosing. These include an apparent wish to present Rollo as a suitable founder of a dynasty and his successors as true Christian princes, to assert the dukes' entitlement to the whole of Normandy, including the Cotentin peninsula, and to the fealty of Brittany, and possibly to establish outright Norman rights to the duchy, independent of the French king.

For the form of the earlier parts of his story Dudo turned to Virgil. He tells that the Danes were descended from the Trojan Antenor. They expelled first Hasting, the barbarian Viking, to whom Dudo ascribes all those typical Viking deeds, which were doubtlessly not forgotten by his contemporaries. Secondly they expelled Rollo, a brave young man of royal blood, and Dudo presents him as another Aeneas; in his dreams he is told that he shall rule in France and after a series of heroic adventures he indeed obtains his promised land and the king's daughter in marriage. Dudo further relates of Rollo's promises of loyalty to the French king, although an anecdote reveals that he does not kneel, of his baptism and his generosity to the Church, his granting of new laws, his support for the French Crown, when it is threatened by rebellious counts, and of his just and peaceful reign. With this account of Rollo's life in Normandy Dudo establishes a pattern, which he repeats and develops in the lives of the succeeding dukes. Rollo and his

successors ever give just and voluntary support to the French kings, are consistently generous to the Church, enter into Christian marriages with French noblewomen (although Rollo's princess was almost certainly of Dudo's own invention and his descendants were the products of possibly less official liaisons), they have many difficulties with evil-minded and ambitious French counts and throughout they staunchly defend their rights to the duchy and to the fealty of Brittany. This restricted framework must be kept in mind when we approach Dudo's work. For while it is certainly fulsome and eulogistic and written with some propagandistic objectives, it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that it may yet contain not only some genuine historical information, but also specifically Scandinavian survivals of no little interest. Among the many matters that might be investigated are the exodus story (cf. Saxo, *Rydårbogen* and *Guta saga*), sacrifices of humans to Þórr made before their departure (e.g. Tacitus, Jordanes and a number of Scandinavian sources refer to human sacrifices to various deities) and the story of a Viking capture of a town in Italy by means of a trick (which occurs in several other sources with Norman connections, was used by Saxo no less than twice, and in *Heimskringla* is counted among one of Haraldr Harðráði's craftier deeds). Dudo's work might also prove of value to us on the early Norman relations with Denmark and England, the date and extent of the French king's grant of lands to Rollo, the nature of the Scandinavian settlement and traces of Scandinavian laws, customs and institutions surviving within it. And finally, may it be that insufficient attention has been paid to Dudo's testimony in the vexed issue of the identification of Rollo with Gǫngu-Hrólf?

Not all historians have been equally dismissive of Dudo's work. Jules Lair in his edition of *De moribus* (1865) thought that no actual borrowing from existing sources could be established and that Dudo may have used lost chronicles and histories (a judgement based on Dudo's text) but derived the greater part of his information from Count Rodulf. Johannes Steenstrup (*Normannerne 1876-82, Normandiets historie* 1925 and elsewhere) made a valiant attempt to establish the work as a reliable source. Unfortunately he accepted far too much at face value and has commanded little support outside Denmark. Recent historians, particularly in Britain, have shown a new inclination to use Dudo's history as an acceptable source, but many still adhere to the view of Henri Prentout: in 1911 and 1915 he submitted *De moribus* to the most detailed survey ever undertaken and came to the conclusion that Dudo based his account on extant literary sources, especially on Flodoard's annals. Although Prentout thought it probable that Rodulf supplied Dudo with some information, which had been preserved in his family, about the periods both before and after the settlement (though he discounts the earliest events in Scandinavia itself), he found this to be so scanty and so grossly distorted, whether by Rodulf or by Dudo, as to be virtually useless. Although Prentout in his discussion often seems to take Dudo's apparently Scandinavian material quite seriously in its detail, his conclusion remains that Dudo was an 'insupportable bavard', who wrote a bad source, not only for Norman history, but also for any useful study of specifically Scandinavian traditions and survivals. Other critics have been even more severe and claim that Dudo did not use any Norman informant at all, but simply invented everything that we cannot read better in surviving annals.

It is hard to believe that Dudo, who records much that we cannot find in any of his supposed sources, and who was writing about his contemporaries and their recent ancestors, could have so much misinformation accepted, not only by the Normans themselves, but also by his own immediate successors. For example,

William of Jumièges largely retold what Dudo had written and Orderic Vitalis also used Dudo's evidence in places and is not nearly as uncomplimentary about him as many appear to think. Secondly, no actual loans from annals have been established yet and Dudo does not give the impression of being so accomplished an author that he could paraphrase a source without giving any echoes of the original. Finally, the critics' main argument in support of their contention that Dudo based all his 'non-fictional' material on surviving annals does not seem entirely convincing. There is a gap in the annals from c. 900 to 919, which they claim Dudo filled with a large amount of fictional material. In the period from 966 to 996 his presumed source (Richer's *Historiarum*) is extremely brief and he is seen to respond with equal brevity. Dudo may, of course, have felt free to dream up events for the earlier period and not for the latter (though both would fall within the scope of living memory). However, while we must allow for Dudo's propagandistic purposes, no extant source positively contradicts his main statements on the events he claims took place between 900 and 919 and while this does not prove his veracity nor does it disprove it. As for the period 966-969, had anything of import happened to the Norman dukes during this time, would they not have wished it to be included? Dudo did, after all, write at their behest and received rewards from their hands. Although *De moribus* is a distinctly troublesome source and much of it must be rejected, it must still be regarded as a unique document and it might well repay further study.

For this reason we must be grateful to Erling Albrechtsen for including Dudo's work in his series of translations into Danish of some important sources on the Normans. *Vikingerne i Franken* (1976) gives us Regino's *Chronica* and some excerpts from the other more relevant 9th century continental annals. *Dudo. Normandiets historie* (1979) is the first complete translation ever. In *To normanniske krøniker* (1980) we have William of Jumièges's *Gesta Normannorum ducum* (translated by Guizot, 1826) and William of Poitiers's *Gesta Guillelmi* (translated by Guizot, 1826, and Foreville, 1952). Another first translation is Albrechtsen's *Godfred Malaterra. Normannernes bedrifter i Syditalien* (1981). Can we hope for more? If so, Flodoard's *Annales* and a new translation of Richer's *Historiarum* to complement Dudo would be welcome. The translation of *De moribus* is accurate and readable — even occasionally colloquial, which may give the uninitiated reader a rather false impression of the character of the original. Dudo's metrical effusions do not add much of interest and most have sensibly been omitted. There is a brief, informative introduction and useful notes, maps and genealogies. Albrechtsen does, however, tend to the Steenstrup view and makes much use of annals to support Dudo's statements, without drawing attention to the possibility that Dudo used just those annals. It might also have been helpful to have made the reader more aware of the work's nature as political propaganda and of the many difficulties that surround its use as a source. But quibbles apart, Albrechtsen's translation of *De moribus* makes, with its companions, a most welcome aid to the future study of the Norsemen abroad.

KIRSTEN WILLIAMS

KVINNANS EKONOMISKA STÄLLNING UNDER NORDISK MEDELTTID. UPPSATSER FRAMLAGDA VID ETT KVINNOHISTORISKT SYMPOSIUM I KUNGÄLV 8-12 OKTOBER 1979. Edited by HEDDA GUNNENG and BIRGIT STRAND. *Kompendiet*. Lindome, 1981. vi+119 pp.

'Om kvinnors verklighet under medeltiden vet vi nästan ingenting alls' (p. 14) could be the motto for this collection of papers (with English summaries) presented

at a symposium held in Kungälv in October 1979. The contributors, who come from Sweden, Norway and Iceland, are mostly academic historians and in their thirties, but other generations and occupations are represented, for example by the *doyenne* of the Icelandic women's movement, Anna Sigurðardóttir. As there has been little work done on the history of women in medieval Scandinavia, many of the papers are surveys, either of methodological problems or of areas where detailed work is needed. Eva Österberg discusses the sources for the medieval history of women and the way in which these sources should be used. She suggests that, although medieval sources are few, it is possible to study later sources (from the 15th and 16th centuries) and arrive at an understanding of the middle ages by retrospection, particularly if the aim is qualitative rather than quantitative history. Ingvild Øye Sølvyberg emphasises the role of archaeology in delineating the field of activity of medieval women and shows how this can be done with the finds from Bergen. Elsa Sjöholm discusses the reliability of medieval laws as historical sources and argues against the prevailing view of written laws as an end-product of a geological accumulation which can be used as a mine of relics of laws in the earlier stages of a society. Legal provisions, according to her, must be seen as a conscious product of and having a function in the society in which they arose. A study of medieval laws and their provisions for women is the basis for several of the contributions. Randi Andersen outlines the possibilities for economic activity by women in Norway based on laws regarding inheritance and marriage. Anna Sigurðardóttir surveys the rights and duties of women as found in medieval Icelandic law, illustrated by examples from the sagas, and indicates that more research is needed. Helgi Þórláksson's paper on Icelandic working women, particularly weavers, is based on laws regulating working conditions and wages, and he too uses sagas to illustrate his points. However, as Sjöholm pointed out, the problem with laws is that they are normative and do not necessarily represent conditions in society exactly. Several articles provide detailed studies of smaller topics, based on non-legal historical documents. Ragnhild Aarsæther discusses the role of women in the economic life of 16th and 17th century northern Norway as determined by changing economic factors and the relative importance of fishing and farming. Erik Lönnroth analyses two letters written by Queen Margareta which show her to have been a gifted politician with a sure sense of her own superiority. The most rewarding article was Ing-Marie Munktell's study of land-registers and accounts originating in the estates of aristocratic Swedish families 1445-1520. She compares the lot of aristocratic and tenant women, often on the same estates, and we are given glimpses of their daily lives. Munktell concludes that the economic importance of aristocratic women lay mainly in their value as marriage objects, while their tenants had a vital role in the production of food and wares which was the mainstay of the estates. Both types of women acquired relatively greater control over and influence on this production after they were widowed. This book is primarily intended to initiate research and debate rather than provide definitive answers. However, one conclusion which does emerge from it is just this that, insofar as women had any control over their socio-economic activity at all, it was when they became widows, whether they were tenants or nobles on Swedish estates, the wives of Norwegian *fiskerbønder*, Icelandic settlers like Auðr in djúpúðga or Queen Margareta who brought about the Kalmar Union. This control could sometimes be extended to women who were unmarried or whose husbands were absent fishing, working for the lord of the manor or travelling as merchants.

ÍSLENZKIR SJÁVARHÆTTIR I-II. By LÚÐVÍK KRISTJÁNSSON. *Bókaútgáfa Menningarsjóðs*. Reykjavík, 1980 and 1982. 472 pp. and 516 pp.

The author describes the first seed of this work as a remark made more than half a century ago about the need to save from oblivion the memory and legacy of the life and practices of Icelandic seamen in the past. The present work fulfils this aim, but the scope is also much broader, and what we have is a unique record of a nation's relationship with the sea in every conceivable aspect. It is a landmark of research, the sources consulted ranging from sagas, *jarðabækur* and church records to letters, diaries and travel books. A substantial part of the bibliography consists of unpublished manuscripts, and the author pays special tribute to his oral informants, many born in the last century, who number over two hundred. Lúðvík Kristjánsson has assimilated this prodigious bulk of material in all its diversity, and yet the result is a text so tidy and lucid that it can be read not only with pleasure, but with a genuine feeling that one is getting as close and also as responsible a view of the subject as is possible: one is aware of the wealth of the detail rather than its weight. The first volume deals with the produce of the sea encountered on the shore: seaweed and shore plants, long important as food, fuel and fodder; shellfish; driftwood and seals. There is a complete examination of seaweed types and their appearance, distribution and uses, a discussion of the legal and practical aspects of gathering and processing driftwood, from its appearance on the shore to its use in bridges, furniture and snuff-boxes, and an analysis of the methods of hunting and dressing seals. The author substantiates the claim that without the driftwood thrown up by the sea on Icelandic beaches, the existence of the Icelandic nation could scarcely have been possible. The second volume deals with what could be called the preparation for fishing: the siting and history of fishing stations (*verstöðvar*), the *verbúðir* themselves, and the construction of boats. References to saga literature are naturally only a tiny fraction of the whole, but the student of sagas can learn a lot from the illustration of many a specialized term and from the glimpses of a vanished world preserved here. There are special lists of idioms connected with things to do with the sea, and there is a lot of folklore throughout the text, where verses, charms and customs are cited and explained. Throughout, this work is illustrated with photographs of quite exceptional quality, both in colour and in monochrome, and also with drawings and diagrams which often have the edge on photographs as regards detail and clarity. The quality of paper and print is outstanding. Each volume is thoroughly indexed, with useful cross-referencing, and has an English summary. There are many fold-out maps. A third volume, covering fishing and fish-processing, is in preparation.

JEFFREY COSSER

VIKING AGE DENMARK. By ELSE ROESDAHL. Translated by Susan Margeson and Kirsten Williams. *A Colonnade Book published by British Museum Publications Ltd*. London, 1982. 272 pp.

Of the seeming plethora of books in English on Viking Scandinavia which have appeared during the last few years, nearly all have attempted to cover the whole geographical area with which the Scandinavian peoples were concerned during those dramatic two and a half centuries. Only two have, in fact, confined themselves within the bounds of one of the modern Nordic countries — in both cases Denmark, and in both written by a native archaeologist. Klavs Randsborg's study, *The Viking*

age in Denmark (1980), was avowedly controversial, and, as its subtitle *The formation of a state* suggests, was devoted to a central theme, around which various forms of evidence — written sources, rune stones, settlement remains, burials and silver hoards — were gathered. The contribution of Else Roesdahl, now lecturing at the University of Århus, while it inevitably overlaps at many points with Randsborg's and uses much the same evidence, is sober and uncontentious with its material arranged in a fairly conventional way under chapter headings like 'Transport and communications', 'The first towns' and 'Art and ornament'. It is, however, at least equally welcome both for the clarity of its presentation and for the attractive way in which it has been produced under the auspices of the British Museum; its many photos and line-drawings are more closely integrated with the text than is often the case. The reader will find in its pages reliable — if tantalizingly brief — guides to recent archaeological discoveries and investigations, not only the by now familiar Skuldelev ships, but also the less familiar settlements at Vorbasse and Sædding in Jutland, so valuable because of the paucity of non-urban Viking habitation sites. And since it is Viking Age and not modern Denmark which dictates its geographical boundaries, excavations in Lund and other locations in Skåne can be included. There is a final chapter on Danish contacts abroad during the period, but since the author is largely concerned with material remains and these are often difficult, if not impossible, to 'nationalize', it is the least satisfying. It may indeed, of course, be questioned how far one is justified in dividing up the Viking world into countries which were only just emerging as political entities at the time and when the Nordic peoples at the end of the first millennium still shared so much of a common culture. But both Randsborg's and Roesdahl's books suggest in their different ways that an approach on a smaller geographical scale can be fruitful. Something on the same lines for Norway and Sweden would certainly be useful.

STEWART OAKLEY

ARKEOLOGI PÅ GOTLAND. Edited by WALDEMAR FALCK, ERIK NYLÉN, KARIN NYLÉN, BENGT SCHÖNBÄCK and KARIN SVAHNSTRÖM. *Gotlandica nr 14*. Barry Press Förlag. Visby, 1979, 275 pp.

Here is a welcome medley of recent work on Gotlandic archaeology in the prehistoric and medieval periods, both on land and under the sea, reported on by thirty contributors (some appearing more than once), under the control of five editors. Neatly packaged and lavishly illustrated, it contains something for everyone — even a topless model clad only in seals' teeth (Bild 3) — but not too much of anything. It consists of straightforward gobbits of information about new techniques, new finds and recent excavations, with a few linking sections of a more general nature. It is strongest on Viking Age and medieval discoveries and is thus of particular interest to members of the Viking Society. No one need, however, fear indigestion from even so rich and varied a diet, for no contribution runs to more than four pages of text and as many of illustrations; to each is appended an up-to-date bibliography and a German summary. No reader will fail to be impressed by the quantity and quality of the archaeological work that has been undertaken on Gotland during the last decade and that is still very much in progress. It would be invidious amongst the work of so many to name but a few. Suffice it to say that this reviewer has had his appetite whetted for the appearance of final reports on numerous projects so briefly summarized in this small, but enterprising book, with its well-designed and pleasing format.

JAMES GRAHAM-CAMPBELL

DE KOMMO VIDA . . . VIKINGARS HAMN VID PAVIKEN PÅ GOTLAND. By PER LUNDSTRÖM. *Statens sjöhistoriska museum*. Uddevalla, 1981. 144 pp.

This beautifully produced and attractive book is primarily designed for the general reader but at the same time provides the specialist with the first comprehensive account of the 8th to 10th-century harbour and manufacturing centre of Paviken on the west coast of Gotland. The site was excavated by Per Lundström, director of Statens sjöhistoriska museum in Stockholm, from 1967 to 1973, when approximately one fifteenth of the estimated total occupation area (15,000 m²) was uncovered. The method of excavation resulted in the discovery of only sparse traces of dwellings in the form of stone-lined post-holes and hearths, but produced some 10,000 small objects of Vendel period and Viking age date. These form the basis of the present publication. The finds are grouped according to their use and there are sections devoted to hunting and fishing, household equipment, leisure activities, weapons, horse equipment, jewellery and tools. The descriptions of these, and the excellent colour plates that accompany them give a graphic picture of life of this community during the three hundred years of its existence. The most exciting sections of the book, however, are those devoted to the industrial life of the community during this period. The finds show that Paviken was an important ship-building and ship-repairing centre of the Viking Age. The superlative craftsmanship of Viking Age ships has long been known from the Oseberg and Gokstad ships in Norway and the Skuldelev ships from the Roskilde Fjord in Denmark, but now for the first time we have an insight into the methods employed in constructing such vessels. This fact alone would make Paviken of outstanding significance for the student of the history and archaeology of the Vikings. But at Paviken there is also evidence for other crafts: the cutting of garnets for insertion into jewellery (mostly of the Vendel period), the production of bone and antler combs, the casting of bronze jewellery, and iron working. The raw materials involved in all these activities were almost entirely imported from elsewhere, and this throws further light on Paviken. It was not only a ship-building and manufacturing centre, it was also a centre of Baltic trade. Per Lundström concludes from the occupation evidence and lack of extensive cemeteries in the neighbourhood that Paviken was a seasonally occupied site, and therefore different from Hedeby and Birka which he cites as its closest parallels. It was perhaps defended by Västergarn which lies slightly to the south and whose great semi-circular wall also inspires comparison with those of 10th-century Birka and Hedeby. He suggests that Paviken was the outpost for the administrative district (*sätting*) of Hejde with a summer population drawn from the permanently occupied scattered farmsteads of the interior, and points to Visby and to Boge as similar outposts for the districts of Bro and Rute respectively. He ends by suggesting that other outposts might be found elsewhere on the Gotlandic coast and lists some ways in which these sites might be discovered. In short, this is a most stimulating publication of a highly important site. The format as a popular work avoids the turgid prose and lengthy catalogues of conventional excavation reports and the fact that the excavation of Paviken is one of the most exciting archaeological investigations of the past two decades comes through all the more clearly as a result.

HELEN CLARKE

GRÍMNIR. RIT UM NAFNFRÆÐI I. Edited by ÞÓRHALLUR VILMUNDARSON. *Órnefnastofnun Þjóðminjasafns*. Reykjavík, 1980. 143 pp.

It is not usually considered a great event when the first number of a new learned

periodical is published — such things must happen almost every day. It is, however, novel and remarkable when, as is the case with *Grímnir*, a new journal appears which is edited, and its contents written by one and the same person. This is a periodical of place-name studies, almost every page of which is from the pen of the director of Örnefnastofnun Þjóðminjasafns, Professor Þórhallur Vilmundarson (abbreviated: P.V.). In a foreword, P.V. sets out the aims of *Grímnir* and explains the periodical's name by reference to *Grímnismál*, 'hið dularfulla nafnakvæði Eddu': Icelandic place-name scholars, he says, find themselves between two fires: 'Annars vegar brennur heitt á þeim eldur eyðingarinnar, hættan á glötun hluta hins íslenska örnefnaforða, ef skráningu hans er ekki sinnt sem skyldi nú á elleftu stundu. Hins vegar brennur á þeim þörfin á að skilja nöfnin sem réttustum skilningi.' And he elaborates the conceit: Geirrörðr he likens to one 'sem eldana kyndir og í hættu teflir menningararfinum, en knýr jafnframt fram andsvör', while Agnarr is he who 'hornið ber og fræðin styrkir — og ríkið erfir.' *Grímnir* contains four articles all by P.V.: 'Helkunduheiði' (pp. 7-23); 'Nýnefni og örnefnavernd á Íslandi' (pp. 24-36); 'Sængurfoss' (pp. 37-44); 'Frá Örnefnastofnun' (pp. 50-56). In addition, there is a review (again by P.V.) of two Swedish folkloristic and place-name studies (pp. 45-9). But the greater part of *Grímnir* (pp. 57-140) is devoted to a 'Safn til íslenskrar örnefnabókar' (abbreviated here: 'Safn') in which P.V. briefly discusses sixty-nine individual Icelandic place-names. There are photographs, plans and maps throughout the book.

In 1966 P.V. gave the first of his public lectures on Icelandic place-names. These were so well attended that the largest theatre in Reykjavík, the Háskólabíó, was hardly large enough to hold the would-be audience. His lectures attracted a good deal of attention at the time, although his theories did not find their way into print until 1969 (P.V. *Um sagnfræði*, 1969, pp. 105-11; P.V., 'Kennd er við Hálfðan hurðin rauð', in *Afmælisrit Jóns Helgasonar*, 1969). Briefly stated, it was P.V.'s view that a considerable number of Icelandic place-names have been incorrectly understood as compounds of personal names rather than as 'nature-names' ('náttúrunöfn') referring to local topography and physical features (cf. *Um sagnfræði*, p. 107). Two factors have, in P.V.'s view, conduced to such misunderstandings: (a) a number of Icelandic personal names were in fact themselves originally place-names or nature-names (e.g. *Bolli*, *Hallur*, *Kolbeinn*, *Steinn*, *Torfi*); (b) at an early stage, second elements were added to such names (e.g. *Kolbeinn*>*Kolbeinsey*). From *Grímnir* it is clear that P.V. has revised and slightly modified the views put forward in his original lectures of 1966 and subsequent articles (cf. the following by P.V.: 'stad. Ísland', *Kulturhistorisk leksikon for nordisk middelalder*, XVI, 1971; 'Úr Lifrardal til Liverpool' in *Afmælisrit til Steingrims J. Þorsteinssonar*, 1971; 'Lúdent' in *Afmælisrit Björns Sigfússonar*, 1975; 'Um klausturnöfn', *Árbók Fornleifafélagsins*, 1975; 'Af Sturlum og stöðlum', in *Minjar og mennir. Afmælisrit helgað Kristjáni Eldjárn*, 1976; 'Hugarflug og veruleiki í íslenskum örnefnum', *Namn och bygd*, 1978). On the other hand, his basic ideas seem to have remained unchanged.

In *Grímnir*'s first item, 'Helkunduheiði', P.V.'s skills but also his shortcomings as an interpreter of place-names become apparent. He begins by reviewing Magnus Olsen's explanation of the name put forward in 1932. According to Olsen, contemporary Icelanders would connect the element *Helkundu-* with some such word as *samkund*, *samkunda*, 'meeting' and understand the name as 'den heiðr hvor man kommer til Hel', 'Hel-komst-heien'. Olsen himself, however, compared the element *helkundu-* with Gothic *airþakunds*, 'av jordisk herkomst', Old English

helcund, 'som stammer fra hel(vede)', Old Icelandic *trollkundur*, 'som stammer fra troll', and posits a lost noun **halkunda*, 'et kvinnelig vesen som hører til de dødes verden', as first element of this name; *Helkunduheiðr* would have been thought of as an area which was the domain of, or in some way associated with such a being. P.V., on the other hand, while he does not necessarily dismiss Olsen's derivation, sees the origin of *Helkunduheiði* in the physical features of the place. Following Þorvaldur Thoroddsen, P.V. regards 'the main characteristics of parts of the heath' as 'the innumerable erratic blocks dispersed over the heathlands' (p. 22). With these in mind, P.V. goes on to suggest a connection between the first part of the name (*Helkundu-*) and Old Norse *helkn*, (*hæln*), *hqlkn*, 'rough stony ground', 'lava', 'flat rocky ground'. Of the following two etymologies of this word, P.V. opts for the first without much discussion: (1) *hqlkn* < **horkn* (< **hardukin*?); cf. *harðr*, *hqrzl* (Alexander Jóhannesson); (2) as related to *hallr*, 'boulder', with *k-* suffix (< **hallukína*) (more properly, then, *hqlkn* or *høllkn*) (de Vries). He goes on to enumerate a number of place-names (mainly river-names) in which the element *hqlkn* (and *hqrzl*) appears, e.g. *Hölná* (*Hörkná*, *Hólná*, *Hörtná*, *Hölná*), *Hólnalækur*, *Hörtl*, *Hörtlafoss* and *Hörzl*; all these places are connected with stony, rocky ground. His proposal, then, is that the place-name *Helkunduheiðr* is derived from an older **Hqlknaheiðr*. And in support of this proposition, he produces various pieces of evidence. In one copy (AM. 214, 8vo b, dated 1600-1620) of *Kirknatal Páls byskups Jónssonar* (from about 1200; cf. *Diplomatarium Islandicum*, XII p. 3) the name is spelt *Hoolkunduheidi* and this spelling in P.V.'s view might suggest a form with *q* in the first syllable. — A noun *hqlkn* appears in various Norwegian and Faroese place-names (e.g. *Heltn* < *Helkn*, *Holknom*; *Heltnin*). — In the west of Iceland (Dalasýsla), there is another heath, *Hólknaheiði*, the name of which, together with connected names, in P.V.'s view, bears out his theory. Older forms of the first element of this name are *Holkunar-* (1725), *Hólkna-* (1844), *Hólkunnar-* (ca. 1850). On the heath, there is a mountain called *Hólknarhnúkur* (1844), *Hólkonuhnjúkur* (20th c.) and a valley nearby is called *Hólknar-* or *Hólkonudalur* in the 19th century. The heath and the valley are covered with rocks and it seems probable that the names in question have developed from forms which had *Hqlkna-* as first element. But what is interesting is that the forms in *Hólkonu-* have given rise to folk-tales about a giantess in the area ('Stórkonan í Hólkknadal'). Here, then, we would have a parallel to a place-name originally *Hqlknaheiðr* developing in such a way as to produce the name of a female supernatural being (with *Hólkonu-*, cf. *Helkundu-*). — And somewhat the same, P.V. argues, may be said of the names *Herkonuklettur* and *Herkonugil* in Skagafjörður. There are folk-tales connecting both these names with giantesses. And the element *Herkonu-* has according to P.V. probably developed from an older *Horkna-* and not *herr*, a giant, as previously thought, but is related to the river-name *Hörkná* and other derivatives of *hqlkn*. Summing up, P.V. traces the development of *Helkunduheiði* backwards as follows: *Helkundu-* (-ar-; the form *Helkundar-* appears frequently from 15th c. onwards.) < **Helkunnar-* < **Helkunar-* < **Helkna-* < **Hqlkna-heiðr*, that is, 'from M. Olsen's supposed giantess back to the descriptive name-element *Hqlkna-* which depicts the boulder-strewn heath' (p. 23). P.V. adds the reservation, however, that 'it is difficult to decide how the Icelanders who first used the form *Helkunduheiðr* understood the name: whether they perhaps thought of the first part as the name of a giantess descended from Hel, as M. Olsen did, or connected it with the noun *samkunda*, -kund 'meeting', cfr. the Icelandic place-name *Kundubakkar* ' (p. 23).

Now interesting though P.V.'s arguments are, they are open to various objections. The main one is that he does not convincingly demonstrate how **Helkunnar-* could have become *Helkundu-*. What sound-change, one must ask oneself, is involved here? P.V.'s explanation that *Helkunduheiðr* could have developed from **Hǫlksnaheiðr* by being 'aukinn miðstofni' (inaccurately translated (p. 22) as 'lengthened by an inserted element') is unsatisfactory. The examples P.V. produces as parallels to this development, *Silfra->Silfreks- Silfrúnarstaðir*, *Kyrna->Kýrrunnarstaðir*, are, as he himself notes, due very much to folk-etymology and therefore scarcely analogous. Either the name *Helkunduheiði* must be considered a compound of three nouns or two nouns and an adjective (*hel*, *kundr* (or *kunda*) and *heiði* (<*heiðr*) (so Magnus Olsen), or the component *-und-* must be satisfactorily explained. Even though Old Icelandic contains various compounds in *Heljar-* there are those with *Hel-* as first element. The sound-change *nn>nd* does occur in Icelandic in the 14th century, but only in stressed syllables before a long vowel or diphthong. *Helkvndvheiði* and not a supposed form **Helkunnarheiði* is the oldest written form of the name (in AM.371, 4to, written 1302-10; *Hauksbók*-redaction of *Landnámabók*, ed. Jakob Benediktsson, 1974, 172 (f.8v., l.4); cf. *Hauksbók*, ed. Finnur Jónsson, 1892-96, 86). Again, the appearance of a svarabhakti-vowel between *k* and *n* (or between stops and nasals) which the development of the name suggested by P.V. presupposes (**Helksna->*Helksna(r)-*; p. 21) is quite simply unknown in Icelandic (cf. *sókn*, *vopn*, *vatt*). Nor does it appear clearly from P.V.'s exposition that the forms *Hólkn-* and *Hólkn-* are probably double forms: Old Icelandic *o* has been preserved locally in some places as *o* (pronounced [ɔ]) as, for example, in the double forms *mokkur/mökkur* <*mǫkk*, or the prevailing form has only *o*, e.g. *dokk*, *dokka* <*dǫkk*. The word *hǫlkn* has developed to produce the double forms *hólkn* and *hólkn* (the *ó* in this latter to be explained as the result of lengthening of vowels before *l*+consonant (*k*, *g*, *p*, *f*, *m*), e.g. *fólk* <*fólk*). All in all, it can be said that the way P.V. traces the development of this name does not carry conviction.

P.V.'s interpretation of the waterfall-name *Sængurfoss* is more acceptable. This is that it is related to an Icelandic verb *sangra* (cf. Norwegian *sangra*, 'klynke, pibe, give en langtrukken, hvinende Lyd' (Aasen)), rather than to *sæng* (genitive *sængur*), 'eiderdown', as popular etymology and a local folk-tale would suggest. P.V. considers the first element of the compound to be a noun, **sangr*, 'song' (cf. Norwegian *sanger*, 'Klynken, klynkende Stemme' (Aasen)) and that the name refers to the noise made by the waterfall. The diphthong [ai] could be explained as a dialectal pronunciation before *ng/nk* which is, of course, otherwise attested in the part of Iceland in question. It should be noted, however, that the Icelandic verb *sangra*, and a related noun *sangran*, are only really known from a single authority, viz. Björn Halldórsson í Sauðlauksdal's *Lexicon islandico-latino-danicum* (1814, II, p. 229) and that this is not always a reliable source (cf. Jón Helgason in *Bibliotheca Arnarnæna*, XXIX, 1967, p. 103). As parallel to a form **sangr* (related to *songr*), P.V. might have mentioned the Norwegianisms *hreysikatr*, *galtr*, which are not used in Icelandic after the Middle Ages and the unmutated *hatt(u)r* (*a*-stem) which gains ground in Icelandic at the expense of the older form *hqt(u)r* (*u*-stem).

For students of Old Icelandic, it is perhaps the 'Safn til íslenzkrar örnefnabókar' in *Grimnir* which is most valuable. This contains brilliant interpretations of a number of place-names and very often P.V. succeeds in showing how given stories could have arisen from place-names and how they have come to take their place

in the pseudo-historical literature of early Iceland, first and foremost in *Landnámabók* and in the *Íslendingasögur*. P.V. often makes skilful use of photographs to back up his interpretations. A good example is the name *Berserkjahraun*. Taking *berserkr* to mean either 'fáklæddur' or 'skyrtilaus', P.V. posits a place-name **Berserkir* which would originally have referred to the naked heaps of pumice which are found in the area. This name would have given rise to the well-known story in *Eyrbyggja saga*. P.V. might have mentioned for comparative purposes the place-name *Grábrók* which is based on similarity between clothing and physical features of the landscape. Again, P.V.'s interpretations of names which have *Gufu-* as the first element is doubtless correct: for example, the place-names *Gufuskálar* have nothing to do with Ketill gufa Órlygsson's nickname but rather with physical features in the places in question. On the other hand, the shortcomings of P.V.'s 'Safn' are of the same sort as in his article on *Helkunduheiði*: grammatical and phonological explanations are often too short or not altogether convincing. How, for example, can *Flugumýrr* be derived from a more original **Flofumýrr* (p. 83)? Where this name appears in the manuscripts, it is always spelt with *u* (*v*) in the first syllable and there is no evidence for a sound-change $\varphi > u$ in stressed syllables in Old Icelandic. And another quite serious deficiency is the fact that neither phonetic transcriptions of the various place-names nor details of any variant or local pronunciation are given on a systematic basis. In certain cases these would have been relevant to P.V.'s interpretations. Thus modern pronunciation may indicate whether a particular vowel was originally long or short, as, for instance, in the first syllable of *Dýrafjörður*. The traditional interpretation of this name, based on modern pronunciation, takes its first element as genitive of a personal name *Dýri* which is otherwise practically unknown in early Iceland. The orthography of the two existing paper manuscripts does not help in deciding whether the vowel in question was long (*y*) or short (*y*). P.V. on the other hand, regards the original form of the name as **Durafjörðr* from *dýrr* (genitive plural *duraldýra*) 'door', 'opening', and thinks it refers to the portal-like entrance to the fjord between two mountains (cf. such place-names as *Dyrhólaey* and *Dyrfjöll*). He is able to point to a spelling (albeit a unique one) (*j*) *durafirde* (*Diplomatarium Islandicum*, VI, p. 746) in support of his view and also to other cases where the elements *Dyra-* and *Dýra-* have been confused in place-names. But it would have been useful to have details of the modern pronunciation to help us make up our minds on this matter. Again, P.V. argues that the name *Brúnastaðir* which is borne by four farms in Iceland is connected not with a man called Brúni but with burn-beating ('svidning'; cf. *Kulturhistorisk leksikon*, s.v. *Svedjebruk*); he compares such Norwegian and Swedish names as *Brunstad*; *Brun-*, *Bråne-*, *Brånesta(d)* which he regards as of the same origin. P.V. notes that the first element of the name *Brúnahvammur* in *Vopnafjörður* (eastern Iceland) could be pronounced as if it were spelt with both *-u-* and *-ú-* but again he gives no phonetic transcription. P.V.'s explanation of *Brúnastaðir* could well be right, but he might have mentioned the various local senses the word *bruni* might have (e.g. 'lava', 'hayfield', 'landslip', etc.) as these could, of course, also be of relevance. (This entry on *Brúnastaðir* in 'Safn' and also the one on *Gilsfjörður* should have contained some reference to Hans Kuhn's articles in *Árbók Fornleifafélagsins*, 1943-48, 66-80 ('Hátúningamelur og Gnúpverjahreppur'); 1949-50, 5-40 ('Vestfirzk örnefni')). P.V. also discusses (p. 105) the word *Kein*, the name of a pond, which does not occur in any written source, and which P.V. plausibly suggests is related to Middle Dutch *kene*, *keen*, Old English *chinu*, English *chine* 'deep, narrow ravine cut in rock by stream'. But

one wonders if it might not just as well be explained as *Keyn* and related to *kaun*, 'boil, sore'. The advantage of many of P.V.'s interpretations lie in his intimate knowledge of local topography, folklore, trade-practices and the like. He has also made a thorough study of all the sources for the various names and compares similar or related place-names in Iceland and Scandinavia. And, not least important, he provides us with photographs of the places in question; these, and the many maps in *Grímnir*, will be of great value to Icelandic and non-Icelandic scholars alike. In 'Safn', P.V. has not given himself much space for each individual name, but it seems to me that he has collected and discussed the main secondary sources for those names he has dealt with. On the other hand, one might criticize him for not discussing more fully interpretations which run counter to his own. For example, in his entry on *Mýlaugsstaðir*, he should have mentioned Svavar Sigmundsson's discussion of this name (cf. 'Mannanöfn í örnefnum', *Saga*, 10, 1972, 58-91), nor does he pay due attention to Helgi Þorláksson's ideas on the naming of pools, cliffs, skerries, etc. after persons in both Norway and Iceland (cf. 'Sjö örnefni og Landnáma', *Skírnir*, 152, 1978, 114-61).

It is not to be expected that scholars will agree with all of P.V.'s ideas and theories. He has, however, succeeded in throwing new light on place-name studies and, as is manifest in 'Safn', has done much good work in organizing the collection and classification of Icelandic place-names, many of which would otherwise have been lost. Because of his researches, historians (for example) will be much more careful in using sources like *Landnámabók*. On the other hand, P.V.'s views are often one-sided. In some cases there must have been good authority for a place being named after the people who lived there.

Grímnir is extremely well produced. I noted only one printing error in the whole book and the plates and maps are excellent. It might have been more helpful to give manuscripts their numbers rather than Icelandic names (e.g. 'AM.468, 4to' instead of '*Reykjabók*', etc.). In one place (p. 91) P.V. refers to an article in 'Mbl.' (12/11, 1974) and non-Icelandic readers might like to know that this refers to the conservative daily paper *Morgunblaðið*. The acknowledgements (p. 4) say that all the maps are published by permission of 'Landmælingar' or 'Sjómælingar Íslands', but on page 92 there is a map clearly intended for English-speaking readers: who, one may ask, published this? But such technical imperfections are trivial. In his foreword, P.V. expressly avoids committing himself to regular publication of further numbers. But *Grímnir* has more merits than shortcomings and regular publication would undoubtedly sustain and refresh Old Norse-Icelandic place-name studies. The venture has had a good start. Let us hope it will be continued in like manner on a regular basis.*

SVERRIR TÓMASSON

* *Grímnir 2* was published in 1983 (eds.)

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THE READER IN *GRETTIS SAGA*

BY ROBERT COOK

MY title reflects the language of a current mode of criticism known variously as "reader-response criticism" or "affective stylistics" or "Rezeptionsästhetik" (cf. Warning 1975; Crosman and Suleiman 1980; Tompkins 1980), the basic premises of which deserve to be considered in regard to the sagas of Icelanders. These premises may be summed up in Georges Poulet's dogma that books only take on their full existence in the reader (1969, 54; also in Tompkins 1980, 42), or in Wolfgang Iser's claim that "a text can only come to life when it is read, and if it is to be examined, it must therefore be studied through the eyes of the reader" (1971, 2-3). Of the many theoretical treatments of reader-response criticism, Iser's description of the fundamental "indeterminacy" (*Unbestimmtheit*) of literary texts and of the aesthetic response as consisting of the reader's juxtaposing the various views offered by a text and filling in the inevitable "gaps" (*Leerstellen*; Iser 1971, 10-14; German version in Warning 1975, 234-6) seems particularly suited to the experience of reading a work like *Grettis saga*. My concern, however, is practical rather than doctrinaire, and what follows is something like a traditional "close reading"; I follow the reader-response critics to the extent of concentrating on the experience of a modern, informed reader of the sagas as he confronts the text sequentially. Such a concentration is of course one-sided, for there are many stages in the literary transaction beyond the experience of reading the text, but *Grettla* and the sagas of Icelanders in general have been getting their share of historical and rhetorical and thematic study and it may be useful now to examine, insofar as it is possible, the experience of the reader. The reader of *Grettla* has an exciting role to play: faced with a confusion of fragmentary perspectives on the hero's character, both the contradictory actions of Grettir himself and the comments and attitudes of others, he has a hard time making up his mind about Grettir. I shall try to describe the activity in the reader's mind as he moves from bewilderment and uncertainty about Grettir to a position of relative clarity by the time Grettir begins his outlawry in Chapter 47.

Grettir does not appear until the fourteenth chapter of his saga.

In the first thirteen chapters there is a full history of his great-grandfather Qnundr tréfótr (Chs. 1-10) and then an account of two generations in Iceland, that of Grettir's grandfather Þorgrímur hærulkollr (Chs. 11-12) and that of his father Ásmundur hærulangi (Ch. 13). As he goes through this material the reader will probably ask himself what relation, if any, it bears to the story of Grettir. (The reader is not told in advance that these are Grettir's forefathers, but he is likely to guess it.) An answer to this question has been offered by Denton Fox and Hermann Pálsson (1974, viii-ix) and simultaneously by Kathryn Hume (1974, 478-9): that Qnundr tréfótr's world of viking adventure would have suited Grettir well, had he not had the bad fortune of being born too late and into a more confining society; the prologue (Chs. 1-13) thus prepares for the main theme of the saga, the incongruity of Grettir's brand of heroic individualism in civilized, authoritarian Iceland. It would be off the point to agree with or to challenge this suggestive reading, which may well come after long reflection on the saga but will not occur in the process of reading to which we are committed here. Let us try instead to imagine, briefly, what the reader of the first part of the saga experiences.

The ten chapters on Qnundr tréfótr summarize an exciting life in such a dry and straightforward way that he comes across as a typical viking who opposed Haraldr hárfagri and eventually settled in Iceland. Even the most dramatic episode in his career, the fight with the vikings Vígbjóðr and Vestmarr (Ch. 4) has been called a typical *víkingasaga*, probably invented by the author on the model of similar stories in other sagas (Ólsen 1937-9, 298). In spite of his having been "frœknastr . . . ok fimastr einfœttr maðr á Íslandi" (*Grettis saga* 1936, 25-6), Qnundr's story will strike most readers as routine stuff. In Chapters 11 and 12, on the other hand, with the first generation to be born in Iceland, events take on a bizarre turn and might even be seen as parodies of earlier ones. The near-killing of Þorgeirr Qnundarson, who is saved by the flask of whey he is carrying on his back, may remind the reader of the near-killing of Ásgrímur Qndóttsson in Chapter 7: in both cases the adversaries have the mistaken belief that they have been successful. But the similarity only underscores the fact that the second scene, with the sharp squishy sound of an axe penetrating a leather flask full of whey, is far more vivid and dramatic, even comic. The reader might also compare the nickname *flöskubakr* applied to Þorgeirr with the nickname *tréfótr* given to his father in Chapter 2; they are similar in having a second element which refers to a

part of the body, but whereas *tréfótr* suggests Qnundr's heroic dignity, *flöskubakr* is ludicrous. Again, the large-scale battle at Rífsker in Chapter 12 may be perceived as a parody of the battle of Hafrsfjörðr in Chapter 2; in both a forebear of Grettir's is dealt a severe blow (Qnundr loses his leg, his son Ófeigr grettir loses his life) and is taken away from the scene of battle by ship. But the first battle is treated with awe as a major historical event ("Þessi orrosta hefir einhver verit mest í Nóregi," p. 5), while the second — in which two bands of Icelanders go at each other over a beached whale, with meat axes, whale ribs, and bits of meat — is called *óknyttin*, "unseemly" (p. 31), in the verse composed about the battle.

The reader need not notice the parallels I have suggested to be aware of a new vividness in Chapters 11 and 12, and that it accompanies a new set of circumstances. In contrast to the generosity with which Eiríkr snara gave a large portion of his land to Qnundr *tréfótr*, Eiríkr's son Flosi treats Qnundr's sons with unjustified pettiness, first over the land and then over the driftage rights. What was left to a gentleman's agreement in the older generation turns into a cause for malice in the younger, leading to the attempt to kill Þorgeirr and the battle over the whale at Rífsker. The new subject matter — the family of Qnundr being victimized by the pettiness of others — seems to have struck a responsive chord in the author.

Chapter 13 moves to the third generation and gives a brief but complete biography of Grettir's father: his troubles with his father, his success abroad, his two marriages, his settling in Iceland. It does for Ásmundr in one swift chapter what the first ten chapters did for Qnundr, only this time the subject is a merchant, not a viking. In contrast to Chapters 11 and 12, this chapter contains no dramatic events, but rather such dry material as that taken from *Kristni saga* about the coming of Christianity to the north of Iceland (cf. Ólsen 1937-9, 292; *Grettis saga* 1936, xxviii). Even the events most suitable for dramatic development, such as Ásmundr's conflict with his father or his amassing of wealth, are treated with bland summarization in this chapter ("Ásmundr vildi lítt vinna, ok var fátt um með þeim feðgum," "Hann sigldi til ýmissa landa ok gerðisk inn mesti kaupmaðr ok vellauðigr"). Whether the author was merely putting down information which he felt required to report but which did not inspire him, or whether he was intending a contrast with what went before, the reader experiences Chapter 13 as a dry pause in the narrative whose completeness — the

chapter ends with Ásmundr settling down at Bjarg with his second wife Ásdís — prepares the reader for a new start in Chapter 14.

None of this, however, fully prepares the reader for what comes with the introduction of Grettir in Chapter 14 (p. 36):

Annan son áttu þau [Ásmundr and Ásdís], er Grettir var kallaðr; hann var mjök ódæll í uppvexti sínum, fátalaðr ok óþýðr, bellinn bæði í orðum ok tiltekðum. Ekki hafði hann ástríki mikit af Ásmundi, fður sínum, en móðir hans unni honum mikit. Grettir Ásmundarson var fríðr maðr sýnum, breiðleitr ok skammeitr, rauðhærðr ok næsta freknótt, ekki bráðgörr, meðan hann var á barnsaldri.

This portrait, following hard on that of his brother Atli, is much more complex than any thus far in the saga and tells us that we have come to the main character. It has three parts: a description of his character, a statement about his relationships with his parents, and a physical description. No other portrait has had all three, or has dwelt so much on spiritual qualities, or used such expressive language (e.g. “bellinn bæði í orðum ok tiltekðum”). But along with this comparative fullness the portrait presents gaps: is Grettir’s difficult nature the cause or the result of Ásmundr’s dislike of his son? The order of presentation — Grettir’s character is described before the statement that his father did not care for him — might suggest that Grettir is the source of the problem, but then Ásmundr’s own history might suggest that he was treating his son in the same fashion as his father had treated him, whether fairly or not. In Chapter 13 the blame for the discord is laid on Ásmundr; with Grettir the question is left open, and the reader must turn to the succeeding events for an answer.

The story of Grettir’s prankish responses to the three tasks assigned by his father, however, proves to be ambiguous. From Grettir’s point of view the first two tasks are in themselves insulting; the first, minding the geese, he calls “lítit verk ok lqðrmannligt” (p. 37), and of the second, rubbing his father’s back, he says “Heitt mun þat um hqnd . . . en þó er verkit lqðrmannligt” (p. 38). Nonetheless he tries each one. In the first, his short temper (“hann var lítill skapdeildarmaðr,” says the narrator on p. 37) causes him to lose patience with minding the slow creatures, and so he kills some goslings and mutilates some of the geese. It is hard to look favourably on this act of cruelty. As for the second task, although Grettir considers it to be similarly beneath him, he performs it satisfactorily for a time, until his father provokes him (p. 38):

“Nú muntu verða af þér at draga slenit, mannskrafan,” segir hann. Grettir segir: “Illt er at eggja óbilgjarnan.” Ásmundr mælti: “Aldri er dugr í þér.”

In this exchange the father is the one who is guilty of impatience:

he speaks irritably and insultingly to his son, without provocation, while Grettir's remark, a bit of proverbial wisdom, is far more impersonal and temperate. Grettir's physical reaction, however, is more severe, when he runs a wool comb with sharp iron teeth down his father's back. Ásdís's comment that Grettir will not turn out to be prudent (*fyrirleitinn*, p. 39) is an accurate but neutral comment on the action, leaving the reader to wonder whether it was justified revenge or vicious cruelty.

The third task is to take care of the horses and to keep them grazing outside unless the mare Kengála refuses to leave the stable — this is a sure sign of a coming storm. Grettir's comment on this job is that it is more manly than the other two, but cold, and that he doesn't like taking orders from a mare. The prank which he eventually performs — cutting Kengála's back with a knife so that the skin is loosened all the way from the shoulders to the loins — looks like a second instance of gratuitous cruelty to animals and perhaps a third example of sadism. On the other hand, the text makes clear that Grettir suffers severely because he is badly dressed and not accustomed to the cold to which Kengála forces him to be exposed (p. 40):

Pá gerði á kulða mikla með snjóvum ok illt til jarða. Grettir var lítt settr at klæðum, en maðr lítt harðnaðr; tók hann nú at kala, en Kengála stóð á, þar sem mest var svæðit, í hverju illviðri; aldri kom hon svá snimma í haga, at hon myndi heim ganga fyrir dagsetr.

Surely it is unjust and perverse for a father who craves warmth for himself ("gerðisk Ásmundr heitfengr mjök," p. 38) to allow his son to be so badly clothed for a task that involves extreme exposure to the cold, just as it is inconsistent for a father who was indolent in his own youth to be unsympathetic toward a son who balks at lowly tasks. And not only his father, but fate also seems to be working against Grettir. Kengála is one of those strange animals who, like Freyfaxi in *Hrafnkels saga*, does exactly that which hurts her keeper the most: in spite of wretchedly cold weather she stays outside all day long. It is understandable that Grettir reacts with a prank that has the desirable effect of making her stay in the stable.

By the end of Chapter 14, which is as dense and surprising as Chapter 13 was dense and predictable, the reader is not certain whether he has met a tyrannous and unreasonable father, an incorrigible and sadistic ten-year-old, or a budding hero not content with menial tasks.¹ Ásdís's comment to Ásmundr, dividing blame between the two men, doesn't make it easier for the reader to

decide: “‘Eigi veit ek, hvárt mér þykkir meir frá móti, at þú skipar honum jafnan starfa, eða hitt, at hann leysir alla einn veg af hendi’ ” (pp. 41-2). The chapter ends with the author’s objective view of Grettir as a young man (p. 42):

Mörg bernskubroð gerði Grettir, þau sem eigi eru í sögu sett. Hann gerðisk nú mikill vexti; eigi vissu menn gørla afl hans, því at hann var óglíminn. Orti hann jafnan vísur ok kviðlinga ok þótti heldr níðskældinn. Eigi lagðisk hann í eldaskála ok var fátalaðr lengstum.

The word *bernskubroð* acts as a kind of excuse by suggesting that such pranks as the three recorded in this chapter belonged to a boyish phase in Grettir’s life. The other details in this passage do not look back as much as they anticipate, without judgement, what is to come. Later, in retrospect, the reader can see that the last three sentences in Chapter 14 carefully outline the following chapters: (1) Grettir’s untried skill in wrestling is put to the test in Chapters 15 and 16; (2) his predilection for composing mocking verses is expressed on board ship in Chapter 17; and (3) his aloofness and taciturnity are most evident in his behaviour on Háramarsey in Chapter 18, where the final phrase here, “hann . . . var fátalaðr lengstum,” is repeated (on p. 56).

In Chapter 15 the “unwrestled” Grettir is given a chance to try his strength against his older kinsman Auðunn, and one purpose of the episode of the ball-game is to show that Grettir had strength far beyond his fourteen years (“Þóttusk menn þá sjá, at Grettir var sterkari en menn ætluðu, því at Auðunn var rammr at afli,” pp. 43-4). Whether the episode also shows Grettir to be an ugly character is another matter. When Auðunn hits the ball over Grettir’s head, Grettir becomes angry because he thinks that Auðunn was being unfair (“Grettir varð reiðr við þetta, ok þótti Auðunn vilja leika á sik,” p. 43). His response is to throw the ball at Auðunn, hitting him in the forehead and breaking the skin. The two boys then wrestle, and Auðunn gives Grettir a drubbing (“lét Auðunn þá fylgja kné kviði ok fór illa með hann,” p. 44). Grettir does not like this treatment, but contents himself with the menacing generalization, “‘Præll einn þegar hefnisk, en argr aldri’ ” (p. 44). In judging Grettir’s reaction we might note that those who have studied these obscure ball-games agree that the ball would normally have been hit in such a way as to bounce along the ground or ice and that it would have been unfair to hit the ball so high that the opponent could not catch it (Björn Bjarnason 1950, 176, 179; Knudsen 1906, 76). In any case it is clear that Grettir *thought* that Auðunn was not playing fairly. Most readers of the saga will

be familiar with *Egils saga*, in which a similar scene occurs (Ch. 40). Egill too is matched as a youngster (six years old) against an older boy in a ball-game; when the older boy, Grímr, proves to be the stronger — there is no hint of foul play or the perception of foul play — Egill responds by hitting him with the bat, and Grímr then gives him a drubbing (“en Grímr tók hann höndum ok keyrði hann niðr fall mikit ok lék hann heldr illa,” p. 100). Egill then borrows an axe and sinks it into the head of Grímr in the midst of play. In Grettir’s terms, Egill’s behaviour is that of a thrall. Whether or not the reader of *Grettis saga* thinks of Egill, he is aware that Grettir’s behaviour toward Auðunn is comparatively temperate for a young saga hero in this position.

Although Grettir’s first slaying does not occur, like Egill’s, during a ball-game, it follows hard on (in Chapter 16) when he kills a servant named Skeggi on the way to the Althing. The fact that the quarrel is over a bag of provisions makes the killing sound unpardonable, but again the episode is presented in a way that earns respect for Grettir. When he suggests to Skeggi that they hunt together for their missing bags, we see for the first time a companionable side to Grettir. In the light of this, Skeggi’s action — running off without warning to pick up a bag, which he then refuses to show to Grettir — is most unsociable, and when the two get into a tugging match over the bag, Skeggi intensifies the quarrel with his insulting comments (p. 46):

“Undarliga ætli þér,” segir húskarlinn, “þó at menn sé eigi jafnstórauðgir allir sem þér Miðfirðingar, at menn muni eigi þora at halda á sínu fyrir yðr.” Grettir kvað þetta eigi eptir mannvirðingu ganga, þótt hvern hefði þat, er ætti. Skeggi mælti: “Of fjarri er nú Auðunn at kyrkja þik, sem við knattleikinn.” “Vel er þat,” sagði Grettir, “en eigi muntu mik kyrkja, hvern veg sem hitt hefir verit.”

Here, as in the exchange with his father over the back-rubbing, Grettir’s words are more temperate than those of his opponent. The reader also notices that it is Skeggi, who has less reason to be inflamed, who seizes a weapon, and that Grettir kills him not with a weapon of his own but in self-defence with the axe he manages to get out of Skeggi’s grasp. Following the slaying, Grettir’s acknowledgement of the deed (though at first in a witty and ambiguous verse), his decision to continue on to the Althing, his lifting of the boulder “Grettishaf,” and Porkell’s willingness to pay the compensation for Skeggi preserve a favourable picture of Grettir.

We gain an additional perspective on Grettir through the eyes of his father at the beginning and end of this chapter: Ásmundur

says “hann mun verða sterkr maðr ok óstýrilátr; þykkjumikill ok þungr hefir hann mér orðit” (p. 45); “Ásmundr tók lítt á ok kvað hann óeirðarmann verða mundu” (p. 48). Though negative, these remarks are in fact quite restrained when considered in the light of Ásmundr’s relationship with his son; he doesn’t call Grettir malicious or unfair or homicidal, but limits himself to saying that he is self-willed and bound to cause trouble — and on the positive side Ásmundr admits to Þorkell krafla that Grettir is sufficiently clever (“viti borinn,” p. 45) to carry out his affairs at the Althing.

The voyage to Norway in Chapter 17 poses still more problems for the reader who is trying to make sense of the various perspectives he gets on Grettir, who is shocked by his rash deeds but also notices admirable qualities and sees that Grettir is sometimes unfairly taxed by others. His shipboard behaviour is so outlandish that his shipmates label it *lögleysa*, “lawlessness” (p. 51), referring both to his refusal to help bail out the leaking ship and to his insulting verses. Other words used in this context, like *óþolanda*, *ólög*, *óiltækiligt*, and *ógeranda* (p. 52) show that Grettir is at his worst at the beginning of this episode. But from this low point Grettir improves dramatically when, with the weather getting worse, Hafliði magnanimously suggests that he compose a scurrilous verse about him in order to appease the sailors. Grettir at first refuses to treat Hafliði in the same way as he does the sailors, but when Hafliði then proposes that the verse be an ambiguous one that appears to insult him but actually compliments him, if carefully studied (“ef grafin er,” p. 52), Grettir rises to the challenge. We learn two things about Grettir from this: first, that he does not behave badly toward all men indiscriminately (he says later, in a different context, “eigi geri ek mér alla menn jafna,” p. 65), but that in fact his nastiness is directed only toward those he considers inferior. Such a sense of discrimination is not altogether unattractive, especially when it is combined with true admiration for superior persons, such as Grettir shows for Hafliði. The second thing we learn is that when he is presented with a challenge by someone he admires, Grettir responds positively. Hafliði’s suggestion that he compose a complex verse is a world apart from Ásmundr’s order to look after the geese. Grettir discriminates tasks as well as people.

This episode ends when Grettir, his best side having been brought to the fore by Hafliði’s magnanimity and tact, eagerly joins in bailing out the ship and does the work of eight men. The sailors change their way of speaking about him (“Þaðan af skiptisk mjök

um orðalag kaupmanna við Gretti, því at þeir sá, hvat hann átti undir sér fyrir afls sakar," p. 55), and in the same way the reader's attitude changes from disgust to admiration as he sees that Grettir is not lazy but simply prefers to save his unusual strength for unusually demanding tasks. The reader begins to see that Grettir is not only superior to others but is also conscious of his superiority. A just sense of one's own worth is an attractive quality, though it is often taken for arrogance by lesser men.

In the next episode (Chapter 18), in which Grettir has been shipwrecked and is the guest of a chieftain named Porfinnr on Háramarsey, off the coast of Sunnmøre in Norway, the reader again gets an initial bad impression, or at least a puzzling one. Grettir shuns the company of his generous host ("Grettir var honum ófylgjusamr og vildi eigi ganga með honum úti á daginn," p. 56) and instead frequents a lesser farmer named Auðunn. Grettir's behaviour is strange, and the reader knows no better than that he has his own reasons for being rude to this impressive *hofðingi* who rescued him from shipwreck. By the end of the chapter, however, Grettir has once again gained the respect both of the offended person within the saga (in this case Porfinnr) and of the reader, by breaking into the mound of Kárr inn gamli, wrestling with the ghost and cutting off its head, and bringing back the treasure to Porfinnr. The chapter has many puzzling details, if not outright contradictions,² but the general drift is the same as in Chapter 17: though he appears unattractive at first, Grettir forces the reader to re-evaluate him and wins the reader's admiration. It is confusing, after the events of Chapter 17, to see Grettir avoiding the company of a superior man and seeking out the company of lesser men, but by the end of the chapter we see that Grettir avoided Porfinnr not because he despised him but for the opposite reason: he wanted to impress him, to earn his respect. It was not Grettir's style, however, to impress by hanging around the chieftain's hall and being sociable. He struck out on his own, waiting for the right opportunity. Eventually he learned of the burial mound and defeated Kárr, and in this way gained the respect of Porfinnr. Once more Grettir's unpleasantness turns out to be a necessary side of a man who has to prove himself in his own terms and in his own time, out of a sense of superior worth.

The next chapter (19) contains the episode of Grettir and the twelve berserks who come to Háramarsey to take their vengeance on Porfinnr for his part in having them outlawed. It is an episode which challenges the reader to put to the test what he has learned

from the experience of the two previous episodes. Porfinnr has gone to another island to celebrate Christmas, leaving Grettir behind with his wife and daughter and eight servants. Once more we see Grettir acting at first in an unaccountable and unpredictable way. He speaks pleasantly to the berserks and encourages them in their mission of vengeance (pp. 63-4):

“Gæfumenn miklir munu þér vera, því at þér hafið hér góða atkvámu, ef þeir eru menninir, sem ek ætla; bóndi er heiman farinn með alla heimamenn, þá sem frjálsir eru, ok ætlar eigi heim fyrir en á bak jólnunum; húsfreyja er heima ok bóndadóttir; ok ef ek þøttumk nokkurn mótgang eiga at gjalda, þá vilda ek þann veg at koma, því at hér er hvatvetna þat, er hafa þarf, bæði ǫl ok annarr fagnaðr.”

When he brings the berserks into the house and presents them to Porfinnr's wife as Christmas guests, the wife responds bitterly (p. 64):

“Launar þú ok illa Porfinni fyrir þat, er hann tók þik af skipbroti félausan ok hefir haldit þik í vetr sem frjálsan mann.”

Grettir tells her that instead of accusing him she should help their guests out of their wet clothes, and when Þórir þomb, one of the worst of the berserks, promises that she and the other women of the house will be well served sexually, Grettir's comment is “Slíkt er karlmannliga talat; megu þær þá eigi yfir sinn hlut sjá” (p. 65). The episode continues in this fashion, with Grettir playing the perfect host and even hinting at joining their company, until he gets them thoroughly drunk, locks them in a shed, and then sets about killing them.

In this episode the question of the reader's response is paramount, for the reader is in a position comparable to that of Porfinnr's wife and daughter — he doesn't know for certain what Grettir is up to. To put it another way, the situation of Porfinnr's wife and daughter is a perfect objectification of the reader's situation. Is Grettir being sincere in his offer of friendship to the berserks? Is he planning to join their number and in this way get the sword that Porfinnr has withheld from him? Or, on the other hand, is he only pretending to be friendly to the berserks in order to win their confidence so that he can trick them later, and in this way earn the sword from a grateful Porfinnr? The women on Háramarsey are convinced that Grettir has joined the side of the berserks, and their reaction works toward producing a similar reaction in us, just as we were affected by the reactions of the sailors in Chapter 17. We may know more about Grettir than the women on Háramarsey and thus feel a kind of trust in him based on our reading of the previous chapters; we may have read other

sagas in which berserks are first flattered and then put to death (e.g. *Eyrbyggja saga*, Ch. 28), and this may make us feel confident about the outcome. But in spite of whatever confidence we may have we are still in a state of suspense when we read this chapter, because we do not yet know enough about Grettir to be absolutely certain how he will behave. With respect to basic questions about his character, his potential for good or evil, his range of possible action, we are still feeling our way.

Sooner or later, of course — at the latest when Grettir locks the berserks in the shed — each reader learns the truth. The precise moment of realization will vary from reader to reader, and until that moment the text challenges the reader's understanding of Grettir and invites him to pit his understanding against that of the women on Hámarsey.

For having killed the berserks Grettir gains the gratitude of Porfinnr and his wife and a good reputation throughout Norway. If the reader, also won over to Grettir's side, pauses at this point to look back over what he has read about Grettir thus far, he might notice several things: (1) that Grettir tends to be unfairly treated by others, as by his father in Ch. 14, by Auðunn in Ch. 15, by Skeggi in Ch. 16; (2) that he behaves in strange, unsociable and unpredictable ways, but that his behaviour usually becomes understandable and forgivable in due course — this is especially the pattern of Chs. 17-20; (3) that Grettir has exceptional gifts in strength and fighting, shown progressively in all these chapters, and that these gifts help to excuse his erratic behaviour. (Perhaps this is overly schematized; not every reader will or should have these reflections, which are merely an attempt at describing some of the things that might be going on in the mind of a reader faced with this complex presentation of a complex personality.)

In Chapters 21-4 Grettir's capacity for attracting envy and malice comes to the fore in his dealings with the Norwegian Bjørn and his two brothers Hjarrandi and Gunnarr. Bjørn's unpleasant character ("Bjørn var hávaðamaðr mikill ok gerði um sik mikit," p. 74) sets Grettir in a favourable light by contrast. He considers Grettir to be inferior to himself ("þótti Birni hann lítils verðr hjá sér," p. 74), but it is clear from his own actions and from the words of his kinsman Þorkell ("eigi munu þit jafnir hreystimenn vera," p. 76) that he is the inferior one. Although he provokes Grettir by throwing his fur cloak into the bear's cave and continuing to insult him even after Grettir has killed the bear, Grettir shows restraint and readily agrees to Þorkell's request not to take action against

Björn while they are with him (“‘Pá muntu, Grettir, gera þat fyrir mína skuld, at gera eigi á hluta Bjarnar, meðan þit eruð hjá mér,’” p. 78). The very request is an admission on Þorkell’s part that Grettir has a right to avenge himself on Björn and serves to justify the slaying in advance. Björn’s cowardice when Grettir confronts him on his return from England and the cowardly attempts of Hjarrandi and Gunnarr on Grettir’s life gain the reader’s sympathy for Grettir. But at the same time the reader is offered another perspective, that of jarl Sveinn Hákonarson, who moves from respect for Grettir (p. 81) to a determination to have his life for the slaying of the three brothers (p. 84). In the climax to these three chapters the reader witnesses a debate about whether or not Grettir should be allowed to live, in which it is striking that such prominent men as Þorfinnr, Bersi Skáld-Torfuson and Þorsteinn drómundr are willing to oppose jarl Sveinn and risk their lives for Grettir. The jarl’s treatment of Grettir as a public enemy offends their sense of justice, as it does that of the reader.

Chapters 25-7 contain a sequence of events very typical of the sagas of Icelanders: the foster-brothers Þorgeirr Hávarsson and Þormóðr Kolbrúnarskáld kill Þorgils Máksson in a needless and cruel quarrel over the rights to a whale, and this is followed by the usual gathering of support on both sides, a lawsuit, legal manœuvring, a trial at the Althing and a verdict. Grettir is absent from these events, and it may occur to the reader that this is appropriate and to his credit, that none of this rather sordid routine — neither the killing nor its aftermath — is typical for him.

The next time Grettir appears, however, we do not get such a favourable picture. When he returns to Iceland in Chapter 28 he is described by the author as impossibly overbearing (“‘Pá gerðisk ofsi Grettis svá mikill, at honum þótti sér ekki ófært,’” p. 95). Barði Guðmundarson’s words to Grettir later in the chapter repeat the notion: “‘þú ert ójafnaðarmaðr ok ofrkappsfullr’” (p. 97). There is a “gap,” however, between these pronouncements and Grettir’s actual behaviour, which is not at all that of a typical *ójafnaðarmaðr* — the foster-brothers have just exemplified that type — and the reader must try to adjust the different impressions.

Grettir’s motives in going to visit Auðunn are understandable: he wants to test his strength once more against the man who got the better of him in the ball-game some four years earlier and who now is reputed to be “sterkastr norðr þar” (p. 95), and he wants to pay Auðunn back for hurting his throat in their earlier fight (this second motive comes out in Grettir’s verse, pp. 97-8, and prompts

even Barði to say that it is to be expected that Grettir seeks vengeance). In preparing for the visit Grettir pays much attention to his dress and equipment, taking the saddle Þorfinnr had given him, a good horse "ok vápn ǫll in beztu" (p. 95). From such details the experienced reader of the sagas expects swift and deliberate vengeance, but instead, when Grettir comes to Auðunarstaðir and learns that Auðunn is up at the shieling, he puts his horse out to graze in the *tún*, goes into the house and falls asleep! This is not the behaviour of a vengeful man or of the difficult and overbearing character that the author and Barði have described. It is, however, a double calculated insult: by failing to respect the ready-to-be-mown hayfield and by falling asleep while waiting for the master of the house, Grettir violates two rules for a guest. When Auðunn returns to the house carrying two bags of *skyr* and stumbles over Grettir's leg, Grettir challenges him to a fight, but then suffers the humiliation of being covered with curds. What was potentially a violent and bloody scene has become a comic exchange of insults, in which Auðunn's ripe hayfield and Grettir's finest clothes are the only victims — the men themselves are unscathed. No mention is made, in the description of the fight, of Grettir's weapons or an attempt to use them until it says that Auðunn managed to tear them off ("hann hafði slitit ǫll vápnin af Gretti," p. 96), and they go on wrestling until they are interrupted by Barði Guðmundarson. Grettir agrees with Barði's request to stop fighting, though he is not happy about it.

Had the author really wanted to make Grettir an ugly, overbearing type in this scene, all he had to do was to follow through the implications of Grettir's well-equipped ride to Auðunarstaðir to settle a grudge. The sagas contain countless scenes of this sort which end in a deliberate killing; there are examples later in *Grettla* itself, when Þorbjörn øxnamegin kills Atli (Ch. 45) and when Grettir kills Þorbjörn (Ch. 48). That the author chose to create an expectation and then reverse it in Chapter 28 causes the reader to re-evaluate Grettir once more. He is not a typical overbearing man bent on killing those who have offended him. Of the two motives given for Grettir's ride to Auðunarstaðir, the desire to test his strength far outweighs the urge for vengeance. Although the fight is cut short, Grettir manages to fell Auðunn and prove himself the better man ("sparði hvárrgi af, en þó verðr Grettir drjúgari, ok fellr Auðunn at lykðum," p. 96), and this is enough for Grettir, who bears no further grudge. (The next time they meet, in fact, Grettir presents Auðunn with an axe as a pledge of friendship — p. 116.)

If it was not totally clear whether Auðunn acted unfairly toward Grettir in the ball-game in Chapter 15, in Chapter 29 it is obvious that Oddr ómagaskáld acts improperly when he strikes Grettir with his pole during the horse-fight at Langafit. Grettir strikes back and pitches Oddr into a pool, but neutral parties prevent a large-scale fight from breaking out. In the next chapter, however, Grettir and four others intercept a party containing Oddr ómagaskáld and his kinsmen Kormákr and Þorgils on their return from a trip south. A fierce fight takes place and continues until Þorbjörn øxnamegin and others just happen to ride by. The newcomers force Grettir to cease fighting by threatening to join his adversaries, and both sides ride home. No more is ever said of this conflict: “Eigi er sagt, at þeir fyndisk Kormákr síðan, svá at þess sé getit” (p. 104).

The reader who notices the three interrupted fights in Chapters 28, 29 and 30, and senses a pattern there, will read Chapter 31 with great interest, for here the frustration to Grettir is double: (1) he is not invited by Barði Guðmundarson to join in the Battle on the Heath, as he had requested; (2) when he waits for the returning Barði near Póreyjargnúpr, hoping somehow to gain satisfaction for this insult, Barði's party of six is suddenly augmented by a group of men from the farm. This time the fight is averted before it begins. Grettir simply departs, not willing to take on so many opponents single-handed. A second detail repeats itself: as with Auðunn (Ch. 28) and with Kormákr, Þorgils and Oddr ómagaskáld (Ch. 30), the conflict ends here: “Ekki áttusk þeir Barði ok Grettir fleira við, svá at þess sé getit” (pp. 106-7). Those who offend Grettir, except the truly vicious, are more likely to drop out of the story than into a grave.

The cumulative effect of Chapters 28-31 is to show a Grettir who may appear to resemble the typical over-bearing man in the sagas but who falls short of fulfilling the type. He has something else on his mind than asserting his superiority over other men, and in this connection the concluding words of Chapter 31 are significant (p. 107):

Eptir skilnað þeira Barða fór Grettir aprt til Bjargs. Þá þótti Gretti mikit mein, er hann mátti hvergi reyna afl sitt, ok fréttisk fyrir, ef nokkut væri þat, er hann mætti við fáska.

There is an impersonal quality in Grettir's brand of arrogance; for him the primary thing is not to eliminate Auðunn or Oddr or Barði, but rather to put to the test the extraordinary force which he knows he has, and against any challenge whatsoever, not necessarily human. It is characteristic that while waiting for

Kormákr, Þorgils and Oddr (in Chapter 30) he spent a good part of the day lifting a heavy stone called "Grettishaf" on Hrótafjarðarháls (p. 102), and it is clear that this simple activity (which occurred also in Ch. 16; a third "Grettishaf" is mentioned in Ch. 59) gives Grettir satisfaction. We might even say that the pleasure he derives from lifting stones that no one else can lift diminishes his need for blood-revenge. Grettir's chief need is to use his strength, and his awareness that he excels most men in strength makes it less necessary for him to defeat them in other ways, like killing them. The fact that his main concern is to "reyna afl sitt" explains why he allows his struggles in Chapters 28-31 to remain inconclusive.

The statement at the end of Chapter 31 that Grettir needed something on which to try out his strength is immediately followed by the stupendous adventure with the revenant Glámr (Chs. 32-5), and the timing is perfectly calculated to give the reader the relief of seeing that now, at last, Grettir enters a contest that is truly worthy of his powers. His earlier feats against Kárr, the berserks, and the bear, had all required superhuman strength, but the last of these took place in Chapter 21 and since then Grettir has been involved in a series of human encounters that are unsatisfying both to him and to the reader. The fight with Glámr is a welcome move to an adventure sufficiently challenging to Grettir — but in fact so challenging that he does not survive it without paying a heavy price. Glámr, lying on the ground in Grettir's grip, pronounces a threefold curse: (1) that Grettir's strength, which would have developed to twice its present magnitude, remain as it is; (2) that his deeds henceforth result in misfortune and outlawry; (3) that the terrifying sight of Glámr's eyes reflecting the moon be always before him, so that he will find it difficult to be alone (p. 121).

Such a pronouncement marks the Glámr episode as an important moment in the saga, and it may be interesting to glance at the ways in which some recent critics have found it to be important. For Hermann Pálsson the episode marks the point in Grettir's career when his pride, "the chief sin, which plays a major role in Grettir's actions and is his major curse" (1969, 378 [my translation]; cp. 1981, 100), causes him to ignore good advice and to risk his strength excessively. "Although Jökull warns him against risking his life with Glámr, Grettir's pride is so great that he pays no heed to his uncle's warning. The encounter with Glámr is the high point of the saga, and with it comes a change in Grettir's prideful career in

that he fights with a superior power and goes too far in the search for the limits of his capability" (1969, 378 [my translation]; cp. 1981, 98). John L. Greenway, working from a mythic rather than from a Christian point of view, reads the curse of Glámr as "a material intrusion of uncontrolled violence into the world of civilized restraint," after which Grettir's "inborn violence" begins to have a destructive effect on society (1973, 7). Kathryn Hume follows Greenway in seeing the episode as changing Grettir's relationship to society for the worse, but her concern is less with myth and more with the theme that she sees governing the process of composition in *Grettla*, "the unacceptability of the 'heroic' within a modern society" (1974, 477). Grettir, according to Hume, is a man who cannot live peacefully within Icelandic society and needs adversaries like Glámr in order to play a socially useful role. His tragedy is that he lives by the values of a *fornaldarsaga* hero, and that these are not the values of the society he inhabits; "only in a fantasy situation can he function acceptably" (1974, 472). Following the fight with Glámr, Grettir's life becomes an unheroic round of petty activities. As Hume puts it in a second article, Grettir comes to resemble Glámr and succumbs to the temptation "to use strength for private ends and gratifications, to use it to harm the society that has cast him out" (1980, 10).

The reader more interested in experiencing the text than in looking for a thesis will probably find these interpretations speculative, thinking instead that Grettir fights Glámr because he is endowed with unusual strength and a natural inclination to put it to the test, not because he is guilty of overweening pride. Grettir is an outsider to society because his figure has deep roots in the timeless world of myth and folklore (cf. Óskar Halldórsson 1977, 1982) — rather than, as some have assumed, in the Viking world of *Qnundr tréfótr*. From the fact that this "outsider" is set in eleventh-century Iceland, however, it does not follow that certain of his deeds should be regarded as unimportant for society. Hume says of the troll-slayings at Sandhaugar: "He has performed a great *landhreinsun*, and we know it to be his tragedy that Iceland needs no such cleansing except in fantasy" (1974, 475; cp. 1980, 7). In fact, the Iceland depicted in the saga very much needs Grettir's protection against inhuman enemies such as Glámr, and if we may look ahead for a moment, Grettir performs useful services for society after Glámr's curse as well as before. If his undeserved outlawry makes him by definition an adversary to society, it is going too far to point to Glámr as "the catalyst for future changes

toward the worse" in Grettir's relationship to society (Hume 1980, 11). To be sure, Grettir commits occasional acts of thievery and bullying, but his most significant deeds as an outlaw are unselfish fights against the foes of mankind, performed without thought of reward (cf. Ciklamini 1966, 150-1).

Before the fight with Glámr, Grettir's uncle Jökull Bárðarson warns him in words that are often cited and deserve examination here (p. 117):

Jökull bað hann þat eigi gera, — "því at þat er gæfuraun mikil, en frændr þínir eigu mikit í hættu, þar sem þú ert," sagði hann; "þykkir oss nú engi slíkr af ungum monnum sem þú, en illt mun af illum hljóta, þar sem Glámr er; er ok miklu betra at fásk við mennska menn en við óvættir slíkar." Grettir kvað sér hug á at koma á Þórhallsstaði ok sjá, hversu þar væri um gengit. Jökull mælti: "Sé ek nú, at eigi tjáir at letja þik, en satt er þat, sem mælt er, at sitt er hvárt, gæfa eða gørvigleikr."

As we have seen, one way of responding to this warning is to say that Grettir should have heeded it and that his *ógæfa* is the result of the flaw in his character that caused him to disregard it. The reader may, however, notice several things: (1) that Grettir was already called a man of bad luck by Þórarinn inn spaki in Chapter 31 (pp. 104-5) and in fact has already experienced the kind of bad luck described in Glámr's curse, including outlawry; (2) that Jökull himself, "þó mikilhæfr maðr," is characterized as "inn mesti ofsa-maðr . . . ok mjök ódæll" (p. 117) and is therefore not exactly in the class of wise and temperate men whose words deserve full respect; and (3) that he advises Grettir that it is much better to fight with human adversaries than with such monsters as Glámr; such a philosophy might suit the obstreperous Jökull,³ but any careful reader of the saga to this point will appreciate what Jökull fails to appreciate: that it is not Grettir's nature to fulfill himself by fighting "við mennska menn." Grettir has had from his earliest youth a proper sense that he was not cut out for the ordinary tasks and conflicts of men, and in fact has even been excluded from the sort of fight Jökull recommends (by Þórarinn inn spaki in Ch. 31). The fight with Glámr has as its main function that it confirms Grettir's special destiny brilliantly, setting him forever apart from men like Jökull.⁴ The curse placed on him by Glámr is the price he pays for taking risks, not retribution for wrongdoing.

Immediately after the fight with Glámr, however, the reader is returned to the human world around Grettir in dramatic fashion. In Chapter 36 Þorbjörn oxnamegin gives a feast at which men discuss Grettir's valour, not in relation to the fight with Glámr, as

we might expect, but in relation to the interrupted fight with Kormákr and his kin (Ch. 30). Þorbjörn ferðalangr's comment that Grettir is a coward who avoids fights unless he has a large force is patently and outrageously unfair, yet somehow typical of the world of men that Grettir experiences. After defeating the ghost of Glámr, Grettir is reduced to dealing with types like the two Þorbjörns, and a good part of the saga until Chapter 48 is taken up with the nuisance offered by these men. In his dealings with these petty and malicious types Grettir shows the dignified forbearance and honourable behaviour of characters like Gunnarr in *Njáls saga* and Blund-Ketill in *Hænsa-Þóris saga*, noble men who are drawn into quarrels by the unfairness of lesser men.

But other episodes give a more troublesome picture of Grettir, particularly the striking events in Norway in Chapters 38 and 39, in which Grettir accidentally burns twelve men to death and then destroys his chance to prove his innocence. When good intentions turn to evil results in this way it appears that Glámr's curse is having its effect, but the reader accustomed to pondering multiple perspectives in the saga will not accept a simplified view of malevolent fate as the sole cause of the events in Norway. Grettir's character plays a role, but it is not easy to understand just what that role is or what these events tell us about Grettir. In the fire-snatching scene the author has avoided the bluntness of the *Hauksbók* version of *Landnámabók*, where it says that Grettir murdered (not merely killed) one of the sons of Þórir (*Landnámabók* 1968, 281), and in fact seems to have gone out of his way to present the reader once more with a problematic view of his hero. Grettir's action in getting the fire can appear, as it does to some readers, as "wild and hasty behaviour" (Foote 1965, xii). On the other hand, it seems that the author has tried to excuse Grettir by placing blame on the men who persuaded him, against his better judgement, to go for the fire, and on the sons of Þórir who are so drunk that they cannot tell the difference between Grettir and a troll (cf. Ólsen 1937-9, 312). Both views can be argued with equal plausibility and both are "correct"; the reader is not given an easy answer but must wrestle with the problem himself.

The same is true of the scene in the Trondheim church (Ch. 39) where Grettir strikes a boy who taunts him and thus destroys his chance to prove his innocence by the ordeal of bearing hot iron. The king gives two reasons for calling off the ordeal: Grettir's lucklessness (*ógæfa*) and his impatience (*bolleysi*). From words

that Grettir spoke to Þorvaldr Ásgeirsson at the end of Chapter 35 we know that he expected his impatience to increase as a result of the fight with Glámr ("Grettir kvað ekki batnat hafa um lyndisbragðit ok sagðisk nú miklu verr stilltr en áðr, ok allar mótgörðir verri þykkja," p. 122). Is this new degree of irritability a part of Glámr's curse, or is it a sign that Grettir's violence is getting out of control, or is it the understandable impatience with trivia that comes with success? The matter is uncertain, but it is to Grettir's credit that he is aware of the new tendency in himself, a tendency which goes hand in hand with his *ógæfa* (King Óláfr is correct about this) in bringing about the fateful scene in the church. The sudden appearance of the boy is the most dramatic instance of fated bad luck in the saga: "En engi þóttisk vita, hvaðan sjá piltr kom, eða hvat af honum varð, en þat ætla menn helzt, at þat hafi verit óhreinn andi, sendr til óheilla Gretti" (p. 133). Such sheer and unexpected *ógæfa*, coming from the outside and not motivated by Grettir's character, acts as an excuse for Grettir's impatient reaction in striking the boy, and the fact that the boy is referred to as an *óhreinn andi*, perhaps recalling the *spiritus immundus* who cried out against Jesus in the synagogue at Capernaum (Mark 1:23ff.), places Grettir in a good light.

As if to provide relief after the troubling complexities of these two chapters, Chapter 40 offers a straightforward encounter in which Grettir, with masterful deftness, dispatches a berserk named Snækoll who insists on having the daughter of a man named Einarr, at whose farm Grettir happens to be spending Christmas. It is a classic berserk-slaying and achieves the effect of rehabilitating Grettir, showing the reader once more what an unambiguously positive force he can be. His brother Þorsteinn drómundr expresses this succinctly at the end of the chapter: "Slyngt yrði þér um mart, frændi, ef eigi fylgði slysin með" (p. 137).

The meeting of the half-brothers continues in the next chapter when they compare arms one morning in the bed-chamber. It is a tender scene and their words — even when Grettir says that Þorsteinn's strength is barely that of a woman — are kindly, not competitive. The reader is moved that the weaker brother vows to avenge the stronger and that they separate for the last time on warm terms: "Skilðu þeir bræðr með vináttu ok sáusk aldri síðan" (p. 138).

The next four chapters (42-5) have to do with another brother, Atli, and events in Iceland leading to his death at the hands of an unpleasant character whom he and Grettir had encountered earlier

(Ch. 30). Þorbjörn oxnamegin takes advantage of Grettir's absence and seeks vengeance for Þorbjörn ferðalangr whom Grettir had justly killed (in Ch. 37). He first sends the sons of Þórir frá Skarði to attack Atli, but they are killed in spite of the fact that their party outnumbers Atli's. When a settlement is reached which does not satisfy Þorbjörn, and when a mistreated servant of his is taken in by a reluctant Atli, Þorbjörn attacks and slays the defenceless Atli at home. The fact that Atli is the victim of petty men who had provoked Grettir and that it is assumed that Grettir will take up the case when he returns to Iceland points to family solidarity. However badly Grettir may have got along with his father, his relations with his brothers are excellent. Just as Þorsteinn will avenge him, he will avenge Atli (and eventually a third brother, Illugi, will share Grettir's loneliness and die with him). Grettir gains in the reader's eyes by having good brothers and getting along well with them.

We have now come to the point where I promised to stop. In Chapter 46 Grettir returns to Iceland and is outlawed for the killing of the sons of Þórir í Garði in the accidental burning in Norway. The trial is clearly unfair, and the fact that no less a figure than Skapti Þóróddsson the lawman protests against a judgment rendered on the basis of one man's statement makes us take Grettir's part as he begins the long outlawry which will continue to the end of his life. I would not like to suggest that the reader's fun is over at this point, that Grettir's character is now fully comprehensible. The saga will continue to show him in good and bad light, in a range of activities from sheep-stealing to troll-slaying, and even develop some new aspects of his character, such as playfulness, love of disguise and sensuality. For the kind of reader we have been assuming, who prefers to engage actively in the text as it unfolds rather than to relax into a thematic generalization about its meaning, there will still be interesting complications. But if some of the arguments in this essay are acceptable, the reader will have put together from the many confusing perspectives on Grettir a fairly coherent picture by the end of Chapter 46: of a truly extraordinary man who is more sinned against than sinning as he seeks to put his talents to appropriate use, whose arrogance is little more than justifiable self-confidence, who displays more patience and forbearance than the overbearing men with whom he is compared, and whose bad luck derives largely from the malice of lesser men jealous of his ability.

Notes

¹ The description of the struggle with Kengála has suggestions of a heroic contest: "Nú fór Grettir upp á bak henni; hann hafði hvassan kníf í hendi ok rekr á um þverar herðar Kengálu ok lætr svá ganga aprtr tveim megin hryggjar. Hrossit bregðr nú hart við, því at þat var feitt ok fælit, eyss svá, at hófarnir brustu í veggjunum. Grettir fell af baki, ok er hann komsk á fœtr, leitar hann til bakferðar. Er þeira viðreign in snarpasta, ok svá lýkr, at hann flær af henni alla baklengjuna aprtr á lend, rekr síðan út hrossin ok til haga." (p. 40)

² Auðunn's prediction that Þorfinnr will be angry if Grettir breaks into the mound (p. 56) is contradicted when Þorfinnr easily pardons him (p. 60). One is surprised also at Þorfinnr's reason for forgiving Grettir: "'ek veit, at þat fé er illa komit, er fólgt er í jörðu eða í hauga borit'" (p. 60); presumably it was Þorfinnr himself who erected and furnished the mound for his father. It is especially curious that a *minjagrip* like the sword, a family heirloom (p. 59), should be placed in a burial mound. Boer (*Grettis saga* 1900, 66n.) explains these contradictions by claiming that Kárr was not originally the father of Þorfinnr.

³ Þokull does not appear in *Grettla* apart from this scene. In Snorri's *Óláfs saga helga*, Ch. 182, he is put to death for taking the side of the king's enemy, jarl Hákon Eiríksson (Snorri Sturluson 1941-51, II 331-2).

⁴ A phrase used twice later in the saga suggests Grettir's special destiny: when the hauntings at Bárðardalr begin, "Grettir hafði spurn af þessu, ok með því at honum var mjök lagit at koma af reimleikum eða aprtrgöngum, þá gerði hann ferð sína til Bárðardals ok kom atfangadag jóla til Sandhauga" (p. 210); at the end of the saga Sturla the lawman is reported to have said three things about Grettir, one of which is "at hann var sterkastr á landinu sinna jafnaldrá ok meir lagðr til at koma af aprtrgöngum ok reimleikum en aðrir menn" (pp. 289-90).

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ROWING CHANTS AND THE ORIGINS OF *DRÓTTKVÆÐR HÁTTR*

BY RICHARD PERKINS

I

THE purpose of this paper is to propose a new hypothesis to explain the origin of the features of poetry in *dróttkvæðr háttr*.¹

Lie (*Kl* III 338) writes: "D[róttkvætt]s opprinnelse har vært meget diskutert," and Erik Noreen (1922, 1) writes: "Det i viss mån centrala problemet i den fornvästnordiska diktningens historia är frågan om 'skaldepoesiens' uppkomst."

II

reru víkingar.

(*Helgakviða Hundingsbana I*)

Pungur er þegjandi róður.

(Icelandic proverb)

In framing the Hypothesis, the following three premises are postulated:

1. *That rowing was a particularly common and important activity throughout the period in which we can assume dróttkvætt-poetry to have arisen.*² This may be enlarged upon with a few remarks: We know, of course, that the Vikings were great rowers and there is good reason to believe that their immediate predecessors were also. This was in their capacity as raiders, traders, travellers, fishermen, whalers and the like. The forerunners of the great ships of the Viking Age were designed primarily for rowing — we can say this with reasonable certainty of the Kvalsund ship, usually dated to the 7th century (or to about 700) and with complete certainty of the Nydam ship (4th-5th centuries) and, for example, the *tólfæringr* from Fjortoft (6th-8th centuries). The sea-faring peoples of Scandinavia were, in fact, late in adopting the sail. And the success of the Viking raids can, at least to some extent, be attributed to the ability to row in an efficient and disciplined manner. The use of the oar made Viking warships to a great extent independent of the currents of the big European rivers and they could be rowed up the Seine, for example, to attack Paris or the Rhône to sack Valence. And traversing the eastern river route

between the Baltic and the Black Sea would involve rowing or being rowed upstream something like half-way across Russia. And while thinking of "Russia" in this context, we might recall that this name very likely goes back to a Scandinavian word for Scandinavian rowers (cf. e.g. *Kl*, s.v. *Roden* and refs.) and could give us some indication of how Scandinavians of the period in question saw themselves or were seen by others. Lastly, it may be recalled that the medieval system of levy probably goes back in some form or other at least as far as the Viking Age and we know how important rowing was to the levy (cf. *Kl*, s.v. *Leidang*). Much more evidence could be produced to suggest the importance of rowing in the Relevant Period (cf. e.g. Almgren 1962).

2. *That labour processes, including rowing, can give rise to new modes of rhythmical composition in the form of or through work chants.* Most work carried out by human muscle power proceeds more easily and efficiently if performed rhythmically. This is particularly true when, as often in the case of rowing, a plurality of workers is engaged in some common task. And because of this, verses, chants or songs which follow or set a work rhythm existed or exist in large numbers in the pre-industrial world and in non-mechanized societies (to an extent which modern Western man may not always appreciate to the full). Some of the different types of work chant may be more or less randomly exemplified: weaving, spinning and "waulking" chants; milling and grinding chants; smiths' songs, hammering songs, bellows songs; verses to which tools or weapons may be honed or sharpened; reapers' chants and threshers' chants; grape-treaders' songs; songs to which stone-breakers, road- and railway-workers laboured; chants used in hauling logs and sawing them; chants for pile-driving; songs for sowing and picking; shearing and churning songs; songs used in drawing water or pumping; chants for dragging ships overland or launching them; tow-path songs ("The song of the Volga boatmen" is an example of this last type).

Perhaps the most important single book on the work song as it manifests itself in various parts of the world is Karl Bücher's *Arbeit und Rhythmus* which went through six editions between 1896 and 1924. (The fifth edition of 1919 is referred to in the present article.) Bücher not only collected and classified a large number of work songs of various types, but he also put forward various theoretical considerations. *Inter alia*, he propounded the thesis that the rhythmical element in all poetry and music derived originally from work

processes. Here Bücher appears to go too far: it is only in quite sophisticated cultures that the advantages of rhythmically organized work are recognized and that songs and chants to accompany work processes therefore exist; the simplest cultures in the world do not have work songs (cf. e.g. Nettl 1956, 62-3). But most would agree that labour processes and work chants are important catalysts in the development (if not the origin) of poetry and music: the various tasks connected with the operation of the large sailing vessels of recent centuries gave rise to the shanties and these last represent an important group within the repertoire of English folk-song; and American negro work songs played their part in the development of blues and jazz. — Another thing Bücher (1919, 243 ff.) does in passing is to stress the comparative importance, indeed the relative necessity of rowing and paddling chants to the pertinent activities. The need for exact co-ordination and the often tedious and prolonged nature of the work in hand make rowing chants one of the commonest, if not the commonest type of labour chant and Bücher is able to quote instances from throughout the world (cf. Cederschiöld 1905, 95-7). And in this context it may be worth noting that Gunther Schuller (1968, 16-17) refers to American negro rowing songs in discussing the origins and development of jazz. — Traces of work chants in early Scandinavia are discussed by, for example, Anne Holtsmark in her article "Arbeidssanger" in *Kl.* Holtsmark recognized two verses as connected with rowing chants. These are Verses 1 and 2 in the Appendix to this article. In *Mediaeval Scandinavia* for 1969, I argued that a verse preserved in *Flóamanna saga* (Verse 3 in the Appendix) was a rowing chant. None of these three verses is, of course, in *dróttkvætt*, the origin of which metre it is the aim of this paper to account for.

3. *That poetry in dróttkvætt is a form of rhythmical composition.*

III

On the premises that rowing was a common activity in Scandinavia during the Relevant Period (cf. Premise 1 in II above) and that rowing can often give rise to new forms of rhythmical composition in the form of rowing chants (cf. Premise 2 in II above), we can reasonably deduce *that rowing chants existed and came into existence during the period in question*; this proposition is the more acceptable when we consider, for example, the cramped conditions in which rowers of the larger ships of the Relevant Period had to work and the fact that they would in the majority of cases have

been free men rather than slaves and therefore unlikely in the long run to have been satisfied solely with the more monotonous forms of timekeeping (such as the beat of a hammer). And given that rowing chants (which are forms of rhythmical composition) existed or came into existence in the Relevant Period and that poetry in *dróttkvætt* is a form of rhythmical composition (cf. Premise 3 in II above), the following Hypothesis is proposed which is the main thesis of this paper: *that rowing, through rowing chants, gave rise to dróttkvæðr háttr*. In what follows (in Sections IV, V and VI) evidence will be produced in support of this Hypothesis.

IV

The first piece of evidence in support of the Hypothesis is the fact that there exists in the corpus of skaldic poetry at least one strophe which is in *dróttkvætt* and which at the same time seems highly likely to be a rowing chant. This strophe, Verse 4 in the Appendix (cf. *Skj* A I 300-01; B I 277), is preserved in *Bjarnar saga Hítðelakappa* (*Íf* III 123) and is there ascribed to the saga's main character, Björn Hítðelakappi Arngeirsson. It must be stated at the outset that it is not necessary to believe that the verse was originally declaimed under the circumstances described in *Bjarnar saga* nor indeed does the saga's attribution of the verse to Björn have to be accepted. On the contrary, I would contend that the verse originally had nothing to do with Björn. A full justification for this standpoint will not be offered here (although various reasons will become evident in what follows; see especially pp. 160-3 below); suffice it to say that the only element in the verse which connects it with the story of Björn Arngeirsson and Þórðr Kolbeinsson as told in the saga is the genitive form of the nickname of the latter's wife (i.e. *Eykyndils*) in the fourth line and that this bears neither alliteration nor rhyme and would easily be interchangeable with the genitive form of other women's names (e.g. *Þórdísar* or *Kolbrúnar*).³ In what follows, then, the strophe in question will be considered more or less *in vacuo* and without reference to the prose of *Bjarnar saga*.⁴

The reasons for thinking that this verse ascribed to Björn Hítðelakappi (which will be referred to as "Verse 4" in what follows) is a rowing chant may now be itemized as follows:

(1) Verse 4 itself (in contradiction to the preceding prose) says that rowing is going on while it is being declaimed: "we cause the stout oar to sigh at the gunwale;" "I must move the ship forward."

Obviously these statements are not to be taken entirely at their face value, but they are certainly suggestive.

(2) Verse 4 contains the first person plural (present tense) of a verb denoting the work in hand, viz. *vinnum* (*þr kløkkva*) at the end of the fifth line. Now first person plurals of verbs referring to the work being carried out are also found in other verses already acknowledged as connected with Old Norse labour chants: in *Darraðarljóð* (*Íf XII* 454-8), which is in all probability related to a weavers' chant, we find *vindum*, *vindum*, "en tydelig oppsang til arbeidet med å dreie vevbommen" (Anne Holtsmark, 1956); in *Grottasöngur* (*Edda*, 297-301) which, most would agree, contains elements from a milling chant, we have *leggjum* (*lúðra*), *léttum* (*steinum*) (v. 3) and *molum* (vv. 5 (×3) and 22); in Verse 1 from *Sturlunga saga* we have the first person dual in *róm vit ok róm vit*. And this feature (as far as grammatical equivalents allow comparisons) appears in work chants from outside medieval Scandinavia. A line from a modern Danish rowing chant is: *Og så ro vi let* (Grünner Nielsen 1920, 31). In the many German translations of work songs from all over the world in Bücher's collection, we often find the first person plural of the present tense (see e.g. Bücher 1919, 294, 301). And the following is the first verse of a French rowing chant (cited by Smith 1888, 145), the refrain of which contains two instances of the first person plural:

Mon père a fait bâtir maison,
Tirons donc tous sur nos avirons,
Tirent, ah! tirent, mariniers, tirent,
Tirons donc tous sur nos avirons.

(3) We may note in the second half of Verse 4 a certain pre-occupation with, and indeed, if we interpret *kløkkva* as "sigh" (cf. p. 192), a personification of the oar the declaimer is pulling; labour chants sometimes address or personify the instrument used in the relevant work process; cf. e.g. Perkins 1969, note 6; Buck 1959, 42, 283; Bücher 1919, 70.

(4) A very minor point may be mentioned here for what it is worth: Verse 4 shares the formula *þr á (at) borði* with the verse from *Flóamanna saga* (Verse 3) which it has been argued elsewhere (Perkins 1969) is likely to be a rowing chant.

(5) A fifth thing which suggests that Verse 4 is a work chant is its prurient content; salaciousness was, for example, very much a feature of the shanties, so much so that they often had to be censored by the captains of Victorian sailing ships.

(6) Next and related to the fifth point just mentioned is this: it seems reasonable to see sexual innuendoes not only in the first half of Verse 4, but also in its second half. I take this to be what A. L. Lloyd (1975, 412) in his book on English folk songs calls the "sexualization of tools": work songs very frequently liken the tools and equipment the chanter is working with to the sexual organs, and the task he has in hand to the sexual act. Lloyd gives a number of examples from England; and in his article "Some collective expressions of obscenity in Africa" (1929), Evans-Pritchard refers to similar comparisons and innuendoes in African work songs.

(7) In the second half of Verse 4, the rower complains of his hard lot. The element of complaint is very frequent in work songs the world over. Theresa C. Brakeley (in Leach (ed.) 1949-50, 1183) gives examples: she draws attention to querulous corn-grinding songs (for instance from Greece; cf. also *Grottasöngur*); to an Irish-American song from the quarries which refers (albeit humorously) to hard and hazardous work; and she remarks that "the paddle songs of the Badouma men [of Lake Chad, Africa] tell of the rigors and danger of their labor." Numerous other examples of this common feature of work songs could be cited.

(8) Verse 4 alludes to the easy and pleasant lot of the landsman living comfortably at home. Such allusions, of course, we also find in the shanties.

(9) Under 4 above, a very minor point of comparison between Verse 4 and Verse 3 has been mentioned and is of no great importance. On the other hand, Verse 4 also shares with Verse 3 a more complicated feature which demands greater attention and which, in my view, is of particular significance. In both Verse 3 and Verse 4, one part of the verse describes the rhythmical work in which the singer of the song is (or was) engaged; another part describes the rhythmical activity of another person; the two descriptions are linked by the conjunction *meðan*. This pattern is found not only in Verse 3 (which I have argued elsewhere is a rowing chant), but also, with certain variations, in other verses which are connected with work-processes. In the absence of any established term, I call verses of this type "*meðan*-verses" and give the essential information in tabular form as follows (order as in *Skj*):

1. Verse 5: beat of hammers/movement of bellows (operated by second person)

2. Verse 6: whetting of spears/(by implication) sex act (*enn* instead of *meðan*)
3. Verse 3: rowing/beat of hammer
4. Verse 4: sex act/rowing
5. Verse 7: lowering of anchor *or* manning of windlass/*either* erotic song *or* (by implication) sex act *or both*
6. Verse 8: (probably) bailing/(by implication) sex act
7. Verse 9: bailing/beat of waves (cf. Brennu-Njáll in *Skj A I* 139)

It must be admitted that the five other *meðan*-verses are not perhaps as good examples of the type as Verses 3 and 4. For instance, in the last example from *Friðþjófs saga* (Verse 9), one of the two movements involved is not human but the beat of the waves. In the second example, the word *enn* is used instead of *meðan*. And there are examples of the *meðan*-verse type which have nothing to do with human labour. But with this said, it seems impossible not to connect the pattern of these verses with work chants and in particular maritime work chants.⁵ In five of the seven examples, we also find first person plurals of verbs describing the declaimers' work (cf. (2) above); and in five cases, the work involved is on board ship. It may be mentioned in passing that Saxo Grammaticus appears to have got hold of an Icelandic *meðan*-verse which was also a rowing chant and turned this into nineteen lines of Latin (cf. Olrik 1892-4, I 73-8, especially 75). This is as follows (*Saxonis Gesta Danorum* 1931, 148-9; key words italicized by R. P.):

Sanguine suffusos enses ferrumque cruore
 puniceum rabidi versavimus in nece monstri,
dum te, Norvagicæ cladis moderator Amunde,
 excipit alta quies, quem, cum sine lumine mentis
 nox ignava premat, virtus dilapsa fefellit.
 At nos defunctum membris opibusque gigantem
 contudimus vastique chaos penetravimus antri.
 Illic congestum raptu violavimus aurum.
 Et iam fluctivagum *tonsis everrimus* æquor
 confertamque ratem spoliis ad litus ovantes
remigio reduces *agimus*, percurrimus undas
 permensore maris carabo; *sulcemus* alacres
 hoc pelagus, ne nos hosti lux obvia prodatur.
 Ergo leves *totoque manus conamine nisi*
rimemur mare, castra prius classemque petentes,
 quam roseum liquidis Titan caput exserat undis,
 ut, cum rem rumor vulgaverit atque Frogertha
 noverit egregio partam conamine prædam,

blandior in nostrum moveat præcordia votum.⁶

It is true that this verse has been adapted to fit the particular story that Saxo is telling; it is also true that, as far as we can see, the landsman is neither at work nor in a woman's embrace. On the other hand, the singer of the verse is clearly rowing and he rebukes the landsman for his inertia; it is reasonable to assume that *dum* in the third line translates Icelandic *meðan*; and Icelandic first person plurals must lie behind the Latin first person plurals of words and expressions meaning "to row". And another piece of relevant evidence here is the fact that something similar to the *meðan*-verse pattern is found outside Scandinavia in the shanties and related sea-songs of the English-speaking world. The following are verses from work songs collected by Frederick Pease Harlow in his *Chanteying aboard American ships* and edited under the heading "Whaling songs" (words italicized by R. P.; Harlow's italics ignored):

(a) Harlow 1962, 211 (introductory prose also from Harlow):

When the whale is alongside and the great dripping blanket-piece is being cut in, every pound of which represents so much gold, the sweating oil-soaked, greasy crew would burst into some such song as:

My father's a hedger and ditcher,
My mother does nothing but spin,
While I hunt whales for a living,
Good Lord how the money comes in.

(b) Harlow 1962, 232:

Come all you Chili whalemén bold,
To these few lines I'll write,
And to tell you how the game goes on
When you are out of sight.
Just to let you know how the lads on shore
Go sporting with your wives,
While you are on the raging deep
Endangering your sweet lives.
While you are on the raging deep
Endangering your sweet lives.

(c) Harlow 1962, 219-20:

Come all ye girls of Edgartown,
A line to you I'll write,
While crossing o'er the ocean wide
In which we take delight,
In sailing o'er these raging seas
As we poor sailors do,
Not like those lazy landlubbers
Who stay at home with you.

They'll stay at home with you, my dears,
And tell with lips unsealed,
Concerning all their harvest work
That's done in our corn fields,
In cutting off the grass so green,
It's all that they can do;
While we like jovial hearted lads,
Go plow the ocean through.⁷

Each of these three examples contrasts the activities of the whaler with that of the landsman; and in each case the contrast is introduced with the conjunction "while". In (a), the landsmen are busy at workaday tasks (cf. Verse 3), while in (b) and (c) they are represented as ladies' men enjoying an easy life ashore (cf. Verse 4 (also Verses 6, 7 and 8)); indeed (b) seems to be quite a close parallel to Verse 4, particularly if we, as it were, de-euphemize certain words in it. (We may wonder, for example, how common the use of the verb "to sport" in its sixth line really was amongst the crews of American whaling-ships of the nineteenth century.) We may also note in passing that in (c) we find examples of the first person plural (cf. (2) above) and the element of complaint — "As we poor sailors do" (cf. (7) above).

Here, then, are nine factors which suggest that Verse 4 was a rowing chant. As intimated, some of them by themselves are not enough to make the point. Others, however, for example the verse's *meðan*-verse pattern (and note also (1) and (2)), are much more significant, and all nine of them taken together are in my view decisive. I give special attention to Verse 4 because the case for its being a rowing chant seems overwhelming. On the other hand, there are other *dróttkvætt*-verses which bear more or less clear signs of being rowing chants. Probably the next best candidate is Verse 10 in the Appendix: here again rowing is described as actually going on (cf. (1) above), here again we find a verb in the first person plural (line 1: *etjum*).⁸ And I give as Verses 11-14 in the Appendix four other *dróttkvætt*-verses (three of them admittedly attributed to one and the same poet) which bear fairly clear signs of a connection with rowing.⁹ And I shall suggest in other contexts that Verses 15 and 20 could well be rowing chants.

In seeking to identify possible rowing chants within the corpus of skaldic poetry, we encounter, of course, various difficulties which should not be underestimated: because labour chants frequently consciously avoid mentioning the relevant work, because their purpose is precisely to distract the workers' minds from the task in hand, they will often be difficult to recognize.¹⁰ And we

have also to remember that it is precisely the most obvious and mundane work chants which are the least likely to have been preserved to us. (Indeed, it is largely for this last reason that we are so relatively badly informed about work chants in general in ancient and medieval Europe, even though they were, after all, one of the most frequently heard forms of metrical composition.) But despite these difficulties, we have preserved to us not only certain *lausavisur* like Verse 4 which bear fairly clear signs of being rowing chants, but there are also various *themes* in the *dróttkvætt*-corpus which to a greater or lesser extent find parallels in rowing chants, the shanties, and work songs in general. I do not intend in the present context to go into this aspect of the material in detail (cf. however Excursus 1); I prefer to give clear prominence to the testimony of Verse 4. A few examples may, however, be given: The fact that many *dróttkvætt*-verses are about ships, sea-voyages, the sea and storms at sea is of relevance in the present context; these are, of course, common themes in the shanties. Again, Jón Helgason (1953, 146) remarks that skaldic *lausavisur* (and here he refers not only to *meðan*-verses) sometimes mention the “strabadser, som skjalden må udstå på søen”;¹¹ as noted above, workers’ complaint at their hard lot is a common theme in shanties, sea-songs and work songs. The shanties have a predilection for high-sounding place-names (e.g. Shenandoah, Mobile Bay, Rio Grande, Sacramento (cf. Terry 1921, I xi; Hugill 1979, 35)); a similar tendency can be found in the sea-voyage poetry of certain skalds: for example, Halldórr skvaldri (*Skj*, A I 486-8) incorporates such exotic or impressive names as *Sintré*, *Alkasse*, *Lizibón*, *Norvasund* and *Íviza* into his *Útfarardrápa* (cf. de Vries 1964, 292; Jón Helgason 1953, 147). And the following three points are elaborated upon in Excursus 1: Skaldic poetry often deals with topical events (for example a recent battle); work chants very often contain topical material. Skaldic poetry was, of course, frequently encomiastic; so sometimes were, for example, Scottish Gaelic rowing chants. By representing the lauded person as a generous man, skaldic poetry, I suggest, often hints at reward; so sometimes do rowing and paddling chants. But to return to Verse 4. As I have argued, it is reasonable to assume that this was used as a rowing chant. (I do not, I should stress, think it can be a *dróttkvætt*-verse which borrowed its content from a rowing chant which was in some essentially different metre; its content is too ordinary for that; and there are, at any rate, other *dróttkvætt*-verses (e.g. Verses 10 and 15) which were probably also used as rowing chants.) It is important

to appreciate the full implications of this conclusion (cf. also pp. 178–9 below): If we are correct in thinking that it was possible to row to *dróttkvætt*, then experimental archaeologists investigating rowing techniques on Viking Age vessels should take the rhythm of *dróttkvætt* into account in their tests. What difficulties may be involved here is not a matter I can go into. But there is no reason why there should be any. After all, Turville-Petre (1976, xxxii f.) characterized the rhythm of *dróttkvætt* as “staccato”;¹² and Alan Binns (1961, 14) has suggested that the rowing stroke required on Viking Age vessels was “the short quick one needed for rowing at sea”. But however this may be, the conclusion of the evidence produced so far must stand: this is that the Vikings could well have rowed to *dróttkvætt*-verses. And this conclusion is, I think, of interest in itself, quite irrespective of the *origins* of the metre in question.

V

Allur kveðskapur mótast af tilgangi sínum, vettvangi og flutningi.
(Einar Ól. Sveinsson)

I go on to the second part of the evidence. It may be agreed that *dróttkvætt*-verses were used in the relevant milieu as rowing chants; but this does not, of course, necessarily mean that *dróttkvætt* had its origin in rowing chants. *Dróttkvætt* could have had some entirely different origin and yet verses in the metre may later have come to be used to set the time for rowing; in the same way, some English folk-songs which originally had nothing to do with the sea were taken over and used as shanties. To make it more probable, then, that *dróttkvætt* had its origin in rowing chants, it should be possible to suggest that at least some of its essential features had their origins in rowing chants (and then perhaps as functional elements). Two points may be noted in this connection: First, I do not consider those features which *dróttkvætt* shares with Eddic poetry and which it could have taken over from it. I do not, for example, consider alliteration or the eight-line stanza. I agree with those scholars (e.g. Finnur Jónsson 1920-24, I 403; cf. Sigurður Nordal 1942, 236) who believe that *dróttkvætt* must at least to some extent have developed from *fornyrðislag* and both alliteration and the eight-line stanza are, of course, features of *fornyrðislag*. Second, I do not consider *dróttkvætt*'s system of internal rhymes (*skothendingar* and *aðalhendingar*); the evidence suggests that this was not an original feature of *dróttkvætt*. On the other hand, given that *dróttkvætt*-verses were used as rowing chants, it is possible to

suggest explanations of both the eight-line stanza and the system of internal rhymes as functional elements. This I do in Excursus 2. For present purposes, however, I confine myself here to three features of *dróttkvætt*-poetry which I consider to be of particular importance.

(A) In my view, the most distinctive feature of *dróttkvætt* is that each line ends with a long stressed syllable followed by a short unstressed one, what may be called the final trochee. I think it is possible to explain the final trochee of *dróttkvætt* in terms of work chants. In doing this, I am to a certain extent following and adapting arguments put forward by George Thomson in his book *The prehistoric Ægean* (ch. XIV, 2: "Rhythm and labour"). It is easily demonstrable that labour chants often contain regularly recurring constants which were uttered at the moment of the worker's or workers' greatest exertion in a rhythmical work-process, for example, as the hammer blow was actually made or when the axe was sunk into the tree. These constants frequently consist of inarticulate grunts and occur at the end of a line which was otherwise variable. The following verse from southern Africa (Thonga) provides an example (Junod 1927, II 189, 284):

- | | | |
|-----|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| (i) | Ba hi shani sa! Ehe! | 'They treat us badly! Ehe! |
| | Ba ku hi hlupha! Ehe! | They are hard on us! Ehe! |
| | Ba nwa makhofi! Ehe! | They drink their coffee! Ehe! |
| | Ba nga hi nyiki! Ehe! | And they give us none! Ehe! |

Here the first part of each line is relatively variable, but each line ends with the constant *ehe* which marks the moment of exertion. Another example is this (Jones 1974, 68):

- (ii) Oh, Lawd, I'm tired, uuh
 Oh, Lawd, I'm tired, uuh
 Oh, Lawd, I'm tired, uuh
 Oh, Lawd, I'm tired, a dis mess.

In this example, it can be seen that not even the first part of the line is variable, but that each line ends with a "work grunt". The next stage of the process is exemplified by a work song from the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola (Oster 1959, 8):

- (iii) Had a great day-- --Group: Oh well.
 Down in Texas. Oh well.
 Don't you wish that Oh well.
 You were there Oh you were there.¹³

Here we have the constant at the end of each line (except the last) but now it at least consists of recognizable words, in this case sung out by the work-group, and probably at the moment of greatest exertion. It may, incidentally, be noted that the sentence which makes up the last two lines of the verse is interrupted by the constant. Further stages in the process by which the constant at the end of each line becomes fully integrated into the sense and syntax of the verse are traced in Thomson's book just referred to. Finally, what were originally work chants containing such labour cries become fully divorced from the labour action. I would suggest that the final trochee at the end of the *dróttkvætt*-line could have developed out of a similar labour cry belonging originally to rowing chants.¹⁴ This, I would suppose, was interjected at the end of each line of verses perhaps not very dissimilar to *fornyrðislag*-verses (it was, we should note, Finnur Jónsson's explicit statement that a *dróttkvætt*-line is formed by the addition of a trochee to a *fornyrðislag*-line; see Finnur Jónsson 1920-24, I 403). To begin with, these final interjected syllables would have been meaningless expletives similar to those in the first two verses quoted immediately above. Alternatively, they may have been (or perhaps rather have developed into) independent disyllabic first person plurals of verbs (cf. p. 159 above; e.g. *vinnum*, "we labour", or *róum*, "we row" (cf. Bibire 1974-7, 460, lines 16-25)).¹⁵ In any case, these line endings would, in the course of time, and perhaps quite quickly, have become articulate and meaningful (cf. the verse from Oster 1959 quoted immediately above). Finally, the sense of the main part of the verse would have been carried over into these endings (or vice versa); and the element which was originally the labour cry would have been fully incorporated into the rest of the verse. In this way, what is perhaps the most idiosyncratic feature of *dróttkvætt* could be accounted for in terms of the Hypothesis.¹⁶

(B) A second important feature of *dróttkvætt* is that the number of syllables in each line is fixed within narrow limits and is most usually six. This feature would, of course, be easily explicable in terms of the Hypothesis. Obviously the standardization of the length of each line would regularize the incidence of the constant (see (A) above) thus making for improved co-ordination in rowing which would have been so important, not least on the rowed ships of the Relevant Period (cf. pp. 155-7 above). It will be observed that the verses cited under (i), (ii) and (iii) in (A) above show the same regularity of length of line. This particular feature of *dróttkvætt* could, of course, be accounted for in a number of other

ways and too much importance should naturally not be attached to the explanation given here.

(C) The third feature of *dróttkvætt* to be dealt with is not a prosodic one:¹⁷ it is the extensive use of kennings and *heiti* in the diction of poetry composed in *dróttkvæðr hátttr*. Here the Hypothesis links up with an already existing theory on the origins of kennings.¹⁸ This theory, propounded by several scholars, sees, at least to some extent, the origin of skaldic diction in the language of taboo. *Noa*-expressions are common amongst primitive peoples the world over for feared and revered phenomena.¹⁹ Indeed, certain groups, most notably hunters, seamen and warriors, often have more or less complete *noa*-languages consisting of words and expressions very different from those otherwise used in everyday life. The proponents of the theory in question discerned likenesses between the poetic diction of the skalds and the circumlocutions used by those wishing to avoid normal, everyday language for superstitious reasons. I may review here in very condensed form the evidence produced in support of this theory by the scholars in question. First Axel Olrik. In 1897, Jakob Jakobsen published his dissertation *Det norrøne sprog på Shetland*. In ch. V of this (entitled "Fiskernes navne-tabu; sønavne"), Jakobsen discussed the *noa*-language of Shetlandic fishermen, which he described (p. 84) as "et systematisk gennemført søsprog, ikke så lidt afvigende fra det daglige omgangssprog". By the use of this *noa*-language while out fishing, the fishermen sought to conceal their intentions from the spirits of the sea in whose province they considered themselves to be. They thought that the use of ordinary language would bring bad luck and were reluctant to call anything (least of all the fish they were out to catch) by the name they would normally use on land. In his review of Jakobsen's book (also published in 1897), Axel Olrik discerned likenesses between the *heiti* of the skalds and the *noa*-expressions of Shetlandic fishermen. Admittedly, Olrik tended to regard as examples of skaldic *heiti* the various expressions catalogued in the poem *Alvíssmál* (*Edda*, 124-9); but this in no way affects his main conclusions since similar expressions are found in *dróttkvætt*-poetry. These are some of the correspondences to which Olrik drew attention:

Shetlandic "søsprog"

djub, mar, "sea"
log, "sea"
brener, "fire"
fona, "fire"

Alvíssmál

djúpr marr (v. 24)
lagastafr (v. 24)
forbrennir (v. 26)
funi (v. 26)

Assuming a connection here, Olrik was in no doubt that it was skaldic diction which was secondary to the *noa*-vocabulary and not the other way round. Whereas Olrik really only dealt with *heiti*, Erik Noreen (1921, 3-17) showed connections between skaldic kennings and *noa*-language.²⁰ Thus kennings of the type *viðfiskr*, *lyngfiskr*, *lyngáll*, *heiðar lax* (not mentioned by Noreen) and *jarðar seiðr* (all meaning "snake") find parallels in continental Scandinavian *noa*-expressions for "snake" and "adder" as follows: Norwegian: *lyngaal*, *lyngseid*; Swedish: *buskefisk*, *backål*; Danish: *buskål*, *hedeål*.²¹ Mention of the adder (as of other dangerous animals) was, for obvious reasons, often tabooed. The most recent contribution to this theory is that of Svale Solheim. In an important but not well known study published in 1940 and entitled *Nemningsfordomar ved fiske*, Solheim treated the taboo-superstitions and *noa*-language of Norwegian fishermen which survived down to his own day. In this (p. 57), Solheim mentions in passing that "nemningsfordomar" were also particularly common amongst those engaged in whale- and seal-hunting. And in a shorter work published in 1942 called *Kvalen i folketru og dikting*, Solheim turned his attention not only to Scandinavian *noa*-expressions for the whale, but also to certain Norse poetic circumlocutions for the same animal. More particularly, Solheim showed that kennings which represent the whale as the "pig of the sea" (e.g. *brimsvín*) have counterparts in *noa*-expressions from various parts of the Norse world. He is doubtless right, for example, when he regards the Danish *marsvin*, "porpoise", as "eit opphavleg løyndenamn" (Solheim 1942, 10). Solheim's arguments are somewhat intricate and will not be rehearsed here in detail. But his conclusion that in this particular matter there is some connection between "skaldemål" on the one hand and "sjømål" on the other and that the former is indebted to the latter is undoubtedly certainly a sound one.

At this point, I should like to adduce a new, albeit small, piece of evidence in support of this theory: although sea-*noa*-language is not well attested in Iceland, it certainly existed there (contrary to what Solheim 1940, v, says). In the manuscript Lbs. 522, 4to in Landsbókasafn Íslands, written by Ólafur Sveinsson in Purkey in 1828, there is a list of *sjóvíti*, i.e. actions and words which were to be avoided at sea.²² In this list, use of the word *mús* is forbidden and the expression *veggja dýr* is prescribed. We know, of course, of *noa*-expressions for this harmful rodent used amongst seamen and fishermen elsewhere (see Solheim 1940, 83-4, for examples

from Norway, the Shetlands, Scotland and Estonia; Portengen 1915, 115, 118). But what is relevant in the present context is that the expression *veggja dýr* finds a parallel in a kenning for “cat” in a verse preserved in the *Laufás Edda* (see *Skj* A I 181; B I 171; *Edda Magnúsar Ólafssonar* 1979, 265): this is *vélir viðbjarnar aldinna veggja: viðbjörn veggja*, “(brown) bear of the walls” is a mouse; the “mouse’s deceiver (*vélir*)” is a cat. There must be some connection here between kenning and *noa*-expression and I would suggest that the former is secondary and the latter primary.²³

It remains to mention Alberta Johanna Portengen’s dissertation of 1915, *De Oudgermaansche dichtertaal in haar ethnologisch verband*. Just as Olrik had built on information provided by Jakobsen (1897), so Portengen drew on Adriani’s *Sangireesche spraakkunst* of 1893. Adriani treated the language of the Sangir Archipelago (Kepulauan Sangihë) off the northeastern tip of the Celebes (in present-day Indonesia). And in addition to dealing with ordinary Sangirese, Adriani devoted a separate chapter to a special *noa*-language (called Sasahara) which was used by the Sangirese first and foremost at sea. Indeed, Sasahara is characterized by Adriani (p. 53) as “een volledige zee-taal”. While on land, the Sangirese would use, for instance, the word *meo* for “cat”; while at sea, they would say *mangkahukang*, literally “scratcher”;²⁴ further examples: ordinary Sangirese *balawo*, “mouse”: Sasahara *mohong siq*; ordinary Sangirese *këmboleng*, “shark”: Sasahara *belau; sołoëng*, “(a sort of) sawfish”: Sasahara *mahoroëng*, literally “the sharp (one)”; ordinary Sangirese *patola*, “(large) snake”: Sasahara *karantusa*; ordinary Sangirese *sasi*, “sea”: Sasahara *daghe*; ordinary Sangirese *pulangeng*, “thwart”: Sasahara *kalaintolangeng*; ordinary Sangirese *pundalë*, “paddle”: Sasahara *bawahasi*.²⁵ What is relevant here is that Sasahara was also used by the Sangirese as a special poetic diction and its appearance in this function is almost certainly secondary to its use as a *noa*-language. The important part of Portengen’s contribution to this theory then was to adduce the example of Sasahara as a concrete parallel to the derivation of poetic diction from *noa*-language which it postulates.²⁶

The proponents of this theory are able to produce striking parallels between *noa*-language on the one hand and skaldic diction on the other and to argue convincingly that the relevant expressions were primary to *noa*-language and secondary in skaldic vocabulary. But what they were not able to do was to explain how *noa*-vocabulary came to find its way into skaldic diction.²⁷ But this problem is largely solved within the framework of the Hypothesis.

It is precisely at sea that *noa*-languages take their most comprehensive form; note here Adriani's and Jakobsen's statements on respectively Sasahara and the Shetlandic fishermen's language cited above. And of the evidence in support of this theory, that produced by Olrik, Portengen, Solheim and myself comes from sea-*noa*-vocabulary. And we also have to remember that the use of *noa*-language at sea was not necessarily a voluntary affair: the Estonians keel-hauled men for breach of their taboos and Norwegian fishermen of recent times (amongst whose ancestors, I would suggest, *dróttkvætt* developed) had a system of fines and penalties for those who imperilled the success of a fishing expedition by the careless use of language. Given, then, that we can infer that a sea-*noa*-language existed in the milieu in which *dróttkvætt*-poetry arose, and given that skaldic verses seem often to have been declaimed at sea, there is, at least theoretically, good reason why these latter should be composed in a sea-*noa*-language. And if the idea of rowing chants couched in sea-*noa*-vocabulary might seem too elaborate,²⁸ I would draw attention to Verse 15.²⁹ This verse bears signs of being a rowing chant: it begins with the first person plural of a verb; it refers to rowing; and indeed rowing seems to be going on as the verse is declaimed. But it also contains two kennings for the fish which the rowers are out to catch, *spáþernur langra nóta* and *akrmurur jökla*. As noted above, it is precisely their quarry that hunters and fishermen are particularly concerned to refer to by *noa*-terms. I would suggest, then, that when Verse 15 was used as a fisherman's rowing chant, the kennings in it could well have had something of the function of *noa*-words.³⁰

VI

In IV and V above, I have produced the two main parts of my evidence, basically (i) that it seems likely that *dróttkvætt*-verses were used as rowing chants; and (ii) that it is possible to explain three important features of *dróttkvætt*-poetry in terms of the Hypothesis.³¹ I shall mention here a subsidiary piece, but, it should be noted, different type of evidence which I think supports the Hypothesis. In my view, it is possible to discern in skaldic diction a certain preoccupation not only with things maritime in general, but also with things familiar to the rower in particular. As is well known, the imagery of skaldic poetry is much concerned with ships and the sea. Very frequently, phenomena which in themselves have nothing to do with the sea contain maritime allusions; illustration of this fact is not necessary. But I think it is also possible to observe,

perhaps not quite as easily, reference or allusion to things which a man engaged in rowing would have near him or could see, for example, the gunwales of a vessel, oars, the wake of a rowed ship and the like. A well known example would be the type of kenning for "shield" — an object which, after all, has nothing intrinsically to do with the sea — which alludes to the gunwale of a ship along which shields might be fastened (cf. Meissner 1921, 175-6). Poetry attributed to Bragi contains two examples: *lauf Leifa landa*, "leaf of the lands of Leifi (Leifi was a sea-king; *Leifa lǫnd*, 'the sea')" (cf. Turville-Petre 1976, 2-3); *Ræs reiðar máni*, "moon of the chariot of Rær (Rær, a sea-king; *Ræs reið*, 'ship')" (*Skj B I 2*).³² Other examples may be given: there is a verse ascribed to Óttarr svarti (*Íf XXVII 35*) in which Óláfr Haraldsson is addressed as *skjǫldunga þopti*, "rowing-bench companion of princes" (i.e. "compeer of princes"). (*Þopti*, and *aldarþopti*, also appear in a *þula* of *manna heiti* (*Skj B I 662*.) And a kenning for the wing of a bird in a verse in the Third Grammatical Treatise (*Skj B I 598*) is *vindǫr*, "wind-oar" in a longer one for a bird's flight, *vindára róðr*, literally "rowing of wind-oars". In the instances just quoted, the metaphor is fairly clear and natural: the wings of a bird do resemble in some ways the oars of a vessel (cf. Verse 13), the idea of a shield as "moon of the gunwale" seems to me a perfectly apposite one. But what is more significant to the point being made here are kennings where the comparison between the object to do with rowing and the object the complete kenning denotes is inapposite, strained, biased or remote. It is also interesting where the analogy has puzzled a commentator like Meissner (1921) and where the need is felt for special explanation. Four examples may be given:³³

(1) Thus in kennings for "sword", the *Grundwort* in eight cases listed by Meissner (1921, 153) is a word for "oar", or a *pars pro toto* for "oar" (e.g. *blóðǫr* (*Skj B II 225*); *benja ræði* (*Skj B I 504*)).³⁴ A basic word with this sense alongside words with such meanings as "stechendes Werkzeug" (only two examples) and "Dorn" seems to have puzzled Meissner who writes: "Von der Form kann die Vergleichung kaum ausgehen, vielmehr hat man daran zu denken, dass die Handhabung des Remens wie des Schwertes Kraft und Geschicklichkeit erfordert." In my view, an oar is an unwieldy and un-sword-like object and Meissner's explanation not altogether satisfactory.

(2) Jón Helgason (1934, 62) notes that kennings for "tongue" often fall into the pattern "ordenes redskab (høvl, aare m.m.)". But of the examples of the type given by Meissner (1921, 133), there are

only two containing the element *lokarr*, “plane” (*óðar lokarr*; *ómunlokarr*), while there are no less than five kennings for “tongue” where the basic word is connected with ships. Three of these last refer to oars: *orða ór* (*Skj B II 160*), *óðar ór* (*Skj B I 437*), *tölu ræði* (*Skj B II 83*), a fourth to the steering-oar, *máls stýri* (*Skj B I 631*). Meissner would seek to explain the preoccupation with oars in these kennings by the fact that they present a “Bild eines Werkzeuges, das an einem Punkte festliegt und sich sonst bewegt”. This explanation, of course, is not entirely unconvincing. On the other hand, that the interest is rather (or at least additionally) in things familiar to the rower is suggested by a fifth kenning connected with ships and cited by Meissner, *orða hlýða* (*Skj B I 433*): here *hlýða* refers to “brædder der blev sat op på skibskanterne, for at gøre disse højere og hindre bølgerne i at styrte ind over skibet” (*Lp*, s.v. *hlýða*), which, of course, are not “Werkzeuge” and which, while they do shake (cf. *Skj B I 370*), do not really move in the way described by Meissner.³⁵

(3) The word *dorg* appears in three kennings for “sea”, *dorgar dynströnd* (*Skj B I 453*), *dorgar vangr* (*Skj B II 2*) and *djúp dorgtúns* (*Skj B II 183*). It means “fiskesnöre (på en lang stang, som slæbes med båden, idet denne ros frem)” (*Lp*, q.v.). The word *dorg* is not really a very apposite determinant in these kennings. And we do not, as far as I have been able to discover, find a word for any other piece of fishing equipment (e.g. any word for “net”) used in this way (cf. Meissner 1921, 97, where, however, the use of the word *taug* in a kenning for the sea is recorded, “in gleichem Sinne” to *dorg*). On the other hand, a *dorg* is an object which would have been visible to the fisherman at his oar. Here again, then, we find skaldic diction seeing things very much from the point of view of the rower.³⁶

(4) Last in this context, we should note four kennings for “woman, lady” where the determinant has such senses as “riches”, “brooches”, “costly stuff”, but the basic word *þopta* means “rowing-bench”: *auðar þopta*, *Skj B I 395*; *goðvefjar þopta*, *Skj B I 403*; *þorna þopta*, *Skj B II 476*; *gullhlaðs þopta*, *Skj B II 491*. Again, these kennings seem to have somewhat (but perfectly understandably) puzzled Meissner (1921, 411). But we remember that *þoptur* in small and perhaps even quite large vessels were often loose planks. And whether *þoptur* were fixed or not, what we have here is a word for a plank- or pole-like object (cf. e.g. *brik*, “bed-board” and of special interest in the maritime context, *skorð* and *skorða*, “ship-prop”) of a type which is frequently found

alongside names of living trees in kennings for "woman" but one which is particularly connected with rowers and rowing. A sexual innuendo may also be present (as perhaps also with *brik*). Note also the kenning *vága hyrjar þilja*, "rowing bench of the fire of the sea" ("fire of the sea" = "gold") for "woman" (*Skj* B II 236); and also *þopta* which appears as a *kvenna heiti ókent* in the *þulur* (*Skj* A I 688).

Here, then, we have the evidence of four groups of kennings which, taken as a whole, display a definite interest in things familiar to the rower and which seem much more accountable if we assume that skaldic diction had some special preoccupation with rowing. In general it might be argued, of course, that Old Norse poetic diction draws its metaphors from many environments and that the environment of the rower is just one of these. On the other hand, there can, as noted, be little doubt that Old Norse *kenningar* and *heiti* are particularly connected with the sea. And in my view, it would be difficult to think of any milieu other than that of the rower which kennings meaning as different things as "prince", "shield", "tongue", "sword", "woman" and "wing of a bird" might refer to.³⁷

VII

In this section, some conclusions will be drawn and an assessment of the Hypothesis made under three headings as follows:

(A) First, two alternative theories to the Hypothesis which seek to account for the origin of *dróttkvætt* may be mentioned and argued against:³⁸

(1) The theory that *dróttkvæðr háttur* developed under the influence of Irish metrical forms has had a number of proponents amongst both nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholars (cf. Turville-Petre 1972, 170, footnote 14). It faces a serious chronological problem: it is very doubtful that the substantial Norse receptivity to Irish culture which this theory presupposes could have developed before the genesis of *dróttkvætt* (if, indeed, it ever existed at all). Again, while likenesses are to be found between Irish metres and *dróttkvætt* in individual prosodic features, it is, I understand, difficult to point to a single Irish metre which combines all these features and might therefore have provided a single model for *dróttkvætt* (although, it is true, particular single Irish metres (e.g. *rinnard* which consists of six-syllable lines ending in a trochaic disyllable) have been mentioned as models). And while there are similarities between Irish metres and *dróttkvætt*, there are also marked differences: for example, Irish metres most usually have a seven-syllable line; and Einar Ól. Sveinsson (1962, 129) writes: "Það er óeitanlegt, að furðu gegnir, að ekki skuli gæta ríms í enda vísuorða í dróttkvæðu, ef írskir hættir væru fyrirmyndin, því það er beint aðaleinkenni þeirra." On this point, Jón Helgason (1934, 56) writes: "en hypotese om irsk paavirkning støder bl. a. paa den vanskelighed, at de

irske versformer er ret avfigende” and Hallvard Lie (1952, 11): “det . . . er . . . etter mitt skjønn mere som skiller enn som binder.” And if poets composing in Old Norse really took Irish metrical forms as their models, we might expect them to have done so more whole-heartedly and to have rejected native elements more thoroughly than is suggested by the curiously eclectic amalgam of features from the two traditions which the proponents of this theory see in the *dróttkvætt*-stanza. Finally, there is very little incidental evidence for this theory: if it were correct, one might expect, for example, to find more Irish loan-words in early skaldic poetry, or more Irish subject-matter, or more references to Ireland (for an example of how these might have manifested themselves, cf. the verse attributed to Magnús berfættr (died 1103), *Hvat skulum heimfjör kvitta?* in *Skj B I 403* with the Irish loan-word *ingjan* in its sixth line). This theory has been vigorously opposed or dismissed by a number of critics (cf. e.g. Lie 1952, 5 ff.).

(2) In an article entitled “Skaldestil-studier” in *Maal og minne* for 1952, Hallvard Lie argued that “dróttkvættstilen” which in his view we find first represented in Bragi’s *Ragnarsdrápa* (*Skj B I 1-4*) had its inspiration in contemporary visual art. More specifically *Ragnarsdrápa* purports to describe pictures on the various panels of a shield and Lie argues that Bragi was influenced by or imitated the art of decoration on shields. Lie’s argument as a theory on the origin of “dróttkvættstilen” suffers from various flaws. First it presupposes that Bragi’s *Ragnarsdrápa* is not only the oldest *preserved* poem in *dróttkvætt* but that it was the first poem ever to be composed in that metre. I can by no means accept this.³⁹ Again, Lie (1952, 29) has to concede that we know little or nothing about the art of Viking Age shield-decoration at first hand and has to fall back on the evidence primarily of the Gotland picture-stones but also of figured bracteates and pictures on fragments of tapestries. Despite this, he apparently, but wrongly in my view, feels himself justified in formulating an opinion on the artistic impression given by what he considers to have been Bragi’s primary (if visual) model when he composed *Ragnarsdrápa* and in so doing created “dróttkvættstilen” more or less *ex nihilo*. Finally it seems to be a premise (or at least an implication) of Lie’s argument that an immobile, stagnant quality (“en nærsagt fjetret ubevegelighet”, an “instrykk av stillstand”) which Lie discerns in *Ragnarsdrápa* is shared by the Gotland picture-stones; this is highly debatable in my opinion; I find the art of the Gotland picture-stones very lively, perhaps as lively as one might expect of the visual arts of the period; indeed, in my view, many of the Gotland pictures are rather characterized by the “rask ytre bevegelighet” which Lie (1952, 34) seems to see (and perhaps correctly) as the antithesis of the essential character of “dróttkvættstilen”. All in all, I consider Lie’s arguments vague and subjective and unlikely to be of much assistance in attempting to trace the origins of the more distinctive features of poetry in *dróttkvætt* (cf. Note 37, where I hope I demonstrate how at best subjective, and probably fallacious Lie’s arguments could well be on a point of detail).

(B) Here certain possible objections to the Hypothesis may be anticipated and answered (cf. also Note 28):

(i) It might be objected that *there was too great a gap between the cultural milieu of the oarsman and that in which dróttkvætt-poetry was practised for dróttkvætt to have arisen in the way suggested by the Hypothesis*. In reply, I would argue that *dróttkvætt*-poetry would have been composed and recited by members of all the free

social classes; it was not the inviolable preserve of an élite or any one social class (insofar as such were clearly differentiated at the time) and “court poetry” is a misnomer when used as a blanket term for all skaldic poetry or all poetry in *dróttkvætt*. At any rate, the following strophes from *Haraldskvæði* (verses 15-17; *Skj B I 24*) show that it would have been the duty of the men surrounding a king of the early Viking Age (whether they would have been referred to as a *drótt* or not) to row:

15. “Hversu es fégjafall,
þeim es fold verja,
ítra ógnflýtir,
við íþróttarmenn sína?”
16. “Mjök eru reifðir
rógbirtingar,
þeirs í Haralds túni
húnum verpa.
Féi eru þeir gæddir
auk fõgrum mækjum,
malmi húnlenzkum
auk mani austrænu.
17. Þá eru þeir reifir,
es vitu rómu væni,
õrvir upp at hlaupa
auk árar at sveigja,
hõmlur at slíta
enn hái at brjóta,
ríkula võrru þeysa
at vísa ráði.”⁴⁰

Further, there is nothing particularly improbable in the occasional accounts we have of kings and princes themselves taking a turn at the oar (cf. Verse 10, where we are told how well the *dróttar deilir* rows).⁴¹ And encomiastic poetry praising kings and princes could well have arisen from rowing chants (cf. (b) in Excursus 1). I would suggest that the most likely milieu for the genesis of *dróttkvætt* was that of the petty kings of Scandinavia (probably western Norway) in the century or so immediately preceding the beginning of the Viking Age; and that such kings would have had in their retinues a substantial proportion of men who at some time or another would have been seamen or fishermen and who would have been quite familiar with the task of rowing would seem to be undeniable.⁴²

(ii) A second objection might be this: *if the Hypothesis is correct, why do we not have more dróttkvætt-verses, which, like Verse 4, show more or less unequivocal signs of being rowing-chants?* This objection has to some extent already been answered: as suggested

(pp. 163-4), work chants do not, of course, by their content, expressly identify themselves as such. Some bear only incidental signs or no signs at all of being work chants. Indeed, there is sometimes an intentional tendency to avoid mentioning work in general and the tedious task the performance of which they accompany or set the time for in particular. Sometimes the diversion of the workers was the prime consideration and the content might be anything to take the workers' minds off their task so long as the work-rhythm was maintained. Second, it should be borne in mind that the most obvious rowing chants are precisely the ones least likely to have been written down by saga authors and the like.⁴³ Third, it is of great importance to remember that the very limited selection of skaldic poetry which has been transmitted to us can by no means necessarily be regarded as representative of the totality of oral *dróttkvætt*-poetry ever composed and declaimed which has perished and of which it forms only a miniscule part. According to Holtsmark (1964, 16) something like two-thirds of extant skaldic poetry from before Snorri's time has been transmitted to us through his single pen and, as far as we know, Snorri was not particularly interested in rowing chants, although in this context we should note that verse 22 of *Háttatal* (Verse 16 in the Appendix) certainly suggests that he was well aware of the function of *dróttkvætt*-verses as rowing chants.⁴⁴ Indeed, in view of these factors just mentioned, it is remarkable that we have at least eight skaldic verses preserved (Verses 3, 4, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15) which bear fairly clear signs of being rowing chants. And we should also remember that we have a large proportion of *dróttkvætt*-verses which, while they do not specifically mention rowing, refer in the present tense to the progress of ships and boats through the sea.⁴⁵

(iii) And a third objection might be this: *on the whole, work songs are rather simple from a formal point of view; poetry in dróttkvætt on the other hand displays considerable formal complexity, not least with respect to word order; therefore (it might be argued) it is improbable that dróttkvætt-poetry had its origin in rowing chants.*⁴⁶ I would admit that if there is a drawback to the Hypothesis it lies in this objection: it is true that work songs tend to take rather a simple form. On the other hand, the following three considerations, taken together, in my view invalidate this objection:⁴⁷

(a) It is certainly possible to exaggerate the difficulty of skaldic word order; cf. for example, Jón Helgason 1934, 63.

(b) The complex *dróttkvætt*-poetry which we have preserved

could have, indeed is likely to have, developed out of poetry which was formally less complex and which had simpler word order. (The Hypothesis does not, of course, necessarily presuppose that there was no formal development in *dróttkvætt*-poetry between the time of its origin and the time represented by the poetry we have preserved; there surely must have been.⁴⁸ Nor is it necessarily a corollary of the Hypothesis that any of the preserved *dróttkvætt*-verses with their relatively complicated word order were used as rowing chants, although it seems certain that in fact a number of them were (cf. p. 163 above and (c) below.) And in this context, it is interesting to note that there do exist pieces of *dróttkvætt*-poetry which have simpler than usual word order and which, at the same time, could well be, or be connected with, maritime work songs: First a couple of *helmingar* in *Hallfreðar saga*, ch. 5 (*Íf* VIII 153) edited in the Appendix as Verses 17 and 18: in these the word order is simple. The task of raising anchor seems to be going on (cf. Verse 7); and we note the first person plural of the verb *færa* in Verse 17. (In suggesting that we have in Verse 17 some sort of maritime work song, I regard it as significant that in his English rendering of Verse 17, Lee M. Hollander (1945, 130-1) borrows a phrase from the shanties (or at least from work songs):

Heave, heigho! our cable –
 here comes a big breaker –
 taut grows the hide-hawser:
 where is Akkerisfrakki?)

Second, Verse 19 (*Njáls saga*, ch. 88): here we have a couple of lines of poetry so simple in their form (and yet clearly related to *dróttkvætt*-poetry) that they are accorded no place in Finnur Jónsson's corpus of skaldic poetry (*Skj*). At the same time, they contain the first person plural of a verb and this in a formula (*lötum* + a verb denoting movement through water + a name of a vessel) which appears with slight variations in other verses which seem to be maritime work chants (cf. Verse 15 and Note 45; the line *lötum kenni-Val kanna* in a verse attributed to Þórhallr veiðimaðr (*Skj* B I 182) which I have argued elsewhere is a rowing chant (Perkins 1976)).⁴⁹ Cf. also in this context Verse 20: here the word order is by no means complicated; and in Excursus 2 below I produce reasons why the verse could well be a rowing chant.⁵⁰

(c) *Here I make a point which I consider of the utmost importance to the whole argument of the present contribution. It needs special emphasis. It cannot be stressed too strongly.* It seems likely that at least Verse 4 and probably Verses 10 and 15 were used as rowing

chants; the word order of these verses is really no less complicated than that of other *dróttkvætt*-poetry; therefore, we can say, by these very facts (and despite the relative simplicity which may characterize work chants elsewhere in the world), that Old Norse rowing chants were formally rather complicated and had relatively free word order; the objection is, then, invalidated. In my view, it would be difficult to affirm that Verse 4 is more likely not to have been used as a rowing chant than to have been used as one; and yet it is surely more or less incumbent on those who seek to dismiss the Hypothesis on the basis of this objection to show that Verses 4, 10 and 15 were never used as rowing chants. And if, as I think probable, Verses 4, 10 and 15 were used as rowing chants, then that is, as noted, a conclusion with far-reaching implications and one which largely disposes of this difficulty.

(C) Thirdly, I would draw attention here to some of the advantages of the Hypothesis:

(1) It ties in well with an existing (and to some extent favoured) theory on the origin of skaldic kennings (cf. pp. 168-71 above); this cannot really be said of the “Irish” theory or Hallvard Lie’s theory.

(2) It fully accepts, as seems necessary, that *dróttkvætt* developed from *fornyrðislag*.

(3) On the whole, the evidence in its favour is at any rate more varied and probably more extensive than that in favour of the two alternative theories reviewed on pp. 174-5 above.

(4) It might be regarded as simpler than the other two theories, one of which presupposes foreign influence and bilingualism, the other the influence of non-literary art-forms.

(5) Finally, it would largely explain the intimate connection Old Norse skaldic poetry has with sea-faring and the sea: Both in its subject matter and its diction, poetry in *dróttkvætt* is often clearly preoccupied with maritime matters. This connection is more intimate than can be accounted for by the mere fact that Norse kings and chieftains with whom older preserved skaldic poetry is, of course, much concerned, often travelled by ship. Some further explanation is needed. We might therefore *a priori* look to the sea for some solution to the problem of the origin of *dróttkvætt*-poetry. And the Hypothesis provides an answer which clearly connects the origin of *dróttkvætt* with the sea.

EXCURSUS 1: Topical and laudatory elements in *dróttkvætt* and rowing chants

On page 164, in arguing that some of the *themes* of the corpus of *dróttkvætt*-poetry find parallels in rowing chants, the shanties and work songs in general, I mention that treatment of topical events, praise of the workers' boss or master and hints for reward are elements found in both skaldic poetry and work songs. In this excursus, I go into these likenesses in greater detail:

(a) *The topical element:* In his characterization of skaldic poetry, Erik Noreen (1926, 16) points out that, in contrast to the poetry of the Edda, the poetry of the skalds is "till sitt innehåll aktuell, anknuten till samtidens historia på ett eller annat sätt". Stefán Einarsson (1957, 46) writes: "The actuality of the king's eulogies derives from the circumstance that they must have been based on the king's recent feats." And Jón Helgason (1953, 138) remarks that: "I flere tilfælde digter en skjald om en overstået kamp." And if we may, for example, believe the poet (or poets; cf. Note 50) of verse 21 it was composed within twenty-four hours of an attack on Heiðabær (which seems to have been sea-borne; the verse therefore presumably composed at sea). And as is well known, single occasional verses about both momentous and trivial events are an important part of the preserved corpus of skaldic poetry. This element of improvisation and the preoccupation with recent events is, perhaps not surprisingly, also a feature of the chants of rivermen and seamen the world over. Here are examples from two continents. Ruth Finnegan (1970, 235 f.) notes that the Mabale paddle-songs (Congo) are sometimes about local events. And of the work songs of the Thonga, Henri A. Junod (1927, II 208-9) has the following interesting passage:

But the richest collection is that of *sailors' songs*. I heard one of these . . . on the Nkomati, repeated a hundred times in a monotonous fashion by a boy who was pushing the boat along the shore with his pole, from Morakwen to Lourenço Marques: "I siloyi, I ndandale," he said — (these words have no more meaning than tra-la-la) "They are starving at Ntimane, siloyi . . ." He was journeying from the Ntimane country, near Khosen, and having heard that the crops had failed, went muttering this great news all down the river!

Cf. also the quotation from Sibree (1880) under (c) below. Turning from Africa to Australasia, we note the following by Charles Wilkes (1844, III 20-1) in a report on an American expedition to Tongatabu (Tonga Islands) in the middle of the last century:

The canoe of these chiefs was seen advancing slowly over the calm sea by the efforts of its scullers, and was filled with men all singing the following air: [music

given by Wilkes, but omitted here]. To this they sing any words, but generally such as are applicable to the mission of business or pleasure they may be on .

Finally James Cowan (1910, 316) describing a war-canoë expedition by Queenite Maoris against rebel Hauhaus in 1864, records a combined war-song and paddle-song, chanted by the *kai-tukis* (fuglemen on Maori canoes) just before the forces entered the Ohau River on its way up to Lake Rotoiti (North Island), of which the following is a snatch:

Steersman, straight for the Ohau River mouth –
Paddle away!
All together, all together!
Quickly plunge your paddle blades.
How bravely fly the feathers
That deck our war canoe!
Paddle away, etc.

Can we doubt that when the Queenite force returned home victorious, the *kai-tukis* sang of their recent success?

(b) *The laudatory element*: In the Maori paddle-song of which part has just been cited, we also find these lines:

Paddle away!
Yonder see our leaders
Winiata and Haimona,
Who gazed upon the cliffs of Tuhua.
I'm weary sitting at my paddle;
But soon I'll leap into battle, etc.

Here we see that the chieftain leaders of the expedition are referred to. In this connection, we may consider the circumstance that “hovedmassen av s[kaldediktning] er . . . lovkvad, diktet for og om fyrster” (*Kl XV 389*). It is a well known fact that panegyric themes are an important element in skaldic poetry. It is also well known that work songs frequently concern the employer, boss or master of the chanters, whether in laudatory terms or otherwise. In the bitter and grim work songs of American prison labour, convicts often sang of hard taskmasters. German threshing songs frequently referred to the threshers' boss, the farmer (Schopp 1935, 290). And moving from dry land to the waters, we find similar themes. Rowers and paddlers frequently refer to or praise either important passengers, masters or chieftains in their time-keeping chants. For example, Madingoes paddling a missionary up the Gambia river to his mission station in 1833 sang an extempore paddle-song wishing success to the minister in his new work (Moister 1850, 124). Similarly, Maori *kai-tukis* used to make extempore remarks on the Europeans in the boat (Best 1925, 239). The

impromptu song of another *kai-tuki* as his vessel transported a Maori lady of high rank was this (Andersen 1907, 373):

Pull on; thrust deeply. —

How leaps my fluttering heart, as gleam of brightness flashes from thine eyes,
O Puhi-huia!

Pull on!

And again:

Though far thy fame from Maunga-whau was spread and heard in distant lands,
thy heart consents to dwell at Tipi-tai.

And turning to more permanent masters and leaders, three examples may be briefly cited: George W. Cable (1885-6, 821) gives this vignette of life in the Louisiana of ante-bellum days where travelling was mainly by water:

Every plantation had its river or bayou front, and every planter his boat and skilled crew of black oarsmen. The throb of their song measured the sweep of the oars, and as their bare or turbaned heads and shining bodies bowed forward and straightened back in ceaseless alternation, their strong voices chanted the praise of the silent, broad-hatted master who sat in the stern.

Second, Finnegan (1970, 235 f.) notes how the paddle-songs of the Mabale sometimes concerned the local chief. And finally, and nearer home, Scottish Gaelic rowing chants were, as noted above, often composed in honour of chiefs.

(c) *Hints for reward*: Many skaldic poems are, then, praise-poems in honour of a prince or king. It is a well known fact that a quality frequently praised in the eulogistic verses of the skalds is generosity. There is, for instance, a number of skaldic kennings for princes which refer to this virtue — *bauga deilir*, *armlinn eyðir*, *hringa hreytir*, *auðar skiptir* are but a few examples. And with good reason, references to a prince's generosity have been interpreted as hints for reward. In this context, it is relevant that paddlers and rowers (as well as other groups of workers; cf. e.g. Schopp 1935, 64 ff.) in other parts of the world sing chants which contain hints for reward from master or employer, sometimes praising his generosity at the same time. Here are three examples, from Indonesia, from Madagascar and from Louisiana:

(i) Interessant war auf dem Heimweg der Gesang unserer Ruderer. Sie suchten sich während der mehrstündigen Fahrt dadurch anzufeuern und bei uns die Gebelaune zu erwecken. Irgend einer hob z.B. an: "Der Herr hat viel Arrak und wird uns davon geben", worauf der Chor die Zeile wiederholte. Da aber der Herr keinen Arrak gab, hiess es weiter: "Der Herr hat viel Tabak, er wird uns davon geben", und so ging es fort und fort mit dem Herzählen aller Herrlichkeiten, ein Gebrauch, der im ganzen Archipel bis zu den Arrow-Inseln wahrgenommen werden kann (Jacobsen 1896, 96-8).

(ii) Few things are more pleasant than a canoe voyage on some of the large rivers of Madagascar, always providing that you have a good canoe and a sufficient staff of paddlers. The men often beguile the time by singing their musical and often amusing canoe chants, in which one of them keeps up a recitative, usually an improvised strain, often bringing in circumstances recently happening, and very frequently introducing delicate flattery of the European employing them, how generous and rich he is, &c., and inquiring if there is not beef, and rice, and other food at the next stopping-place. To this all the rest chime in with a chorus at regular intervals, a favourite one being *Hé! misy vâ?* ("Oh, is there any?") (Sibree 1880, 178).

(iii) This is the final verse (in translation) of a Creole slave rowing song to a Louisiana planter by his men on the last stage of his journey (Cable 1885-6, 822; cf. p. 182):

See! see! the town! Hurrah! hurrah!
 Master returns in pleasant mood.
 He's going to treat his boys all 'round,
 Hurrah! hurrah for master good!

Given that *dróttkvætt*-verses were used as rowing chants, a more imaginative (but nevertheless tentative) reconstruction of one aspect of Norse conditions may be given in the light of material produced in this Excursus and elsewhere in this article. Verses in *dróttkvætt* might be seen as rowing chants used, for example, by Viking bands raiding foreign coasts. A typical Viking attack has been seen as a "quick-in quick-out" affair (Gwyn Jones 1968, 183) and the importance of rowing to the success of Viking raids, not least to facilitate speedy retreat to the open sea, has been stressed by, for example, Bertil Almgren (1962) (cf. p. 155 above). With a raid completed, destruction wrought, with booty and captives on board, the skalds (who may be seen in the role of rowing-officers; cf. Notes 31 and 50) would give time to the men of the *drótt* as they rowed vigorously away from the hostile coast. To begin with, what they said or sang would have been strictly functional, perhaps something corresponding to the time-keeping commands of coxswains of modern racing shells. Or they would have used standard, well-established chants.⁵¹ But as the threat of pursuit subsided and the success of the venture seemed more assured, they would have begun to improvise. In the first instance, their chants would have been *topical*: "We burnt Hedeby." "Men fled from the warriors." "Let us cause the steed of oars to tread the whale's path to Hordaland." Then, with one eye on recently acquired spoils, the skalds may have entered upon *praise* of their leader or prince and his conduct in battle: "Bravely you strode forward, O prince!" "The warrior reddened his sword in the midst of the throng." "Fiercely you fought, O king!" And finally, with more unconcealed

hope of reward, the skalds stressed their leader's *generosity* by, among other things, referring to him by kennings of the type "giver of treasure", "waster of gold", "distributor of rings". The chieftain listened. And as verses 16 and 17 of *Haraldskvæði* (cf. p. 176 above) might suggest, when the expedition returned home, the *dróttar deilir* (cf. Verse 10) in his hall would have rewarded his now more comfortably seated *íþróttarmenn* for their exertions on the rowing-bench, their doughtiness in battle. *Mækjar*, *málmr* and *man* would have been awarded or allotted. And the skalds would have improved upon their shipboard verses about the foray and complemented them with further ones on the same subject, perhaps better turned and more memorable; the same rowing rhythm would, however, have been maintained. And in later years, these verses would have been remembered and passed on to younger generations. And, in the course of time, they would have come to the ears of Icelandic writers of kings' and family sagas, who incorporated them in their works. And copies of many of these last have survived and preserved the skalds' verses to the present day.

EXCURSUS 2: The possible function in rowing chants of two features of *dróttkvætt*

On pages 165-71 it has been argued that it is possible to explain how three features of *dróttkvætt*-poetry could have had their origins as functional elements in rowing chants. Given that *dróttkvætt*-verses were used as rowing chants, I will suggest in this excursus ways in which two further features of *dróttkvætt* (the system of internal rhymes; the eight-line stanza) could have had some practical purpose as functional elements. I should stress, however, that *I do not regard these suggestions as in any way part of my arguments in support of the Hypothesis*: the system of internal rhymes could well be a secondary development (cf. p. 165 and note the two lines of poetry which make up Verse 19 (cf. Note 49)) and there are numerous other ways in which the origin of both it and the eight-line stanza could be accounted for. In what follows, then, *no attempt is made to account for the origins of the two features in question*.

A. The system of internal rhymes

When strictly followed, the system of half- and whole rhymes (*skothendingar* and *aðalhendingar*) has the effect of marking alternate lines of the *dróttkvætt* stanza. In connection with this feature

of *dróttkvætt*, it is of interest that rowing chants and paddle songs are frequently sung antiphonally with one singer or group of singers alternating with another singer or group. This may happen in various ways: (a) One person (perhaps a steersman, rowing officer, fugleman or simply a member of the crew) sings a solo part while the others on board chime in with a chorus. Examples are numerous, amongst them the rowing chants of American negro slaves or the songs from Indonesia and Madagascar referred to in Excursus 1. (b) The oarsmen or paddlers on one side of a vessel sing parts of the chants alternately with those on the other side. Antiphonal chants like these have been found, for example, amongst the boatmen of the Zambesi (Finnegan 1970, 234) and the rowers of Chinese junks (Bücher 1919, 252-3).⁵² (c) Two time-givers sing alternate verses responding to one another. This was sometimes the case with the *kai-tukis* on a Maori canoe: thus Shortland (1854, 143-4) writes:

In the long war canoes two singers, called *Kaituki*, stand on stages placed on a level with the gunwale of the canoe, one near the bow and the other near the stern. In addition to their voices, they have in the hand some native weapon which they brandish in time, just as the leader of an orchestra brandishes the bow of his violin. Sometimes they sing alternate verses responding to each other, sometimes both together. By this means the time is remarkably well preserved. I have seen fifty or sixty paddlers plunge into the water so exactly at the same instant that the eye could mark no difference between them.

Two Norse verses should be noted in this connection: First, Verse 20 in the Appendix which comes from chapter 8 of *Barðarsaga Snæfellsáss* (1860, 16) where it is attributed with no small degree of improbability to Hetta trollkona. It seems not at all unlikely that this verse was used as a rowing chant. It concerns, of course, a man who rows. It is found in the close proximity of another verse (viz. *Róa skaltu fjall Firða* etc., *Skj B II* 482; *Barðarsaga Snæfellsáss* 1860, 15) which could also well be a rowing chant.⁵³ And of Verse 20 Ólafur Lárússon (1944, 162) remarks “vísan er einföld og lítill skáldskapur í henni,” a circumstance which could well be of relevance in this context (cf. Perkins 1969, 95 lines 23 ff.). What is singular about this verse is the repetition of the line *Ingjaldr í skinnfeldi*; as Ólafur Lárússon suggests, this repetition must be unique in Eddic and skaldic poetry. But given too that the verse is a rowing chant, an explanation seems obvious: The even lines could have been spoken or chanted by a single individual and perhaps improvised (cf. (c)(ii) in Excursus 1); and the line *Ingjaldr í skinnfeldi* could be explained as a chorus chanted by the others on board. We note the line contains *skothending* (although we

might expect *aðalhending*). (One might compare with this verse the American negro rowing chant *Michael row de boat ashore*.)

The second item of interest here is Verse 2 which appears in *Sturlunga saga*, or perhaps rather the prose which immediately precedes it. Here we are told how a man dreamt that he entered a small room and found two men sitting there, opposite each other on separate benches. They clasped each other by the hands and rocked backwards and forwards so vigorously that they struck the walls with their shoulders. At the same time, they declaimed a verse (Verse 2) each chanting alternate lines of it. It should be noted, of course, that Verse 2 is not in *dróttkvætt* and has neither *skothendingar* nor *aðalhendingar*. But the motions of these two men are, as Vogt (1927, 66) has rightly stressed, those of rowers. And commenting on the passage (and having dealt with Verse 1 and its preceding prose), Anne Holtsmark (1956) writes:

Samme sted fortelles en annen drøm, her er det to menn som ror, de sitter andføttes og lener seg avvekslende bakover og synger en strofe, hver sin verslinje vekselvis. Strofen egner seg ikke så godt til oppsang, men slik vekselang kan også være brukt.

Here, then, and whatever the status of Verse 2 itself as a rowing chant, the probable existence of antiphonal rowing chants in the medieval Norse world seems already to have been recognized.

We may now first return to Shortland's statement quoted above which is of interest in the present context. Here we have information about chants to a large number of paddlers working on particularly long vessels. With such an extended line of workers, it would have made for more exact synchronization to have, as Shortland says was the case, and as is confirmed by a quotation from J. A. Wilson's *Ancient Maori life and history* in Best 1925, 237, two time-keepers, one at each end of the vessel rather than a single one at one end or amidships. And somewhat the same could well have been the case on board the Viking *langskip* which might have had a line of thirty or more rowers at each gunwale. Rather than have a single time-keeper at the stern who would have been at some distance from the oars furthest forward (sound takes time to travel and grows weaker in the process) or one half-way along the ship whose signals (cf. Shortland's statement) would not have been seen by rowers abaft him, it might have been the most practical arrangement to have two time-keepers, one fore, one aft, who would have synchronized their time-keeping by chanting antiphonally.⁵⁴ Second in this context, it is interesting to note a further comment by Anne Holtsmark on the passage just referred

to from *Sturlunga saga*. In Paasche 1957, 138, Holtsmark writes:

. det fins indirekte vidnesbyrd om sang som blir sunget ved årene når flere ror samtidig; i *Sturlungasaga* ser en mann i et syn to som sitter mot hverandre og ror, og synger:

Vi ror, og vi ror, det regner med blod!

Situasjonen er tatt fra virkeligheten, to ror en båt, én ror og én skåter for å holde kursen, og de synger for å holde takten. Slike sanger er naturlige overallt hvor et arbeid utføres kollektivt.

Here there appears to be some mistake by Holtsmark; she seems to translate the beginning words of Verse 1 instead of those of Verse 2. But it is relevant in the present context that she finds a practical function for the antiphonal rowing chant in what may be termed “push-pull rowing”. Certainly antiphonal chants would assist synchronization in this form of rowing where close co-ordination between two rowers would have been essential. Given, then, that *dróttkvætt*-verses were used as rowing chants and in view of the combined evidence of Verse 2 (with its preceding prose) and Verse 20, I would suggest that the system of internal rhymes in the regular *dróttkvætt*-stanza could have had the effect of marking alternate lines of such stanzas for antiphonal chanting (of any of the three types mentioned above). And antiphonal chanting in rowing would have made for improved maintenance of co-ordination not only in the two very different forms of rowing like those visualized by Holtsmark (push-pull rowing) and myself (long lines of oarsmen rowing) but also, I would suggest, in most types of rowing and particularly those in which a large number of participants were involved.⁵⁵

B. The eight-line stanza

Given that *dróttkvætt*-verses were used as rowing chants, a way in which the eight-line stanza might have come to assume some utilitarian function relates to the system by which Norse rowers took turns at the oar and rest from work at it. Here reference may be made to the article “Uge søs” in *Kl XIX* 248-51 (by various authors).

When, as, of course, must often have been the case, long distances were rowed at sea in the Relevant Period or the Viking Age, it was necessary to allow a crew of rowers a period of rest or to replace them with another crew. The word used for “den afstand, man kunne ro uden at skifte mandskab ved årerne” was in West Norse *vika*, which more originally meant “et skifte til søs” (cf. Poul Rasmussen in *Kl XIX* 248-9). Eventually, the word *vika* came to denote an exact unit of measurement at sea, the length of which

varied from century to century and country to country but which, for example, in thirteenth-century Iceland must have been about 9.25 kilometres.

As just intimated, and like the Norse unit of land measurement the *rošt*, the *vika* was originally not exactly defined in terms of length; just as the *rošt* would have varied according to the difficulty of the terrain, so a *vika* would have varied according to the current, wind (contrary or otherwise) and other factors governing ease of progress. Thus, according to Kustaa Vilkuna (*Kl*, s.v. *Uge søs. Finland*), “i den svårframkomliga Kajana älv är u.s. [= uge søs] endast 3,6 km. Däremot var u.s. nedanför Ule träsk litet över 6 km, men här gick resan medströms.” And Vilkuna continues: “Också i skärgården vid havskusten synes u.s.s. längd ha varierat beroende på segel- el. roddfarledens besvärlighet. Ute på öppna havet var u.s. längst.” And another statement by Vilkuna, “efter t. ex. 1000 roddtag bytte man roddare, och då hade man tillryggalagt en u.s.”, seems to suggest the way in which a *vika sjávar* was in fact measured: it seems reasonable to assume that it was originally reckoned by actually counting the number of strokes at the oar which had been made. Indeed, it is difficult to think of any other possible or more equitable way of reckoning for this purpose. And for this method of computing the *vika*, we have the analogy of measuring the mile (Latin *mille passus*) by the number of paces made.

Let us assume, then, that in order to arrange regular rest periods for rowers or regular changes of crew at the oar, an exact tally of the number of strokes rowed was often kept on Norse ships and boats. Rowing chants with stanzas of regular length could well have assisted the strict reckoning of the number of strokes rowed. And in this context, we may note the following statement by Theresa C. Brakeley in her article on “work song” in Leach (ed.) 1949-50, 1182:

The cumulative or counting songs have found special favor with English workers. *Barley Mow*, for example, is a cumulative toast, “Here’s a health to the barley mow, my brave boys,” and the size of the drink increases progressively stanza by stanza with the refrain, “We’ll drink it out of the jolly brown bowl” (pint, hogshead, ocean). *Mowing Down the Meadow*, a haymakers’ counting song, also sung by soldiers marching [NB!], counts from one to 100 men “to mow down the meadow” and in reverse from 100 to one in cumulative refrain. Cornish laborers shoveling ballast on ships sang *The Long Hundred*, a number song matching one line to each shovelful, a total of 120 (a long hundred) by the time 100 was reached in the text of 20 six-line stanzas.

Certainly Cornish labourers using *The long hundred* to regulate

their work took rests between each repetition of the song (cf. Courtney 1890, 205). In the light of the preceding, then, I would suggest that if (as I think probable) *dróttkvætt*-verses were used as rowing chants and (as I again think probable) strokes of the oar were counted to compute *vikur*, then the fact that a *dróttkvætt*-strophe regularly consisted of eight lines would have assisted the recording of the number of strokes rowed. The recitation of a *drápa fertug* (for example) would mark off 320 strokes of the oar; the rehearsal of three or four such *drápur* might give time for what was regarded as a reasonable stint at the oar, 960 or 1280 strokes (cf. Vílkuna's statement quoted above). Eight would be an appropriate base unit for such reckoning: as the reconstructed picture of men rowing a Viking ship in Almgren 1975, 270-1 will show, any normal rower would, of course, have had a natural tally up to eight before him in his eight fingers (his eight *lóns gagfellis lautir*? cf. Note 35) grasping the oar in front of him. One can imagine a Norse rower, perhaps tired, perhaps chary of his labour or jealous of his rights, perhaps complaining (cf. e.g. *Íf* XXVIII 401), perhaps rowing under difficult conditions, but at all events looking forward to the end of the current *vika*, quietly but carefully counting on his eight fingers and in his head the number of strokes he had rowed and thus keeping check on the calculations the rowing-officer made on the basis of the number of eight-line strophes of a time-keeping chant recited. In this way, absolute fairness (and probably efficiency) in the regulation of rowing duties might be maintained and disputes avoided. Finally in this context, attention may be drawn to the following quatrain edited by Einar Ól. Sveinsson in *Fagrar heyrði eg raddirnar* (1974, 206):

Af Eyrarbakka út í Vog
er það mældur vegur
átján þúsund áratog
áttatíu og fjeður.

This suggests that measurements were made by counting oar-strokes in the way I have suggested and also perhaps that reckoning was on the base, if not of eight, then of four.⁵⁶

APPENDIX: THE VERSES

The purpose of the following edition of the Verses is purely to illustrate the arguments put forward in this article; no attempt is made at offering a considered interpretation on matters not relevant to the point being made. The head-word given to each Verse

is normally the name of the poet with whom it is associated in Finnur Jónsson's edition of 1912-15 (*Skj*) (unless it is simply "Anonymous"). This procedure is, however, merely a convenience and by no means implies that the attribution to the poet in question is necessarily accepted; on the contrary, in a number of cases, I would definitely reject these ascriptions and prefer to regard the original poets of the verses in question as unknown (cf. Note 4). In some (but not all) cases where the prose introduction to a verse has some bearing on my arguments, this is reproduced from an appropriate edition and a translation given with that of the verse. The texts of the verses have been normalized, as also the passages of preceding prose (the prose according to somewhat different principles from the verse).

1. Anonymous (*Skj* A II 138; B II 147; *Sk* II 79; *Sturlunga saga* 1906-11, I 285; cf. Vogt 1927, 165-6; Holtsmark 1956)

[Preceding prose: Þat dreymdi mann í Skagafirði, at hann þóttisk koma í hús eitt mikit. Þar sátu inni konur tvær blóðgar ok reru áfram. Honum þótti blóði rigna í ljórana. Önnur kvað konan:]

Róm vit ok róm vit,
rignir blóði,
Guðr ok Gøndul,
fyr guma falli.
Vit skulum ráðask
í Raptahlíð,
þar munum blótaðar
ok þolvaðar.

3. *Guðr* and *Gøndul* are the names of valkyries. 6. *Raptahlíð*, a mountain-side just south of Hólar.

Translation: [Prose: "A man in Skagafjörður dreamt that he thought he entered a large house; in it sat two bloody women and rocked backwards and forwards. It seemed to him as if it rained blood through the louvers. One of the women chanted this:"] "We row and we row, *Guðr* and *Gøndul*; it rains blood foreboding the fall of men. We shall move to *Raptahlíð*. There we shall be damned and cursed."

2. Anonymous (*Skj* A II 138; B II 147-8; *Sk* II 79; *Nn* 3275; *Sturlunga saga* 1906-11, I 286; cf. Vogt 1927, 165-6; Holtsmark 1956)

[Preceding prose: En í Vestfjörðum dreymdi mann, at hann þóttisk kominn í litla stofu, ok sátu upp menn tveir svartklæddir ok höfðu gráar kollhettur á höfði ok tókusk í hendr. Sat á sínum bekk hvárr ok reru ok ráku herðarnar (v.l.: *hendrnar*)

á veggina svá hart, at þá reiddi til falls. Þeir kváðu vísu þessa, ok kvað sitt orð hvárr þeira:]

Höggvask hart seggir,
enn hallask veggir;
illa eru settir,
þás inn koma hettir.
Verk munu upp innask,
þás aldir finnask
— engi er á sómi —
á øfsta dómi.

Translation: [Prose: “But in the Vestfirðir, a man dreamt that he thought he entered a small house and two black-clad men were sitting there and they had grey caps on their heads and clasped each other by the hands. They sat on different benches and rocked backwards and forwards and struck the walls so hard with their shoulders (or hands/arms) that they almost fell over. They chanted this verse, each of them alternate lines:”] “Men smite each other mightily and the walls are close to falling. Things have come to a perilous pass when the hatted ones come. Men’s deeds will be recounted when mankind meets on the Day of Judgement; there will be no honour in it.”

3. Anonymous (*Skj* A I 185; B I 174; *Sk* I 93; *Flóamanna saga*, ch. 24 (*Fornsögur* 1860, 177); cf. Perkins 1969)

[Preceding prose (*Fornsögur* 1860, 177): . . . ok einn dag fundu þeir [i.e. Þorgils Ørrabeinstjúpr and his companions on the desert coast of Greenland] árarstúf einn ok váru á rúnar þessar:]

Vaskat dási,
es drók þessa
opt, úsjaldan
ór at borði.
Sjá gerði mér
sára lófa
meðan heimdragi
hnauð at rauða.

1. *dási*, “laggard”. 8. *hnauð at rauða*: *at hnjóða at rauða*, “to beat at bog-ore [most probably after it had been roasted but before it was put in the furnace for smelting; cf. Perkins 1969, 94]”. By an alternative interpretation, *at* is taken as the negative particle and *rauða* as an adjective. This produces a translation: “did not chafe (his palms) red”, but is less satisfactory (cf. Perkins 1969, 94).

Translation: [Prose: “. . . and one day they found the stump of an oar and inscribed on it were these runes:”] “I was no laggard when I pulled this oar, again and again at the gunwale. It gave me sore palms, while the stay-at-home beat at bog-ore.”

4. Björn Arngeirsson Hítðælakappi (*Skj* A I 300; B I 277; *Sk* I 142; *Nn* 742, 743; *Bjarnar saga Hítðælakappa*, ch. 5 (*Íf* III 123-4); cf. Frank 1978, 161-3)

[Preceding prose: Þann vetr fór Björn til hirðar Eiríks jarls ok var með honum; ok er þeir lágu við Hamarseyri, orti Björn vísu:]

Hristi handar fasta
hefr drengr gamans fengit.
Hrynja hart á dýnu
hløð Eykyndils vøðva,
meðan vel stinna vinnum
— veldr nøkkvat því — kløkkva
— skíð verðk skriðs at beiða
skorðu — ór á borði.

Drengr hefr fengit Hristi handar fasta gamans. Vøðva hløð Eykyndils hrynja hart á dýnu; meðan vinnum vel stinna ór kløkkva á borði; nøkkvat veldr því; verðk at beiða skorðu skíð skriðs.

1. *Hrist* (nominative) *handar fasta*: *fasti* = “fire”; “fire of the hand (*handar*)” = “gold”; *Hrist* is a valkyrie name, and “Hrist of gold” is a kenning for “woman”. Frank finds this kenning ambiguous and thinks that *fasti* might also be read as “firmness, stiffness”; then she also suggests that *hristi* could be taken as dative singular of *hristir*, “shaker” (cf. *Lp*, s.v.); the result would be an obscene woman-kenning: “shaker of the stiffness of the hand”. (Frank compares a kenning in a verse in *Grettis saga* (*Íf* VII 240-1), *hredja kvista Hrist*, “valkyrie (conceivably “shaker”) of the twig of the scrotum”.) If Frank’s interpretation is correct, the hearer is, as she suggests, certainly prepared for the innuendoes of the second half of the verse. 4. *vøðva hløð*, “pile(s) of muscles”, here: “buttocks” 5-8. *Lp* gives two senses for *kløkk* (adj.): (1) “böjelig, smidig”; and (2) “bløð, ræð, grædefærdig”; most commentators seem to prefer the first sense and would translate, as I did in Perkins 1969, 97, “we cause the stout oar to bend.” Kock (*Nn* 743), however, seems to prefer the second sense and translates: “jag får mäkt kraftig åra att . . . sucka.” Mr. Helgi Skúli Kjartansson has kindly suggested to me another possible interpretation: he reads: *meðan vinnum kløkkva ór vel stinna á borði*, “while we work the soft oar stiff on the gunwale”, and discerns a hint at masturbation. A combination of more than one of these possible interpretations might have been intended and it is at any rate clear that a sexual innuendo of some sort (with the oar thought of as a penis) is present. The translation below follows Kock’s interpretation. 7-8. *skorða*, “boat-prop”; the “ski (*skíð*) of the boat-prop” is a “ship” 8. A variant reading is *ór at borði*; cf. Verse 3, l. 4.

Translation: [Prose: “That winter, Björn joined the bodyguard of Eiríkr jarl and stayed with him; and when they lay off Hamarseyrr, Björn composed a verse:”] “The *drengr* has given the lady sexual pleasure; Eykyndill’s bottom beats hard on the down cushion; meanwhile, we cause the stout oar to sigh at the gunwale. There is a reason for that; I must keep the ship moving forward.”

5. Skalla-Grímr Kveld-Úlfsson (*Skj* A I 30; B I 27; *Sk* I 17; *Nn* 235, 1816, 2006, 2723; *Egils saga Skalla-Grímssonar*, ch. 30 (*Íf* II 79))

Mjök verðr ár, sás aura,
 ísarns meiðr at rísa,
 váðir vidda bróður
 veðrseygjar skal kveðja.
 Gjalla lætk á gollí
 geisla njóts, meðan þjóta,
 heitu, hrærikytjur
 hreggs vindfrekar, sleggjur.

Mjök ár verðr at rísa ísarns meiðr, sás skal kveðja veðrseygjar váðir vidda bróður aura; lætk sleggjur gjalla á heitu gollí geisla njóts, meðan vindfrekar hreggs hrærikytjur þjóta.

2. *ísarns meiðr*, “pole of iron (weapons)”, “man”. 3-4. *viddi* from *víðir*, “sea”; *bróðir vidda*, “brother of the sea”, “wind”; the *váðir* (“clothes”) of the wind are “bellows” (which are full of wind); *veðrseygr*, “wind-sucking”. The interpretation adopted here is that of *Íf* II 79; cf., however, *Nn* 2723 and refs. 5-6. *gollí geisla njóts*: *geisla njótr*, “owner of rays, beams”, “fire”; the *goll* (“gold”) of fire is “iron”. 7-8. *hrærikytjur hreggs*: *kytja*, related to *kot*, “small hut”; the *kytjur* which move (cf. *hræri-*) the wind are “bellows”; *vindfrekr*, “wind-greedy”.

Translation: “That man must rise very early, he who wishes to summon wealth from the wind-sucking bellows; I make the hammers ring on the hot iron while the wind-greedy bellows whine.”

6. Vigfúss Víga-Glúmsson (*Skj* A I 121; B I 115; *Sk* I 65; *Nn* 641, 1951, 2509, 2902 I; *Fagrskinna* 1902-3, 95-6; *Jómsvíkinga saga* (various texts))

Oss es leikr — enn lauka
 liggr heima vinr feimu;
 þryngr at Viðris veðri
 vandar — góðr fyr hǫndum.
 Hlýs kveðk hælís bósa
 — hann væntir sér annars —
 vǫrmum vífs und armi
 — vér skreytum spjǫr — neyta.

Oss es góðr leikr fyr hǫndum, enn vinr lauka feimu liggr heima; þryngr at Viðris vandar veðri; kveðk bósa neyta hlýs hælís und vǫrmum armi vífs; vér skreytum spjǫr; hann væntir sér annars.

1-2. *lauka feima*: *feima* is itself a *heiti* for “woman” and *lauka* therefore seems redundant; *laukr* does, however, appear in kennings for “woman” (e.g. *lauka lind*, *lauka eik*). 3-4. *Viðris vǫndr*, “wand of Óðinn”, “sword”; the *veðr* of the sword is “battle”. 8. *skreyta*, “adorn”, “make ready”; in this context, the sense is

doubtless "sharpen"; Finnur Jónsson (*Skj*) translates "vi . . . glatter vore spyd" and certainly in the prose of some texts of *Jómsvíkinga saga* where the verse appears (cf. e.g. *Flateyjarbók* 1944-5, I 208), Vigfúss is represented as whetting a spear as he declaims the verse. A sexual innuendo is doubtless also present (cf. Verse 4).

Translation: "We have good sport in prospect but the ladies' man lies at home. The time for battle approaches fast. I declare that the libertine enjoys a cosy haven in the woman's warm arms. We sharpen our spears; he looks forward to something else."

7. Haraldr Sigurðarson harðráði/Pjóðólfr Arnórsson (The verse is attributed to Haraldr harðráði in *Morkinskinna* and *Flateyjarbók*, to Pjóðólfr in *Fagrskinna*. In *Heimskringla* and *Hulda-Hrokkinskinna* the first *helmingr* is attributed to Haraldr, the second to Pjóðólfr.) (*Skj* A I 358, 379; B I 330, 349; *Sk* I 166, 175; *Nn* 846, 1854 B, 3086; *Haralds saga Sigurðarsonar* in *Heimskringla*, ch. 32 (*Íf* XXVIII 109); *Fagrskinna* 1902-3, 250; *Morkinskinna* 1932, 156; *Flateyjarbók* 1944-5, IV 110; *Fornmanna sögur* 1825-37, VI 251-2)

[Preceding prose (from *Heimskringla*, *Íf* XXVIII 108-9; cf. the *Hulda-Hrokkinskinna* text in *Fornmanna sögur* 1825-37, VI 251-2; the other texts do not have the prose interruption between the two halves of the verse): Haraldr konungr Sigurðarson . . . lagði í Goðnarfjörð. Þá orti Haraldr konungr þetta: [first *helmingr*]. Þá mælti hann til Pjóðólfs skálds, bað hann þar við yrkja. Hann kvað: [second *helmingr*].]

Lötum vér, meðan lirlar
líneik veri sínum,
Gerðr, í Goðnarfirði,
galdrs, akkeri halda!
Sumar annat skal sunnar
— segik eina spó — fleini
— vér aukum kaf króki —
kaldnefr furu halda.

Vér lötum akkeri halda í Goðnarfirði meðan líneik, galdrs Gerðr, lirlar veri sínum. Annat sumar skal kaldnefr halda furu fleini sunnar; segik eina spó; vér aukum króki kaf.

1. *lirla*, "to lull to sleep (by song)" 2. *líneik*, "linen-oak", "woman". 3. *Goðnarfjörðr* is the Randersfjord in Denmark. 3-4. *Galdrs Gerðr*, "Gerðr of song", "woman who sings". 8. *kaldnefr*, "anchor" (the *fleinn* or *krókr* of which resembles a nose); *fura*, "ship"

Translation: [Prose (cf. above): "King Haraldr Sigurðarson . . . put into Goðnarfjörð. Then King Haraldr composed this: [first half-verse]. Then he spoke to Pjóðólfr the skald and asked him to complement the verse. Pjóðólfr chanted this: [second half of verse]."] "We lie at anchor (probably this is anticipatory and "drop anchor" is meant; cf. the seventh line of the verse) in

Goðnarfjörðr, while the woman lulls her husband to sleep with song. Next summer, the anchor will hold the ship with its fluke in a more southerly place — I make one prophecy. We let the anchor drop.”

8. Ármóðr (*Skj* A I 531; B I 512; *Sk* I 251; *Orkneyinga saga*, ch. 88 (*Íf* XXXIV 229))

Eigum vér, þars vági
 verpr inn of þrom stinnan,
 — þann hofum vér at vinna —
 varðhald á skæ barða,
 meðan í nótt hjá nýtri
 námdúks hørundmjúkri
 lókr sefr lind enn veiki.
 Lítk of oxl til Krítar.

Vér eigum varðhald á skæ barða, þars vági verpr inn of stinn þrom — þann hofum vér at vinna — , meðan enn veiki lókr sefr í nótt hjá nýtri hørundmjúkri námdúks lind. Lítk of oxl til Krítar.

2. *verpr inn of þrom stinnan*: exactly the same line is found in a verse attributed to Hofgarða-Refr Gestsson (*Skj* B I 297). 3. *þann* refers to either *vági* or some such understood noun as *hlut*. 4. *skær*, “horse”; *barð*, “prow”; *skær barða*, “ship”. 6-7. *námdúkr*, “kerchief”; *lind*, “lime-tree, linden”; *námdúks lind*, “woman”. 7. *lókr*, “laggard”.

Translation: “We have to keep watch on the ship, there where sea-water washes in over the stout gunwale — it is with that we must concern ourselves. Meanwhile, this night, the weak laggard sleeps alongside the excellent soft-fleshed woman. I look over my shoulder towards Crete.”

9. From *Friðþjófs saga ens frækna (Björn)* (*Skj* A II 275; B II 296-7; *Sk* II 156; *Friðþjófs saga ins frækna* 1901, 32. The variant of the verse cited here is from Papp. 4to nr. 17, Kungliga Biblioteket, Stockholm, and from Gl. kgl. samling 1006, fol., Det kongelige Bibliotek, Copenhagen.)

Jusum vér, meðan
 yfir gekk svólúr,
 bragnar teitir
 á bæði borð,
 tíu dægr ok átta.

2. *svólúr*, according to Larsson (*Friðþjófs saga ins frækna* 1901, 32) (who reads the manuscripts *svolr* thus), is “von *svalr*, ‘kalt’ und *úr*, ‘fein verteilter regen’”, and “bezeichnet die wogen, die sich gegen das schiff brachen und darüber sprühten.”

Translation: "We, cheerful fellows, bailed for eighteen days while cold spray (from waves) came over both gunwales."

10. Þórarinn (*Skj* A I 153; B I 145; *Sk* I 79; *Nn* 1082; *Flatøyjarbók* 1944-5, I 450)

Sitr við ór, enn etjum,
allvaldr, á sæ kaldan,
— vel rær dróttar deilir
dýrr — enn hundr við stýri.
Skelfr gnapmari Gylfa
gæðings skafit ræði
— jalmar hlumr við hilmis
hendr — sem skildi vendir.

Allvaldr sitr við ór, enn hundr við stýri; dýrr deilir dróttar rær vel, enn etjum á kaldan sæ. Skafit ræði gæðings skelfr gnapmari Gylfa, sem vendir skildi; hlumr jalmar við hilmis hendr.

4. *hundr*: cf. Note 8. 5. *gnapmari* (emended from MS. *agnapi mar*), dative of *gnapmarr*, "towering horse"; Gylfi is the name of a sea-king; *gnapmarr Gylfa*, "ship" 7. *Lp* (s.v.) glosses *jalma* as "knitre, brage, (som en skurende lyd, der frembringes ved at to ting stryges mod hinanden, om årens lyd idet den bevæges i tollen)". 8. *sem skildi vendir*: *Skj* translates these words as "som vânder mod skjoldet"; Meissner (1921, 77) thinks that *vendir* refers to (the shaft of) a spear but gives no further explanation. Kock (*Nn* 1082) regards *vendir* as equivalent to "sköldens 'vendir'" and translates the phrase "liksom klingorna en sköld" Reichardt (1930, 251) interprets *vendir* in the sense "sticks" and explains it thus: "das ruder des fürsten lässt das schiff ebenso erzittern wie stöcke einen schild! d.h. das ruder bringt das schiff zum zittern, aber ebenso gefahrlos wie ein stock, mit dem man auf einen schild einhaut. der klang ist stark, aber der schiff geht unzerstört aus diesem kampf hervor." Because neither Kock's nor Reichardt's explanation seems entirely satisfactory, I here very tentatively put forward another possible one: In addition to rowing chants and other oral means of time-keeping for rowers, there must have been more mechanical devices. Could there conceivably be some reference here to a method of keeping time for rowers by beating a shield with a stick? Certainly when the river-rowing Rūs (cf. p. 156 and Note 41) wished to produce a noise (to drown the shrieks of a doomed slave-girl), they did this, according to Ibn-Faḍlān, by "å slå med tre(-stavene) på skjoldene" (Birkeland 1954, 23). Note, however, the *mjór sjautøgr vøndr* which *skelfr und røndu* in Verse 14. The following translation gives a neutral rendering of the phrase.

Translation: "The prince sits at the oar and a dog at the helm; the glorious lord of the *drótt* rows well and we labour out on the cold sea. The prince's smooth oar causes the towering ship to shake as sticks against the shield. The oar handle groans in the prince's hand."

11. Þjóðólfr Arnórsson (*Skj* A I 381; B I 351; *Sk* I 176; *Nn* 2033, 2831 B b; *Haralds saga Sigurðarsonar* in *Heimskringla*, ch. 60 (Íf

XXVIII 142); *Fornmanna sögur* 1825-37, VI 309; *Hákonar saga Ívarssonar* 1952, 24)

Slyngr laugardag löngu
lið-Baldr af sér tjaldi,
út þars ekkjur líta
orms súð ór bæ þrúðar.
Vestr réð ór Nið næsta
nýri skeið at stýra
ungr (enn árar drengja)
allvaldr (í sæ falla).

Lið-Baldr slyngr laugardag löngu tjaldi af sér, þars þrúðar ekkjur líta orms súð út ór bæ. Ungr allvaldr réð næsta at stýra nýri skeið vestr ór Nið, enn árar drengja falla í sæ.

2. *lið-Baldr*, "Baldr of the troop", "lord of the troop". 5. *næsta* is taken by Kock (*Nn* 2831 B b) in the sense "närmast", "därnäst", "därefter", "sedan"

Translation: "On Saturday, the lord of the troop throws off the long awnings, there where the stately women see the side of the dragon-ship from the town. After that, the young king steered the new longship out of the Nið and the comrades' oars splash in the water."

12. Þjóðólfr Arnórsson (*Skj* A I 381; B I 351; *Sk* I 176; *Nn* 153, 1908, 2989 C; *Haralds saga Sigurðarsonar* in *Heimskringla*, ch. 60 (*Íf* XXVIII 142-3); *Fornmanna sögur* 1825-37, VI 309; *Hákonar saga Ívarssonar* 1952, 25; the first two lines of the verse are also found in the First Grammatical Treatise.)

Rétt kann ræði slíta
ræsis herr ór verri.
Ekkja stendr ok undrask
áraburð sem furðu.
Ært mun, snót, áðr sortuð
sæfong í tvau ganga,
(þöll leggr) við frið fullan,
fákleyf (á þat leyfi).

Ræsis herr kann slíta rétt ræði ór verri. Ekkja stendr ok undrask áraburð sem furðu. Ært mun, snót, við fullan frið, áðr fákleyf sortuð sæfong ganga í tvau; þöll leggr leyfi á þat.

1. *verri*, dative singular of *vörp*, "wake produced by oars", "sea" (cf. Note 36). 5. *ært* from *æra*, "to row" (cf. *ór*, "oar"); *sortaðr*, "tarred" 6. *sæfong*, "oars" 7. *þöll*, "woman". 8. Most manuscripts have *ferkleyf* here, but Kock (*Nn* 153) emends to *fákleyf*, "som föga kan klyvas", "av hållbart trä". (In *Íf* XXVIII 142-3, Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson has a different interpretation with the manuscript reading *ferkleyf* retained.)

Translation: "The prince's men can pull straight oars from the sea. The woman stands and admires the movement of the oars as a wonderful thing. There will be rowing in peace, lady, before the solid tarred oars are broken in two. The woman praises that."

13. Þjóðólfr Arnórsson (*Skj* A I 381-2; B I 351-2; *Sk* I 177; *Nn* 872, 3088; *Haralds saga Sigurðarsonar* in *Heimskringla*, ch. 60 (*Íf* XXVIII 143); *Fornmanna sögur* 1825-37, VI 309-10; *Hákonar saga Ívarssonar* 1952, 25)

Sorgar veit, áðr slíti
sæfǫng ór mar strǫngum
herr, þars heldr til varra
hár sjau tǫgum ára.
Norðmeðr róa naðri
neglðum straum enn heglða
— út's sem innan líti
arnarvæng — með jární.

Sorgar veit, áðr herr slíti sæfǫng ór strǫngum mar, þars hár heldr sjau tǫgum ára til varra. Norðmeðr róa naðri, neglðum með jární, enn heglða straum; út's sem líti innan arnarvæng.

1. *at vita sorgar*, "to feel anguish" 2. *sæfǫng*, "oars". 3. *varra*, genitive plural of *vorr*, "wake produced by oars", "sea" (cf. Note 36). 4. *hár*, "rowlock", singular with plural sense. 5. *naðr*, "dragon-ship"

Translation: "Anguish will be felt before the host lift their oars from the rough sea, now that the rowlocks hold seventy oars in the sea. The Norwegians row their dragon-ship, nailed with iron plates, along the hail-whipped tide; it is as if one saw an eagle's wings."

14. Anonymous (*Skj* A I 591; B I 592; *Sk* I 288; *Nn* 1226; *Morkin-skinna* 1932, 331; *Fornmanna sögur* 1825-37, VII 66-7)

Vegg blæss veðr of tyggja,
viðr þolir nauð í lauðri.
Læ tekr klungrs at knýja
keip, enn gelr í reipum.
Mjór skelfr — Magnúss stýrir,
móð skerr eik at flóði,
beit verða sæ slíta —
sjautǫgr vǫndr und rǫndu.

Veðr blæss vegg of tyggja; viðr þolir nauð í lauðri. Læ klungrs tekr at knýja keip, enn gelr í reipum. Mjór sjautǫgr vǫndr skelfr und rǫndu; móð eik skerr at flóði; beit verða slíta sæ. Magnúss stýrir.

1. *vegg*, "sail"; *tyggi*, "king", "prince". 2. *lauðr*, "foam of sea-water". 3.

læ, “damage, bane”; *klungr*, “brambles”; *læ klungrs*, “damage of brambles”, “wind” 7. *beit*, “ship” 8. For a different interpretation of l. 8 which removes any references to rowing, see Foote 1978, 65.

Translation: “The wind blows the sail over the prince; the timbers (of the ship) take the strain in the foam of the sea-water. The winds begin to buffet the rowlocks and to whistle in the rigging. Seventy slim oars shake under the shields. The tired ship cuts through the water, the vessels must break the sea. Magnúss steers.”

15. Eyvindr Finnsson skáldaspillir (*Skj* A I 74; B I 65; *Sk* I 40; *Nn* 3050; *Haralds saga gráfeldar* in *Heimskringla*, ch. 16 (*Íf* XXVI 223); cf. Perkins, forthcoming (cf. Note 30))

Lótum langra nóta
 lōgsóta verfótum
 at spáþernum sporna
 sporðfjōðruðum norðan,
 vita, ef akrmurur jōkla,
 ǫl-Gerðr, falar verði,
 ítr, þærs upp of róta
 unnsvín, vinum mínum!

Lótum lōgsóta sporna norðan verfótum at sporðfjōðruðum spáþernum langra nóta, vita, ef akrmurur jōkla, þærs unnsvín of róta upp, verði falar vinum mínum, ítr ǫl-Gerðr!

1-4. *sporðfjaðraðar spáþernur langra nóta: sporðfjaðraðar*, “feathered with a tail”; *sporðfjōðruð þerna langra nóta*, “tern of the long net, feathered with a tail”, “fish”, and, since there is a similarity between the tern and the herring, especially with respect to the tail (see Flornes 1939, 15-16), “herring”; *spáþernur* is glossed by Finnur Jónsson (*Lp*, s.v.) as “varslende tærner” Flornes (1939; cf. Odd Nordland in *Kl*, s.v. *Spádom*) thinks that terns are so called because of their habit of collecting over shoals of fish and thus giving fishermen intelligence (*spá*) of the fish’s whereabouts. On the other hand, the likening of the tern to the herring implied by this kenning might rather suggest some sort of special relationship (and thus collusion) between the two animals: the terns might rather (or also) be thought of as warning the herring of the fishermen’s approach. All the more reason for the fishermen to use special language (*noa*-language) to conceal their intentions (cf. pp. 168-70 above and Perkins (forthcoming) where parallels to this possible use of *noa*-language will be adduced). 2. *lōgsóti*, “steed of the sea”, “ship”; *ver*, “sea”; *verfótr*, “sea-foot”, “oar”. 3. *sporna*, “tread” (verb). 5. *akrmurur jōkla: akr jōkla*, “field of drift-ice, icebergs”, “sea”; *mura*, “cinquefoil (potentilla)”. (On *mura* as an edible plant, see *Kl* XI 210 and refs.) “Cinquefoil of the sea” is “fish”. 6. *ǫl-Gerðr*, kenning for “woman”. 6-8. Kock’s interpretation (*Nn* 3050) of *verði falar vinum mínum*, “are available to, can be caught by my men” is accepted here as clearly correct. 8. *unnsvín*, “pig of the sea” has been variously interpreted as “boat, ship” (so e.g. Finnur Jónsson in *Lp*, s.v. *unnsvín*) and “whale” (so e.g. Solheim 1942, 12-13). I am marginally in favour of the first alternative; on the other hand, any certainty on a matter like this is impossible and it is by no

means inconceivable that the original poet ingeniously intended both ideas to be present.

Translation: "Let us row our ship (let us have our sea-steed tread with oars) from the north to the herring adorned with tails, to find out whether the fish, which ships (*or* whales) root up, might be caught by my men, splendid woman!"

16. Snorri Sturluson (*Skj* A II 58; B II 67; *Sk* II 38; *Nn* 2176, 2572; *Háttatal*, verse 22 (*Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* 1931, 226))

Himínglæva strýkr hávar
 — hrǫnn skilja sog — þiljur.
 Lǫgstíga vill lægir
 ljótr fagrdrasil brjóta.
 Lýsheims náir ljóma
 — líðr ár — of gram blíðum
 — uðr rekkir kjǫl klökkvan
 kǫld — eisa; far geisar.

Himínglæva strýkr hávar þiljur. Sog skilja hrǫnn. Ljótr lægir vill brjóta lǫgstíga fagrdrasil. Lýsheims eisa náir ljóma of blíðum gram. Kǫld uðr rekkir klökkvan kjǫl; ár líðr, far geisar.

1. *Himínglæva*, "bølge, en af Ægirs dǫtre" (so *Lp*, s.v.). 2. *sog*, "'den sugende' del af skibets skrog, d.v.s. den nederste del af bunden mellem de to nederste planker i skibet . . . , kølen, kølpartiet" (so *Lp*, s.v.); *hrǫnn*, "wave", "sea". 3. *lægir*, "sea". 3-4. *fagrdrasil*, "beautiful steed"; *lǫgstígr*, "ocean path" = "sea"; "beautiful steed of the sea" = "ship". 5-8. *lýsheimr*, "fish-home", "sea"; *eisa*, "fire"; "fire of the sea" = "gold". 6. *líðr ár*: Kock's interpretation of these two words (*Nn* 2572) is doubtless correct. 7. *rekkja*, "sætta liv eller fart i" (so *Nn* 2176).

Translation: "The wave washes the high rowing benches. The keel splits the sea. The ugly sea attempts to break the beautiful vessel. Gold shines around the cheerful prince. The cold wave makes the yielding keel dance. The oar glides, the vessel speeds forward."

17. Hallfreðr Óttarsson vandræðaskáld (*Skj* A I 167; B I 158; *Sk* I 85; *Hallfreðar saga*, ch. 5 (*Íf* VIII 153); *Hallfreðar saga* 1977, 40)

[Preceding prose: . . . var þá upp dregit akkerit. Þá kvað Hallfreðr stǫku þessa:]

Færum festar órar.
 Ferr særoka at knerri.
 Svǫrð tekr heldr at herða.
 Hvar es akkerisfrakki?

4. In terms of the narrative of the saga, *akkerisfrakki* is to be conceived as a person's name. As however Einar Ól. Sveinsson (*Íf* VIII lx, note 2) remarks: "mjög

er freistandi að hugsa sér, að akkerisfrakki þýði: akkeriskló, og sé alls ekkert nafn.” This interpretation is accepted here as more or less certain (cf. also Verse 18).

Translation (cf. p. 178): [Prose: “. . . then the anchor was hauled up and Hallfreðr chanted this ditty:”] “Let us move our moorings. A large breaker bears down on the ship. The hide rope is much strained. Where’s the anchor-fluke?”

18. Óláfr Tryggvason (*Skj* A I 152; B I 144; *Sk* I 79; *Nn* 1081; *Hallfreðar saga*, ch. 5 (*Íf* VIII 153); *Hallfreðar saga* 1977, 40)

Einn í olpu grænni
ek fekk dreng til strengjar,
panns hnakkmiða hnykkir.
Hér’s akkerisfrakki!

1-3. The exact import of these lines and their relationship to the prose of the saga are not easy to work out. It is strongly tempting to suppose that *drengur í olpu grænni* refers to some algae-covered item of equipment connected with the anchor (rather than to a person as the prose of the saga would have it). According to Falk (1912, 79; cf. *Íf* VIII 153, note), the *hnakkmiði* was a rope connecting the anchor to a marker-buoy. But if *drengur í olpu grænni* in fact alludes to this rope, might *hnakkmiði* not rather refer to part of the anchor or the buoy itself (cf. *Lp*, s.v. *hnakkmiði* and refs.)? At all events, this verse is, of course, clearly connected with Verse 17. In some texts (e.g. *Íf* XXVIII 109), the two *helmingar* of Verse 7 (which is to do with lowering anchor) are declaimed by different persons; so Verses 17 and 18 could well be essentially two *helmingar* of a single verse.

Translation: “I got a lad in a green cloak to get hold of the anchor-cable, one who pulls on the buoy (anchor? buoy-rope?). Here’s the anchor-fluke!”

19. Þráinn Sigfússon (*Njáls saga*, ch. 88 (*Íf* XII 220))

Lótum geisa Gamminn,
gerrat Þráinn vægja.

Translation: “Let us make Gamminn (“The Vulture”) speed forward; Þráinn will not give way.”

20. From *Bárðar saga Snæfellsáss* (*Hetta*) (*Skj* A II 450; B II 482; *Sk* II 263-4; *Nn* 3342; *Bárðarsaga Snæfellsáss* 1860, 16)

Út røri einn á báti
Ingjaldr í skinnfeldi.
Týndi átján ǫnglum
Ingjaldr í skinnfeldi,
ok fertugu færi
Ingjaldr í skinnfeldi.
Aptr komi aldrið síðan
Ingjaldr í skinnfeldi!

Translation: “Ingjaldr in a fur cloak rowed out alone in a boat; Ingjaldr in a fur cloak lost eighteen hooks and Ingjaldr in a fur cloak lost a forty-fathom line. May he never come back again, Ingjaldr in a fur cloak!”

21. Anonymous (*Menn Haralds*) (*Skj* A I 426; B I 396; *Sk* I 196; *Haralds saga Sigurðarsonar* in *Heimskringla*, ch. 34 (*Íf* XXVIII 114-15); *Fagrskinna* 1902-3, 257; *Morkinskinna* 1932, 164; *Flateyjarbók* 1944-5, IV 115; *Fornmanna sögur* 1825-37, VI 259)

[Preceding prose (from *Morkinskinna* 1932, 164; cf. the other texts containing this verse): Ok er þeir höfðu rænt bæinn [Heiðabær] ok tekit slíkt er þeir vildu, þá brendu þeir hann upp allan; ok þá ortu þetta menn Haralds konungs:]

Brendr vas upp með endum
allr — enn þat má kalla
hraustligt bragð, es hugðak —
Heiðabær af reiði.
Vǫn's, at vinnim Sveini
(vask í nótt fyr óttu)
— gaus hár logi ór húsum —
harm (á borgar armi).

Allr Heiðabær vas brendr upp með endum af reiði, enn þat má kalla hraustligt bragð, es hugðak. Vǫn's at vinnim Sveini harm; vask í nótt fyr óttu á borgar armi; hár logi gaus ór húsum.

8. *borgar armr*: the fact that Heiðabær was, of course, surrounded on three sides by a large rampart (coupled with archaeological evidence which suggests that it was destroyed by fire in the mid-eleventh century) tends to confirm the “genuineness” of this stanza (which is important for the arguments in Note 50). Cf. Brøndsted (1960, 132) who feels himself able, although perhaps not altogether justifiably, to locate *borgar armr* even more precisely.

Translation: [Prose: “And when they had sacked the town and taken whatever they wanted, then they burnt it to the ground. Then Harald's men composed this verse:”] “All Heiðabær was burnt from end to end in rage; that may be called a brave deed as I think; it is to be expected that we inflict anguish on Sveinn; last night, before dawn (*fyr óttu*), I was on the rampart of the town; high flames burst forth from the houses.”

Notes

¹ The form of the present article is primarily that of a paper given to the Viking Society in November, 1982. Its basis is a contribution presented at the Third International Saga Conference, Oslo, July, 1976, entitled: “Rowing chants, the first ‘Kings’ Sagas?” It has been amplified with material taken from papers given on other occasions: a seminar at the Centre for Medieval Studies and School of Graduate Studies, University of Toronto, October, 1977 (I am grateful to Professor

Roberta Frank for arranging for me to give this); and another seminar, entitled "Furðustrandir revisited", at University College London in December, 1979. — I have had the benefit of discussing the ideas put forward here with a number of colleagues, all of whom I cannot unfortunately mention by name; this last circumstance in no way diminishes my gratitude for helpful comments and criticism from a number of quarters. I should, however, like to express thanks to various people by name: Professor Peter Foote for his critical perusal of two drafts; Professor Peter and Mrs. Ursula Dronke for invaluable references and advice; Mr. Norman Schwenk for pertinent suggestions and insights; and my wife, Ingegerd, for help in numerous ways. Gratitude is also due to my co-editors of the *Saga-Book* for agreeing to publish the article. Whatever mistakes, misrepresentations or other faults are to be found are, of course, entirely my own responsibility.

² I do not here wish to go in detail into all the intricacies of delimiting the period in which *dróttkvæðr hátttr* must have arisen. A *terminus post quem* must be the date at which the sound shift known as syncope was complete in the relevant area of Scandinavia. It is difficult to date syncope, but a *terminus post quem* arrived at on this basis would not be unreasonably set at A.D. 650. The oldest preserved *dróttkvætt* poem of any length is often thought to be *Ragnarsdrápa* attributed by Snorri Sturluson to a poet called Bragi. But even if this assessment is correct, it is very difficult to connect *Ragnarsdrápa* with any satisfactory degree of probability to any datable historical event. On the other hand, the *dróttkvætt* verses assembled by modern scholars under the medieval title *Glymdrápa* were in all probability composed in the life-time of Haraldr hárfagri and may be dated to about 900 (so Anne Holtmark in *Kl*, s.v. *Glymdrápa*). We have no reason to suppose that *Glymdrápa* was the first poem composed in *dróttkvætt* and it is therefore reasonable to set a *terminus ante quem* at c. 850 on its evidence. I would suggest, then, that *dróttkvætt* was developed in the period A.D. 650-850. There is no evidence of which I am aware that *dróttkvætt* necessarily came into existence during the last century of this period (I would vigorously dismiss the notion that *Ragnarsdrápa* was the first *dróttkvætt*-poem ever to be composed; cf. p. 175 below) and it might well have developed in the years around A.D. 700. The period 650-850 in which it will be assumed that *dróttkvætt* came into existence will sometimes be referred to in what follows as "the Relevant Period"

³ On the interchangeability of names of various sorts in the shanties, see Hugill 1979, 124, note 1, and 540-2; and in work songs from Texas prisons, Finnegan 1977, 57, 154.

⁴ It will not be possible in the present article to discuss the question of how far each skaldic verse adduced as evidence in support of the Hypothesis can be considered "genuine", how far it was composed under the circumstances stated by the saga and whether it was composed by the person the prose of the saga says it was. The whole question of determining the "genuineness" of skaldic poetry is a difficult one which needs reconsideration with respect to its aims and definitions. On the whole, I feel myself entitled (as I do here with Verse 4) more or less to ignore what the prose of a particular saga says about the circumstances under which a verse it contains was composed and to consider the verse *in vacuo*. This does not mean that I do not on various occasions take cognizance of what the prose of a saga says about a particular verse or part of a verse which may throw more light on it. Thus while I would reject most of what the prose of *Hallfreðar saga* says about the circumstances under which Verses 17 and 18 were declaimed as more or less fictitious, the fact that Verse 17 is stated in the prose of the saga to have been

rehearsed in connection with the raising of an anchor is obviously of relevance to my arguments about the nature of that verse. Again, it is relevant to my arguments that the prose of *Flóamanna saga* states that Verse 3 was inscribed in runes on the stump of an oar. On the other hand, I would reject practically all of what the prose surround to Verse 15 in *Heimskringla* says about the circumstances under which that verse was first declaimed (apart, perhaps, from the statement that it was composed on a *róðrarferja*). It is possible that my approach on these matters may seem somewhat arbitrary; I have, however, considered each case carefully but it is a desire not to clog up the main argument of this paper with unnecessary detail that has inhibited me from discussing the prose frame to every verse I cite. On the whole, however, I think we have reason to be at least sceptical of the confidence with which saga-authors often assign circumstantial contexts to the composition of *lausavísur* whose origin they can surely have had no inkling of whatsoever. Again, it is impossible to accept the attributions of authorship given by saga-writers to various verses I cite. Sometimes verses are ascribed to supernatural characters (cf. Verses 1, 2 and 20), sometimes to an obviously fictional figure (cf. Verse 9). Sometimes the unreliability of attributions to given poets is underlined by the fact that a single verse is ascribed to different poets in different texts (cf. Verse 7). I am certainly very reluctant to ascribe Verse 15 to Eyvindr skáldaspillir or Verse 18 to Óláfr Tryggvason. Again, with the “*meðan*-verse” pattern so generalized both inside and outside Scandinavia (cf. below), can we really accept the attribution of Verse 4 to a named poet (viz. Björn Hítðelakappi)? And the poet to whom Verse 10 is ascribed in *Flateyjarbók* (Þórarinn) is a very shadowy figure, little more than a name. This does not mean, of course, that we cannot attribute Verse 16 with almost complete confidence to Snorri Sturluson; and Verses 11-13 could well be the work of Þjóðólfr Arnórsson, author of other extant poetry. It does, however, suggest that a good proportion of the verses or parts of verses collected together in the Appendix must be regarded as anonymous. And here we note that the texts in which Verses 3 and 14 are preserved do not ascribe them to named poets. The general conclusion to be drawn from these considerations is, then, that the information given in sagas about the authors and circumstances of original composition of a substantial proportion of the skaldic verses produced as evidence in this article is unreliable. We must look elsewhere for their origins.

⁵ There are *dróttkvætt*-strophes which have the “*meðan*-verse” pattern but which I would not suggest were work chants, e.g.: *Skjótt munum, Skarði, herðnir*, etc. (*Skj* B I 78); and *Höldum vér of hildar*, etc. (*Skj* B II 97). But it seems probable to me that the “*meðan*-verse” pattern is only secondary in these verses while it is primary as a feature in work chants and particularly indicative when coupled with mention of some rhythmical task being carried out as in each of the seven cases here enumerated.

⁶ Peter Fisher (Saxo Grammaticus 1979, 167-8) translates this verse as follows: “We have turned our blood-drenched sword, blade red with gore, / to slay a savage monster, while you, Amundi, / presider over Norway’s defeat, lie deep / in rest, as your courage slips away and escapes, / your lightless mind oppressed by coward darkness. / We have battered the ogre, divested him of limbs / and wealth, when we probed the abyss of his desolate cavern. / There we seized and ravished the piled-up gold. / And now we brush the wandering main with our oars, / joyously ply a craft laden with booty / back to the shore, shooting the waves as our skiff / measures the waters; briskly furrow the deep, / lest the oncoming dawn reveal us to our foe. / Let us speed then and churn the sea with all / the strength of our

hands, seeking our ships and the camp / before the sun has pushed his rosy head / from the clear waves, so that when the story is known / and Frogerth hears of the plunder won through our gallant / attempt, she may turn her heart more sweetly to our prayers."

⁷ It is interesting to find precisely whalers' songs sharing the "meðan-verse" pattern. In Perkins 1976, 69-82, I suggest that a "meðan-verse" ascribed to Þórhallr veiðimaðr in *Eiríks saga rauða* (*Skj* B I 182) was, in fact, a whalers' work song (rowing song) which mocks the land-bound whale-flenser. This surmise, which I put forward tentatively, is reinforced by these parallels from Harlow. I hope to return to this matter elsewhere.

⁸ It seems clear that the word *hundr* in the fourth line of Verse 10 is secondary, chosen to fit the obviously apocryphal tale of the surrounding prose (for which, see *Flateyjarbók*, 1944-5, I, 450). In fact, it is likely that when Verse 10 was employed as a rowing chant, the name of or word for the person steering the vessel in its fourth line was an interchangeable element which could be altered to suit the circumstances. (Note the suggestion on p. 158 above that the second word of the fourth line of Verse 4 was an interchangeable element and cf. Note 3; like *Eykyndils* in Verse 4, *hundr* bears neither alliteration nor rhyme.) And the fifth line of Verse 14 (which I also think bears signs of being a rowing chant) indeed suggests that we have a formula here (cf. Note 45) and shows how the second half of the fourth line of Verse 10 could have been if the name of or word for the steersman was disyllabic. Note also in this context a verse attributed to Steigar-Þórir (*Skj* A I 434; B I 403), which in one manuscript begins with the first person plural of the verb *róa* (although in the past tense; cf. however Note 45): *Vórum* (v.l.: *Reyrum*) *félagar fjórir / forðum — einn við stýri*; and in v. 15 of Hallar-Steinn's *Rekstefja* (*Skj* B I 529), which also refers to rowing in the past tense, we find the line: (*hírd þrúð*) *hilmir stýrði*. Parkinson (1887, 150) records a six-line canoe song from the Bismarck Archipelago leaving a blank space in the third line where "der Name eines der Kanoë-Insassen . . . wird . . . eingeschaltet."

⁹ With reference to Verse 12 and to a lesser extent Verse 11, note that collective work songs frequently "suchen die Genossen . . . durch Hinweis auf die gute Meinung der Zuschauer anzuspornen" (so Bücher 1919, 257).

¹⁰ Of Swedish rowing chants, Cederschiöld (1905, 96) says: "Annars hör man hvarjehanda dikter, som alls icke ha något afseende på rodden eller sjölivfet, sjungas af svenska roddare; hvad som helst, blott takten kan afpassas för rodden och visan förnöjer de roende, kan förekomma." And writing on Japanese work songs, Theresa C. Brakeley (in Leach (ed.) 1949-50, 730) writes: "The words of occupational and work songs do not necessarily refer to the task at all, but may be of love, of food and drink, of nostalgia, of old stories or new jokes"; and of the songs of Japanese fishermen and sailors: "They may tell of faraway homes and lovers, of the luck of the catch, or of almost any other subject." Cf. Note 52.

¹¹ Jón Helgason (1953, 147) also writes: "Skjaldene færdes mange steder; deres vers spænder over et mægtigt geografisk område. På den ene side er Spanien, Sicilien, Kreta, Jordan, Konstantinopel, på den anden det nordlige Grønland"; cf. Lyon (1930, 54): "they [i.e. the words of the shanties] speak of wanderings in distant seas, — to Mexico, Barbadoes, Australia, and elsewhere."

¹² Ohlmarks (1970, 7) refers to the rhythm of work songs in general as "den stackata starkt tryckaccentbetonade, liksom andfådda arbetsrytmen".

¹³ Only the first of these examples is cited by Thomson (1949); (ii) and (iii) come from other sources. Apart from *formal* likenesses which these three verses have to

vísuhelmingar in *dróttkvætt* (and these should be noted as far as they exist), we may also observe that all of them contain the element of complaint already mentioned (see p. 160 above). Also verse (i) refers to the worker's masters; such references, whether querulous or laudatory (as in some of the rowing and paddling chants referred to in Excursus 1) are a frequent feature of work chants.

¹⁴ Cf. Einar Ól. Sveinsson 1962, 128: "Þess má geta hér, að fýsilegt virðist að hugsa sér, að visuorðslok dróttkvæðs háttar standi í einhverju sambandi við kvæðalag, og ég get aldrei hrundið þeim grun frá mér, að síðasta risið í dróttkvæðum hætti hafi verið seimdregið, ef vísan var söngluð."

¹⁵ Note the position of *vinnum* (Verse 4, line 5) and *etjum* (Verse 10, line 1); these first person plurals however, are, of course, fully integrated into the sense of the respective verses; cf. what follows.

¹⁶ It is also possible to reason in the following manner (although the conclusion will not corroborate the Hypothesis): given that *dróttkvætt*-verses like Verse 4 were used as rowing chants (and the evidence makes it seem highly likely that they were), then it is entirely possible that the two final syllables of each line served a similar function to the constants at the end of each line of verses (i), (ii) and (iii) quoted above. And by the same token, one could argue that given *dróttkvætt*-verses were used as rowing chants, it would require excellent arguments to demonstrate (1) that the standardization of the number of syllables in the lines of *dróttkvætt*-verses used as rowing chants did not serve to regularize the rowing-beat (cf. (B) below); (2) that the diction of *dróttkvætt* rowing chants did not function as a sea-noa-language (cf. (C) below); (3) that the system of internal rhymes in *dróttkvætt* rowing chants cannot have served to mark alternate lines for antiphonal chanting (cf. Excursus 2, A); and (4) that when used as rowing chants, eight-line *dróttkvætt*-stanzas did not serve as units in counting strokes of the oar (cf. Excursus 2, B).

¹⁷ Askeberg (1944, 108) reasonably refers to kennings as "ett konstitutivt element i skaldeversen"; and Foote and Wilson (1969, 329) write: "The scalds however make such extensive and elaborate use of kennings in their verse that these are regarded as the prime feature of 'scaldic' style."

¹⁸ For a useful and quite detailed account of the various theories on the origins of kennings (including the "profantabu-teori" which is of relevance here), see Lie 1957, 42-59 (cf. however Note 20).

¹⁹ It is neither possible nor necessary here to go into the whole subject of taboo and noa-language. A few references may, however, be given: *Kl.*, s.v. *Tabu* and refs.; Webster 1942 (cf. particularly pp. 300-04); Portengen 1915, 78-128; Nyrop 1887. In the present article, I use the terms "noa-word", "noa-expression", "noa-language", etc., to refer to the harmless or "safe" circumlocutions which were substituted in appropriate circumstances for tabooed vocabulary, the use of which was considered dangerous. And what I refer to as "noa-words", "noa-expressions", etc., are by some writers called "taboo-words", "taboo-expressions", etc. On the original sense of Polynesian *tabu* (*tapu*, *kapu*) which means something like "thoroughly marked", and *noa*, approximately "general", "common", see e.g. Webster 1942, ch. 1.

²⁰ More specifically, Noreen's contribution sets out to explain the origin of that type of kenning he terms "gátkenningar" (Noreen 1921, 9). Noreen's classification of kennings (which unfortunately cannot be reviewed here) has perhaps exercised more influence than it has been credited with (cf. the classification of Einar Ól. Sveinsson 1956, 46 ff., whose fourth group of kennings corresponds to Noreen's "gátkenningar"). And in many ways, Noreen's contribution represents the most

cogent and comprehensive enunciation of the theory on the origin of kennings here discussed (although Lie 1957, 55-6, fails to mention it; cf. Note 18).

²¹ In a verse attributed to Sighvatr Þórðarson (*Skj* B I 239; *Íf* XXVII 267-8), the poet refers to Óláfr Tryggvason's ship Ormr inn langi by the kenning *lyngs fiskr*. I would not argue that this kenning had the active force of a *noa*-expression in Sighvatr's verse. But Norwegian seamen of more recent centuries certainly imposed a taboo on mentioning their ships and boats by their proper names (see Solheim 1940, 14 ff.). And an authority writing on the Maoris says that their "war-canoes were very *tapu*" (cf. Best 1925, 62). I would suggest, then, that *lyngs fiskr* (or some such similar expression) which belongs to an attested type of *noa*-expression, could well have been used as a "sea-term" for Ormr inn langi by those who sailed (or rowed) in her and especially while at sea.

²² I should like to thank Dr. Lúðvík Kristjánsson of Hafnarfjörður for drawing my attention to this *noa*-expression and Mr. Jeffrey Cossar of Reykjavík for furnishing me with a photo-copy of the relevant part of the manuscript.

²³ The circumlocution *veggja dýr* if it were a kenning would be placed in Einar Ól. Sveinsson's third class, while *viðbjörn veggja* would be in his fourth class (cf. Note 20 and Einar Ól. Sveinsson 1956, 46-7). The word *dýr* (and derivatives) is attested elsewhere in *noa*-language: thus when Sigurðr gives the dying Fáfnir his name as *göfugt dýr* in *Fáfnismál*, v. 2 (*Edda* 180), this has been seen as a *noa*-term used because, as the preceding prose remarks, *þat var trúa þeira í forneskju, at orð feigs manns mætti mikít, ef hann bqlvaði óvin sínum með nafni* (cf. Nyrop 1887, 181-2; Portengen 1915, 87). When out hunting in Norway, it was best to refer to one's quarry simply as *dyret* (cf. Hødnebo 1971, 34-5). And a snake might be referred to simply as *eit dyr* (Solheim 1940, 81). But *dýr* is also a common element in kennings, particularly as a basic word (cf. *Lp*, s.v. *dýr*): thus it appears frequently in kennings for "ship" (e.g. *brimdýr*, *unndýr*; cf. Meissner 1921, 218). And in the present context, the kenning *söðuldýr*, "horse" (*Edda* 224; *Skj* B I 210) is of interest. (This would also be in Class 3 according to Einar Ól. Sveinsson's classification; on sea-*noa*-terms for "horse", see Solheim 1940, 61-4.) In the fourth strophe of Þórarinn loftunga's *Tøgrdrápa* (*Skj* A I 323; B I 299; *Íf* XXVII 309), *hádýr* is either a *noa*-place-name (such are not uncommon phenomena) for a mountain in western Norway or a kenning (which would be of interest to the theme of this article), "thole-animal", "ship" (or perhaps both of these things); cf. Birkeland and Olsen 1913; *Lp*, s.v. *hádýr*; Solheim 1942, 11-12; Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson's note in *Íf* XXVII 309. Kennings which designate animals according to their habitat are, of course, frequent (e.g. *híðbyggvir*, "bear"; *lyngs fiskr*, "heather fish", "snake"). A *noa*-expression similar to the kenning *viðbjörn veggja* from the so-called "camphor-language" of Malaya is "kitchen-tiger" = "cat" (see Skeat and Blagden 1906, II 421). On Scandinavian *noa*-expressions for "cat" and "mouse", see Solheim 1940, 72 ff. and 83-4 and refs.

²⁴ Adriani (1893, 57) actually translates as "krabber" (= "scratcher"). Whatever their exact grammatical status in Sangirese, various other Sasahara words for animals in addition to this one are translated by Adriani (1893, 56-7) into Dutch as *nomina agentis*: *mahëbuang*, "blaffer" (= "barker"), Sasahara for "dog"; *maëmbekang*, "blater" (= "bleater"), Sasahara for "goat"; *mantëlakeng*, "vlieger" (= "flyer"), Sasahara for "bird". Certainly the use of *nomina agentis* for animals (as well as for other phenomena) is found in *noa*-languages elsewhere in the world, e.g. Shetlandic *jarmer*, "maiwor", "cat" (Jakobsen 1897, 90); German dialect *bönlöper*, "Bodenläufer", "mouse" (cf. Nyrop 1887, 136; also Portengen

1915, 113-14, for examples from Slavonic, Baltic and Finno-Ugric languages). It is therefore worth remembering in this context that many Old Norse *heiti* and kennings and not least those for animals are *nomina agentis* (cf. Meissner 1921, 6 ff., 110 ff.); a single example: *vélir viðbjarnar aldinna veggja* mentioned above.

²⁵ These examples are selected from Adriani, but also from Steller and Aebersold (1959) whose orthography is followed.

²⁶ Portengen's book does more, of course, than simply draw attention to the parallel of Sasahara. In it, she puts forward an elaborate argument for the origin of Germanic poetic diction (not just skaldic kennings) in *noa*-language. I hope to review Portengen's larger thesis elsewhere but cannot go into it here. Suffice it to say that it is unsatisfactory in a number of respects. One deficiency, admittedly not fundamental, is that in the whole of her book Portengen does not cite any Sangirese poetry, either in the original or in Dutch translation from Adriani's edition (1894). Indeed, Portengen does not even mention this last work. And one would have liked more information on the way Sasahara was used, both as a *noa*-language and as poetic diction. This could, presumably, have been obtained direct from Adriani with whom Portengen had personal contact (cf. Portengen 1915, 130). It may be worth noting that the greater part of the poetry published by Adriani is the so-called *sasambos* which not only contain a large proportion of Sasahara words, but were sung primarily on proas at sea while rowing or paddling was going on (cf. Adriani 1894, 1, 305, 354). The content of the *sasambos* is much concerned with sea-voyages and, to a less obvious extent, with rowing or paddling. As far as I can see, each half-verse is either six or eight syllables long (each verse respectively twelve or sixteen syllables) and each ends in a trochee (cf. Adriani 1894, 354).

²⁷ Thus it is indicative that the most recent proponent of this theory, Solheim, ends his contribution of 1942 (p. 15) on a literal and metaphorical question mark (cf. Portengen's rather groping conclusion to her thesis, 1915, 193-4). It is the lack of an explanation on this matter which has provided the basis for objection to this theory (cf. Note 18 and refs.).

²⁸ A criticism that might be levelled at the evidence produced in support of the Hypothesis as a whole is that it is too elaborate (cf. pp. 175-9 for other possible criticisms). But any single explanation of the origin of a complex form of poetry like *dróttkvætt*-poetry will itself have to be fairly elaborate to be convincing.

²⁹ One of the fragments of Shetlandic Norn speech mentioned by Jakobsen (1928-32, 705) is what he calls "a sea-verse, tabu-verse, recited by Fetlar fishermen at mackerel fishing in order to get the fish to take the bait". This is couched in *noa*-language and, in my view, seems likely to have been recited or sung while rowing was going on. — Rowing chants are, in a way, related to orders given to rowers and in the Shetlands these last were often special *noa*-terms (see Solheim 1940, 39 and refs.). — Drucker (1951, 178) mentions two whalers' paddling chants collected from the whale-hunting Indians of Vancouver Island which contain *noa*-expressions for the object of the hunt, the whale.

³⁰ In fact, there are other reasons for thinking that this verse is a rowing chant: (i) its resemblance to certain modern Icelandic *miðavisur*; and (ii) its likeness to Icelandic and mainland Scandinavian children's play-songs which are in all probability derived from rowing chants (cf. Cederschiöld 1905, 80). And there is a substantial amount of evidence for thinking that the circumlocutions of the verse are *noa*-expressions: Not only do fishermen use *noa*-expressions for the fish they are out to catch but also for their own vessel (Solheim 1940, 14 ff. (cf. Note 21); cf. *lōgsóti* and perhaps *unnsvín*), their equipment (such as oars; Solheim 1940, 21-

2; cf. *verfætr*) and certainly for whales (Solheim 1942 and page 169 above; cf. *urnsvín*, which may be a circumlocution for “whales”; cf. also Adriani 1893, 53 ff., and Jakobsen 1897, 85-92). Unfortunately I cannot go further into these matters here, but hope to in another article.

³¹ It is possible to produce other minor or indirect pieces of evidence in support of the Hypothesis. Thus the proposition that *dróttkvætt*-verses were used as rowing chants suggests that skalds had the function of rowing-officers or time-keepers for oarsmen aboard Norse ships. It is therefore interesting to find that in describing his years of service with Óláfr (helgi), Sighvatr Þórðarson, in a verse (*Íf* XXVIII 17) which it is not unreasonable to regard as “genuine”, remarks that he was “known on ships” (*fyrir vask kendr á knorrum*). And we hear of skalds declaiming *dróttkvætt*-verses on ships on numerous occasions. That the frequent presence of *dróttkvætt*-poets on Viking Age ships is more than a literary fantasy of saga-authors is inferable from the circumstances surrounding the oldest and practically only original document for *dróttkvætt*-poetry from the Viking Age itself, the verse in the runic inscription on the Karlevi stone (cf. Jansson 1962, 124-6). This monument lies, significantly for the theme of this article (cf. point (5) on p. 179), only a few hundred metres from the sea (Kalmarsund) on Öland’s west coast; when it was originally established, it was probably even closer (more or less on the shore?). It is reasonable to suppose that the Karlevi stone was set up in memory of a man (a Dane called Sibbi) who died unexpectedly on a sea-journey in these parts or even further afield from Denmark. But despite the unexpectedness of Sibbi’s death, there was a man aboard the Danish ship (or ships) who was able, at fairly short notice, to compose a formally impeccable *dróttkvætt*-stanza in honour of the suddenly deceased “battle-strong sea captain”. And in connection with ships and the sea, it is interesting to note that a verse ascribed to Hallfreðr vandræðaskáld (*Íf* VIII 197) ends with the two lines: *munat úrþvegin eira / alda sínu skaldi*, “the crested wave will not spare her poet.” The use of the possessive pronoun here with *alda*, “wave”, as its principal is noteworthy and thought-provoking. What relationship is there between the skald and the wave? Can it have been part of a skald’s task to charm the *ljót bára* (cf. *Skj* B I 306) into quiescence, *at svæfa sæ, at lægja ægi* (cf. respectively *Hávamál*, v. 154, and *Rígsþula*, v. 43 (*Edda* 43 and 286); Solheim 1940, 110-15)? Sometimes work chants can have almost the character of charms or incantations. Combined “sea-assuaging songs” and time-keeping chants are known amongst the Maoris (see Cowan 1911, 53-4). Note also that the author of *Egils saga* (cf. p. 177) has Egill produce skaldic stanzas on two occasions while rowing is going on (cf. *Íf* II 159, 170). The verse *Vist es hér með hraustum*, in the interpretation given in *Surlunga saga* 1946, I 585 (cf. 204), contains an interesting reference to rowing. In *Hávarðar saga Ísfirðings* (*Íf* VI 331-2) one of a group of rowers asks their helmsmen, Hávarðr, to chant a verse and he responds with a *dróttkvætt*-stanza.

³² Þórðr Særeksson’s record-breaking kenning for “warrior”, *nausta blakks hlémána gifrs drifu gimsløngvir* (*Skj*, B I 302; cf. *Lp.*, s.v. *gimsløngvir*) would seem to be conscious of the gunwale of a ship with its kenning for “shield”, *nausta blakks hlémáni* (“skipets le-máne”, dvs. “den ly-(vern-)givende måne som henger på skipssiden” (translation by Hallvard Lie in *Kl.*, s.v. *Kenningar*, with my italics)).

³³ I am aware that not a few of the kennings I cite as examples in what follows are attested in relatively late or “learned” poetry. I am also aware that rowing frequently occurs in the metaphors of Icelandic (as of other languages; cf. Morrison and Williams 1968, 195 f. for Greek examples) in other places than in rowing

chants. But despite this, I regard the evidence I cite taken as a whole as significant. With regard to the first point, the fact that a phenomenon is *attested* late does not, of course, necessarily mean that it did not exist much earlier. And note the epithet *borðróinn* (cf. Note 37) which appears twice in poetry normally considered early.

³⁴ Meissner's examples of kennings and the interpretations of the relevant skaldic verses on which they are based are for the most part accepted for purposes of the present section. Naturally there are other interpretations: thus the *pars pro toto* for "oar" mentioned by Meissner in this context is in the kenning *skjalda hlumr* (*hlumr* = "handle of an oar") which is taken in the sense "hermaðr" in *Íf* VI 346, and "spyd" in *Lp*, s.v. *hlumr*. While, then, there may, of course, be other interpretations preferable to those accepted by Meissner, this does not substantially affect the argument of this section.

³⁵ In *Íf* XXXIV 195-6, the kenning *lóns gagfellis lautir* in a verse in *Orkneyinga saga* ascribed to Rognvaldr kali is interpreted: *lóns gagfelli*, "sword of the sea", "oar"; the *lautir*, "hollows" of the oar would be "fingers" ("hendur, fingur, er kreppast um árina"). If this interpretation is right, it is interesting to see another part of the body represented in terms of things to do with the rower, although in rather a different way from in these kennings for "tongue".

³⁶ Here we may also note the word *vorr* which according to Finnur Jónsson (*Lp*, s.v.) basically means "stroke of an oar", then "den virkning som ses [from the strokes of oars] på vandets overflade" (i.e. the wake of a *borðróinn barði* (cf. Note 37)), then "sea" in general. Here again, the sea is, one might almost say literally, seen from the point of view of the rower at his oar.

³⁷ In this connection, we may consider two epithets or epithetical phrases which allude to rowing and which appear in the corpus of skaldic poetry, *húfi róinn* applied to a bay (*hafs botn*) in a half-verse attributed to Þjóðólfr (*Skj* B I 346), and *borðróinn* (applied to *barði*, "boat") in poetry attributed to Bragi (*Skj* B I 4 (*Ragnarsdrápa*, v. 17; in a longer kenning for the World Serpent, *borðróins barða brautar þvengr*, "thong of the path of the boat, rowed on its gunwale" (Turville-Petre)) and to Einarr Helgason skálaglamm (*Skj* B I 124; *Íf* II 271). It is interesting that Hallvard Lie draws attention to Bragi's use of *borðróinn barði* in connection with his suggestion that Bragi was the first to compose poetry in *dróttkvætt* and then under the influence of anaturalistic pictures on a shield or shields (cf. p. 175 below). Lie may be quoted at some length on this point. He (1952, 39) first argues that when Einarr skálaglamm uses the expression *borðróinn barði*, it is as "åpenbart et direkte lån fra Brage". He then goes on: "I Einars vísa står uttrykket *borðróinn barði*, såvidt jeg kan se, form-logisk helt umotivert, det har m. a. o. ingen bestemt signifikativ hensikt i forhold til selve den tingen det betegner; opplysningen om at Sigvaldes *barði* er *borðróinn*, dvs. har 'ærer på siderne', blir 'rot på bægge sider' (Lex. poet. [= *Lp*]) virker på oss her som den platteste selvfølgelighet, da den jo ikke fremhever noesomhelst særegent ved Sigvaldes skip." But in connection with Bragi's use of the phrase, he continues: "Når Brage derimot i sitt billedbeskrivende dikt bruker dette tilsynelatende så overflødige attributt, *øyner* vi straks den kunstneriske mening bak det: *borðróinn* uttrykker i Rdr. [= *Ragnarsdrápa*] noe karakteristisk og iøynefallende ved det skipsbilde Brage hadde foran seg; med *borðróinn* peker han liksom ned på avbildningen og viser oss det merkelige at et skip kan ses fra siden og samtidig ovenfra, at man så å si kan se rundt det fra ett og samme synspunkt. Det er m. a. o. den ideoplastiske utformning av skipsbildet på skjoldet, dette at skipet var 'utfoldet' i planet så årene på begge sider var synlige enda skipet egentlig var sett fra siden (liksom seilet på skipene på de

gotlandske billedsteinene er foldet helt ut i skipets lengderetning), — det er denne ideoplastiske utformningen Brage med *borðróinn* har tilgodesett i sitt dikt." I find it difficult to accept Lie's argument here as convincing (cf. p. 175 below): the models he suggests that Bragi was influenced by (i.e. pictures on shields) are very imperfectly known. Even if they were well preserved to us, I believe that the body of evidence which could be adduced in favour of their having influenced Bragi's *Ragnarsdrápa* would, at best, be insignificant and equivocal. On the other hand, it is something of a coincidence that Lie attaches such importance to this epithet concerned with rowing — he devotes nearly five pages to his discussion of the kenning *borðróins barða brautar þvengr*. The following points should be noted: (1) that it is difficult to agree with Lie that when Einarr skálaglamm uses the phrase *borðróinn barði*, this is a specific loan from Bragi. That Lie's arguments on this point are at best somewhat subjective is suggested by a remark by Sophus Bugge (1894, 103): "Epithetet *borðroinn* er temmelig ørkesløst i Brages Vers, men ikke i Einars." It is preferable to regard the phrase in question as a stock formula (cf. Note 45) which would have been found in other places than in the two verses in question (cf. the *mjök róin ór* in *Skj B I 268*; and the *skothendingar* on *borð-* and *barð-* in a verse (which for other reasons is of interest in the context of this article) in *Skj B I 170*; and in the lines *Pás fyr borð á Barða* (*Skj B I 138*) and *pás borðmikinn Barða* (*Skj B I 193*)); (2) that while Lie goes too far in regarding Einarr's *borðróinn* as a description of Sigvaldi's ship as "den platteste selvfølghelighet", it can reasonably be said that the epithet is an "overflødig attributt" in both Einarr's and Bragi's verses; (3) given this last consideration, but also given that Lie's explanation of the epithet in Bragi is unconvincing (as I think it is), then some other explanation of the epithet in both verses is called for. My explanation would be that the epithet (which I would regard as a formula) reflects that same preoccupation with rowing that I have been discussing in this section. And this conclusion is to some extent substantiated by the existence of another "overflødig attributt" which also refers to rowing, the one mentioned above, *húfi róinn* in the half-verse attributed to Þjóðólfr.

³⁸ There have, of course, been other suggestions put forward to account for the origin of skaldic poetry than the two mentioned here. For example, the possible influence of Latin poetry has been proposed and Stephen R. Anderson (1973, 6-7) has seen a possible connection between skaldic poetry and Latvian trochaic folk-songs. Cf. also Einar Ól. Sveinsson 1962, 127-8, on the possible "innlendar rætur" of *dróttkvætt*. — There has been a tendency to regard theories which seek to solve the problem of the origin of skaldic kennings as theories which solve the problem of the origin of *dróttkvætt*-poetry as a whole. The first problem should, of course, be regarded as separate from, or only part of the second problem. It should be noted, however, that the Hypothesis accords well with an existing theory on the origin of kennings (cf. pp. 168-71 above).

³⁹ If anything, I would regard the date of the composition of *Ragnarsdrápa* as a *terminus ante quem* for the genesis of *dróttkvætt*; cf. Dronke (ed.) 1969, 204: "innumerable duller *drápur* [than *Ragnarsdrápa*] before and after Bragi's time have no doubt been lost." Cf. Note 2.

⁴⁰ Do we detect an echo of a rowing chant in *Haraldskvæði*, verse 17 (cf. Stubb's rowing chant to his crew in Melville, 1969, ch. 47: ". . . Why don't you snap your oars, you rascals? . . . pull and break something!")?

⁴¹ Cf. Leon Diakonos's (1961, 143-4; Loretto's translation) eye-witness account of Svyatoslav (described, perhaps not altogether accurately, by Obolensky (1974,

251) as "so typical a Viking ruler") on the Danube in 971: "Sphendosthlabos aber kam in einem skythischen Boot herangefahren; die Hand am Rudergriff, ruderte er mit den anderen, als wäre er einer von ihnen . . . Nachdem er kurze Zeit mit dem Kaiser über die Friedensbedingungen gesprochen hatte, nahm er seinen Platz auf der Ruderbank wieder ein und stieß vom Lande ab." If *Orkneyinga saga* (Íf XXXIV 130) is to be believed, Rognvaldr kali Kolsson Orkneyingjarl boasted in a verse (which it quotes) about his abilities as a rower.

⁴² It is for this sort of reason that I feel justified in drawing certain analogies between the practices, beliefs, etc., of the men amongst whom I believe *dróttkvætt* to have arisen in the Relevant Period and those of men whom I see as their cultural inheritors and physical descendants, namely Scandinavian (primarily Norwegian) seamen and fishermen of more recent centuries (cf. e.g. p. 169; Note 46). By the same token, I cannot accept Lie's (1957, 56) main, and indeed only objection to the theory reviewed on pp. 168-71 above on the origin of kennings (what he calls the "profantabu-teori"), namely the gulf he sees between "folkelig praktisk ervervsmagi" (i.e. the use of *noa*-language) and "en overklassepreget høyartistisk diktekunst" (i.e. the skaldic art). In my view, there was no such gulf in the milieu in which *dróttkvætt* developed; free Norse society of the Relevant Period was, I would argue, comparatively unstratified. In this article, by the way, comparisons are also made between the practices, customs, etc., of Scandinavians of the Relevant Period and those of certain primitive peoples, not least Austronesians (including the Maoris) (cf. e.g. pp. 170-1, 181-5; Notes 21, 23-4, 26, 31, 50). Likenesses which exist in this context (and which are suggested, incidentally, as far as Polynesian peoples are concerned by the title of Buck's book of 1959) are of no small interest and deserve further attention.

⁴³ We also have to take into account, of course, the vagaries of textual preservation. Thus it is only a matter of some good fortune that Verse 4 (and indeed the whole of *Bjarnar saga Híttdælakappa* in which it is preserved) has been transmitted to us at all; cf. Íf III lxiii: "Það hefur verið mjórra muna vant um Bjarnar sögu, að hún glataðist með öllu, eins og ýmis íslenzk fornrit, sem vitað er með vissu, að til hafa verið, en nú er ekki örmull eftir af." Had *Bjarnar saga* (or at any rate that part of it which contained Verse 4) perished, we should have lost what I consider to be a more or less unique example of a type of rowing chant in *dróttkvætt* which would have been used to set time to rowing on Norse ships on hundreds of thousands of occasions. Also if Verse 4 had perished, a very important piece of evidence in support of the Hypothesis would have been lost (cf. pp. 158-65 and 178-9 and Note 16).

⁴⁴ Indeed, it may be regarded as significant that the authors of such displays of skaldic virtuosity as *Háttatal* and *Rekstefja* (cf. Note 8) seem to find it appropriate to mention the labour of rowing in their poems.

⁴⁵ Of the eight verses just enumerated, Verses 4, 3 (not in *dróttkvætt*), 15 and 10 seem to me to bear the most obvious signs of being rowing chants. Rowing is also mentioned in the present tense in at least two other preserved verses: *Skj B I 170* (*Leika barðs á borði*, etc.) and *Skj B I 395* (*Áleifr knýr und órum*, etc.). Verses which refer in the present tense to vessels making their way through the sea, but without any reference to rowing are, of course, too many to enumerate. A random example is the group of five half-strophes ascribed to Hofgarða-Refr Gestsson (*Skj B I 296-7*); note also (as another random example) the *stef* of the otherwise lost *Bárðardrápa* (*Skj B I 166*): *Bárðr of rístr bóru / brautland varar andra*. The first person plurals of verbs (cf. p. 159 above) are found in some of the verses of this

type, e.g. *Skj B I 182* (*Förum apr þars órir*, etc.; cf. Perkins 1976, 67 ff.); *Skj B I 479* (*Vér höfum vaðnar leirur*, etc.); *Íf XII 220* (*Lótum geisa Gamminn*, etc. (= Verse 19); cf. p. 178 below and Note 49). Many of these verses could easily have been rowing chants even though rowing is not specifically mentioned in them. — Rowing chants, it seems, had their set formulae and rhymes, e.g. *ór at/á borði* (cf. p. 159 above); n.n. *við stýri/stýrir* (cf. Note 8); *lótum*+word, name or kenning for a ship+infinitive expression meaning “move forward” or the like (e.g. Verses 15 and 19); noun (in dative) meaning “sea”+ *verpr inn of þrom stinnan* (cf. commentary to Verse 8); *skothendingar on borð-/barð-* (see Note 37). These formulaic elements also suggest a larger body of rowing chants in *dróttkvætt* than the eight or so fairly clear examples that have been preserved. — It should also be noted that there are a number of skaldic verses which refer to rowing in the *past* tense, e.g. *Skj B I 55* (cf. *Íf XXVI 157-8*), 204, 268, 303, 311, 314, 377, 378, 529. Jón Helgason (1953, 146) writes of skaldic *lausavísur*: “I det hele taget er havsprøjet, styrtesøerne, *de knagende åretoller yndede emner* [my italics], og samtidig ser vi menneskes kamp midt i stormene og bølgegangen: ‘vi var seksten, der måtte øse samtidig’ hedder det et sted (*Skjd. I A 139* [= *Skj B I 130*; cf. p. 161 above]).”

⁴⁶ In assessing the Hypothesis, it would be a mistake to assume that Norse seamen when they put out to sea, for example, for a day’s fishing would necessarily have regarded themselves as involved in something quotidian, a mere routine. On the contrary, as Svale Solheim (1940, 1, 176) writes of Norwegian fishermen of more recent centuries: “Når fiskarane i eldre tider stelte med arbeidet sitt, så var ikkje dette så liketil som vi gjerne vil tenkja oss no for tida. Alt var uvanleg, spanande og farleg då, og det var så mangt og mange dei måtte taka seg i vare for.” “Når fiskarane i gamle dagar var ute på sjøen og fiska, så hadde dei ei kjensle av at sjølve arbeidet var noko høgtideleg, noko som låg heilt utanom det vanlege. Utan tvil kjende dei det som dei var i ei verd for seg sjølv, i ein annan heim. Men livet i denne andre heimen var fullt av spaning og otte. Støtt måtte fiskaren vera på vakt, for kringom han på alle kantar låg det og lurde sterke og farlege makter, som berre venta på eit høve til å gjera skade. Og skade, det var det same som mislukka fiske, uver, skipbrot og mannespille.” And if preparations for a fishing-trip were carried out with such circumspection and the venture regarded as so comparatively exceptional in post-Reformation times, with how much more care and ceremony would preparations for a highly elaborate enterprise like a sea-borne raiding expedition have been made in the pre-Christian Relevant Period or Viking Age (cf. Excursus 1; there are, of course, a large number of taboos inhibiting warriors as well as sailors). In primitive societies, the work-processes may often be surrounded with ceremonial, ritual and even magic. An elaborately contrived form of poetry would not, then, necessarily be out of character as an accompaniment to such complicated and dangerous operations.

⁴⁷ It might also be remembered that seamen and fishermen often used *sea-noa*-language with the definite intention of concealing their plans from the spirits of the ocean, competitors, etc. (cf. e.g. Adriani 1893, 7; Solheim 1940, 116; Lockwood 1956, 2; cf. Note 46). Could the relative complexity of the word-order of *dróttkvætt*-poetry have originally developed out of a feeling for the need to be cryptic or to confuse? It is perhaps worth noting in this connection, that *noa*-language(s) sometimes contain(s) forms which are anomalous from a phonetic and grammatical (as well as a lexical) point of view (cf. Havers 1946, 117 ff.).

⁴⁸ Theories seeking to account for the origin of given phenomena often, of course, presuppose considerable processes of evolution between those phenomena in their

extant state and the (more) original forms from which they have developed. Accepting, for example, the Theory of Evolution, we may consider how much more complex *Homo sapiens* is than the ape-like creature from which it is assumed he developed. Or we may contrast a piece of modern jazz of the 1980's with an American Negro work song of the 1840's (cf. p. 157 above and pp. 182 and 183 below).

⁴⁹ I can only concur with Einar Ól. Sveinsson's opinion (1933, 184-5) that Verse 19 as it stands with its suffixed definite article in the word *Gamminn* is unlikely to have been composed as early as the time of the historical *Práinn* Sigfússon. But it is so formulaic in its general form (cf. Note 45) that it would be difficult to ascribe it to any poet about whom we know anything. (We note that other names or words of two syllables could be substituted for *Práinn* in the second line; cf. p. 158 above and Notes 3, 8 and 45.) If, as is reasonable, the verse is divorced from the prose context it is given by *Njáls saga*, one might be inclined to see in the word *vægja* the sense "give way (as of one vessel to another at sea)"; cf. the use of *vægja* in the verse *Leika barðs á borði*, etc., (*Skj* B I 170; cf. Notes 37 and 45) which is much concerned with oars and rowing. The verb *geisa* is found also in Verse 16, which seems to be (an imitation of) a rowing chant (cf. p. 177 above), and in *Háttatal*, v. 21 (*Skj* B II 66), which also refers to the movement of a rowed ship. We note, of course, not only the simplicity of Verse 19's word order but also its lack of *skothendingar* and *aðalhendingar*.

⁵⁰ In this connection, it is perhaps worth noting that it is possible to make a distinction between *primary* and *secondary* work chants. The former are the spontaneous effusions of individuals or groups of workers produced *as they actually go about their labours*. Secondary work songs, on the other hand, are composed by individuals *prior to their use as rhythm-setters for a particular piece of work*; indeed, they are not always necessarily intended by their authors as work songs. (Cf. on this matter, Cederschiöld 1905, 98-102, where the distinction may, however, be slightly different from the one made here; for some pertinent remarks on "prior composition" of work songs, see Finnegan 1977, 79.) Understandably, secondary work chants will tend to be more elaborate and complicated in their form than primary work chants. (Jónas Hallgrímsson's poem *Formannsvísur* contains a number of verses which are in a metre closely akin to *dróttkvætt* and which may have been intended as rowing chants.) Now here we must remember that rowing chants are amongst the most necessary (and widespread) of all work chants, and further that the larger Norse vessels of the Relevant Period were, by the standards of the time, highly elaborate pieces of equipment (cf. Note 21). In the cramped conditions on board, disciplined co-ordination must have been of the essence. Crews must have been subject to the most precise and perhaps complicated rowing-drills and careful time-keeping in rowing would have been of immense importance for successful operation. It seems likely that aboard the larger Scandinavian oared ships of the time, particularly aboard levy-ships, there must have been men who had special charge of the rowers, their discipline and morale, and whose essential task it was to act as time-beaters to set the rhythm for rowing. For the existence of such "rowing officers" (if that is not too formal a term) we have the analogy of the *keleustai* on Greek oared ships of the ancient world and similar positions on French and Papal galleys of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (cf. Casson 1971, 300-4; note here also the Maori *kai-tukis*, cf. pp. 181-5 below and Best 1925, 62, 229-30, 237-43). In the first instance, such rowing-officers would have given the beat either by shouted orders (cf. p. 183 below) or by more mechanical means (cf. notes

to Verse 10). But when the crew of free rowers grew tired of such monotonous methods of time-keeping, it was these rowing-officers who, I would argue, produced rowing chants in the form of *dróttkvætt*-poetry. And as inferred in Note 31, I see the skalds, the authors of *dróttkvætt*-poetry, in the function of rowing-officers. Now the verses composed by men in such positions are rather to be regarded as secondary than primary work chants; that is, they would have been composed before they were actually chanted to working rowers as time-setters. It is true that the space of time between the completion of a verse in a skald's mind and his first declamation of that verse to rowers could have been very short. Thus there is no reason why skalds should not have been able to improvise *dróttkvætt* verse relatively speedily (using, of course, a number of formulaic expressions; cf. Note 45). In this connection, it is of interest to note the prose preceding the two halves of Verse 7 in *Heimskringla*. A skald might easily have begun and completed a strophe on board ship as a crew of men were actually rowing — he might simultaneously have been keeping time for them by some other means — and five or ten minutes later have declaimed the newly composed strophe to those selfsame men as they continued to row. (Here reference may be made to the story surrounding Verse 10 in *Flateyjarbók* 1944-5, I 450.) Indeed, such a situation might have been an everyday one in the appropriate milieu. But even so, on the definition given above, such verses would be classified as *secondary* work chants. They cannot be regarded as the spontaneous effusions of workers engaged in their tasks. Their poets would have had time to think, to conform to more stylized patterns. And as secondary work chants, such verses may have taken a more elaborate form than primary work chants. Much of what precedes is, of course, surmise. But it should be stressed again that Norse ships were highly complex objects; that time-keeping for rowers aboard them would have been essential and rowing chants almost essential; that Norse rowing officers (or whatever they may be called), the authors of Norse rowing chants, would probably have been professionals or at least semi-professionals; and in view of these things, it would not be surprising if their chants took rather an elaborate form. — In connection with these matters, two further points may be made: (1) Primary work chants are, of course, less likely to have survived than secondary ones (cf. pp. 163-4 above). It is conceivable (although not very likely) that Verse 20 and the fragment edited as Verse 19 could be primary (rather than secondary) work chants. (2) Collective work chants have been mentioned in what precedes. It is interesting that we have two references in the sources to collective authorship of quoted *dróttkvætt* verses: (i) in *Knýtlinga saga*, ch. 14 (*Íf* XXXV 116), two verses of a *flokkr* in *dróttkvætt* are said to have been composed by the *liðsmenn* of King Canute (although elsewhere these two verses are ascribed (probably incorrectly) to Óláfr helgi Haraldsson; on the problems surrounding the so-called *Liðsmannaflokkur*, cf. Jón Helgason 1953, 139 and *Íf* XXXV xciv-xcvi and refs.); and (ii) Verse 21 is said in the sources in which it appears to have been composed by “the men of Haraldr” (*harðráði*). Various remarks may be made in this connection: (a) Given the apparent tendency of saga-authors (or their predecessors) to ascribe what came to their ears as anonymous skaldic verses to named persons, these two references are all the more remarkable (cf. Note 4; and note the way the two verses in *Knýtlinga saga* have been ascribed, probably wrongly, to Óláfr helgi in the other sources where they appear). It is quite possible, then, indeed it is probable, that other skaldic verses (preserved or otherwise) were collectively composed and that the practice of joint composition was more widespread than is suggested by the sources. (b) On the whole, in discussing work

chants, there is a tendency to associate collectively composed poetry with primary work chants (cf. above). It is not, of course, suggested that any of the three *dróttkvætt* verses under notice here are primary work chants; indeed, there is little to suggest that they were work chants or rowing chants at all. Note, however, various first person plurals of verbs in *Liðsmannaflokkr* (as conceived by Finnur Jónsson, *Skj B I* 391-3) and Verse 21 (although not verbs connected with work processes); and with Verses 5 and 6 of Finnur Jónsson's *Liðsmannaflokkr* (*Skj B I* 392), cf. Verse 12 and Note 9. In connection with the ascription of the two verses in *Knýtinga saga*, it might be noted that if we are to believe the *Liber Eliensis* (1962, 153-4), at least some of King Canute's followers would have been familiar with rowing chants (cf. "*Merie sungen ðe muneches binnen Ely / ða Cnut ching reu ðer by. / Rowep cnites noer the lant / and here we [first person plural] þes muneches sæng.*" *Quod latine sonat: "Dulce cantaverunt monachi in Ely, dum [cf. l.3 of the verse from Saxonis Gesta Danorum quoted on pp. 161-2 above] Canutus rex navigaret prope ibi. Nunc milites navigate propius ad terram et simul audiamus monachorum armoniam"*). On the other hand, as noted, the texts of work chants often give no indication of their function as such. And in view of the evidence that *dróttkvætt* verses were used as rowing chants and of the considerations immediately following under (c), these two references are of no small interest. Even though a work chant is not a primary one, it might still have collective authorship. Thus on Norse ships (as elsewhere) favourable winds often gave crews respite from the task of rowing; during such periods they might well have collectively composed rowing chants for future use. (c) It is interesting that the three verses under notice here seem to belong to one of the milieux in which I think it likely that *dróttkvætt* verses were used as rowing chants, i.e. that of the Viking or pre-Viking who would have been rower as well as warrior (cf. Excursus 1). Verse 21 is of particular interest here: If it was composed under the circumstances stated by the prose in which it is embedded, and if its joint authors are to be believed, it must have been composed within twenty-four hours of a sea-borne attack on the Viking Age town of Heiðabær just before 1050; given that the town had been entirely destroyed by fire by the time Verse 21 had been made, it is reasonable to assume that the attackers were withdrawing by sea. Verse 21 would then have been composed on board ship. And even though the men who composed it may not have actually been rowing, it is reasonable to assume that they had been rowing in the immediate past and could expect to be rowing in the near future; cf. *Íf* XXVIII 116-17, much of which, of course, is not to be taken too seriously as historical fact; we can, however, take Almgren's remarks (1962, 194, lines 21-33) more seriously. In view of these things, then, it seems perfectly possible that Verse 21 was a rowing chant and was composed by more than one person.

⁵¹ Cf. Wilkes (1844, II 82): "A chief of Samoa attacks an enemy on another island and conquers. After the victors have embarked safely for their island, they sing as follows: 'Keep her away, and mind the helm.'"

⁵² Bücher (loc. cit.) cites a "Herr Tsur" as authority for the following information: "Sie [the junks of the Chinese] sind von Haus aus Segelschiffe; aber bei Windstille müssen die Schifflleute rudern. Zwei grosse Ruder befinden sich am hintern Teile des Schiffes, je eines auf jeder Seite. Jedes wird von drei Arbeitern gehandhabt. Während so sechs Mann rudern, ruhen sechs andere, welche die Ablösungsmannschaft bilden. Die Arbeit ist eine harte Geduldsprobe, da das schwere Schiff nur sehr langsam vom Flecke kommt. Dennoch singen die Rudernden, und zwar wechselt die Mannschaft am rechten Ruder mit derjenigen am

linken von Satz zu Satz ab. Häufig schlägt dazu einer der ruhenden Genossen ein gongähnliches metallenes Instrument. Eines der meistgesungenen Lieder stammt von einem alten chinesischen Dichter und lautet: [Here follows the music of the song and German translation of its text, which has nothing to do with rowing (cf. pp. 163-4 above) and which must be regarded as a "secondary" work chant by the definition given in Note 50]. Das Lied erweckt in den Schifffleuten Heimatgefühle, und unwillkürlich rudern sie kräftiger und rascher." (In connection with this account, we may imagine the way in which what were basically sailing-ships like *Skuldelev 1* and *3* must have been rowed, quite often probably only with two pairs of oars.)

⁵³ The verse in question, which is in a metre related to *dróttkvætt*, has been recognized as a *miðavísa* (i.e. a mnemonic verse to assist location of fishing-grounds by bearings on various points on land) by e.g. Ólafur Lárússon (1944, 157) and Jón Helgason (1953, 165). As such it is strictly functional. And since it must have been recited or rehearsed (or at least muttered) as rowing was actually going on, it is reasonable to assume that it was possible to row to it, that it was a sort of rowing chant. Ólafur Lárússon (1944, 161) seems to think that it could well be from the heathen period.

⁵⁴ It is not impossible that the men who gave time (and orders) to rowers on the larger Norse ships used megaphones. Certainly a wooden object has been found in the Kvalsund ship-find which is most easily explained as a megaphone. (The larger Kvalsund ship, a sizeable rowing vessel from the western Norway of the Relevant Period, is of no small interest in connection with the Hypothesis; cf. pp. 155, 176 above.) Wooden megaphones were apparently used by fishermen in western Norway down to modern times. Cf. Shetelig and Johannessen 1929, 31-2, 39-40, 70.

⁵⁵ I wonder if there could perhaps be any connection between the somewhat obscure first element of the word *skothending* on the one hand and Old Norse *skutr* (Norwegian *skut, skot, skott*), "end of vessel; (most usually) stern", or the related Old Norse verb *skotta* (Norwegian *skota, skåte*), "back water, back oars", on the other. Note, for example, Anne Holtsmark's use of the verb "skåte" in the passage quoted from Paasche 1957: had the two men in *Sturlunga saga* (Verse 2 and its preceding prose) been using a chant in *dróttkvætt*, might not the one who "skåtet" have chanted odd lines (with their *skothendingar*), his companion, who did the main part of the work, even lines (with their *aðalhendingar*)? Or might the odd lines have been connected with the side of oars which back-watered when the ship was turned (cf. Falk 1912, 73)?

⁵⁶ After this contribution was ready for press, my attention was drawn to an article by Bertil Daggfeldt in *Fornvännen* for 1983 entitled "Vikingen — roddaren" Daggfeldt suggests a new explanation for the much-discussed Old Norse word *vikingr*, "Viking". He posits a connection with the Old Norse noun *vika*, "turn at the oar", "shift of oarsmen", and the related verb *víkja*; according to him (93), "det hette också att man vek vid årorna när man växlade roddare efter varje veckosjö." He would see the original sense of *vikingar* as "men rowing in shifts" (Cf. Askeberg 1944, 114-83, who makes a connection with the same verb, although in a different sense.) I cannot here express an opinion on this suggestion by Daggfeldt. If correct, however, it is obviously germane to the idea put forward here in Excursus 2, B. But quite apart from Daggfeldt's more specific point, the general premise of his article (so succinctly encapsulated in its title) corresponds closely to one of mine: as he writes of Viking ships and their forebears: "Skeppsbyggnadstekniken och organisationen ombord för att kontinuerligt driva

dessa roddfarkoster fram över vida öppna hav, mot strömmen i de ryska floderna eller tidvattnet i Engelska kanalen var nödvändiga förutsättningar för den samfärdsel, som tillät de nordiska vikingarna att kolonisera avlägsna trakter." Here we are brought back to Premise 1. And Daggfeldt (himself an officer in the Swedish navy) also writes: "Att rodden var ett tungt och hårt arbete, som under långa perioder dominerade vikingens liv, kan man lätt föreställa sig, i synnerhet om man själv rott skeppsbåtar som t. ex. flottans valbåtar, s.k. tio-huggare." — In connection with the suggestions put forward here in Excursus 2, we may note a Maori paddling song quoted by Best (1925, 239-41) whose wording and other features set a quite intricate drill (including variation of strength of stroke) for the paddlers.

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(Sometimes quotations from unnormalized editions are given in normalized form and without signal.)

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YNGVARR'S EXPEDITION TO THE EAST AND A RUSSIAN INSCRIBED STONE CROSS

By JONATHAN SHEPARD

I: Introduction

The expedition of Yngvarr inn víðförli to the east has intrigued generations of scholars. The riddle is posed partly by the diverse nature of the sources for the expedition. On the one hand stands a substantial collection of rune stones which refer to the expedition. No other event is attested by so large a number of extant stones. On the other hand, we have *Yngvars saga*, purporting to relate the exploits of Yngvarr. *Yngvars saga* is a romantic tale, and the earliest surviving manuscript was probably written in the first quarter of the fifteenth century (Jón Helgason 1955, xii; Hofmann 1981, 188). The existing text has been convincingly shown by D. Hofmann (1981, 189-91, 194-5, 200-4, 221) to represent an Icelandic translation, close though not word for word, of a Latin original which is no longer extant. Hofmann argues strongly that Oddr Snorrason wrote the Latin original in the closing years of the twelfth century in the monastery of Þingeyrar. The translation into Icelandic seems to have been done before 1200 (see, however, McDougall 1982-3, 107). A third category of source is annalistic. In the entries s.a. 1041 in both *Konungsannáll* and *Lögmannsannáll* comes the laconic statement that "Yngvarr the Far-Traveller died" (*Íslandske Annaler* 1888, 108, 250). Scholarly opinion has tended towards a consensus that in or around 1041, Yngvarr led an expedition from central Sweden, and that the expedition met with disaster somewhere south-east of Russia, in the region of the Caspian (Braun 1924, 188-9; Stender-Petersen 1953, 137; Ruprecht 1958, 55; Jansson 1962, 39-40; Liestøl 1970, 128; Davidson 1976, 167-8; Benedikz 1978, 228; Sawyer 1982, 32, 35).

This consensus underwent challenge from two scholars, working independently of one another, in the mid-1970s. E. A. Mel'nikova proposed a revision of both the date and the destination of Yngvarr's expedition, from the Caspian region in 1041 to Byzantium in 1043. She argued that Yngvarr's war band in fact formed a contingent in the great Russian host that attacked Byzantium in

1043 (Mel'nikova 1976a, 82-3, 86-7). A. Thulin, in contrast, retained the Caspian region, but proposed to shift the expedition's date back to the early 1030s. He tentatively suggested that Yngvarr's venture might be identifiable with attacks made by "Rūs" on Arab emirs in the Caucasus between 1030 and 1033. These attacks were recorded by an eleventh-century Arabic source which has been incorporated *in extenso* in a later work (Thulin 1975, 23, 28-9; cf. Musset 1979, 58). These two "revisionist" theses have greatly enlivened the debate concerning Yngvarr, and are of sufficient weight to warrant full consideration. The same goes for the important material and suggestions presented by O. Pritsak (1981, 434-51). It must, however, be stated at the outset that my conclusion concerning these theses is negative. The traditional view that a particular expedition sallied forth to the Caspian region still seems to me the most convincing. There is, moreover, a piece of evidence which has not hitherto been associated with Yngvarr's expedition. It is an Old Russian inscribed cross, commemorating a deceased Russian. The cross stood near a land- and water-route from the Caspian to the Sea of Azov. Its inscription seems once to have borne a date corresponding to A.D. 1041, but no longer does so. This is very regrettable, since our argument for connecting the cross with Yngvarr's expedition rests mainly on the coincidence between this date and the date given for Yngvarr's death by the two Icelandic annals and by *Yngvars saga*. Our argument's other, lesser, prop is the approximate coincidence between the cross's original location and the region which the literary evidence seems to represent as the destination of Yngvarr and his men. Even if the Russian cross does not clinch the case either for dating the debacle to 1041 or for locating it in the Caspian region, it does seem worth introducing into the Yngvarr controversy.

II: Scandinavians and the "East Way"

Before turning to the theses of Mel'nikova and Thulin, a simple point must be made, and some illustrative material provided. Many more people than previously were travelling between Russia and Byzantium in the eleventh century, and substantial numbers between Scandinavia, Russia and Byzantium. One effect of the conversion of Russia to Christianity and of Vladimir's construction of a steppe-frontier at the end of the tenth century was to make the journey to Byzantium considerably safer and more convenient than it had been before. A large fortified harbour was built at Voyn, by the confluence of the Sula with the Dnieper (see Map; Dovzh-

enok 1966, 21, 23-4, 103; Shepard 1979a, 225). Horseshoe-shaped fortifications enclosing a harbour have also been excavated two kilometres upstream from Voyn along the River Sula. There, too, convoys could muster (Kilievich 1965, 189-90; Dovzhenok 1966, 23-4). At these outermost frontier-posts, fleets of boats could be assembled for the voyage through the open steppe and beyond, to the Black Sea. The finds of cavalry equipment in forts near the frontier, and the mention in literary sources of semi-nomadic groups such as the "Black Klobuki" there, suggest that mounted detachments were available to escort the boats past points of especial danger, such as the Dnieper rapids (Dovzhenok 1966, 79-80, 100-1, 104-7; Rappoport 1966, 115-16; Kirpichnikov 1973, 46-7, 51-2, 56-7). At Olesh'e, in the Dnieper estuary, there arose a town in the second half of the tenth century, seemingly in the closing years of that century. It served as a "great transit and trading-point" for traffic between Kievan Russia and the south (Sokul'sky 1980, 73). The earliest stratum is defined as "end of the tenth century" (Sokul'sky 1980, 72-3). Sokul'sky argues that the town called "Olesh'e" by twelfth- and thirteenth-century Russian chroniclers is, partially at least, identical with an extensive site on Velikopotemkin Island, 12 kilometres below the modern town of Kherson, on the right bank of the Dnieper (see the map, lacking any scale, in Sokul'sky 1980, 66). Judging by the preliminary excavations, the commercial life of the town reached its peak in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. This serves as an index of the frequency of contacts between Russia and Byzantium, since Olesh'e owed its principal *raison d'être* to the trade with Byzantium. In all five trial-excavations, many fragments of Byzantine or Crimean amphorae, glazed pottery and glass-bracelets were found (Sokul'sky 1980, 66-9, 71, 73).

But already in the tenth century, Arab writers such as Mas'ūdī were calling the Black Sea "the Sea of the Rūs", and falsely inferring from the frequency of their voyages across it that they actually lived on its shores (Mas'ūdī 1962-71, I 164, 167). Crusaders visiting Byzantium picked up the name from colloquial Byzantine usage, and the Black Sea appears as *Mare Russiae* in, for example, the chronicle of Ekkehard of Aura, who participated in the 1101 Crusade (Ekkehard of Aura 1844, 216; cf. Albert of Aix 1967, 525E; Soloviev 1959, 5-6). Helmold, in his *Chronica Slavorum*, states that "the Sea of the Russians carries (one) rapidly to Greece" (1963, 36-7; cf. Soloviev 1959, 7). Helmold, who wrote the first book of his work between 1163 and 1168, does not seem to have

been offering a mere rationalization as an explanation for the sea's name, but to have been reporting a contemporary fact: that travel between Kievan Russia and Byzantium was common, and comparatively rapid. Traffic down the Dnieper to the sea was, it is true, subjected to increasing disruption by the nomadic Cumans (Povoltsy) in the mid-twelfth century. But as late as 1170, the nomads' harassment of traders south of Kiev was deemed both unusual and unacceptable by the Grand Prince of Kiev, Mstislav Izyaslavich. He urged his fellow princes: "And already they [the Cumans/Povoltsy] are taking from us the route to the Greeks and the Salt-route and the Vine-route, and it would be right for us, brothers, to seek God's help and the prayers of the Mother of God and to look to the routes of our fathers and grandfathers, and to our honour" (*Ipat'evskaya Letopis'* 1962, col. 538, s.a. 1170). The ensuing campaign against the nomads showed that, when united, the Russian princes could still defeat them and effectively protect merchants travelling up from the Black Sea (*Ipat'evskaya Letopis'* 1962, cols. 540-1, s.a. 1170; cf. cols. 526-8, s.a. 1167, 1168). It is therefore not surprising that, in the eyes of the mid-twelfth-century Icelander Abbot Nikulás Bergsson, Byzantium was the neighbour of Russia: "Next to Garðaríki to the south-west lies the land of the Greek king" (*Alfræði íslenzk* 1908-18, I 10; Mel'nikova 1976b, 151-2; Pritsak 1981, 540-1).

If one effect of the conversion of Russia to Christianity and the creation of the steppe-frontier was to facilitate travel to Byzantium, another was to accelerate the effacement of the ruling élite's Scandinavian traits. Kievan society probably appeared much more alien to eleventh-century visitors from Scandinavia than it had done to their precursors in the tenth century. The Middle Dnieper region was now protected from the nomads by a series of watchposts, forts and settlements (Shepard 1979a, 223-5). These were populated by Slavs and Finns, and it is probable that the garrisons, and even their commanders, were of the same origin. Slavonic was their written and, presumably, spoken language. The warriors of the forts were probably maintained by means of dues rendered in kind by the inhabitants of the unfortified settlements which verged on the forts (Dovzhenok 1968, 42). However, as Dovzhenok remarks, members of the garrison may themselves have engaged in some farming, since finds of both weapons and agricultural implements are sometimes made in the same dwelling (cf. Rappoport 1966, 116). Neither this form of livelihood nor the borderers' reliance on cavalry warfare were likely to appeal to Scandinavian fortune-seekers.

Nonetheless, Scandinavians continued to visit Russia in the eleventh century. Evidence of this comes from both archaeological and literary sources, on a broader geographical and social scale than might be expected. For example, in a predominantly Christian cemetery at Belgorod was excavated what seems to have been a miniature version of a Viking boat-burning. The boat was merely a hollowed-out tree trunk, and it was burnt in a pit. Perhaps this was in order to avoid the attention of the princely authorities, who would have disapproved of such pagan manifestations (Mezentseva and Prilipko 1977, 339-40). Belgorod, approximately 23 kilometres south-west of Kiev, was founded by Vladimir soon after the conversion of Russia. It was a key point in the system of defences against the nomads (see Map; Rappoport 1956, 81-2; Mezentseva 1974, 39-40). Further north, near the Upper Dnieper in the region of Mogilev, ornaments described by archaeologists as made in Scandinavia have been excavated in cemeteries belonging to settlements of a rural nature. The cemeteries at Ludchitsy, half a kilometre from the right bank of the Dnieper, and at Kolodezskaya, a "remote" spot among bogs near the bank of the River Derazhin, in the *rayon* of Kostyukovichy, have been dated to the eleventh century. The ornaments comprise a cross bearing on it a representation of the Crucifixion; a bronze cross-pendant "of Scandinavian type"; a bronze figurine of a man; another bronze figurine of a rider clinging to a rearing horse. The workmanship of the Crucifixion has been described as "crude" by a Soviet archaeologist, T. V. Ravdina (1975, 223 and n. 24; Rier 1976, 190). Y. G. Rier is confident that the bronze cast figurine of a man found in a female burial at Ludchitsy was made in Scandinavia. An identical exemplar, cast from the selfsame mould, has been found in Latvia, at the fort of Tichi by the Western Dvina (Rier 1976, 185, 190; Petrenko 1970, 253, 255, 260-1, photos on *tablitsy* I and III, 254, 258). The bronze cast figurine of a horseman from a barrow at Kolodezskaya is also believed by Rier to have been made in Scandinavia (1976, 190 and photo on same page).¹ Among possible finds of Scandinavian-made objects elsewhere in Russia, a bronze pin with a head in the form of a bird may also be noted. It was excavated in a burial-ground of the eleventh and the beginning of the twelfth century. The location was the village of Novinki, in the Tolochin *rayon* of the Vitebsk district, where a portage is thought to have connected tributaries of the Western Dvina and the Upper Dnieper (see Map; Sergeeva 1975, 87 and photo in *ris.* 1:9, 86; see also Alekseev 1980, 84-6, 90).

These objects are significant, in that they suggest that in the eleventh century there was some trade between Russians and Scandinavians in objects of moderate value at village level. It is, indeed, possible that such ornaments as the crudely fashioned cross representing the Crucifixion could have been cast by Scandinavian or Scandinavian-trained craftsmen on Russian soil (Stenberger 1947-58, I 177-80; see also Davidan 1980, 65-6). A complex of workshops producing such Scandinavian-style ornaments as pins with zoomorphic heads has been excavated at the site known as "Gorodok", beside the River Lovat', near Velikie Luki. Most of the forges in this complex seem to have functioned in the tenth and early eleventh centuries (Goryunova 1978, 143, 147-8, line-drawing in *ris.* 2:18, 144; Goryunova 1974, 77, 80). But that Scandinavians engaged in trade were still commonplace in eleventh-century Russia is suggested by the earliest version of the *Russkaya Pravda*, in which a clause exempts the plaintiff from the need to produce witnesses in cases of violence alleged to have been done to a Varangian (*Varyag*) or a Kylfing (*Kolbyag*) (*Russkaya Pravda* 1952, 78, 81-2, article 10; *Medieval Russian Laws* 1947, 27). The article is, in effect, repeated in the extended redaction of the *Russkaya Pravda* (1952, 111, 124, article 31; *Medieval Russian Laws* 1947, 39). The article there is not however, exactly the same as the corresponding article in the short redaction, so presumably it had not been copied blindly, but reflected actual conditions of the thirteenth century, the latest date by which the extended redaction could have been composed (*Russkaya Pravda* 1952, 151; see also Kaiser 1980, 44, 130 and 247, n. 14). The term Kylfing (*Kolbyag*) seems to have designated traders of North Germanic origin (Stender-Petersen 1953, 110-11). A particular item which Varangians and Kylfings were deemed by the short redaction to be liable to abduct, and whose value was high, was slaves. Presumably these slaves were objects of trade (*Russkaya Pravda* 1952, 78, 82, 90, article 11; *Medieval Russian Laws* 1947, 28 and n. 11). So were the circular pendants which were cast from a stone mould found in an eleventh-century jeweller's workshop in the citadel of Suzdal'. The design of one of the pendants included seven unreversed runic characters which have been interpreted as "This (is) Óláfr's" (*sa ulofs*; Mel'nikova *et al.* 1983, 183-6; 1984, 63).

Such literary and archaeological evidence of Scandinavians trading in eleventh-century Russia supplements the better-known evidence of them serving as mercenaries for Russian princes. Sagas

tend to heroize warriors rather than traders. The evidence of Scandinavian mercenaries has already received extensive coverage (Stender-Petersen 1953, 115-38; Sverdlov 1974, 62-4; Davidson 1976, 158-66, 207-10; Birnbaum 1978, 18-21; Morrisson 1981, 139-40; Mel'nikova *et al.* 1984, 62). Here one may merely note that the evidence extends over at least the first half of the eleventh century. It is particularly abundant for the eleven years of succession struggle which followed the death of Vladimir in 1015. A wide range of sources attest the activities of Scandinavians in the service not only of Prince Yaroslav of Novgorod but also of Svyatopolk, who seized control of Kiev in 1015. The anonymous *Skazanie* of Boris and Gleb represents "two Varangians" as delivering the *coup de grâce* to Boris, having been sent on this mission by Prince Svyatopolk (*Skazanie* 1967, 37). It is likely that the number of Scandinavian warriors thronging Kiev prompted Thietmar of Merseburg's famous reference to the "fast Danes" (*velocibus Danis*) who, together with "runaway slaves", are represented as peopling the city (Thietmar of Merseburg 1935, 530). Thietmar probably used "Danes" meaning Scandinavians in general (Sverdlov 1970, 86-7). Our sources do not give the impression that individuals or war bands stayed in Russia very long. Yngvarr the Traveller and his war band allegedly spent three years in Russia before pressing further eastwards (YS 12). Even if a conventional saga-writer's device, signifying a "short while", this is an indication of his presupposition that Scandinavian warriors' stays in Russia were brief (on the numbers in YS, see Section VII below). In fact, it may not be frivolous to suggest that Thietmar's use of *velocibus* refers to the mobility or rapid succession of Scandinavians in the service of Russian princes. *Eymundar þáttur* represents Eymundr's contract with Yaroslav as renewable every twelve months, and Eymundr is depicted as repeatedly jibbing at remaining in Yaroslav's employ (*Flateyjarbók* 1860-8, II 121, 123-4, 126-7, 130). Even if the repeated disputes represent a literary device of the author, the picture which he paints of readiness to move on may be authentic. So, too, may be the detail of the twelve-month contract. For his 1024 campaign, as for his 1018 campaign, Yaroslav is represented by the *Russian Primary Chronicle* as sending "overseas for Varangians" (RPC 132, 135, s.a. 1018, 1024; PVL I, 97, 100). In other words, fresh reinforcements had to be recruited from Scandinavia for major campaigns.

The sagas are mainly concerned with princes who fled involuntarily to Russia and were not simply recruited by Yaroslav. But it

is noteworthy that the stay of these princes in Russia was brief. St Óláfr Haraldsson seems only to have spent one or two years there, Haraldr Harðráði three, and Magnús Ólafsson appears to have stayed seven years.² So it is all the more remarkable that the Scandinavians' numbers remained substantial, even after the Russian succession struggle ended in 1026. Some individual war bands in Russia comprised hundreds of men. How far they remained compact and how far they dissolved into smaller units is not clear. Eymundr is said to have commanded 600 Scandinavians in Russia (*Flateyjarbók* 1860-8, II 122). Haraldr Harðráði is said by Cecaumenos to have led a force of 500 "noble men" (γενναίους) to Constantinople (Litavrin 1972, 282-3). In the mid-1020s, a band of 800 sailed south to Byzantium, led by a certain "Chrysocheir" (Χρυσόχειρ meaning "Golden Hand"; Scylitzes 1973, 367). The nationality of the 800 is not stated by Scylitzes but at least some of them may have been Scandinavians. Chrysocheir is called a "relative" (συγγενής) of Vladimir of Kiev. This information, if accurate, need not mean that he was Russian-born: he might have been related by marriage to Vladimir. Kennings containing the element "gold" and meaning a generous lord are common in scaldic poetry, e.g. *gulls deilir* (Meissner 1921, 288-9, 314).

Scandinavian warriors were stationed by Yaroslav in the most important part of the battle line, the centre, for his great contest with the Pechenegs (RPC 136, s.a. 1036; PVL I 101-2). Scandinavians also fought in the centre of Yaroslav's battle-line in 1024. This position in the line was often occupied by the prince's own retinue in the Kievan period (Vilinbakhov 1977, 68). A few years later, Yaroslav recruited more Scandinavian warriors for his expedition against Byzantium. According to Scylitzes (1973, 430), the ruler of Russia enlisted "a large auxiliary force from those peoples living in the northern islands of the Ocean" in preparation for his war against Byzantium (cf. Birnbaum 1978, 21). Suggestive evidence that Scandinavians were familiar figures in Kiev is offered by incidental mentions of them in Old Russian hagiographical works. Just south of Kiev, at Berestovo, there was, according to the Cave Monastery's *Paterikon*, a "Varangian cave". "Varangians" were said to have hoarded their treasures in it (*Paterikon* 1964, 16, 161-2, 163 n. 17, 169, 170). The historicity of the treasure is very doubtful. It may well be a hagiographical motif, serving to embellish the tale of the Devil's temptation of the monk Theodore. But that there was, at the Cave Monastery, a cave associated with Varangians is indubitable (see Stender-Petersen 1953, 146). In the

anonymous *Skazanie* of Saints Boris and Gleb, a Varangian warrior who unwittingly trod on their burial-place at Vyshgorod had his feet scorched by a flame which shot up from the grave. The Varangian is not explicitly termed a "warrior", but this was almost certainly his function. He is said to have had comrades at hand to whom he displayed his scorched feet, "and thenceforth they dared not go near [the graves] but respected them with fear" (*Skazanie* 1967, 53). The late eleventh-century hagiographer Nestor, relating the same story, states that the Varangians "were stationed" (*stoyakhu*) there (1967, 16). This band of Varangians is more likely to have frequented Vyshgorod as soldiers than as traders. The strategic significance of Vyshgorod as the guard-post for Kiev's northern approaches is emphasized by, for example, P. P. Tolochko (1975, 23-4). Thus Scandinavians make almost routine appearances in Old Russian literary works even though there is evidence suggesting that the stays of individuals were quite short. It therefore seems that the stock of Scandinavian mercenaries in Russia needed to be replenished constantly, and this in turn involved frequent journeying between Scandinavia and Russia.

A picture of continual toing and froing by individuals between Scandinavia, Russia and Byzantium is also suggested by the rune stones of Norway, Sweden and Gotland. The names of "Greekland" (*Grikland*) and "the Greeks" (*Grikkjar*) appear on more rune stones than do the names of any other land and people. The total number of such stones amounts to 27 (Mel'nikova 1977, 203-4). The route of these travellers ran through Russia. Approximately 14 other stones mention the region of Russia (*Garðar*) or points on the route from the Scandinavians to the Greeks such as Novgorod (*Hólmgarðr*); the Dnieper Rapid named Aifur and one of the ledges at that Rapid, *Rufstainn*; the town of Vitichev (*Vitahólmr*), some forty kilometres south of Kiev (Mel'nikova 1977, 198, 202, 204, 205, 208-9). Altogether, approximately 44 rune stones mention "the East" or "the East Way" as an area visited (*austr*, *austarla*, *austrvegr*; cf. Mel'nikova 1977, 198-9). "The East" is, indeed, a vague and subjective term but it is improbable that only the inscriptions which add an explicit mention of Russia or the Greeks bear on those areas. Well-known passages in Adam of Bremen indicate that Scandinavians, especially Swedes, often travelled by boat to Russia and Byzantium at least as late as the 1070s. He writes of "ships which are customarily sailed (*dirigi solent*) to the barbarians and to Greece" (Adam of Bremen 1917, 242-3).

It has been necessary to dilate upon the general historical background in order to substantiate two propositions: firstly, that visits by Scandinavian, or at any rate Swedish, war bands to "the East" were quite common; and that therefore, when we read of two groups of Scandinavians active in the eastern lands at approximately the same time, we should hesitate to identify them as one and the same expedition without positive evidence pointing to such an identification. Secondly, thanks to the incessant toing and froing between Scandinavia and the eastern lands, Scandinavians were quite well-informed about events there, especially events involving fellow-Scandinavians. Therefore, were disaster to have befallen a large expedition somewhere in the east, some accurate details might be expected to have reached the warriors' homeland quite fast. The carvers of contemporary commemorative rune stones would therefore be likely to get their facts right, in so far as they offered any details about the goal of the expedition, the scene of the disaster, and the warriors' mode of death.

III: Swedish rune stones and the goal of Yngvarr's expedition

The Swedish rune stones must therefore be the starting-point of any enquiry into Yngvarr's fate. Unfortunately they are of little help in pin-pointing the date of the expedition. Runologists themselves differ over the Yngvarr stones. Some date them to between 1020 and 1060 or, more narrowly, the 1040s (Brate 1928, 75; von Friesen 1933, 215, 217; Gardell 1945-6, I 66-9). Others favour an earlier dating, because of the plainness of the ornamentation. E. Wessén, in particular, contrasted them with the more elaborate decoration which characterizes eastern Uppland rune stones from the time of the rune-cutter Asmundr Karasun onwards. But although Wessén inclined to date the stones on art-historical grounds to *c.* 1020, he forbore from abandoning the widely-accepted date of 1041, because of the possibility that the date given by the Icelandic sources is of early and trustworthy origin (Wessén 1960, 35-41). Wessén attached decisive weight to the saga's statement that Yngvarr died "eleven years after the death of King Óláfr Haraldsson the saint" (Wessén 1960, 36; see Section VII below). However, his views on the art-historical dating of the stones were endorsed and developed by S. Lindqvist, and received serious consideration from A. Thulin (Lindqvist 1968, 94, 98; Thulin 1975, 20). The controversy cannot well be joined by a layman. Even so, it may be noted of the Yngvarr stones that most of their inscriptions are on the bodies of serpents, and seven of them are on the bodies

of *two* serpents.³ These features appear to characterize designs subsequent to those of the opening years of the eleventh century (Mel'nikova 1977, 15-16). Serpents and rune-masters who carved two beasts per stone are discussed by O. von Friesen (1933, 194-5, 199, 211-12), S. Gardell (1945-6, I 72), and C. W. Thompson (1975, 24, 90-1). Moreover, there are crosses on at least 15 of the stones associated with Yngvarr, more than half of those extant.⁴ This suggests that they belong to a period when Christianity was fairly well established in the upper levels of Swedish society in Uppland and Södermanland. Whether this was already the case in the 1020s is at least open to question. The fact that at least 15 of the stones bore crosses invalidates Wessén's claim that Christian features are weaker and less prominent on the Yngvarr stones than on stones recording voyages to western Europe (1960, 44). Some inscriptions convey quite a fervent Christian spirit, e.g. "Gunnviðr . . . went with Yngvarr. God help the souls of all Christians" (Mel. no. 84, Up 1143). The extent of Christianization in eleventh-century Sweden was discussed by C. J. A. Opperman (1937, 95-6) and by H. Ljungberg (1938, 69-75). In any case, E. Wessén has reasonably suggested that there may have been marked regional variation in rune styles between south-western and south-eastern Uppland. The former area, where several Yngvarr stones stand, seems to have been somewhat remote from the changes in style which affected areas further east. So mid-eleventh-century rune carvers in the part of south-western Uppland which looks onto Lake Mälär may have practised old-fashioned styles (Wessén 1960, 43-5; Mel'nikova 1977, 18-19). In any case, rune stones do not seem to be dateable on art-historical grounds alone to parameters narrower than 50 or, at the very narrowest, 25 years (Mel'nikova 1977, 18). The evidence of the coin hoards found in the area where the Yngvarr stones are most common is more suggestive. Peter Sawyer pointed out that in the area of these stones more of the known coin hoards have latest coins dated 1034-40 than have latest coins dating to other decades of the eleventh century (1982, 35). It is possible, as Sawyer notes, that the hoards were deposited by owners who failed to return from the expedition.

So the Yngvarr rune stones are not of decisive significance in resolving the question of the date of the expedition (Thompson 1975, 152-3, and on the hazards of any precise chronology for the Uppland stones, 155-61). But they are material to the questions of its goal and of its fate. Three, perhaps four or five, Yngvarr stones mention Serkland. The rune stones indubitably connected with

Yngvarr's expedition are: Mel. no. 32, Sö 179; Mel. no. 37, Sö 131; Mel. no. 46, Sö 281. The two rune stones commemorating deaths in Serkland but not mentioning, in their extant inscriptions, Yngvarr, are: Mel. no. 45, Sö 279; Mel. no. 82, Up 785. The former of these is very fragmentary, but Yngvarr's expedition may very well have been mentioned on the lost part (SR III, pt. 4, 243-4). The latter stone, though well preserved, makes no mention of Yngvarr. It therefore probably has no connexion with Yngvarr's expedition. The varying forms *Sirklat*, *Srklant*, *Serkl-* all seem to designate the same place. The most informative is the Gripsholm stone which was erected in memory of the "brother" of Yngvarr himself: "Tola had this stone raised for her son Haraldr, the brother of Yngvarr. Bravely they fared out, far after gold, and in the east they fed the eagles. They died in the south in Serkland (*sunarla a sirkianti*)" (Mel. no. 32, Sö 179). The wording of the inscription suggests that Tola was not the mother of Yngvarr himself (Mel'nikova 1977, 75). But she is likely to have been of similar social status, and Yngvarr himself is said by *Yngvars saga* to have been of kingly stock (YS 2-5). Peter Sawyer has pointed out that Yngvarr is not named in the later Swedish royal genealogies, and that "it is possible that Yngvarr was not a ruler but an adventurer", who attracted many men to his enterprise (Sawyer 1982, 50-1). But he concedes that Yngvarr may have been forgotten because of the failure of his expedition. Many scholars have accepted that, whatever the precise ancestry of Yngvarr may have been, he was of royal blood (Braun 1924, 165, 186, 188 n. 1; Stender-Petersen 1953, 136; Ruprecht 1958, 55; Davidson 1976, 167; Mel'nikova 1976a, 78; Pritsak 1981, 425-30). Their judgement seems to me sound, even though only *Yngvars saga* explicitly supports it and, at this stage, the saga's evidence will not be adduced in support of my argument. But it is at least noteworthy that Tola, a woman, had the means to erect a stone, and that she composed or commissioned an inscription which was partly in verse. These facts perhaps bespeak an elevated status as well as means. In any case, Tola may be expected to have been well informed about the purpose and direction of the venture. So it is significant that she regarded the venture as a discrete expedition, which sought booty in a distant place "in the south in Serkland". At least one other stone indicates clearly that Serkland was actually reached, and that the deceased left his bones there: "He went east from here with Yngvarr; in Serkland lies the son of Eyvindr" (Mel. no. 37, Sö 131; SR III, pts. 1-3, 99). Some stones indicate that the

expedition went all, or nearly all, the way by water. One stone commemorates a man who "had his own boat and steered [it] east in Yngvarr's host". Another commemorates a "crewman (*skipari*) of Hólmsteinn", while a third remembers Gunnleifr, who "knew well how to steer a ship" (Mel. no. 75, Up 778; Mel. no. 56, Sö 335; Mel. no. 62, Up 654). So, from the rune stones alone, one may infer that Yngvarr's expedition set off with the express intention of raiding an area which was rich, and accessible by water. The only places "in the east [and] . . . in the south" answering this description are the Byzantine lands or the Moslem lands, particularly those in the vicinity of the Caspian Sea. The consensus of scholarly opinion has favoured the Caspian region. It has tended to rest on the evidence of *Yngvars saga* rather than that of the rune stones, and upon the assumption that "Serkland" designates the lands of Saracens or Moslems (Braun 1924, 150; Stender-Petersen 1953, 136; Ruprecht 1958, 55; Davidson 1976, 167; Benedikz 1978, 227-8; Pritsak 1981, 339, 443).

This consensus was challenged by E. A. Mel'nikova. As has already been mentioned, she proposes that Yngvarr's "expedition" was really only a contingent in the Russian host which sailed against Byzantium in the summer of 1043; thus Yngvarr's destination was the Black Sea and Byzantium, not the Caspian. Mel'nikova marshals various pieces of evidence in support of her thesis. She points out that Russian chronicles mention "Varangians" (i.e. Scandinavians) serving on the Russians' side during the voyage to Byzantium in 1043 (Mel'nikova 1976a, 84). She also adduces details in the account in *Yngvars saga* of Yngvarr's adventures, arguing that these could correspond with known features of the 1043 campaign. For example, the saga describes how an enemy fleet's devices shot fiery material at Yngvarr's ships; Greek fire is known to have been used by the Byzantines against the Russian fleet in 1043. The name of one of the men who, according to the saga, accompanied Yngvarr was Valdimarr: the leader of the Russian expedition was called Vladimir, and was Yaroslav's eldest son. Finally, according to the saga, one boatload of survivors of Yngvarr's fleet sailed, under the command of Valdimarr, to Mikligarðr (Constantinople). Mel'nikova claims that a journey directly to Mikligarðr could not have been made by water from the Caspian or Volga, and that therefore the saga probably implies that Yngvarr's fleet sailed down the Dnieper to the Black Sea, the route taken by the historical expedition of 1043 (Mel'nikova 1976a 81-5).

These seeming coincidences are very tenuous. Mel'nikova's assumption that there was no waterway between the Caspian and the Black Sea is unwarranted (see Section VIII below). The saga does give a markedly detailed description of the operation of Greek fire (cf. Davidson 1976, 169, 277-8). But that is insufficient to prove that Yngvarr's band participated in the 1043 attack on Constantinople. If the saga is supposed to give even a distorted account of the 1043 expedition, it is odd that no direct mention is made of the attempt on Mikligarðr itself. Mel'nikova pins much importance on her interpretation of Serkland. She challenges the conventional view that it is a compound of *Serkir* and *land* — "Saracens", "land" — and that the name designates those regions occupied by the Moslems (Mel'nikova 1976a, 82-3; for the conventional view, see, e.g., Wessén 1960, 33-4). She tentatively endorses T. J. Arne's suggestion that the first element of "Serkland" derives ultimately from *sericum*, the Latin word for silk, and that Serkland originally designated those regions producing silk. So, she argues, Serkland "is clearly connected in the conception of early authors with the territory of eastern Europe" and, further, Serkland could designate "various regions south and east of Rus'", including the Byzantine lands looking onto the Black Sea (Mel'nikova 1977, 207; 1976a, 84; cf. Arne 1947, 302-3). Arne himself thought it possible that Yngvarr's band was annihilated while fighting in Byzantine service in Syria or eastern Asia Minor, or while campaigning against a Moslem people beyond Kievan Russia (1947, 304).

Mel'nikova adduces two documents in support of her statements. One is a map of the world drawn on two leaves of an Icelandic vellum manuscript dateable to c. 1250 or the first half of the thirteenth century. The map represents a people named "Seres" as living on the same latitude as the Caspian Sea, Colchis and Bactria (*Alfræði íslensk* 1908-18, III 71, facsimile after p. 132; Mel'nikova 1977, 206-7; Pritsak 1981, 514-15). This scarcely constitutes a link in the mind of the map maker between the Seres and eastern Europe in general or Byzantium in particular. It is highly questionable whether the Seres have anything to do with Serkland. For *Seres* was the classical Latin name for the Chinese, and this may well be the people whom the map maker was trying to represent, albeit inaccurately. Anyway, the map maker clearly designates the Byzantine empire by the names "Grecia, Tracia, Constantinopolis, Sparta", which he locates in the western half of the world, far from the position of the Seres (Pritsak 1981, facsimile following 512). Mel'nikova's second item of evidence is a verse by

the scald Þjóðólfr Arnórsson on Haraldr Harðráði's exploits in the service of the Byzantine emperor:

Tøgu má tekna segja,
tandrauðs, á Serklandi,
ungr hætti sér, átta,
ormtorgs hǫtuðr, borga,
áðr herskǫðuðr harðan
Hildar leik und skildi,
Serkjum hætttr, í sléttri
Sikileyju gekk heyja.

(*Heimskringla* 1941-51, III 75; Laing 1961, 164). The eleventh-century scald does seem to associate Sicily with Serkland here. And Sicily had, until the ninth century, formed part of the Byzantine Empire. But it is most unlikely that the scald's usage deliberately evoked that historical point. He was alluding to a Byzantine expedition to reconquer Sicily from the Saracens in the 1030s, an expedition in which Haraldr Harðráði undoubtedly served. Þjóðólfr was aware that the expedition was directed against Saracens: the epithet *Serkjum hætttr* ("to Saracens dangerous") implies this. Þjóðólfr's verse suggests that he called Sicily "Serkland" because it was occupied by Saracens at the time of Haraldr's actions there, rather than because of any associations of Sicily with Byzantium. So Mel'nikova does not produce any firm evidence that Serkland, as a term, could encompass Byzantine-governed territory.

Mel'nikova herself recognizes that, from the mid-twelfth century onwards, Scandinavian sources use Serkland of a wide area, including Africa and parts of Asia. And she implicitly recognizes the correlation between places described as in Serkland and the area occupied by Moslems when she concedes that in the twelfth century "there may have been a reinterpretation of the meaning of the first part of the place-name, influenced by the similar sound of the ethnic name *Serkir*, 'Saracens'" (1977, 207). Twelfth- to fourteenth-century Scandinavian works, whether geographical treatises, translations of Latin works by Western Europeans, or sagas, give a fairly consistent picture of Serkland as a general name for a vast area encompassing Babylon, Chaldea, the land of the Assyrians, Numidia, and Africa in general.⁵ These parts of the Near and Middle East had in common the fact that they were inhabited by Saracens. Mel'nikova offers no firm reason why Serkland should not have had the same meaning in the eleventh century as it had in the twelfth. Moreover, without entering fully

into the question of the derivation of Serkland, one may note that Σαρακηνοί was one of the stock Byzantine names for the Moslems, and that Viking visitors to Byzantium might be expected to have picked up the name from their hosts and to have applied it to the land under Moslem domination. Moslems who were not Arabs, such as the Turks, were also termed Σαρακηνοί by Byzantine writers (Moravcsik 1958, II 268).

In fact, the general historical considerations outlined in Section II — the sheer frequency of Scandinavians' visits to Russia and Byzantium in the eleventh century — lead one to expect that Scandinavians, particularly Swedes, were better informed about the geography of "the East Way" than Mel'nikova makes out. One rune stone, seemingly unconnected with Yngvarr's expedition, appears to commemorate a man who "died in the east in Karusm". The stone stands near southern Uppland's Mälars shore. In 1946 S. Jansson interpreted the "Karusm" of this stone as Khwarizm, the Moslem realm south of the Aral Sea. He later cast doubt on this interpretation and, observing that there were other errors in the orthography of the inscription, he tentatively preferred the reading "i Garðum", i.e. "in Russia" (1946, 265; SR XIII, Vm 1-2, 8-9; cf. Mel'nikova 1977, 58-9; Pritsak 1981, 444-5). But his preference seems to stem from the rather circular argument that there is no reason to expect to find Scandinavians so far afield in the eleventh century. That Scandinavians were acquainted with foreign names for distant places and peoples is suggested by the occurrence of such terms as "Langbarðaland" and "Blakumenn" on the rune stones. The former term incorporates the customary Byzantine name for their empire's possessions in Italy (Mel. nos. 35, 58, Sö 65; Jansson 1954, 22, 24-5). The latter term seems to represent a conflation of the names of the Vlachs and the Cumans used by the Byzantines themselves, and to have been adopted by the chroniclers of the fourth Crusade as it had earlier been by the Varangians (Mel. no. 20, Go 134; cf. "Bløkumannaland" in *Heimskringla* 1941-51, III 371; Laing 1961, 389; Ciggaar 1981, 67, 73). About the Byzantines themselves the eleventh-century Scandinavians seem to have had a clear geographical conception. In their 27 references to "the Greeks" or "Greekland" the rune stones consistently refer to them as a particular people, distinct from their neighbours, and accessible via "the East Way". In fact, one stone seems clearly to distinguish between the Byzantines and Serkland. The eleventh-century Timans whetstone on Gotland seems originally to have lain in a grave. It lists the places which

had, presumably, been visited by the deceased: "the Greeks, Jerusalem, Iceland, Serkland" (Mel. no. 22, Go 216, SR XII, pt. 2, 233, 237-8). In the latter work, excessive scepticism is shown by E. Svärdström towards the traditional view that the place-names reflect the travels of the deceased. The fact that the whetstone also served as a mould for a coin-shaped ornament suggests some involvement of the deceased in trade (SR XII 238; figs. 106, 107, 237, 238, plate 74). It is true that Jerusalem should be considered as part of "the Saracens' land". But presumably so sacred a pilgrimage centre was singled out for special mention as having been visited by the deceased. That (the land of) the Greeks, Iceland and Serkland were seen as separate entities remains the obvious interpretation of this inscription.

In short, there seems to me no good reason to accept Mel'nikova's argument that Serkland could designate Byzantine territory, or that Yngvarr's host formed part of the Russian expedition of 1043. We are thus left with the phenomenon of Scandinavians participating in two eastern expeditions in large numbers within a few years of one another. For the Scandinavian contingent in the Russian fleet was sizeable enough to excite comment not only from Old Russian chronicles but also from the Byzantine writer John Scylitzes (*Voskresenskaya Letopis'* 1856, 331, s.a. 1043; *Softya Pervaya Letopis'* 1851, 137; Scylitzes 1973, 430). The numbers of Yngvarr's companions seem also to have been considerable.

One may perhaps be sceptical about the scale of Yngvarr's expedition, and the number of "Yngvarr" stones has sometimes been inflated by classifying as such any stone mentioning the names "Yngvarr" or "Serkland". But even after those stones which lack a clear connexion with Yngvarr are discarded, a "hard core" of approximately 22 stones remains. A generally authoritative list of 25 Yngvarr stones is given by Wessén (1960, 30). However, the connexion of two of these with Yngvarr is questionable (Mel. no. 93, Ög 145; Mel. no. 60, Up 837). And two of the stones in Wessén's list commemorate the same man (Mel. no. 62, Up 654; Mel. no. 90, Up 644). It is noteworthy that one rune stone may even commemorate a man as being "not one of Yngvarr's men". If this reading of the fragment of the rune stone is correct, it implies an assumption that any able-bodied male in mid-eleventh century Strängnäs might well have been a member of Yngvarr's expedition (Mel. no. 44, Sö 277, SR III, pt. 4, 240-1). The editor responsible for publication of this stone, Wessén, stressed that any reading of this poorly-preserved stone must be hypothetical, and discusses a

possible alternative reading: "More eminent was none amongst Yngvarr's men". Wessén adds: "There can scarcely be any reasonable doubt that the stone is rightly counted with the group of Yngvarr stones" (SR III, 241). Wessén has stressed that the distribution area of the Yngvarr stones does not overlap with that for stones mentioning expeditions to western Europe. Some fifteen or more Yngvarr stones are in the vicinity of Lake Mälär, being concentrated most thickly in the central part of the Södermanland lakeside, around Strängnäs and Mariefred (Wessén 1960, 31; from Wessén's figure of 16 I have deducted Mel. no. 60 (Up 837) as being questionable). At Gripsholm (on the lake's southern shore, adjoining modern Mariefred) is the stone raised for Haraldr, the brother or, more probably, half-brother of Yngvarr. And it is even possible that one of the Strängnäs stones was raised for Yngvarr himself (Mel. no. 32, Sö 179; Mel. no. 45, Sö 279; Wessén 1960, 31). It is therefore likely that the core of the expedition, or at any rate of its leaders and the better-off participants, came from the districts of Södermanland and Uppland looking on to Lake Mälär. But this need not mean that the number of men involved was small, or that they came exclusively from the environs of Lake Mälär. For the overwhelming majority of rune stones mentioning Gardar or the eastern lands or the East Way are situated within 60 kilometres of Lake Mälär. This reflects the special political and commercial ties of the region with Russia; these were of long standing (Mel'nikova 1977, 33-4, and map on p. 34). The archaeological evidence for central Sweden's affinities with the Rus' of the eastern lands is discussed by A. Stalsberg (1979, 157-8). This was the area where navigators familiar with the East Way and the languages spoken there could be found, and where east-bound expeditions of any sort could best be organized. Southern Uppland was also the area of residence of Uppland's kings and if, as is probable, Yngvarr belonged to the kingly house, royal resources would be available for the organization of the venture. So the surviving rune stones may be the tip of a hefty iceberg. Men recruited from other areas by the leaders of the expedition, and too poor to be commemorated by rune stones in their home district, may lie below the iceberg's waterline. That Yngvarr cast his net wide may be suggested by a stone commemorating Hólmsteinn, who "was for a long time in the west; he died in the east with Yngvarr". Here, at least, was a seasoned Viking (Mel. no. 49, Sö 173). Admittedly, Hólmsteinn's roots lay in south-east Södermanland at Tystberga, for the stone was raised by his children. One at

least of his crewmen also hailed from Södermanland (Mel. no. 56, Sö 335). Another inscription, across the lake from Strängnäs on the Uppland shore of Mälaren, reads "Þjálf and Hólmlaug set up all these stones for Banki, their son" (Mel. no. 75, Up 778, SR VIII 359, 361). It is possible that the extra, unscribed stones represented the retainers of the deceased who, according to this inscription, "had his own boat and steered [it] east". Anyway, whatever the exact provenance of the participants, their total number must have been, as E. Wessén says, very great (1960, 32).

IV: The Rūs in Eastern Caucasia in 1030-33

Now we must turn to the other major "revisionist" thesis concerning Yngvarr's expedition. A. Thulin (1975, 29) accepts that Serkland designates the Moslems' lands. But he rejects the date generally ascribed to Yngvarr's expedition or, to be more precise, the end of Yngvarr's expedition, 1041. He proposes that Yngvarr's expedition is identifiable with the raids made on Arab-ruled provinces on the Caspian in the early 1030s by members of a people called "Rūs".

Our source for these raids is, as Thulin (1975, 21-3) states, a single work, which assumed its present form at a late date. The extant work incorporating it is a *History* compiled by a Turkish historian known generally as Münejjim-bashī ("Chief Astronomer"), who died in 1702. Münejjim-bashī repeatedly declares that he is using an anonymous history of Sharvān (Shīrvān) and Darband (Derbend). This anonymous history was dubbed the *Ta'rikh Bāb al-abwāb* by the eminent Orientalist, V. Minorsky. Minorsky studied Münejjim-bashī's *History* and translated parts of the text. He concluded that TB had contained copious information, and that Münejjim-bashī epitomized it, and probably divided up the material into separate chapters for particular areas. Minorsky believed that TB was written in the late eleventh century, noting that the last date emanating from TB corresponds to A.D. 1075 (Minorsky 1958, 2-4; 1953, 3-4; Thulin 1975, 21-3). TB was, in Minorsky's view, a local history, concerned with the regions of Sharvān, Darband and Arrān, that is, areas east and south-east of the Caspian, in eastern Caucasia (see Map). TB seems to have contained reliable information, although there exists the danger that Münejjim-bashī may have placed materials relating to the same event in different parts of his *History* without clearly indicating this, or maintaining the correct chronological sequence (Minorsky 1958, 4).

Does TB, as transmitted by Münejjim-bashī, relate the story of Yngvarr's expedition? A. Thulin argues so, presenting a careful and coherent case for the identification of Yngvarr's band with the Rūs of TB. In my view, TB's material is not compatible with what is known, or reasonably certain, about Yngvarr's expedition. The course of events in eastern Caucasia in the early 1030s can be reconstructed fairly clearly from the various chapters of Münejjim-bashī's *History* which Minorsky translated from the Arabic.

According to TB, as relayed by Münejjim-bashī, thirty-eight Rūs boats appeared off Baku in A.H. 421 (A.D. 1030). Overcoming local Moslem opposition, they forced their way up the River Kur and then, still sailing, up the Araxes, drowning a party of Moslems who tried to close the latter river to them. At that time, the Shaddādid amir of Ganja (Janza) in the region of Arrān, Faḍl b. Muhammad, was at odds with one of his sons, 'Askariya. Faḍl's loyal eldest son, Mūsā b. Faḍl, was leading operations against the rebellious 'Askariya (different chapters of TB relating this event in Minorsky 1953, 17 and 1958, 31-2; cf. his Russian translation of the latter work, with additional notes and a reconstruction of text, 1963, 153). Upon the arrival of the Rūs along the Araxes, "Mūsā b. Faḍl made them disembark. He gave them much money and took them to Baylaqān", a city in which 'Askariya had installed himself (see Map). Then, "with the help of the Rūs [Mūsā b. Faḍl] captured Baylaqān and seized and killed his brother 'Askariya. Then the Rūs quitted Arrān for Rūm and thence proceeded to their own country" (Minorsky 1958, 32; 1963, 54; cf. 1953, 17). In the following year, A.H. 422 (A.D. 1031), "the Rūs came a second time and Mūsā set forth and fought them near Bakūya [Baku]. He killed a large number of their warriors and expelled them from his dominions".⁶ In A.H. 423 (1032) the Moslems of eastern Caucasia suffered raids from the Alans and the Sārīr as well as from the Rūs. TB relates the Rūs's raid and that of the Alans and Sārīr in separate chapters. But that the Rūs and the Alans were then acting in collusion is most probable. In 1032, the Rūs raided Sharvān, sacking the territory and taking many prisoners. "As they were returning, their hands full of booty and captives, the ghāzīs of al-Bāb and the Marches, with the amir Maṣṣūr at their head, occupied the defiles and the roads and put them to the sword so that few escaped", retrieving all the booty and prisoners which the Rūs were abducting. TB's account of a raid on Sharvān in the same year by the Alans and Sārīr is so similar that it is probable that a combined operation is in question here. According to TB, the

Alans and the Sārīr, returning across the Caucasian passes with booty and captives, were ambushed by the Moslems, and only a few of the raiders escaped (Minorsky 1958, 47, 32; 1963, 71, 54). Minorsky himself thought it likely that a joint operation was mounted by the Rūs and the Alans and Sārīr in 1032 (Minorsky 1958, 64; 1963, 90).

The following year, 1033, was also eventful: "The Rūs and the Alāns (returned) with the intention of revenge. They gathered together and jointly set off in the direction of al-Bāb [Darband] and the Marches. First of all . . . they moved to *al-Karakh where there was only a small group (of warriors) with Khusrau and Haytham b. Maymūn al-Bā'ī (?), chief of the tanners. And (the latter?) fought (them) with the help of the people of *Karakh, and God let victory descend on the Muslims and they wrought great havoc among the Alāns and the Rūs. The lord of the Alāns was beaten off from the gate of *Karakh and the infidels' greed for these Islamic 'Centres' was extinguished absolutely". *Karakh is identified by Minorsky with the town of Ur-Karakh, approximately 60 kilometres north-west of Darband (Minorsky 1958, 47, 95, 116; 1963, 70-1, 130, 154-5).

V: Yngvars saga, the Yngvarr stones and disease

TB recounts four military operations involving Rūs between 1030 and 1033. Why cannot these Rūs be Yngvarr and his men? The area of fighting was populated by Moslems and could therefore have been designated by the term Serkland on the rune stones. Scandinavians, as well as Slavs or slavized Scandinavians could alike have been called "Rūs" by Arabic sources of the second half of the tenth century and the eleventh century (Minorsky 1958, 109-10; 1963, 155; Thulin 1975, 24-5).⁷ One decisive obstacle to making the identification seems to me the differing modes of death of TB's Rūs and of Yngvarr's warriors, judging by *Yngvars saga* and the phraseology of the Yngvarr stones. The Rūs who harried the Caucasus in 1030-33 suffered repeated heavy losses in action. In contrast, *Yngvars saga* states that Yngvarr's army, and Yngvarr himself, came to grief from an outbreak of disease: "Disease began to spread so much in their army that all their best men died" ("En so tecur sott at uaxa j lidi þeira, at do allt hit bezta folk þeira", YS 27).

It may seem rash to hang an argument on so frail a peg as the saga, whose fabulous features have often been emphasized by scholars (e.g. Stender-Petersen 1953, 136; Wessén 1960, 37; David-

son 1976, 170). I have deliberately refrained hitherto from invoking its testimony, because its value as a historical source has been generally disparaged. It seems to me however that the barrage of scepticism has obscured the fact that the author did know certain details which are verifiable from the rune stones. Oddr Snorrason seems to have compiled his story in the late twelfth century from three oral informants whom he named. While it is clear that versions of Yngvarr's adventures were still circulating in Iceland and even, apparently, Sweden in the second half of the twelfth century (Pritsak 1981, 426; Hofmann 1981, 192-3, 221), it is undeniable that a mass of fabulous material, some of it perhaps deriving from Latin literary sources, had accumulated around the tale. This probably occurred over a long period, before Oddr's harmonization of the versions available to him and creation of his Latin saga (Hofmann 1981, 208-10, 220). Nonetheless, the following verifiable facts were contained therein: an expedition of Swedish Vikings, led by Yngvarr (whose name occurs repeatedly on the stones of other members of the expedition), set forth eastwards by boat; the war band travelled beyond Russia to somewhere that could be described as "in the south in Serkland"; the expedition ended in the deaths of Yngvarr and very many of his men. It should be noted that the saga also offers a date for Yngvarr's death, A.D. 1041, which is consistent with its representation of Yaroslav (*Jarizleifr*) as the ruler of Russia at the time of Yngvarr's passage through the country. This might, admittedly, be dismissed as merely a motif borrowed from such other pseudo-historical stories as *Eymundar þátttr*. But there is one more detail in *Yngvars saga* which can, most probably, be corroborated by a rune stone.

Yngvars saga states that the young Yngvarr was co-leader of a Swedish expedition to the Sengall (*Seimgalir*) who had for some time failed to pay tribute to the king of Sweden. In the course of the expedition, resistance was offered by certain Sengall chiefs, "and there was a great slaughter, before the chieftains fled" (YS 10). Yngvarr and his fellow-commander, Qnundr, are said to have seized much "gold, silver and valuables" as booty, and Yngvarr's fame mounted thereafter. The booty and fame may perhaps be dismissed as conventional motifs of the type applied by saga-writers to heroes. But there is independent evidence which seems to indicate that Yngvarr really did lead an expedition to the eastern Baltic, apparently separate from the one he led to Serkland. A rune stone, now lost, commemorated Sæbj[ǫrn] who "steered (his) ship east with Yngvarr [to] Estland(?)". Unfortunately, the inscrip-

tion is known to us only from a woodcut of the stone which J. Bureus made in the early seventeenth century; the interpretation of the final characters, *askalat-*, cannot be regarded as certain. Nonetheless, E. Wessén, in his *editio princeps* of the stone, judged that “the name which is likeliest, and is most compatible with Bureus’ reading, is *Æistaland*, Estland”, i.e. Estonia (Up 439, SR VII 232, 234). He noted that the name “Estland” occurs on another Swedish runestone, Vg 181. Wessén’s judgement is followed by E. A. Mel’nikova (1977, 105). Pritsak (1981, 459, n. 132) proposes reading a *s[r]kalat[i]*, “in Serkland”. However, he fails to show why the *lectio difficilior* should not be preferred. The design and other characteristics of the stone suggest that it was carved by the eleventh-century runemaster, Æskill. It is said to have stood at Steninge, near Sigtuna, overlooking a channel of Lake Mälär, within 20 kilometres of three stones which are indubitably connected with Yngvarr’s expedition. So here, most probably, is evidence that Yngvarr really did lead an expedition to Estonia, sustaining at least one fatality. The land of the Sengall people is not identical with Estonia, being further south, in modern Latvia. But this scarcely detracts from the significance of the fact that one more detail of *Yngvars saga* refers to an actual event, a Swedish expedition to the east coast of the Baltic, recorded on a rune stone. An eighteenth-century scholar’s association of the rune stone’s “Estland” with events in *Yngvars saga* is discussed by E. Wessén (SR VII 233). The association is remarked upon, and accepted, by Mel’nikova (1977, 105; cf. 207-8 for the occurrence of the word “Sengall” on other rune stones). The historicity of the expedition of Yngvarr to the Sengall/Estland was also tentatively accepted by E. Olson in his introduction to YS (xciii-xciv). However, the significance of the verifiability of this detail of the saga does not seem to have been sufficiently appreciated. The saga-writer and his informants were surely not working by inspired guesswork alone.

If this is so, some weight may be attached to the detail that the expedition to Serkland suffered from an outbreak of disease. A few other cases of disease afflicting Viking expeditions are known from legendary and more or less historical sources. They are numerous enough to indicate that disease was not uncommon among Viking hosts. But they do not feature often enough in legendary sources to constitute a literary *topos* which saga-writers hard up for a climax to a tale of an expedition might readily resort to. According to Saxo Grammaticus, one of Ragnarr Loðbrók’s

expeditions against the Biarmians was stymied by an outbreak of disease. This legendary tale would seem to preserve an echo of the fate of an expedition to Frankia led by the historical Ragnarr. For in 845 a Viking raid on the Paris region led by one "Reginheri", who seems to be identifiable with Ragnarr Loðbrók, was stricken with dysentery.⁸ At least two well-attested raids on southern lands by the Viking Rus' suffered outbreaks of disease. A contemporary life of St. Basil the New, relating the 941 Rus' attack on Byzantium, states that those who survived the engagement with the Byzantine fleet fell victim to dysentery and few lived to return home (Veselovsky 1889, 68). The historian Ibn Miskawaih gives a full description of the Rūs raid upon, and occupation of, Barda'a on the River Kur in 943-4. He states that he was using the information of eye-witnesses. Ibn Miskawaih gives as principal reason for the break-up of the Rūs force the outbreak of an epidemic; this he attributes to their eating large amounts of fruit, to which they were unaccustomed. Moslem attacks reduced their numbers, which were already depleted by disease. So the Rūs had to withdraw from Barda'a to their boats on the River Kur (trans. in Chadwick 1946, 141-3). Ibn Miskawaih's information on such matters as the Rūs incursion seems to be reliable, even though his political history was partisan in favour of the Buwayhids (Khan 1980, 122-3, 135-6). While the destruction of a Viking host by disease does not seem to be a literary convention in Old Norse sagas, here is firm evidence of a Viking expedition being stricken with disease in the very region for which Yngvarr's fleet seems to have headed. It might perhaps be surmised that Oddr Snorrason or one of his sources knew of a Viking expedition to the Caspian which had been hit by disease (that of 943-4) and connected or confused it with the eleventh-century expedition of Yngvarr. It is impossible totally to disprove this conjecture. But, equally, the conjecture lacks any positive evidence that other details of the 943-4 expedition entered *Yngvars saga*. The two expeditions were, on the evidence of Ibn Miskawaih and the rune stones, comparable in character and general destination. There is no reason why their fates should not also have been similar (see Larsson 1983, 102). Moreover, if Oddr was consciously embellishing his tale by drawing material from elsewhere, or inventing it from his own imagination, he might be expected, on the strength of the monsters and wonders which throng his narrative, to have settled for a more heroic *dénouement* to his tale than an outbreak of disease. We seem to face a paradox that the contemporary portrayal on the rune stones of the warriors bravely faring "out

far after gold” and feeding the eagles in the east, is more romantic than the much later saga’s version of the expedition’s end.

However, the paradox is more apparent than real. For, as E. A. Mel’nikova has rightly pointed out, the Yngvarr stones scarcely ever speak unequivocally of men having been killed. Only two inscriptions seem to belong to this category and, strikingly, these two refer to one and the same man, Gunnleifr. According to one stone, Gunnleifr was “killed (*tribin*) in the east with Yngvarr”, while the other states that he “fell (*fil*, i.e. in battle)” on Yngvarr’s expedition (Mel. no. 62, Up 654; Mel. no. 90, Up 644; cf. Mel’nikova 1976a, 85). The wording of the former stone can mean that Gunnleifr was killed while in Yngvarr’s company, and need not imply that Yngvarr, too, died a violent death. These two stones not only illustrate the extreme rarity of inscriptions explicitly mentioning violent death. They also indicate that the terminology of the inscriptions was carefully chosen, in that both stones are unequivocal that Gunnleifr was killed. Eight other inscriptions commemorating comrades of Yngvarr use neutral terms: *deyja*, “to die”; *andask*, “to breathe one’s last, expire”; *farask*, “to perish, especially by drowning”.⁹ On the other stones indisputably connected with Yngvarr’s expedition, no word denoting the mode of death is now to be seen. It is true that the words *deyja* and *andask* are commoner than *drepa* or *falla* on rune stones in general (see Mel’nikova 1977, 177-8; Thompson 1975, 18-19, 143). It is nonetheless strange to find the latter words used so rarely for participants of a notably disastrous expedition. In significant contrast is the fact that two, perhaps three, of the five extant rune stones for members of Freygeirr’s expedition refer to them as “fallen (in battle)” (Mel. no. 64, Up 698; Mel. no. 81, Up 611; Mel. no. 5, *Danmarks Runeindskrifter* 1941-2, II, no. 216). Presumably there were some survivors to carry back news about the nature of the disaster to next of kin. *Yngvars saga* would have us believe so. It is noteworthy that the inscription on the Gripsholm stone states that Haraldr “died” (*tuu*) on the expedition (Mel. no. 32, Sö 179). As mother of Haraldr, and mother or step-mother of Yngvarr himself, Tola, who commissioned the stone, is most likely to have had access to all available details about the disaster, and to have chosen the wording of the inscription with care. If we accept that the choice of wording of the Yngvarr stones in general is deliberate, it does, in the circumstances, appear bizarre. We must therefore agree with Mel’nikova that the wording tallies well with the saga’s account of the outbreak of disease, which killed “all their best

men"; in fact, "a greater part had perished than survived" ("meiri hlutur uar fallinn enn lifdi", YS 27; cf. Mel'nikova 1976a 85). It is, in my opinion, reasonable to conclude that the detail is authentic.

If the detail is authentic, the gap between an epidemic and the violent deaths of the Rūs as related by TB for 1030-33 is unbridgeable. This alone seems to me a decisive obstacle to identifying Yngvarr's expedition with the Rūs raids recounted by TB. There are, however, other features of the latter's account which may repay attention.

TB's account, although laconic, allows one to deduce that both the character and the composition of the Rūs raids altered between 1030 and 1033. The first attack seems to have been in the form of a Viking plundering expedition, intent on booty. The Rūs, apparently under duress from the formidable Mūsā b. Faḍl, disembarked, received "much money" from him and then proceeded to fight on his behalf against his rebellious brother. The next year they returned to the region of Baku, doing battle with their employer of the previous year, Mūsā. Presumably their objective was the acquisition of riches by whatever means were the most expedient, and their experience in 1030 had given them confidence, albeit false, that they were a match for Mūsā. As has been suggested above (Section IV) the Rūs expedition of the following year was most probably launched in collusion with the Alans. The land expedition of 1033 undoubtedly was, in that the Alans and Rūs "jointly set off in the direction of al-Bāb [Darband]" (Minorsky 1958, 47; 1963, 70). These Alan expeditions were significant affairs, being led by the Alans' ruler, "the lord of the Alāns", both in 1032 and 1033 (Minorsky 1958, 32, 47; 1963, 54, 71). The Alans are said to have "made an agreement" with the Sārīr (a people inhabiting the central part of modern Dagestan) in order to launch their expedition in 1032. The allied forces proceeded to storm the town of Yazīdiya in Sharvān and to kill "over 10,000 people" (see Map; Minorsky 1958, 32; 1963, 54). This much is certain. Equally certain is the fact that the Rūs mounting the 1033 campaign jointly with the Alans cannot, strictly speaking, have been wholly identical with the Rūs who had made the earlier attacks. Their army must have consisted, at least in part, of fresh warriors, in view of the heavy losses suffered during the earlier attacks. On the basis of the internal evidence of TB, two observations may be made in connexion with this fact.

Firstly, the Rūs must have had a base fairly near at hand, and

have had a means of replenishing their losses. For, having started with 38 boats in 1030, they lost "a large number of their warriors" in the following year. Nonetheless, they were capable of making a fresh attack in 1032, taking many prisoners. Presumably they arrived by land, and must therefore have had substantial numbers to make up for the loss of the advantages of surprise and mobility which boats provided. These Rūs were ambushed while withdrawing, and "put . . . to the sword so that few escaped". Even so the Rūs, together with the Alans, "(returned) with the intention of revenge" in 1033. TB's picture of heavy losses is, indeed, compatible with the fact that Yngvarr's expedition was wiped out. But it is hard to believe that the dwindling band of survivors of the original 38 boats could have kept battling on alone for so long. It is far more credible that TB's Rūs had a base fairly near by, where they could get reinforcements and re-equip for land campaigning in 1033 and, most probably, in 1032. This would perhaps also explain why they burdened themselves with prisoners and booty in 1032; it would have been a long haul to take them all the way back overland to Sweden, or even to Kievan Russia.

A second observation on the evidence contained in TB is that the Alans were probably engaged in something more than mere plundering raids. They did seize massive quantities of loot, but the fact that the Alans' ruler led the incursions suggests that he had some ulterior goal. By sacking the political centre of Sharvān, Yazīdiya (on this city, see Minorsky 1958, 75; 1963, 106), and putting to death many Moslems "there and in other parts of Sharvān", the Alans dealt a blow to the political and military power of the ruler of Sharvān, Minūchihr b. Yazīd. Their massacre of so many Moslems seems superfluous if booty alone was their objective. The Moslem potentates of eastern Caucasia were already in disarray, Minūchihr being at odds with the amir and other potentates of al-Bāb (Darband). The effect of the Alans' incursions was to accentuate the disorder, judging by the fact that in 1034 Minūchihr was assassinated by his own brother (Minorsky 1958, 31-3, 64, 71-2; 1963, 54-5, 91, 101). That this was the purpose of the Alan incursions can only be surmised. But the surmise can be supported by evidence which will be presented in the following section.

VI: Tmutarakan' and the raids of 1030-33

If the Rūs making the 1032 and 1033 incursions had a base fairly near at hand, from where they could forge ties with the ruler of

Alania, the question of the location of the base arises. In fact, there was a potential base quite close to the Caspian. At the time of these incursions, the city of Tmutarakan', on the eastern shore of the Straits of Kerch', was under the rule of a powerful Russian prince. His name was Mstislav. Judging by TB's account, it was through the territory under Mstislav's sway that the Rūs returned from the Black Sea to the Caspian after their raid in 1030. They are said to have "quitted Arrān for Rūm, and thence proceeded to their own country" (Minorsky 1958, 32; 1963, 54; 1953, 17). The usage of "Rūm" by TB is not conclusive; although most often designating the Byzantine empire, it could mean western Caucasia in general, including Ani. Since Ani lay on a convenient route from the Araxes to the Black Sea, the Rūs may merely have passed through "Rūm" in its widest sense (see Minorsky 1953, 58, 104-5; 1958, 115; 1963, 154). It is difficult to conceive how the Rūs, operating in 1031 without apparent allies, could have penetrated as deep into Moslem territory as the vicinity of Baku except by water. So given that they reappeared near Baku in boats in 1031, they must have either sailed and portaged their vessels from "Rūm" to the Caspian via the Sea of Azov or fitted themselves out with a new fleet. In either case, for building or refurbishing boats, Tmutarakan' was a very likely port of call (see Map).

The existence of Tmutarakan', and the probability of its connexion with TB's Rūs, was noted by V. Minorsky (1958, 115; 1963, 154). He did not, however, adduce the arguments made above as to the necessity of TB's Rūs having had the means of gaining reinforcements and re-equipping for land warfare. Neither did he raise the question of a change in the character of their attacks. A. Thulin also draws attention to the proximity of Tmutarakan'. He adds the important consideration that the Alans were long standing allies of the Byzantines, and tentatively suggests that the attacks by the Rūs and the Alans in 1033, and perhaps also 1032, were instigated by the Byzantines (Thulin 1975, 27). O. Pritsak likewise emphasized the ties between TB's Rūs and local rulers such as the Alans. He argued for attributing them to Tmutarakan', and against any link between them and Yngvarr's expedition (1981, 442-3). The strength of Alan ties with the Byzantine empire was emphasized by, for example, V. A. Kuznetsov (1971, 21-2, 28-9, 31) and D. Obolensky (1974, 234-5). In his study of Yngvarr's expedition, Thulin makes much of the silence of the Russian chronicles about the 1030-33 raids in the Caucasus (1975, 26). In this respect, he fails to take into account the scantiness of the information in

Russian chronicles about eleventh-century Russia in general. He proceeds to offer two alternative reconstructions of events. In one scenario, Yngvarr and his men joined the Varangians at Byzantium after their 1030 incursion, and thereafter participated in the Russo-Alan attacks of 1032 and 1033. In the other, Yngvarr and his comrades, after their naval operation in 1030, went to the Russian city of Tmutarakan' and from there conducted raids on the Moslem lands jointly with the Russians (Thulin 1975, 28-9). The first of these hypotheses is considerably weaker than the second, for there is no necessary direct connexion between the Rūs of 1030 and Byzantine territory. But both are compatible with the two deductions which have been made above on the strength of TB's evidence: that the Rūs must have had a base near by, and that the purpose of the Alans' incursions was at least partly political. A further consideration may now be added: the Russian ruler of Tmutarakan' in the early 1030s was most probably an ally of the Byzantine empire.

There are several items of evidence which support this. They have already been presented in an earlier work, and will here merely be summarized (Shepard 1979b, 207-9). Mstislav had access to some expert Byzantine craftsmen who built and decorated with paintings and mosaics the church of St Saviour at Chernigov. It is also possible that he received Byzantine assistance in fortifying the citadel at Tmutarakan'. Highly skilled craftsmen are more likely to have been sent by the imperial government than to have been independently recruited by Mstislav. The high quality of Mstislav's seals, whose legend and design is Byzantine Greek, also suggests Byzantine craftsmanship in the making of the dies. Above all, Mstislav is almost certainly identical with the Russian prince who co-operated with the Byzantine fleet against a potentate in the region of the Sea of Azov in January 1016. The Russian and Byzantine forces captured the potentate in the first engagement and, according to John Scylitzes, established their own hegemony over the area of that potentate's rule (Scylitzes 1973, 354). The joint attack is said to have been launched against "Khazaria". In this context, the term probably has the broad sense of territory formerly under Khazar dominion, encompassing the north-western approaches to the Caucasus and the coastal region of the Sea of Azov (see Gadlo 1979, 196-7). The Russian prince is called "Spheggos" (Σφέγγου: genit. form) by Scylitzes, and is described as "the brother of Vladimir", the prince of Kiev who had died in 1015. While Mstislav's origins are probably murkier than RPC

makes out, he is very unlikely to have been a *brother* of Vladimir. He is listed among the sons of Vladimir by RPC s.a. 980 and 988 (RPC 94, 119; PVL I 56, 83; cf. Shepard 1979b, 205 n. 4). But Scylitzes' error of detail does not detract from the significance of his basic information, that a Russian prince was liaising militarily with Byzantine forces in the area north-east of the Black Sea in 1016, only a few years before Mstislav is first unequivocally attested there by RPC. Mstislav first appears in RPC as an active figure (rather than just a name in the lists of Vladimir's sons) s.a. 1022 (RPC 134; PVL I 99). It is very unlikely that two different powerful Russian princes could have been functioning as Byzantine allies in the same area at about the same time. Admittedly, Mstislav is a different name from *Σφέγγος. But the latter is very probably a grecized form of "Sveinn" or "Sveinki", or some similar Scandinavian name (cf. Lind 1905-15, cols. 992-6; Dorn 1875, 636-7, n. 4; Mavrodin 1980, 178-9; Stemshaug 1982, 217). It is reasonable to suppose that Mstislav may have borne a Scandinavian as well as a Slavic name. At the end of the eleventh century another Russian prince, also called Mstislav, bore the Scandinavian name Haraldr. Moreover, a son of Yaroslav, probably Svyatoslav, was known to Scandinavian sources as "Holti the Bold" (*inn frækni*).¹⁰ (In the view of S. V. Petrov (1979, 112), the Russian princely name Vsevolod is itself a Russified form of a Scandinavian name such as Sigvaldi or Sigvarðr.) Such nicknames and alternative names reflect the continuing close ties between Russia and Scandinavia in the eleventh century (Dzhakson 1982, 113, 115). Mstislav of Tmutarakan' also may very well have had a Scandinavian name, "Sveinn" or "Sveinki". If he is recorded by this name in Byzantine sources, this perhaps reflects some particular association between him and Scandinavians fresh from the homeland, as well as the residual Scandinavian traits of Russia's ruling clan.

Mstislav was, then, most probably an ally of Byzantium, and engaged in joint operations with the Byzantine fleet in 1016. And it was most probably to Tmutarakan' that the Rūs withdrew after their campaigning in Arrān in 1030. That the Rūs made for Tmutarakan' after their 1030 raid is also the view of O. Pritsak (1981, 442). In my view the course of events in Caucasia in the early 1030s was close to that in the second of the two alternative scenarios sketched by Thulin. The first Rūs raid, probably undertaken by adventurers fresh from Scandinavia, was a straightforward plundering expedition without any "political" ramifications. When effectively resisted by Mūsā b. Faḍl, the Rūs were ready to fight on his

behalf, in return for "much money". Then, withdrawing westwards to the Black Sea, they put in at Tmutarakan', and in 1031 raided the region of Baku. There they suffered a heavy defeat at the hands of Mūsā. Plunder alone may have been the goal of this raid, too, in that Baku was a phenomenally rich town, on account of its oil wells. The wells were said to be yielding at least 2,000 dirhams' worth of revenue a *day* in the mid-tenth century (Minorsky 1958, 120; 1963, 159). My description of the 1030 and 1031 raids as "adventurist forays" still seems to me valid (1979b, 158 n. 2). But a change in the character and composition of the incursions of the Rūs occurred thereafter. The surviving Rūs adventurers received reinforcements from Mstislav, and Mstislav probably arranged the co-operation with the Alans and the Sārir. That he was acting at the behest of Byzantine diplomacy is also probable.

Byzantium had good reason to exploit the opportunity which the presence of a doughty, if depleted, Viking war band in the Caspian zone offered, and to use its ties with both Mstislav and the Alans in order to do so. For the imperial government was, in the first forty-five years of the eleventh century, keenly interested in expanding its influence, and direct dominion, in Armenia and parts of Georgia (Lordkipanidze 1974, 68; cf. Stepanenko 1975, 128-9; 1977, 75, 79; 1980, 165-6). Sharvān and Darband were too far east to be incorporated directly into the empire, but the sapping of their politico-military power through raids from the north would impair their leaders' ability to intervene in areas of more pressing concern to Byzantium. That Byzantine expansionism had ramifications at least as far east as the middle Araxes valley is indicated by events in 1044-5, when the Byzantines annexed Ani, the royal city of Armenia. For they induced the Shaddādid amir of Dvin, Abul-Aswār, to provide them with military assistance in their bid to reduce Ani. Then they broke the terms whereby he was to keep those Armenian lands and castles which he succeeded in capturing during the campaign against Ani. A major Byzantine expedition was sent to capture Dvin in 1045 (see Map; Scylitzes 1973, 436-7; cf. Yuzbashyan 1979, 87-8). Abul-Aswār was the brother of Mūsā b. Faḍl, by turns the adversary and employer of the Rūs in 1030-31. Also noteworthy, as evidence of general Byzantine interest in the area and of Byzantine links with the Alans, are the devastating Alan incursions into Arrān, Abul-Aswār's domain, in 1062 and 1065. V. Minorsky concluded that King Bagrat IV of Georgia "definitely" stood behind the Alans then, while he also noted the "close relations" between Byzantium and Bagrat, who had spent

several years in Constantinople in the 1050s (Minorsky 1953, 20-2, 57-9, 75). Although at first virtually a detainee there, Bagrat became an honoured guest of the emperor, receiving the elevated court title of *sebastos* (Kopaliani 1971, 62-4; Lordkipanidze 1974, 75-7). It may well be that the Byzantines instigated or encouraged these Alan attacks through the mediation of Bagrat in an attempt to overawe Abul-Aswār. Abul-Aswār was in the 1060s an ally of the Seljuk Turkish conqueror of Byzantine Armenia, Alp Arslan.

VII: The Yngvarr stones and the date of the expedition

The foregoing considerations and reconstruction are largely compatible with Thulin's, except for one key qualification: these events have no necessary connexion with Yngvarr. The initial 38 boatloads of Rūs do, it is true, seem to have been intent on booty, and their exploits in 1030 and 1031 might well suit Tola's epitaph for Haraldr and Yngvarr: "bravely they fared out, far after gold". But it must be stressed that the rune stones give the impression that Yngvarr's was an extraordinary, in fact, unique, expedition. The phrase "he went with Yngvarr" was regarded as self-explanatory, and was sometimes used without further elaboration as a way of indicating that a man was dead (e.g. Mel. no. 84, Up 1143; Mel. no. 25, Sö 107; Mel. no. 30, Sö 108). The significance of the wording of the stones has already been discussed (Section V above). But one may add that if the stones were referring to the Caucasian campaigns of 1030-33, when very many of the Rūs were slain, they would surely have used words such as *falla* and *drepa* far more often than they do. The next of kin in Sweden would have been able to gain full information about these campaigns through Mstislav or other Russians with Scandinavian connexions, and thus to put appropriate wording on the rune stones.

It is true that the 38 Rūs boats seem to have comprised a Scandinavian war band, setting off in quest of booty and adventure in the manner of Yngvarr. But the survivors appear to have become the employees of a Russian prince. It is hard to believe that what was, in effect, another case of Scandinavian mercenaries serving a Russian prince could have enjoyed such renown among contemporaries. The campaigns of 1030-33 were, indeed, to very distant parts. But so was the 1043 Russian expedition against Byzantium, in which a sizeable number of Scandinavians participated (see Section III above). Yet there are no known rune stones commemorating the 1043 expedition in the way that the Yngvarr stones commemorate Yngvarr's expedition. Nor, for example, are there "Hákon stones"

referring to the war band which a certain Hákon is known to have led to Russia on Yaroslav's invitation. Yet it contained many candidates for commemorative rune stones, judging by the fact that, according to the *Russian Primary Chronicle*, Hákon's band suffered heavy losses in battle in 1024 (RPC 135, s.a. 1024; PVL I 100). Pritsak associates three or four Swedish rune stones with retainers of the Norwegian Jarl Hákon Eiríksson, whom he identifies with the Hákon of the *Russian Primary Chronicle* (1981, 408-12). Whether or not this identification is valid, none of the stones refers to service in the east.

In fact, the only other expedition to the eastern lands to which the rune stones allude as if it were common knowledge, needing no explanation, is that of one Freygeirr. Freygeirr's expedition, too, seems to have been remarkable and unsuccessful. Five stones are thought to commemorate participants in the expedition, which seems to have ranged round the eastern Baltic coastal lands. That the expedition was led by a certain Freygeirr is indicated by the references on rune stones to the deceased as having "gone with Freygeirr" or to "Freygeirr's host". Freygeirr himself was an Upplander, apparently being commemorated by a rune stone at Västra Ledinge (Mel. no. 65, Up 518; Mel'nikova 1977, 194). Two other Uppland rune stones appear to commemorate comrades of Freygeirr. One of them, Gísli, is said to have "fallen far away in Freygeirr's host" (Mel. no. 81, Up 611). The reading of the inscription on the other stone is more hypothetical, but its subject appears to have "fallen far away in the Lithuanian land in Freygeirr's host" (Mel. no. 64, Up 698; on the question of the expedition's itinerary, see Mel'nikova 1977, 97-8, 194-5; Pritsak 1981, 399-400). Freygeirr's force also drew recruits from Söderby (near Gävle in Gästrikland) and probably from Tirsted on the Danish island of Lolland, for a rune stone at Söderby mentioned Egill who "went with Freygeirr. God and God's mother help his soul!" (Mel. no. 15; Gs 13, SR XV, pt. 1, 134, 147-9). The Tirsted inscription is open to diverse interpretations (Thompson 1975, 154; SR XV, pt. 1, 148), but it has been taken by some scholars to commemorate a man who "perished in the army of Freygeirr when all the Vikings [fell (?)]" (Mel. no. 5; *Danmarks Runeindskrifter* 1941-2, II, no. 216, cols. 262-3). Whether or not the Tirsted stone really does allude to the same expedition as the other stones, Freygeirr's enterprise seems to have been a major one and to have met with disaster. It was a famous event, judging by the fact that the statement that Gísli had "fallen far away in Freygeirr's host"

was apparently deemed self-explanatory. Yet it is represented by at most five known stones. There are obvious dangers in attaching much significance to the sheer number of rune stones which happen to have survived. Accidents of survival may render historical expeditions under- or over-represented by rune stones in relation to their actual size. Nonetheless, Yngvarr's approximately 22 stones as against Freygeirr's 5 does suggest that Yngvarr's host was very large. I find it hard to believe that as many as 22 (or more, allowing for lost and extant but debatable stones) would have been raised in commemoration of an expedition which, according to TB, comprised only 38 boats at its outset. A. Thulin attempts to derive significance from the fact that there is some correspondence between TB's boats, the approximately 25 rune stones (by his estimate) and the saga's statement that Yngvarr set out with 30 ships (Thulin 1975, 28). But Thulin's faith in the saga's figure is misplaced, and his assumption that the rune stones commemorate ships' captains is faulty. The saga shows a suspicious propensity for the figure "30" and fractions and multiples thereof. Sveinn, the son of Yngvarr, is said to have set off along the great river on his father's trail with "thirty ships"; they were later attacked by "ninety" boatloads of pagans (YS 32). Yngvarr himself is said to have spent three years in Russia, and to have sailed up the greatest of "three" rivers in Russia (YS 12; see also Pritsak 1981, 455). In fact only two or three of the Yngvarr stones indicate that the deceased commanded a ship (Mel. no. 75, Up 778; Mel. no. 62, Up 654; Mel. no. 49, Sö 173). One stone expressly commemorates a man who was merely a "crewman" (*skipari*), not a captain (Mel. no. 56, Sö 335). So some stones denote members of the rank and file, while some captains may never have been commemorated by a rune stone. The rough coincidence between the number of extant stones and TB's 38 ships thus loses such force as it may have had. It seems to me that, for so many Yngvarr stones to survive, more than 38 boatloads of Vikings must have sallied forth. It would be strange if an expedition of moderate size were to become such a byword for disaster that a rune stone could categorize a man as being "not one of Yngvarr's men" (see Section III above).

If one rejects Thulin's conclusion that it is "probable that the Yngvarr expedition is in one way or another connected with the events of 1030-33" (Thulin 1975, 29), one is left with the question of when Yngvarr's expedition did occur. The date of 1041 is offered by *Yngvars saga*, *Konungsannáll* and *Lögmansannáll* (YS 30; *Islandske Annaler* 1888, 108, 250). *Konungsannáll* enjoys a gener-

ally high reputation for accuracy, particularly in matters of ecclesiastical history. But the *Konungsannáll* entries for the eleventh century were compiled in their present form not earlier than the end of the thirteenth, or early fourteenth, centuries (*Íslandske Annaler* 1888, xi, xiv, lxxiii; Ólafía Einarisdóttir 1964, 323). Both Mel'nikova and Thulin have, following E. Wessén, suggested that the *Konungsannáll* date for the death of Yngvarr was drawn from *Yngvars saga*. Thulin implies that the saga-writer may, in effect, have invented the date, so as to give his tale greater credibility (Thulin 1975, 19-21; cf. Mel'nikova 1976a, 77). It may well be that the *Konungsannáll* and the *Lögmansannáll* date for Yngvarr's death was drawn from *Yngvars saga*. Ólafía Einarisdóttir has argued for the strong probability that *Konungsannáll*, like other Icelandic annals, drew very heavily on the sagas for facts and dates (Ólafía Einarisdóttir 1964, 318-23). But E. Wessén's final verdict on the saga's information about the date still carries weight. Noting the reading in the principal manuscript, "A", to the effect that Yngvarr perished "nine years after the death of King Óláfr Haraldsson" at Stiklastaðir, he argued that the reading in manuscript "B", "eleven years", was the correct one. And 1041 would, of course, have been eleven years after the battle of Stiklastaðir (Wessén 1960, 35 n. 20). The numerals XI and IX could easily have been confused by a copyist, as Wessén points out. Wessén concluded that the reference to "eleven years after the death of King Óláfr" is probably *not* an invention of the saga-writer. He stated that, considering "how tenacious and long-lived a folk tradition can be in this kind of case", one must "with every reservation" assume it may be true (Wessén 1960, 36). Thulin himself gives some credence to the saga's apparent indication that Yngvarr's expedition lasted "three years", linking it with TB's entries for the years 1030-33 (Thulin 1975, 28). If this indication of duration were to be authentic, so might have been the indication concerning the interval between St Óláfr's death and Yngvarr's. (See above, however, on fractions and multiples of 30.) The *anno domini* date may have been worked out by the saga-writer. These considerations led Wessén to retain the date of 1041, despite his own observations about the stones' designs, and are, in my view, of greater weight than the doubts expressed by Mel'nikova and Thulin. And, whatever the source or sources of *Konungsannáll* may have been, the compiler was discriminating in his use of material concerning Russia and Byzantium. The accession and the death of Alexius I Comnenus are recorded correctly under the years 1081 and 1118 respectively. The

dates of 1019 for Yaroslav's marriage to Ingigerðr and 1029 for St Óláfr's flight to Russia may merely have been deduced from the sagas and correlated with the date of 1030 for Óláfr's death, which would have been known from other sources. But at least the dates given by *Konungsannáll* are not incompatible with the discernible course of events (*Íslandske Annaler* 1888, 106-7, 110, 112, s.a. 1019, 1029, 1030, 1081, 1118; cf. Birnbaum 1978, 9; Stender-Petersen 1953, 132-3; Dzhakson 1982, 109). The compiler seems to have worked carefully, at least striving after accuracy. He may have felt, as Wessén did, that the statement in *Yngvars saga* that Yngvarr's end came "eleven years after the death of King Óláfr Haraldsson" was a detail that should not be lightly discarded.

Quite recently D. Hofmann has drawn attention to the fact that while manuscript "A" of the saga dates Yngvarr's death to 1041 and places it nine years after St Óláfr's death, "B" places the death of Yngvarr eleven years after Óláfr's and states: "Þa er Y(ngvarr) andadiz uar lidit fra hingad burd Kristz at alþydv tali M vetra ok xl v(etra) þa hafði Y(ngvarr) lifad xxx u(etra)" (Hofmann 1981, 197-8; YS 30 and footnote). Thus "B" offers "1040 according to the common reckoning" as the date. Hofmann states that "in the case of the date of the death of Yngvarr manuscript 'B' . . . has evidently preserved the text better than 'A' and deserves particular trust in other passages too" (1981, 203). Whichever date the original text of the saga may have had, he rejects it as inaccurate, citing A. Thulin (1975), and cautiously placing Yngvarr's expedition in "the first half of the eleventh century" (1981, 195 and n. 11, 220). Hofmann's express concern lies not so much with the dating of the expedition as with the question of the date of the Icelandic translation of the lost Latin text composed by Oddr Snorrason. He argues that "at alþydv tali" in "B" preserves the original text of the Icelandic translation; the expression has the technical sense of "normal" chronology, contrasted with alternative ones such as that of Gerlandus; and since Gerlandus's chronology itself became the norm in Iceland for a period starting c. 1200, the Icelandic translation of *Yngvars saga* predates that period (Hofmann 1981, 198-200). While these considerations may hold good, Hofmann does not, in his study, offer compelling reasons for preferring the reading 1040 in "B" to that in "A" of 1041 as the year of Yngvarr's death. There is in both manuscripts a discrepancy between the date and the interval separating the deaths of St Óláfr and Yngvarr. So neither version can be wholly correct. 1041 is the only date supplied by both manuscripts, being expressly

stated by "A" and implied by the "eleven years after" in "B". In contrast, 1040 is stated only by "B", while "nine years after" in "A" implies 1039. It therefore seems most probable that the date 1041 appeared in the common original of the two manuscripts. Assuming that the earliest oral tradition noted the interval between the deaths of Óláfr and Yngvarr and that the date was subsequently computed by, perhaps, Oddr, it is hard to see how 1040 could have been deduced or miscopied from either "nine" or "eleven years after". And if the Icelandic annals took the date 1041 from a copy of the Icelandic text at the turn of the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries, this date should enjoy some precedence among variants offered by extant manuscripts of the fifteenth century. One might tentatively suggest that the date in "B" was due to a copyist's mistaking of ι , the final figure in xli, for a υ , representing the first letter of *vetra*. If the handwriting in "B" itself is any guide, such a misreading of a numeral (as also in the *xi vetrvm* separating the deaths of Óláfr and Yngvarr) would not have been difficult (Jón Helgason 1955, fol. 55v, lines 10, 11). As it stands, the statement ". . . M *vetra* ok xl v(etra) þa hafdi Y(ngvarr) lifad xxx u(etra)" is cumbersome in comparison with the hypothetical ". . . M *vetra* ok *xli . . .". There is no reason to dispute Hofmann's high estimation of "B" in general, and its reading for the interval between the deaths of Óláfr and Yngvarr seems correct. However, Hofmann himself concedes that "A" possibly preserves some readings better than "B" (1981, 203). One such reading is, in my opinion, its date for Yngvarr's death.

VIII: A stone cross at Pregradnoe

There is an item of evidence from the Russian side which has not been drawn into the Yngvarr controversy before. It is a stone cross bearing a Cyrillic inscription which seems once to have included a date corresponding to A.D. 1041. Formerly, the cross stood on the bank of the River Bol'shoy Egorlyk, near the village of Pregradnoe, some 80 kilometres south from the River Manych as the crow flies (see Map). Pregradnoe is situated in low-lying terrain, essentially steppe country, in the Manych basin.

The stone cross and its Cyrillic inscription are of crude workmanship. The cross now exists in the form of five fragments, and is in a poor state of preservation. The inscription has suffered from the drilling of holes for bolts to hold the cross together in the early years of this century. The cross is 3.4 metres long, has short arms and does not appear ever to have been perfectly symmetrical. It

is made of local shell-rock, which was still being worked in the mid-twentieth century in the nearby village of Trunovka (Pchelina 1960, 301). This shell-rock (Russian: *rakushechnik*) is a highly porous limestone. The inscription is placed just below the intersection of the cross's main shaft with its arms. The words of the inscription are unevenly spaced, and its lines are not perfectly straight. The letters themselves are of varying sizes. The overall impression presented by the inscription is that its carver was inexperienced, or unaccustomed to working in this medium.

The character of the inscription, in so far as it can be read, suggests that there was a burial on the site. Moreover, E. G. Pchelina, the scholar who removed the cross from Pregradnoe to the Stavropol museum, reported local traditions that there had formerly been "many barrows (*kurgany*) in the vicinity of the cross, now ploughed up. During ploughing on this spot were found pieces of iron swords, helmets, arrows, battle-axes and other objects" (1960, 301). Regrettably, Pchelina failed to record the precise location of the stone cross when she found it. Two archaeologists excavated the presumed site of the cross in 1973, but found nothing there (Kuznetsov and Medyntseva 1975, 12, n. 7). Nonetheless, a burial, or burials, at the site of the cross remains the obvious interpretation of its significance.

The inscribed cross at Pregradnoe was first noticed by German and Russian observers at the end of the eighteenth century, soon after the adjoining area of the Kuban' steppes had been annexed by Catherine the Great. The first description of the cross, with a transcription of part of the inscription, was published by P. S. Pallas (1799-1801, I 440). Since then it has received occasional attention from scholars. The authenticity of the cross has not been placed in doubt. The discovery of further evidence of Slavo-Russian activity during the Kievan period in the vicinity of the Sea of Azov was undeniably welcome to nationalistic Russians, one of whom was the first painstaking student of the cross. But that the cross was fabricated in order to demonstrate an early Russian presence in the area is extremely unlikely. A forger might be expected to have ensured that most of his inscription was legible, and to have contrived some mention in it of known historical events or personages. Anyway other objects with Cyrillic inscriptions have been found in the region north-east of the Black Sea, notably the Tmutarakan' stone. On this stone is an inscription, carved in regular, evenly spaced letters, recording the measuring of the frozen Straits of Kerch' by Prince Gleb Svyatoslavich in 1068. This

inscription, long suspect as a forgery, has now been shown on paleographical grounds to be, beyond reasonable doubt, eleventh-century work (Rybakov 1964, 16-17; Medyntseva 1979, 48-9).

The first transcriber of the full inscription then extant of the Pregradnoe cross was P. G. Butkov. His transcription has served as the basis for most subsequent publications of the cross. Although alternative readings of individual letters have been proposed, the basic validity of Butkov's transcription has not been impugned (Butkov 1821, 59-60, n. 49; Pomyalovsky 1881, 3-4; Spitsyn 1903, 206; Turchaninov 1948, 77-80; Mavrodin 1980, 179).

The most systematic and best-informed study of the Pregradnoe cross was made jointly by V. A. Kuznetsov, an experienced archaeologist of the northern Caucasus region, and A. A. Medyntseva, a specialist in the study of Old Russian graffiti and paleography. The inscription was subjected by Medyntseva to a thorough examination. Her conclusions, which have not been challenged to date, are as follows (Kuznetsov and Medyntseva 1975, 12; no information is available on the depth of the indentation made by the letters, or concerning the instrument used by the carver). The surviving inscription has four lines discernible. The letters of the top line are adjacent to the lower vertical section of a cross which was carved on the intersection of the arms and vertical shaft. Fewer letters were visible to Medyntseva than had been transcribed by P. G. Butkov in 1803, 12 as against Butkov's 27. However, according to Medyntseva, the surviving letters attest the general accuracy of Butkov's transcription. This exists both in the form of a publication of the text in a periodical article and in the form of a drawing which he made of the cross. Medyntseva accepts as most probable a reading of the first three lines and of a (hypothetical) part of the fourth made by G. F. Turchaninov:—

Pom+[ya]n(i)	Remember
gdī d[ou]sh[ou]	Lord the soul
raba [s]v[oyego]	of thy servant

Such a reading involves an emendation of Butkov's transcription of the second word of the third line, and also the hypothesis that the carver initially cut "ω" (sh), only later altering it to "Δ" (d) for the first letter of *doushou*, "soul" (Kuznetsov and Medyntseva 1975, 14). Of the remainder of the fourth line, and the fifth, as transcribed by Butkov, no trace survives. Apparently, they were destroyed by two holes drilled for bolts in about 1908 (Pchelina 1960, 301). With due caution, Medyntseva favours the reading put forward by A. A. Spitsyn (Kuznetsov and Medyntseva 1975, 15):

[i]vana	Ivan
rous[ʹska]g(o)	Russian

If this reading is correct, the inscription, in so far as it can be reconstructed, reads: "Remember, Lord, the soul of thy servant Ivan, Russian . . .". Evidently the inscription, together with the carved cross and the shell-rock cross itself, was intended to serve as a commemorative and, most probably, funerary, monument for a Russian Christian. Presumably he was of elevated social status. The invocational formula on the Pregradnoe stone cross is paralleled on other Kievan Russian objects, and derives ultimately from Byzantium. For example, "Lord, help Thy servant Basil" appears on a golden disc of the late eleventh or early twelfth century attributed to Vladimir Monomakh (Rybakov 1964, 19-20 and *tablitsa* XXXIV). Other early Russian examples of this formula may be found in S. A. Vysotsky (1966-76, I 57, 62, 73, 80-82). The word "Russian" may seem awkward or redundant in the Pregradnoe inscription, but it is found in other Old Russian inscriptions, especially those mentioning a prince; for example, a graffito in Kiev's St Sophia records the burial of Vsevolod-Andrew, "Russian prince" (*rous'skyi k'nyaz'*) (Vysotsky 1966-76, I 18), while another invokes God's protection for Olisava, "Russian princess" (*rus'sk'ü k'nyag'ini*) (Vysotsky 1966-76, I 73). A close parallel to the Pregradnoe inscription occurs in the legend of a seal of Vladimir Monomakh: "Lord, help Thy servant Basil, Russian prince" (*knyazou rous'skogo*) (Yanin 1970, I 68, 70, 187 no. 97, *tablitsa* 43 on 291). No Russian prince with the Greek Christian name "Ioannes" (of which "Ivan" is the colloquial Slavonic form) is known to me before the early years of the twelfth century, when various princes bore it (see *Ukazatel'* 1875, 426-7, 434; Yanin 1970, I 110, 125, 129). However, our knowledge of Russian princely families of the eleventh century is imperfect, and the possibility of the existence of a Rurikid called Ioannes/Ivan is not excluded by the silence of the sources. That the Slavonic form of the Greek Christian name Ιωάννης was already known in mid-eleventh-century Russia is indicated by the *Ipat'evskaya Letopis'* s.a. 1043 (1962, col. 142; cf. col. 191 s.a. 1078). "Ivan" was, in fact, quite a common name among senior princely officials by the early twelfth century (see *Ukazatel'* 1875, 445-8, 450; Murav'eva and Kuz'mina 1975, 29-30; cf. Hübner 1966, 34-5).

No date on the stone is now visible. Nor was a date visible to P. G. Butkov when he examined the stone in 1803. However, Butkov stated in his publication of the inscription that "a curious

friend of mine assured me that on this monument, soon after the expansion of the Caucasian Line from Mozdok to Azov, about the year 1775, there was visible a clearly marked date (from the creation) of the world, corresponding to A.D. 1041" (Butkov 1821, 60, n. 49). The date on the stone was presumably 6549. If this was reckoned by the Byzantine September-year, it corresponds to September 1, 1040–August 31, 1041. If, however, the "March-year" customary in Old Russia was used, 6549 corresponds to March 1, 1041–February 28, 1042.

Butkov's is the only word we have for the existence of a date on the Pregradnoe cross, and for us the evidence is not second- but third-hand. The shortcomings of such testimony are obvious and grave. We do not even know the name of Butkov's "curious friend". Nonetheless, Butkov's statement deserves serious attention. His empirical observations concerning the cross and its inscription are, when verifiable, fairly accurate. Although a soldier by profession, he researched widely into Old Russian history, chronicle-writing and archaeology. Undoubtedly his passionate defence of the authenticity of the *Lay of Igor* and of the Tmutarakan' stone was motivated by nationalism. But in the latter case at least, his cause has been vindicated. A glance at his published work suggests that he was an indefatigable pedant, amassing vast quantities of materials in support of his views. One of his wilder theories was that the Slavs had occupied the Don and Donets regions since the fourth century A.D. But, partisan and insufficiently critical as he was, Butkov has never been accused of conscious deception or fabrication. A balanced assessment of Butkov's flaws and virtues as a scholar was made by I. I. Lyapushkin (1941, 192-3; cf. *Russkiy Biograficheskiy Slovar'* 1896-1918, III 526-7. A concise list of his writings was given by G. Gennadi (1876-1908, I 119). Admittedly he may have himself been duped by a mendacious or otherwise unreliable friend. However, the value of the information of Butkov's "curious friend" is strengthened by the meticulous palaeographical study of the inscription which Medyntseva carried out.

Medyntseva paid special attention to the word *raba* ("servant"), the one wholly preserved word in the inscription. She found closest analogies in tenth- and eleventh-century Cyrillic stone inscriptions, coin legends and manuscripts. For example, the "a" with a small, acute-angled head and with its right hand line slanting leftwards, is found in very early Old Church Slavonic writing, including an inscription in Macedonia of A.D. 996; on Russian coin legends of the beginning of the eleventh century; and in the signature of

Princess Anna Yaroslavna of 1063. That it is a very early form is suggested by its absence from dated Russian manuscripts of the second half of the eleventh century or later. From these and similar considerations Medyntseva concluded that "there are grounds for dating the Pregradnoe inscription to not later than the first half of the eleventh century" (Kuznetsov and Medyntseva 1975, 16).

It must be emphasized that Medyntseva reached this conclusion wholly on paleographical grounds. She was, of course, aware of the date provided by Butkov's "curious friend", but does not appear to have been swayed by it. In fact, she sets on one side the report of the 1041 date, on the grounds of the absence of drawings of what the "curious friend" saw. But clearly the date of A.D. 1041/6549 from the creation of the world is compatible with the paleographical evidence. Butkov's friend was either remarkably felicitous or prodigiously learned if he invented the date.

Medyntseva and Kuznetsov considered various possible explanations for the origin of the Pregradnoe cross. They rejected the possibility that Pregradnoe could have been directly under the rule of the Russian princes of Tmutarakan', and that the stone might be an adjunct of Russians' permanent residence in the area in the eleventh century. The sway of the prince of Tmutarakan' seems to have stretched only as far as the Middle Kuban'. There were, probably, substantial Slavo-Russian populations only at a few strong points, such as Tmutarakan' itself and Belaya Vezh' (Sarkel) on the lower Don (see Map). Distinctively Slavic graves have not been found along the River Kuban' or elsewhere in Circassia. Burials excavated there have been characterized as probably local Adygei or "Sarmato-Alan" by A. L. Mongayt (1963, 57; cf. Kuznetsov and Medyntseva 1975, 16). Medyntseva and Kuznetsov therefore associate the stone cross with some traveller. Noting that a "water route" has been postulated between the Sea of Azov and the Caspian for the classical and early medieval period, and also noting Minorsky's publication of TB, they suggest that the cross was connected with the Russo-Alan attack on Darband in 1033, or with some later, unknown, Russian attack on the Moslem lands of the Caucasus (Kuznetsov and Medyntseva 1975, 16-17). They show no awareness of the expedition of Yngvarr. Clearly, this qualifies as one such later attack.

It must be admitted that evidence is sparse for the use of a water route from the Sea of Azov via the River Manych to the River Kuma and the Caspian. Medyntseva and Kuznetsov tentatively endorse the conclusions of S. A. Kovalevsky, who attempted to

demonstrate the existence of such a water route. Unfortunately, Kovalevsky's case rested on such implausible premises as that the Ptolemy map was composed c. 700 A.D. rather than in the second century A.D., and that it originally showed the Volga as flowing into both the Caspian and the Sea of Azov. His basic assumption is that the map's configurations and indications of distances between the Don, the Volga and the Caspian reflect early medieval reality, rather than the inaccuracy of the compiler or copyists (Kovalevsky 1953, 39-40, 42). Such an assumption is very ill-founded. Kovalevsky unwittingly argues against himself in citing Mas'ūdi's statement that a "gulf" of the "Pontus" (Black Sea and Sea of Azov) was linked to the River Volga by one of the Volga's "arms" (Mas'ūdi 1962-71, I 164-5; Kovalevsky 1953, 46). Mas'ūdi can here only be designating a route up the Don to the point where its banks were only about 50 kilometres from those of the Volga, in the vicinity of modern Volgograd. For Mas'ūdi is describing the route of the Rūs who, in c. 912-13, sailed from the "Pontus" up the aforesaid "arm" to the Volga. They are said then to have "descended" the Volga, passing the Khazar capital, Itil, before reaching the Caspian Sea (Mas'ūdi 1962-71, I 166). Since Itil stood somewhere on the lower Volga, the Rūs must have crossed over from the Don further upstream. The existence of a route for boats, traversable by small rivers and portages, at the narrowest point between the Don and the Volga is, in fact, indubitable. It is implied by literary sources, and also by the abundant archaeological evidence of trade between the Byzantine and the Moslem worlds at sites such as Belaya Vezh' and Tmutarakan' itself.¹¹ A portage between the Don and the Volga seems to have been in use even in the later Middle Ages (Tikhomirov 1961, 13). This was clearly the most convenient route for boats from the Sea of Azov to the Caspian when they were engaged in commerce (see Map).

Nonetheless, alternative routes, less frequented by traders, would have been of particular value to war bands, offering the advantage of surprise on outward journeys and unblocked lines of retreat on the way back. Whether there was a *continuous* waterway between the lower Don, the Manych, the Kuma and the Caspian in the early Middle Ages cannot now be determined with certainty. But if the Caspian sea level rose by 2.5-3 metres in the ninth and tenth centuries to attain a mark of 28.5 metres below oceanic sea-level (Gumilev 1967, 61, 70, 80), the passage down the Kuma to the Caspian would have been no more difficult than it is today. The portage between the Chogray, a tributary of the eastern

Manych, and a seasonal tributary of the Kuma is only about 11 kilometres across, a trifling distance by the standards of Kievan Russia. For example, one of the principal portages on the famed "Way from the Varangians to the Greeks", from the river Serezha to a tributary of the river Toropa, was approximately 31 kilometres in length, while the shortest route from the Volga to the Western Dvina waterways entailed a portage for 16 kilometres between Lake Peno and Lake Okhvat (Alekseev 1980, 64-5). Pregradnoe, the site of our stone cross, lies on a tributary of the Manych, the River Bol'shoy Egorlyk. The Bol'shoy Egorlyk is, and presumably in the eleventh century was, navigable at least as far up river as Pregradnoe. There flows into the Bol'shoy Egorlyk near Pregradnoe a river that is seasonal along some stretches, the Bol'shaya Kugul'ta; from a tributary of the Kugul'ta, the Shangala, a portage of some 10 kilometres brings one to the River Kalaus. (These statements rest principally on data furnished by *Eastern Europe* 1960-1, Series N501, Sheets NL 37-9 and 38-7; *Tactical Pilotage Chart* 1968, TPC F4-B, Astrakhan; *International Map of the World* 1959-78, Sheets NL37 and 38. I have preferred this data to that given by smaller-scale Soviet atlases in cases of discrepancy, e.g. over the course of the Bol'shaya Kugul'ta.) The Kalaus itself flows into the eastern Manych. Pregradnoe therefore lay on a possible diversion from the main route along the Manych. Tortuous as it was, the journey need not have entailed many kilometres of portaging. It could have been made by men with boats.

The Manych and the Kuma have, in fact, been proposed as the possible route of the Rūs who raided the Caspian in 943-4. And the Bol'shoy Egorlyk itself has been proposed as a route possibly taken by Svyatoslav's expedition from the land of the Alans to Sarkel (Belaya Vezh') on the lower Don (Brun 1879, 111; Kuznetsov 1971, 24-5; Gadlo 1971, 60; Gadlo 1979, 206-7; see also, for the novel theory that two successive Rus' raids assaulted Belaya Vezh' in 965 and Itil and other Khazar towns in 969, Kalinina 1976, 100). Finds of Sogdaean, Byzantine and Chinese silks in the Alan burial ground at Khasaut, in the gorge of Sulakhor, near the modern city of Kislovodsk, suggest that traders could travel along river valleys such as the upper Kuma, the Podkumok and the Kalaus (Ierusalimskaya 1967, 56-8, 68-9, 72-3 and n. 30; for a reconstruction of a land route along the central slopes of the Caucasus, passing near Kislovodsk, see Akritas 1959, 200-1, 205-6, 218-19; see also Rtveladze and Runich 1976, 155; Noonan 1980, 408, 448, 456-7). These silks at Khasaut date mainly from the

eighth and ninth centuries. There is also evidence that, at a later date, some Russians penetrated the approaches of the northern Caucasus. Objects of Old Russian manufacture, notably cross-encolpia and pectoral crosses have been found beside right-hand tributaries of the River Terek and at several places between the rivers Malka and Kuma, including the vicinity of Kislovodsk (Magomadova and Golovanova 1979, 120, map on p. 121; for other such encolpia in the northern Caucasus, see Kuznetsov 1968, 83-4; Alekseeva 1971, 121, 153 n. 72). The majority of these objects are dateable to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. But individual eleventh-century encolpia have been found there, as well as the tenth-century iron tip of a weapon or standard bearing the "Rurikid emblem" and an iron mace "identical to Old Russian examples of the tenth to thirteenth centuries" (Magomadova and Golovanova 1979, 122). These things are made of cheap materials, bronze, copper or iron. It is an open question whether they were brought to the Caucasus as objects of trade or as the equipment or accoutrements of individual Russian visitors, marauders or captives. In either case, they attest movement between regions inhabited by Slavo-Russians and the northern Caucasus. The stone cross of Pregradnoe did not stand in a river valley totally secluded from the outside world. The Manych, the Bol'shoy Egorlyk, the Kalas and the Kuma did not offer the most convenient means of passing from the Sea of Azov to the Caspian. But it is probable that a war-boat could have made the journey for most of the way by water, with only comparatively short stretches of portaging.

So Medyntseva and Kuznetsov are, in my view, correct in linking the stone cross with a traveller of some sort, rather than with any hypothetical Slavo-Russian resident of the locality. One may add to their arguments the consideration that the workmanship of the inscription and of the cross itself is very crude. For example, the cutter of the former seems to have had to correct one of the symbols in the word *doushou*, "soul" (see the discussion of the inscription above). The letters are of irregular shapes and sizes. As already noted, the ensemble gives the impression of having been concocted, perhaps hurriedly, by someone ill-trained for the job. Its quality contrasts sharply with that of the Tmutarakan' stone. A local notable of Pregradnoe might be expected to have been commemorated by a more finished piece of work than this roughly hewn cross.

Medyntseva and Kuznetsov suggested that the cross might be a relic of one of the Rūs raids on Moslem Caucasia mentioned by

TB. A. Thulin might hail the cross as vindicating his thesis that "the Yngvarr expedition is in one way or another connected with the events of 1030-33". As we have proposed above (Section V), amplifying the argument of Thulin, the Rūs who raided Darband in 1033 and, probably, the Rūs raiders of the previous year, must have had a base and a source of reinforcements near by, most probably at Tmutarakan'. Moreover, the River Bol'shoy Egorlyk flowed down from the direction of the land of the Alans, and the Alans were the allies of the Rūs in 1033 and, in all probability, in 1032. In those years, land assaults were made across the Caucasus. Mstislav of Tmutarakan' and Chernigov probably did send men to reinforce the dwindling Scandinavian war band. May not the Pregradnoe cross commemorate one of them?

Even supposing that the Pregradnoe cross were a monument to a Slavo-Russian participant in the raids of the early 1030s, the obstacles to identifying these raids with Yngvarr's expedition would, in my opinion, still be insurmountable, notably the differing modes of death. However, there are two important coincidences which favour an association of the cross with Yngvarr's expedition.

Firstly, the date of 1041 given by *Yngvars saga* and by *Konungsannáll* coincides with the date "corresponding to A.D. 1041" reported by P. G. Butkov's "curious friend" as being visible on the cross around 1775. Secondly, the cross stands on a possible route, navigable for most of the way, between the Sea of Azov and the Caspian Sea. The environs of the Caspian could be covered by the term "Serkland", named by the Swedish rune stones as Yngvarr's goal. The stone raised by Tola "for her son Haraldr, the brother of Yngvarr", states that "they died in the south in Serkland". Tola was, as has been noted above, well placed to obtain accurate information, and was presumably not exaggerating the range of the itinerary (Mel. no. 32, Sö 179). At least one other rune stone alludes to a member of Yngvarr's force as having died (or rather, as lying) in Serkland (Mel. no. 37, Sö 131). So it is most probable that Yngvarr's host actually reached the Caspian Sea, the outer limits of Serkland. Yngvarr and his "brother" need not have clashed with organized Moslem forces to merit the statement that they "died . . . in Serkland", for, if our above arguments are correct, the cause of death for most of them was disease.¹² Pregradnoe was not in "the land of the Saracens", but it was quite near it, and on a possible route to or from it.

These apparent coincidences of date and place connect the cross with Yngvarr's expedition, and that expedition with the region of

the Caspian. *Yngvars saga* offers two items of material which are compatible with, and perhaps complementary to, our interpretation of the Pregradnoe cross.

The saga may well imply that some men joined Yngvarr's band in Russia. It relates that Yngvarr made preparations, while in Russia, to explore the length of the "greatest" of the three rivers flowing "from the east", and that Yngvarr had a bishop consecrate for him a strike-a-light (*boliarn*, i.e. *báljárn*?) and a flintstone (*tinnu*). Then the saga states: "Fiorer menn eru nefnder med Ynguari til ferdar: Hialmuigi ok Soti, Ketill, er kalladr uar Gardaketill — hann uar jslenzkur —, ok Ualldimar" (YS 12). The wording is ambiguous. Mel'nikova (1976a, 81) takes "eru nefnder" to mean that four men were "appointed" to accompany Yngvarr and his main force. However, the literal meaning may well be more accurate: "Four men are named as having travelled with Yngvarr: Hjálmvígi, Sóti, Ketill, who was called Garða-Ketill — he was an Icelander —, and Valdimarr". This interpretation gains from the fact that these four are the only members of Yngvarr's expedition to be named in the subsequent narrative. Each of them features in one or more of the adventures befalling the expedition (YS 13, 14, 19, 23-4, 27-8, 30-1). It is therefore likely that the saga-writer has clumsily interposed at the outset of the journey eastwards from Russia a list of those characters who happen to feature later in his tale. Nonetheless, one or two of these names are suggestive. Sóti is a Scandinavian name while Hjálmvígi seems to be connected with the Low German Helmwīg (-wich) (Hofmann 1981, 194). Hjálmvígi was, according to YS (19), "a good priest", whom Yngvarr instructed to sing "psalms in God's praise" when the expedition came upon a menacing giant. Whatever his nationality, Hjálmvígi could as well have started out on the expedition from Sweden as have joined it in Russia. But the case of Garða-Ketill is rather different. For his nickname implies that he spent a considerable time in Russia and if he was already called Garða-Ketill at the time of Yngvarr's expedition, he had presumably spent some period in Russia to warrant the nickname (cf. Mel'nikova 1976a, 81, n. 28). It is true that Ketill might have acquired his nickname on the strength of his participation in Yngvarr's expedition and his subsequent adventures in the east together with Yngvarr's son Sveinn. And of course the character of Garða-Ketill, as well as the other named companions of Yngvarr, may be totally fictitious. It has been suggested that the details of Ketill's Icelandic origin and eventual return home bearing news of Yngvarr's fate and the

subsequent expedition of Yngvarr's son along the same great river (YS 47) were concocted to give the tale an air of authenticity, as if deriving from an eye-witness account. Such fictional devices are common in sagas recounting marvels, while Garða-Ketill's very name could have been borrowed from *Eymundar þátttr* (see YS lxxx, xciii; Wessén 1960, 32; Davidson 1976, 170). However, as D. Hofmann pointed out, Garða-Ketill plays a more integral role in the structure of YS than he does in *Eymundar þátttr*, and the borrowing might have been in the opposite direction, by the author of the *þátttr* from the saga (Hofmann 1981, 193; YS 13, 27-8, 30-1, 42-3, 46-7). Anyway, in so far as we follow the saga's account, it may suggest that Garða-Ketill was already in Russia at the time of Yngvarr's arrival and that he joined the expedition there.

Perhaps more conclusive is the case of Valdimarr, the fourth of the named companions of Yngvarr. For his name is of Slavonic origin, and presumably belonged to a Russian resident in his native land. The Slavonic name Vladimir seems only to have appeared in its nordicized form, Valdimarr, in the later twelfth century, when it was borne by King Valdemarr the Great of Denmark (1157-82; Hald 1974, 42; Stemshaug 1982, 231). One may therefore agree with Mel'nikova (1976a, 81-2) that the saga seems to indicate that Russians accompanied Yngvarr on his journey along the great river, although her identification of Valdimarr with Prince Vladimir Yaroslavich, leader of the 1043 Russian attack on Byzantium is unconvincing (see above, Section III). The number of Russian recruits would not have been large, judging by the saga's own evidence that the same number of boats set off up the great river as had sailed from Sweden (YS 12). Russia's ruler was, in fact, engaged with other campaigns at the time when Yngvarr's host seems to have been in Russia and Serkland. The RPC relates expeditions against the Yatvingians, the Lithuanians and "in boats (against) the Mazovians", on or beyond Russia's western borders (RPC 138, s.a. 1038, 1040, 1041; PVL I 103). However, the exact chronology of at least the latter expedition is not certain (Korolyuk 1964, 314-9; Kuz'min 1977, 254-5), and anyway Russia's supplies of military manpower were ample, as the excavations of the forts on the steppe-frontier suggest (see above, Section II). So there is no reason why a modest number of Russians, including a certain "Ivan" of elevated status, could not have been available in Kievan Russian or Tmutarakan' for a venture to the East. In that case, there would have been Slavo-Russian as well as Scandinavian casualties, eliciting, perhaps, Old Russian as well as runic inscriptions.

A second feature of *Yngvars saga* relevant to our interpretation of the Pregradnoe cross is its representation of the survivors' return journeys. According to the saga, Yngvarr's fleet on its outward journey reached "that spring" (*þeirar uppsprettu*) which was the source of the great river (YS 21). The narrative is clumsily constructed, making abrupt transitions which are only comprehensible from earlier statements in the saga. But it can be deduced that Yngvarr's band proceeded to sail down *another* river, which flowed from the same source as the "greatest" river. According to the saga, a "promontory" (*nes*) stood "between" this second river and the sea. The river flowed "for a short way", presumably past the promontory, before plunging over a precipice into "the Red Sea, and we call that place the end of the earth" (*Raudahaf, ok kaullum uer þar enda heims*, YS 18). This geographical information was relayed in advance to Yngvarr by Júlfr, king of a realm washed by the waters of the "greatest" river. Yngvarr and his men are subsequently represented as exploring the promontory. Thus *Yngvars saga* portrays them, in a perfunctory and oblique way, as reaching the shores of the "ocean" (YS 23; *Raudahaf*, "Red Sea", is expressly stated by the saga to adjoin the "end of the earth", and clearly it has here the meaning customary in Old Norse sources of "world ocean", see Cleasby and Vigfusson 1957, 228, 483; Hofmann 1981, 208). The saga is more discursive about a great hall standing on the promontory, where a devil in human form appears to the one member of the expedition who spends the night in the hall. The devil tells him that Haraldr, an earlier king of Sweden, had perished with his retinue in the "ocean", and prophesies that Yngvarr, too, will die, together with most of his comrades. Yngvarr is said to have given a name to "that mighty waterfall" (*þeim hinum micla forsi*), and to have sailed away (YS 24). The "mighty waterfall" is obviously identical with the precipice over which the river is said to have flowed into the "ocean". The narrative jumps abruptly to the locale of the great river up which Yngvarr had initially sailed, and relates more adventures there, while stressing that Yngvarr was in a hurry to return home. Then "disease began to spread so much in their army that all their best men died" (YS 27). Yngvarr himself is said to have died of the epidemic after the fleet had entered the realm of the fabulous Queen Silkisif. After the funeral of Yngvarr, the survivors pressed on along the river. After they had been sailing "for a time", they quarrelled over the route to be taken, and the boats went their different ways: "Ketill kept a straight course and came to Garðar,

whereas Valdimarr went off with a single ship to Mikligarðr" (*Ketill hafði retta stefnu ok kom j Garda, enn Ualldimar kom einskípa út j Micklagard*, YS 30-1).

It is very tempting to identify the saga's "greatest" river with the Volga, and several scholars have tentatively proposed this identification (Braun 1924, 165; Ruprecht 1958, 55; Davidson 1976, 168; Benedikz 1978, 228). E. A. Mel'nikova argued against them that Valdimarr's journey by boat to Byzantium (Mikligarðr) could not have been made from the Volga and she emphasized that the term "greatest" river need not necessarily designate the Volga (Mel'nikova 1976a, 83). While this latter point is true, I find it hard to accept her claim that the saga's representation of the "greatest" river as being the middle one of three great rivers *precludes* an identification with the Volga. Furthermore, her dismissal of the feasibility of a journey with a boat from the Volga to the Black Sea is unwarranted and, once one accepts that the Serkland of the rune stones included the Caspian Sea, the Volga is the obvious waterway giving access to that sea. Anyway, our concern is less with the route by which Yngvarr's fleet sailed south than with whether it sailed to the Caspian. If we accept that it did, the saga may offer a tantalizing hint that, after disease had decimated the war band's ranks, the survivors' boats dispersed in different directions. One direction could have been from the Caspian to the Kuma and the Manyč, leading to the Sea of Azov. (The ruler of Tmutarakan', Mstislav, died in 1036, and the city, with its tributary territories, came under the sway of Yaroslav of Kiev; it continued to thrive as a port throughout the eleventh century: Molchanov 1982, 253-4). Admittedly, this interpretation of the "hint" entails discarding the saga's indication that disease struck *after* the return journey along the "greatest" river had begun. But it would explain the saga's reference to the journey of a ship to Byzantium. And it would connect some members of Yngvarr's war band with the vicinity of Pregradnoe.

These are, in every sense, treacherous waters. But, at the least, these two passages in the saga are compatible with the other evidence concerning Yngvarr's objective, and with what might be expected on *a priori* grounds: that Russians joined in the expedition and that, after disease had struck, the fleet broke up and withdrew by divers routes.

IX: A reconstruction and final considerations

While there is, in my view, good reason for concluding that Yngvarr's expedition went to the Caspian Sea and came to grief

there in A.D. 1041, a broader assessment of the events of the expedition and of the circumstances of the erection of the Pregradnoe stone cross is inevitably very speculative. But the following reconstruction seems to me plausible.

Reports of the raids made by Scandinavian Rūs on Sharvān and Darband in the early 1030s soon reached Scandinavia, through the frequent toing and froing between Byzantium, Russia and Scandinavia which has been emphasized above (Section II). The reports told of the rich pickings to be had there, the "much money" paid by Mūsā b. Faḍl in 1030, and the Rūs's return with "their hands full of booty and captives" in 1032. They also told of the stiff resistance offered by the Moslems, who were particularly effective in repulsing the land-attacks of 1032 and 1033. The reports aroused the greed and spirit of emulation of other Scandinavian warriors and at least two fresh war bands made the journey by water. One set off in time to be sailing along the southern shore of the Caspian in the spring of 1035, and will be discussed below. The other was organized by Yngvarr, a Swede probably of royal blood. He and his "brother" (most probably, half-brother) Haraldr assembled a large fleet, recruiting men from the parts of Uppland and Södermanland giving onto Lake Mälär, and from elsewhere in Sweden. The character of their expedition was that of a Viking foray. Their objective was booty from the Moslem littoral of the Caspian Sea. Sailing eastwards they came to Russia, where they were joined by a number of Russians, including one who was, seemingly, named Ivan. They sailed on, by one river or another, as far as the Caspian Sea. But at some time thereafter, they were struck by disease, the bane of many an outsize army in unfamiliar climes in the Middle Ages. Many Vikings died, Yngvarr and Haraldr somewhere near the Caspian coast, or possibly at sea, judging by the rune stone at Gripsholm. The survivors dispersed and withdrew by a variety of direct or circuitous routes, some of them perhaps opting for a land journey home. (One may note by way of comparison that after the defeat of the Russian expedition before Constantinople in 1043, some survivors attempted to trek home overland from the Bosphorus through Bulgaria: RPC 138, s.a. 1043; PVL I 103-4.) The epidemic claimed more victims. One of them was a Russian who, if the Pregradnoe inscription has been interpreted correctly, was called Ivan. He was presumably buried where he died, beside the River Bol'shoy Egorlyk at Pregradnoe. A crude cross was carved from the local shell-rock and inscribed by his companions, who were not experienced in this work. The

fact that they took the trouble to raise a monument to Ivan suggests that he held some sort of command, and was perhaps of princely blood (see Section VIII above). The debacle occurred in A.D. 1041.

Such a reconstruction as this would imply a very active interest on the part of Scandinavians and Russians in the regions of the Black and Caspian Seas. Besides the inflow of Russian and Scandinavian warriors into the service of the Byzantine emperor, there were the following dramatic episodes: the leading of a band of 800 men to Byzantium by one "Golden Hand" (Χρυσόχειρ), perhaps a Scandinavian, in the mid-1020s, and its destruction by the Byzantine authorities (see Section II above); the Rūs raids on Arrān, Sharvān and Darband in 1030-33; Yngvarr's expedition, ending in disaster in 1041; the Scandinavian contingent in the Russian expedition against Byzantium in 1043. Sceptics who doubt whether so many Scandinavian and Russian hosts can have gone to the distant south in such quick succession must reckon with two further mentions of "Rūs" and "Varangian" warriors operating in the Caspian and the Caucasus at about that time.

It is the valuable achievement of O. Pritsak to have drawn attention to a hitherto overlooked mention of "Urūs" (Rūs) in the memoirs of a former state secretary of the Ghaznavids, Abū'l-Faḍl Muḥammad b. Ḥusayn Bayhaqī (c. 995-1077). Pritsak translated the relevant passage from the Persian original and sought to elucidate it. According to Bayhaqī, the Ghaznavid ruler Mas'ūd b. Muḥammad went with his soldiers on Friday, April 4, 1035 to the southern shore of the Caspian Sea. There "they pitched pavilions and tents, drank wine and fished. And they saw the ships of the Urūs, . . . which appeared from all sides and sailed by" (Pritsak 1981, 449; cf. Abū'l-Faḍl Baykhakī 1969, 568). Bayhaqī continues: "It was not possible to reach them [they were far from the shore] to discover to which port [of Ġurgān] each ship was heading". He states that the sighting occurred at Allahum, the port of the town of Āmul (modern Āmol, near the southern shore of the Caspian). His informant was an eye-witness, the secretary of Mas'ūd (Pritsak 1981, 450; cf. Abū'l-Faḍl Baykhakī 1969, 568). The identity and purpose of this fleet of Rūs is shrouded in obscurity. These Rūs may have been Scandinavians or Slavonic Russians, or a mixture of both. Their appearance off Āmul was clearly unusual for Bayhaqī to record it at all. Bayhaqī's account, particularly his statement that it was impossible to go out to the Rūs to ascertain their destination, does not suggest that they were regarded as

threatening or hostile. A connexion with TB's Rūs of 1030-33 is therefore unlikely. Moreover, TB relates how the Rūs suffered repeated heavy losses at the hands of the defenders of Darband and Sharvān. It would be surprising if they were able to launch a large fleet, appearing "from all sides" off Āmul so soon afterwards. This fleet, as described by Bayhaqī, seems to be different in character from the last two of the Rūs expeditions described by TB. One, probably both of these were launched overland, and in collusion with the Alans. Pritsak, too, dissociates the Rūs fleet of 1035 from TB's Rūs. He proposes an identification of the fleet with that of Yngvarr, holding that Yngvarr was sent by Yaroslav of Kiev to aid his ally, Šāh-Malik b. Ālī, in his bid for control of Khwārizm (Pritsak 1981, 448, 450-1).

This hypothesis of an alliance between Yaroslav and Šāh-Malik, a Turkic Oghuz leader trying to wrest Khwārizm from Mas'ūd b. Muḥammad, lacks any positive evidence, and the circumstantial evidence tells against it. Judging by the translated extract from Bayhaqī's memoirs, Mas'ūd contemplated the Rūs fleet's passage with equanimity. He would scarcely have done so had it been sailing to assist his enemy. And if the fleet had been making for a port from which to proceed to Khwārizm, it would surely have sailed clockwise around the Caspian shore, or risked the journey straight across the sea, rather than sail along enemy coastline in the south. Pritsak attempts to connect Bayhaqī's Rūs with the date 1041, which he accepts as being that of Yngvarr's death. He argues that "Yngvarr spent several (probably six) years in the east", referring to *Yngvars saga* in support of this statement, in order to bridge the gap between 1035 and 1041 (Pritsak 1981, 451). However, the saga states that Yngvarr spent "three years" in Russia before sallying forth along the "greatest" river, and then relates that the expedition spent successive winters at the courts of Queen Silkisif and King Júlfr (YS 12, 16, 17). Aside from the suspicious propensity of the saga for the figure "30" and for fractions of it such as "3" (above, Section VII), one may note that it thus represents the expedition as lasting altogether five years, not six, and as spending only two of them in the lands beyond Garðar. If YS's chronological data is to be taken at all seriously, it saps rather than sustains Pritsak's thesis that Yngvarr's fleet operated in the Caspian region for some six years.

If one rejects Pritsak's detailed reconstruction of the background to the appearance of the Rūs boats in the south-eastern Caspian in April 1035, they remain "unattached". It must be admitted that

while there is no positive evidence to link them with Yngvarr, nothing stands in the way of such a link except the date. But the date alone suffices as an obstacle if one accepts, as does Pritsak himself, 1041 as the date of Yngvarr's debacle. For it is very hard to believe that a fleet could have operated for as long as six years in the Caspian region without provoking further mention in Bayhaqī or some other source. And if it were campaigning continuously, it would surely have incurred more violent deaths than the wording of the Yngvarr stones suggests. So Bayhaqī's fleet of Rūs should, in my opinion, be kept separate from Yngvarr's enterprise, even though its character and purpose — perhaps part predatory and part exploratory — may have been comparable.

It may tax belief to maintain that so many waves of northerners troubled the Caspian or adjoining regions in the first half of the eleventh century. But that the northerners were no strangers to these latitudes is indicated by yet another source. It mentions "Varangians" in the employ of King Bagrat IV of Georgia, and these warriors have no discernible connexion with Bayhaqī's Rūs or with Yngvarr's expedition. The reference to the "Varangians" occurs in the anonymous *Georgian Chronicle (Matiane Kartlisi)*, dating from the eleventh century. The passage is laconic to the point of ambiguity, but its general drift is clear. A translation (into Russian) and a reasoned exposition of the passage was undertaken by Z. V. Papaskiri. The *Georgian Chronicle* recounts the protracted conflict between Bagrat IV of Georgia and Liparit Bagvashi, a powerful magnate who was receiving aid from Byzantium. Three thousand Varangians were, in Papaskiri's translation, stationed by Bagrat IV in Bashi, on the River Rioni in western Georgia. Then Bagrat took a detachment of seven hundred of them, together with his own Georgian troops, and fought a battle against the Byzantine-backed Liparit at Sasireti. Bagrat's Georgians fled, and the Varangians, who alone held their ground, were taken prisoner by Liparit's men. Liparit treated them courteously, offering them food, and then permitted them to withdraw from eastern Georgia through the Likhi mountain range (Papaskiri 1981, 167-9; Brosset 1849, 321).

The battle of Sasireti is dateable to 1046-7 (Papaskiri 1981, 170). No further mention is made by the *Chronicle* of the 2,300 Varangians left stationed at Bashi. There is also no word of how they had, as individuals or a group, entered Bagrat's service. Papaskiri rejected the possibility that they might have come via Byzantium, since Byzantium was then sponsoring attempts to de-

pose Bagrat. He suggested that the Varangians may have been sent to Bagrat by Prince Yaroslav of Kiev between 1043 and 1046, when Yaroslav's own relations with Byzantium were hostile. But this hypothesis is devoid of evidence, and there is no need to invoke specific political circumstances to explain the presence of northern warriors in Caucasia. Papaskiri expressly leaves open the question of whether the men termed "Varangians" by the *Chronicle* really were Varangians, in the sense of Scandinavians, or Russians (Papaskiri 1981, 165, 167-8, 170; on the occurrence of the term "Varangian" elsewhere in Georgian sources, see Yuzbashyan 1959, 19 and n. 37). But since the author of this section of the *Georgian Chronicle* was a near-contemporary and showed a general concern for accuracy, one may assume that his choice of the term "Varangian" rather than "Russian" was deliberate (Shengeliya 1975, 39-40; see also Stepanenko 1980, 163, 171-2; Larsson 1983, 102). If so, we have one further indication that Scandinavians, coming as raiders, prospective mercenaries, or even explorers, reached the region of the Caucasus in various groups and quite large numbers in the first half of the eleventh century.

Greed and a spirit of adventure should not be underestimated as motives for the journeys to the south which have been discussed here. It is noteworthy that, according to the *Georgian Chronicle*, the 700 "Varangians" were the only soldiers of Bagrat IV to stand their ground in the battle of Sasireti. No rune stones are known to commemorate their presence in Georgia. But it could perhaps have been written of them, as it was of Haraldr, Tola's son, and Yngvarr: "Bravely they fared out, far after gold".

X: Afterword

Recently M. Larsson has proposed to identify the Varangians of the *Georgian Chronicle* with Yngvarr's expedition. On his own avowal, "the strongest support for the theory is . . . the Georgian Annals' information that Varangians visited the country at the beginning of the 1040s" (1983, 103). He draws attention to the coincidence between the date supplied for the Varangians' participation in the battle of Sasireti by W. E. D. Allen (1932, 89-90) and that given for Yngvarr's death by YS and the Icelandic annals: 1041 (Larsson 1983, 95, 98, 100-1). Unfortunately, Allen's dating is not compatible with the *Georgian Chronicle*, upon which his account of the strife between King Bagrat IV and Liparit is based. The *Georgian Chronicle* sets the Byzantine annexation of Ani (1045) and the death of the amir of Tiflis, Jaffar (c. 1045) before

Liparit's second attempt to set Bagrat's half-brother, Demetrius, on the throne, and thus *before* the civil war during which the battle of Sasireti was fought (Brosset 1849, 319-21). This sequence of events is followed by modern scholars (Minorsky 1953, 57; Kopaliani 1971, 51-2; Lordkipanidze 1974, 58-9, 73-4; Yuzbashyan 1978, 159; 1979, 86; Papaskiri 1981, 165, 170), and Larsson offers no reason why Allen's chronology should be preferred. There is thus a significant gap between the date postulated by Larsson for Yngvarr's activities in the east, "the beginning of the 1040s" and the mention of the Varangians in King Bagrat's service, dated by Papaskiri to 1046-7 (1981, 170).

This gap robs Larsson's comparison between episodes in YS and the civil war in Georgia between Bagrat and Demetrius and Liparit of much of its force. Larsson might perhaps retort that, even if the date which he accepted from Allen must be jettisoned, Yngvarr's force may yet be discernible in the 3,000 Varangians mentioned by the *Georgian Chronicle*, and the essence of his thesis may still stand.

As stated above (Section VIII), the exact route by which Yngvarr's fleet reached the Caspian is not our prime concern. Nonetheless, Larsson's attempt to link the plot and many details of YS with Caucasian history and geography is less than cogent. For, as we have acknowledged above, the saga contains a mass of fabulous material and cannot by itself serve as the basis for a general reconstruction of Yngvarr's expedition. Even the invocation of YS's statement that, some time after Yngvarr's death, the fleet broke up into different portions involves the rather arbitrary concentration on select details in YS and the equally arbitrary rejection of others (YS 30-1; see above, Section VIII). Larsson's whole thesis is open to the same charge of arbitrary selectivity. Strife between members of a ruling family was a commonplace of the sagas and medieval politics alike, and this motif cannot suffice to anchor Yngvarr's adventures in Caucasian history. In trying to match the latter with the saga, one has to pick and choose wildly. YS represents Silkisif as the autonomous queen of her realm and as proposing to Yngvarr that he marry her and rule it as king (YS 15-16). Yet Larsson would see in her the historical figure of Queen Mariam, the mother of Bagrat IV of Georgia, whom he would identify with King Júlfr. Mariam was indeed a dominant figure during her son's reign, but she was never the autonomous ruler of a separate region. YS gives no hint of any ties between Silkisif and Júlfr. Júlfr's realm, as Larsson himself acknowledges, lay a spring

and summer's journey distant from Silkisif's along the "greatest" river, far further than the distance between western and eastern Georgia, the areas which Larsson assigns to Mariam and Bagrat respectively (YS 16; Larsson 1983, 98). Larsson proposes to identify Citopolis with the capital of western Georgia, Kutaisi (classical Cytaea). Such an identification is tempting, but incurs the objection that the name could equally well reflect a story-teller's pretensions to classical scholarship (Citopolis < Scythopolis), as do the names of Hieliopolis/Hieriopolis and Siggeum (YS 17, 18, 23, 25, 29). Larsson himself concedes that the promontory Siggeum has been confused with the Sigeum of the Hellespont (1983, 100; see also Hofmann 1981, 208). If the saga's geographical information and sequence of events are to be followed closely, they fail to match well the geographical or historical context proposed by Larsson. YS represents Yngvarr as sailing up the "greatest river" to Silkisif's realm and later portaging his boats past a "great waterfall" and "narrow gorges" with "high crags" (YS 16), before arriving in Júlfr's kingdom, where he and his men spent their second winter in the lands beyond Russia. Resuming their journey up the river, they came to another great waterfall, where they had to disembark and dig a canal through "flat land and miry land" for several months, so as to float their ships along it (YS 19). Then, just after passing the point where "the river divided" (YS 20), they were attacked by "Vikings" discharging fire from great ships covered in reed, which were taken for "moving islands". After overcoming this peril, they reached "that spring", the source of the great river (YS 18, 20-1). Thence they sailed down another river to "that promontory" called Siggeum, looking onto the "Red Sea" or "Ocean" which Júlfr had described to Yngvarr (YS 18, 23). On the return journey along the "greatest" river, Yngvarr's fleet was met by Júlfr, who demanded of Yngvarr the military aid against his rebellious brother Bjólfr which Yngvarr had pledged during his first visit. Yngvarr's men defeated Bjólfr's army with the help of huge spiked wheels which they had constructed. Yngvarr forbade his men from joining in the pursuit of Bjólfr. Subsequently (and surprisingly), Yngvarr's force was attacked by Júlfr and his troops, who had returned from pursuing Bjólfr. This attack was rebuffed and, after pillaging the camp and receiving a visit from a sinister crowd of women, Yngvarr's band resumed its journey along the river (YS 18, 25-7).

This tale can be directly associated with the course of events related in the *Georgian Chronicle* only by disregarding or rejecting

some important features in YS while attaching undue weight to others. The realms of Silkisif and Júlfr, though far apart, looked onto one and the same river, whereas a mountain range separated the Rioni and the Kur, the rivers upon which the abodes of Mariam and Bagrat IV are alleged to have looked. Larsson emphasizes that the two great waterfalls and series of gorges and high rocks evoke the course of the Rioni's tributaries leading to the Suram pass, and of the Kur near Tiflis (1983, 97-9). But the saga seems to have a penchant for great waterfalls, situating another one at the point where the second river flowed over a precipice into the Ocean. Yngvarr is said to have given this waterfall the name of Belgsóti (YS 24; see above, Section VIII). The saga need not, therefore, be delineating an actual series of waterfalls. Larsson recognizes that whereas Yngvarr is victorious in his battle against Bjólfr, the 700 Varangians fighting on Bagrat's side at Sasireti were taken captive by Liparit. He also notes the detail that there were subsequently hostilities between Yngvarr's host and its former employer, Júlfr. His solution to these discrepancies is to state that YS's representation of the battle of Sasireti as a victory is unsurprising, in view of its general heroizing of Yngvarr, and to opine that it would "accord better" if Bjólfr, rather than Júlfr, came back to attack Yngvarr some time after the battle (1983, 101-2). In the *Georgian Chronicle*, the Varangians first feature as being stationed, after their arrival, at Bashi. Then Bagrat is said to have taken 700 of them with him and they fought side by side with his own troops at Sasireti in eastern Georgia. The Varangians were eventually taken prisoner by the enemy commander, Liparit, who treated them well, providing servants who prepared food for them, and then letting them cross the Likhi range back into western Georgia (Brosset 1849, 321; trans. in Papaskiri 1981, 169, largely in agreement with exegesis of Larsson 1983, 101-2; see above, Section IX). The *Georgian Chronicle* offers no hint that the 700 Varangians used boats in Georgia, fared down the Kur as far as the Caspian, or did anything other than serve as mercenaries of Bagrat and, temporarily, prisoners of Liparit. Only by highly selective treatment can the sequence of events in the *Georgian Chronicle* be matched with a configuration of details or the main course of events in YS. Larsson is driven to speculating that the 2,300 Varangians who stayed in western Georgia might have been a large Russian auxiliary force accompanying Yngvarr's band and, even, that the *Georgian Chronicle* could mean that it was Yngvarr himself who "stationed" the Varangians in Bashi and then took

the 700 with him to fight on Bagrat's side at Sasireti (Larsson 1983, 102). Such exegetical contortions strain the admittedly ambivalent first sentence of the *Chronicle*: it is far likelier that Bagrat is the subject of the sentence, and that he "stationed" the newly-arrived Varangians at Bashi (Papaskiri 1981, 169). And in speculating that Yngvarr might have divided his Russo-Scandinavian forces, apparently taking only his own war band with him for operations on behalf of Bagrat-Júlfr, Larsson strays far from the saga's account, effectively abandoning it as a source of detailed evidence.

YS cannot, then, be coupled with the *Georgian Chronicle* to elucidate fully or conclusively Yngvarr's destination or deeds beyond Russia. From the rune stones' indication that he and his half-brother Haraldr sought "gold" and that their end came in Serkland, the Rioni-Kur route would seem to have been a less straightforward waterway for a naval raid on Moslem territories than the Don, the Volga or perhaps the Manych and Kuma. Its use by Yngvarr is not, however, inconceivable, and its subsequent use by some of the survivors during their withdrawal is perfectly possible: "a variety of direct or circuitous routes" may have been used by them (see above, Section IX). Moreover, individual details of actual phenomena of the distant "East Way" are sprinkled amidst the farrago of fables in YS. The saga's description of the mode of discharge of Greek fire is one of the most detailed and seemingly accurate to have survived (YS 21; Davidson 1976, 169, 277-8; Haldon and Byrne 1977, 93-4 and nn. 8, 10). While this detail and the notion of huge warships the size of islands (YS 18, 21) may have entered Scandinavian literary or oral lore via Varangians returned from service at Byzantium, the veterans of the several campaigns discussed above may have made some contribution to the stock. The many Scandinavians who served in Georgia in 1046-7 must have beheld tall rocks and narrow gorges, as did every person who braved the Dnieper rapids on the "Way from the Varangians to the Greeks". There, too, high rocks and cliffs towered above the traveller, and a full portage was necessary to circumvent one of the rapids (Obolensky 1974, 61-2; Davidson 1976, 169; Shepard 1979a, 219). One, or several, of these phenomena could have been the inspiration of YS's descriptions of the landscape through which the expedition passed. Scandinavian literary lore could also have been enriched by accounts of waterfalls and towering crags from survivors of the Rūs raids along the Kur, the Araxes and elsewhere in Caucasia in 1030-33. In Arrān in 1030, as in Georgia in 1046-7 and Russia in 1015-24, Scandinavians

participated in civil wars involving conflict between brothers or half-brothers, and the veterans' tales could have merged with native Scandinavian stories of family feuds and wars within a royal house. Only on these necessarily limited and inconclusive terms can one relate individual motifs or details in YS with particular phenomena or series of events occurring in the "East" or along the "East Way".

Notes

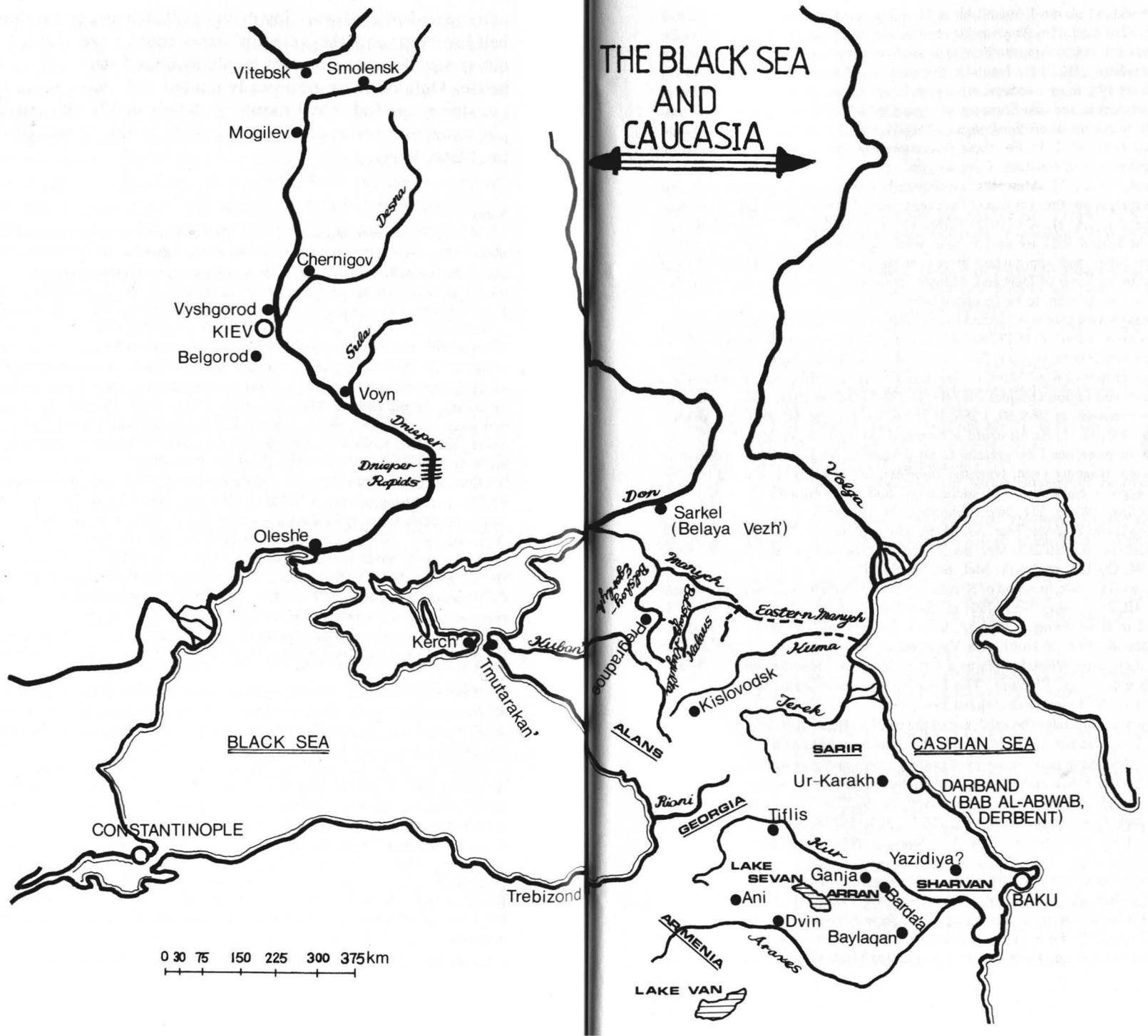
¹ Rier does, however, question (1976, 191) whether the cross-pendant "of Scandinavian type" was manufactured in Scandinavia, following M. V. Fekhner (1968, 214). These small, equal-armed crosses, with relief-ornament on one side, are of bronze or silver, always cast from a mould (Fekhner 1968, line-drawings, 211 *ris.* 1: 1-6). Fekhner argues against a Scandinavian origin from the modest number of examples (6) found in Sweden and Gotland, as against the many finds on the upper Dnieper and its tributaries, upper Volga and in north-west Russia (map, Fekhner 1968, 211, *ris.* 2). But finds in Finland are numerous, and the lack of finds at Birka, which Fekhner emphasizes (1968, 214), is inconclusive, since these pendants are found mostly on end of 10th- and 11th-century sites. Possibly Scandinavians manufactured them in response to a demand for amulets with Christian associations among primitive peoples in, especially, Russia after Vladimir's conversion. They are only found in women's graves (Fekhner 1968, 212).

² On Óláfr's stay with Yaroslav and Ingigerðr, see *Ólafs Saga Hins Helga* (1922, 71, 73-4; cf. *Heimskringla* 1941-51, II 328, 338, 343-4; Laing 1964, II 338, 344, 348). Haraldr's first stay in Russia is mentioned in *Heimskringla* (1941-51, III 69-70; Laing 1961, 161-2). Its duration is estimated as three winters by Shepard (1973, 149). Magnús's movements are related in *Heimskringla* (1941-51, II 328, 343, 415; III 3-4; Laing 1964, II 338, 348, 395; Laing 1961, 127; *Orkneyinga Saga* 1965, 55-6; Pálsson and Edwards 1978, 56-7; cf. Stender-Petersen 1953, 133-4). The sagas' representation of Yaroslav as frequenting Novgorod (Hólmgarðr) in this period seems to be accurate. Russian chronicles deriving from a Novgorodian source offer the most information about Yaroslav for the years c. 1015-c. 1036 (Kuz'min 1977, 253).

³ Two serpents appear on the following stones (numbers assigned by Mel'nikov 1977 (Mel.) and by SR will be cited here and in subsequent references): Mel. no. 36, Sö 9; Mel. no. 49, Sö 173; Mel. no. 62, Up 654; Mel. no. 73, Up 661; Mel. no. 75, Up 778; Mel. no. 84, Up 1143; Mel. no. 90, Up 644.

⁴ Mel. no. 25, Sö 107; Mel. no. 28, Sö 254; Mel. no. 30, Sö 108; Mel. no. 36, Sö 9; Mel. no. 37, Sö 131; Mel. no. 52, Sö 105; Mel. no. 53, Sö 287; Mel. no. 56, Sö 335; Mel. no. 62, Up 654; Mel. no. 73, Up 661; Mel. no. 75, Up 778; Mel. no. 78, Up 439; Mel. no. 84, Up 1143; Mel. no. 90, Up 644; Mel. no. 94, Ög 155. It is unclear whether crosses also appeared on some poorly or fragmentarily preserved stones, e.g. Mel. no. 33, Sö 96; Mel. no. 45, Sö 279; Mel. no. 46, Sö 281. This proportion of stones with crosses corresponds to the general pattern. A cross is found on approximately 64% of all extant Uppland rune stones (Thompson 1975, 30). Thompson states that most of the Uppland rune stones are "demonstrably 'Christian'" (1975, 7).

⁵ Babylon is placed in Serkland in *Postola sögur* (1874, 614). The River Tigris



“fellr of Serkland ok um Ermland hit mikla (Greater Armenia)” (*Alfræði íslensk* I, 1908, 7). The Latin “in Assyrios” is rendered “i Serklandi” in *Stjórn* (1862, 639-40). Darius (in reality king of Persia) is said to have been king of Serkland in *Alexanders Saga* (1925, 1). Numidia “er vestr í Africa ok kallaz Serkland hit mikla”, according to one version of *Rómveriasaga* (1910, 248). For the placing of Serkland in Africa, see also *Fornmanna sögur* (1825-37, XI 415). Africa in general is termed Serkland in *Heimskringla* (1941-51, III 74; Laing 1961, 164) and *Rómveriasaga* (1910, 115). For these references I am grateful to Björn Hagström of the Arnamagnæan Institute, Copenhagen.

⁶ Minorsky 1953, 17. Minorsky subsequently considered it possible that this episode is merely another version of the events recorded in the chapters on Sharvān and Darband for A. H. 423 (1032) (1958, 115 n. 5; 1963, 154 n. 133). However, whereas the Rūs of 1031 are said to have been engaged by Mūsā near Baku after, presumably, they had approached by sea, those in 1032 came by land and were ambushed by the amir of Darband, Maṣūr. Unless the text is very confused, two separate occasions seem to be recorded here.

⁷ Minorsky’s views were subjected to criticism from the anti-Normannist scholar, B. N. Zakhoder (1962-7, II 177-8). Rūs are usually distinguished from the Slavs by 10th-century Arabic sources, but already al-Iṣṭakhri and Ibn Ḥawqal term one of the three groups of Rūs “Slāviya”, seemingly thereby designating the inhabitants of the Novgorod region (Miquel 1967-80, II 332-4; Dubov 1981, 26-7, 28 n. 23).

⁸ Saxo Grammaticus 1979-80, I 286, II 157 n. 44. For the 845 raid, see *Annales Xantenses* 1909, 14-15; *Ex Miraculis s. Germani* 1887, 14, 16; cf. Zettel 1977, 163. For the latter reference I am grateful to Dr Rosamond McKitterick. According to *Ragnars saga*, Ragnarr’s son, Ívarr the Boneless, fell ill when he realised that the siege of a great castle was not succeeding, and he eventually died of illness (*Völsunga Saga* 1906-8, 151, 169; Schlauch 1949, 231, 251).

⁹ Various forms of *deyja*: Mel. no. 28, Sö 254; Mel. no. 32, Sö 179; Mel. no. 49, Sö 173; Mel. no. 53, Sö 287; Mel. no. 73, Up 661; of *andask*: Mel. no. 36, Sö 9; Mel. no. 94, Ög 155; of *farask*: Mel. no. 56, Sö 335.

¹⁰ Mstislav–Haraldr, husband of Kristín of Sweden, is mentioned in *Heimskringla* (1941-51, III 258; Laing 1961, 292; cf. Sverdlov 1974, 61). Holti “the Bold” is mentioned in *Heimskringla* (1941-51, II 148; Laing 1964, I 210). E. A. Rydzevskaya’s identification of Holti with Vsevolod is implausible, for “Vissivaldr” is explicitly named by *Heimskringla* as a son of Yaroslav, together with Holti and Yaroslav’s eldest son, Vladimir. The forceful Svyatoslav seems to me a likelier candidate for Holti (see Rydzevskaya 1940, 67).

¹¹ Literary evidence for the existence of the route in Brun 1879, 109-10; Lyapushkin 1941, 240-2; Schier 1951, 34; cf. for the classical period Miller 1969, map on 122, 140-1. Archaeological evidence of pottery, coins and glassware suggests trade between the Black Sea and Caspian, rather than solely on a north-south axis, at least until the 11th century: see Pletneva 1959, 241-9, 272; Shelkovnikov 1959, 278-9, 284-5, 288, 303-4; Shchapova 1963, 110-11, 114-15, 118-24; Pletneva 1967, 46; Kropotkin 1968, 75-7; Bykov 1974, 142; Spassky 1978, 183-4; Molchanov 1982, 254.

¹² TB does state that after 1033 “the infidels’ greed for these Islamic ‘Centres’ was extinguished absolutely” (Minorsky 1958, 47; 1963, 71). Thulin (1975, 29) adduces this in favour of his identification of Yngvarr’s host with the Rūs raiders of 1030-33. Possibly TB is guilty of inaccuracy here, in that Rūs were at large in the Caspian in 1035, and the “infidel” Alans raided Moslem Caucasia again in 1062

and 1065. But it is more probable that TB is referring only to the Islamic "Centres" about which it is talking, Darband and *al-Karakh. That TB uses "Centres" of a particular area is indicated by Minorsky (1958, 89-90; 1963, 124-5). The solitary man expressly stated by the rune stones to have been killed may have been slain in skirmishing with Moslems or in fending off nomads *en route*. The fact that only three or four Yngvarr stones seem to mention Serkland as the place of death may suggest that most of the deaths occurred outside Serkland, during the withdrawal.

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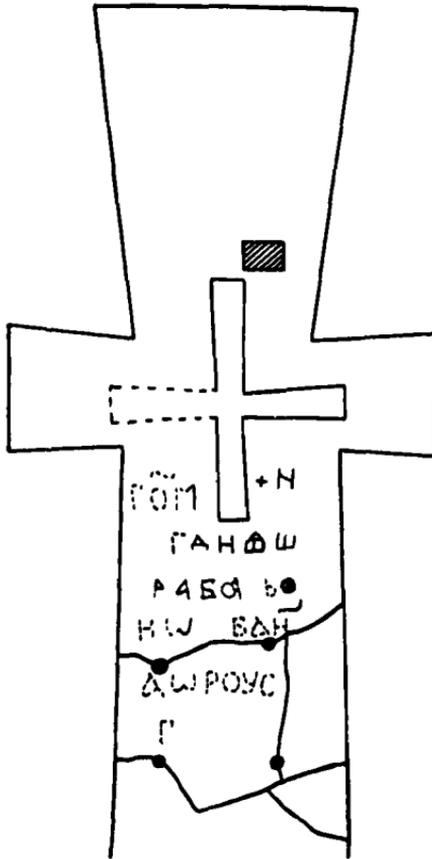
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Upper part of the Pregradnoe cross. Letters and signs no longer extant are shown by dotted lines. The drawing, published by V. A. Kuznetsov and A. A. Medyntseva (1975), is based on a drawing of the cross made by P. G. Butkov.

REVIEWS

DANAKONUNGA SÖGUR. Edited by BJARNI GUÐNASON. *Íslenzk fornrit*, XXXV. *Hið íslenzka fornritafélag*. Reykjavík, 1982. cxciv+373 pp.

Eighteen volumes of *Íslenzk fornrit* have now been published, and they cover most of the sagas of Icelanders (one more volume of later sagas is due to be published) and a number of the more important histories: *Heimskringla*, *Orkneyinga saga*, and now sagas of the kings of Denmark. There is no doubt that these are in many ways the most useful editions of the sagas, having well-printed normalised texts, extensive explanatory notes, textual notes that are highly selective, but adequate for most purposes, and comprehensive introductions. They are ideal for serious Icelandic readers of the sagas; their main disadvantage for others is that the Icelandic introductions may at first be difficult to follow. They are certainly written primarily for an Icelandic readership, and no concessions are made to the ignorance of foreigners about Icelandic literature and history.

This latest volume maintains the same high standards as the earlier books in the series. The three works edited in it, the extant fragments of *Skjöldunga saga*, *Knýtlinga saga*, and *Ágrip af sögu Danakonunga*, which have never before appeared in Icelandic editions, though very different from each other, are accounts of the kings of Denmark that together make up a history of Denmark from legendary times down to the end of the twelfth century, comparable to the history of Norway covering the same period in *Heimskringla*. Other works that relate to the history of Denmark such as *Jómsvíkinga saga*, *Ragnars saga loðbrókar* and *Hrólfs saga kraka* are not included since they are held to belong to different genres of writing. The linking together of *Skjöldunga saga* and *Knýtlinga saga* has been traditional from about the year 1300.

Ágrip af sögu Danakonunga is a brief survey, largely genealogical, of the rulers of Denmark, written in honour of Ingiborg, queen of Magnús lagabætir of Norway, in the second half of the thirteenth century, which survives in a copy made by Árni Magnússon. It is included in this volume for the sake of completeness and because it has not previously been easy of access. *Skjöldunga saga* and *Knýtlinga saga* are of much greater interest both as literary works and as histories, and both have extremely complex literary relationships, and present great problems in respect of their sources and origins. Bjarni Guðnason has spent many years wrestling with these problems, and this edition gives with great comprehensiveness the result of his researches. He has published earlier books and articles which have dealt in even greater detail with most of the topics now treated in his introduction, but in spite of repeated apologies for his summariness here, he gives in *Danakonunga sögur* a very adequate treatment of most of the important aspects of the background of the two sagas. His opinions about them seem largely unchanged, but it is noticeable how very tentative many of his conclusions are, and how frequently, after fully marshalling the evidence on a particular problem, he concludes that a definite solution is not attainable (e.g. p. lxx, on the authorship of *Skjöldunga saga*; p. lxxiii, on the lost beginning of *Knýtlinga saga*; pp. lxxxii and cxlviii on the sources of parts of *Knýtlinga saga*), and this is both honest and modest and gives one greater confidence in his judgement where he is able to reach firm conclusions

(e.g. on the form of the original *Skjöldunga saga*). The complexity of the two sagas and the thoroughness of the discussion of them has meant that the introduction to this edition is longer than any of the other introductions in the series so far; it is printed in smaller type than in earlier volumes and covers 190 pages. It deals mostly with the origin, sources, textual history, authorial methods and authorship of the three works (much space is devoted to the possible existence of lost earlier versions of the sagas), and includes a survey of Arngrímur Jónsson's sources for his accounts of Norwegian and Swedish pre-history and full summaries of earlier research both by Bjarni himself and by other scholars into all these topics.

The most complicated text is *Skjöldunga saga*, none of which is extant in its original form. For this work the editor has assembled most of the passages in later works that are believed to be based more or less directly on the original *Skjöldunga saga*, together with Arngrímur Jónsson's Latin accounts of its contents in *Rerum Danicarum fragmenta* and *Ad catalogum regum Sveciæ*, for which a modern Icelandic translation is provided. The medieval Icelandic fragments include the passage *Upphaf allra frásagna* in AM 764, 4to, parts of *Ynglinga saga*, *Snorra Edda*, *Ragnarssona þátr* in *Hauksbók* (it is perhaps a pity that the whole of this *þátr* was not included), and of the Greatest Saga of Óláfr Tryggvason, and the fragment known as *Sögubrot af fornkonungum* (which Bjarni thinks represents a later version of *Skjöldunga saga* influenced by romances). Some shorter passages are given in footnotes to the text of Arngrímur's Latin version. This is the first time that all these texts have been brought together in one book and it is extremely useful to have them in this form. They give a good impression of the contents and style of the lost saga, which contained a number of very interesting and well-told stories of the legendary history of early Scandinavia that are of great importance for the literary history of early Iceland. As is argued very convincingly in the introduction, *Skjöldunga saga*, although a *fornaldarsaga* in respect of the historical material it covered, was in style and conception a serious and critical history written by someone working fully within the contemporary European tradition of historiography; a man less interested in sensational stories than in the origins of dynasties and the development of political and social realities. It was a learned and disciplined work, like *Ynglinga saga* and *Íslendingabók*, though it was part of the growing interest in antiquities which later led to the composition of the more anecdotal heroic sagas. It was almost certainly written before 1200, and was thus earlier than any of the *fornaldarsögur* and earlier than most kings' sagas.

Knýtlinga saga is also a complicated work, but it is better preserved, though the beginning is lacking. It was clearly strongly influenced by *Heimskringla*, and was an attempt to do for Denmark what *Heimskringla* had done for Norway. But Bjarni argues that it is not only the conception of the work and its view of history that is indebted to *Heimskringla*; there is also much material in it derived from the earlier work, though interestingly enough it appears that the author avoided repeating too much of what he found there, even when it bore directly on the history of Denmark, and evidently conceived his work as a sort of supplement to *Heimskringla*, frequently omitting or abbreviating stories told there even when they might seem essential to his narrative. Bjarni also argues that the author's interpretation of the character of Knútr helgi is strongly influenced by Snorri Sturluson's interpretation of the character of Óláfr helgi, and is not derived from a hypothetical lost *Knúts saga* (this saga is dismissed as never having existed as a separate work on pp. cxv-cxvii, though it seems to reappear on p. clxxvii). He shows that incidents have even been transferred from characters in *Heimskringla* to those in *Knýtlinga saga*, and

that many speeches and attitudes expressed by characters in the later work are modelled on those provided by Snorri for his characters and transferred to different speakers.

Bjarni has theories about the authorship of the three anonymous works he has edited. He plausibly argues for Sturla Þórðarson as the author of *Ágrip af sǫgu Danakonunga* (p. cxci), and for Óláfr Þórðarson as the author of *Knýtinga saga* (pp. clxxix-clxxxiv). He is a good deal less confident in proposing bishop Páll Jónsson, son of Jón Loptsson, as the author of *Skjöldunga saga* (pp. xvii, lxx), and here the evidence is much more sparse and equivocal, though the theory is not improbable. It is at any rate likely that the work originated in the milieu of Oddi.

In his introduction, Bjarni is consistently wary of admitting too freely the existence of lost works, and dismisses many that have been hypothesized by earlier scholars. He prefers to try to explain the genesis of the three texts on the basis of the writings and traditions that are certainly known to have been available to the authors. He is particularly reluctant to accept lost works of Ari Þorgilsson as the solution to all problems of unknown sources, though he often invokes the lost history of Sæmundr the wise. He is also somewhat reluctant to assume oral stories as sources, though he admits that *Skjöldunga saga* must be based on oral prose sources as well as poems and genealogies, and that *Knýtinga saga* probably made use of some Danish oral traditions, and argues that court poets must have been active in handing down oral prose stories and other non-poetical historical traditions (p. xii). But he emphasises that the author of *Knýtinga saga* also used skaldic verse unknown to other Icelandic authors, had access to and made free use of Danish and English written records (both of which would have been in Latin), including Saxo Grammaticus, and generally proposes more extensive use by Icelandic writers of foreign learned sources like Adam of Bremen and Anglo-Latin chronicles than other scholars have done. He lays welcome stress on trying to understand the methods and attitudes of the authors of the sagas, to see how they tended to manipulate their sources in accordance with their political leanings and purposes and their understanding of their task, and to depart from them consistently in characteristic ways, so that it is possible to see how they can be basing their accounts on extant sources without reproducing them exactly. He is illuminating not only about the authors of the texts edited in this volume but also about Snorri Sturluson, and the thorough survey of the development of Danish historiography and the European literary background in the twelfth century in the first section of the introduction is excellent.

There is little that I am able to contribute in the way of corrections to the views expressed in the edition. But it is unlikely, in view of what is now known about the origin of *Trójumanna saga*, that Snorri Sturluson used it as a source (cf. p. xxix and see Jonna Louis-Jensen, 'Trójumanna saga', *Kulturhistorisk leksikon for nordisk middelalder*, XVIII (1974), 652-5, and her edition of *Trójumanna saga: the Dares Phrygius version*, 1981, pp. l-lvi). It is improbable that the legend of the migration of the Æsir in Icelandic writings is directly inspired by pseudo-Fredegar and *Liber historiae Francorum*; and it seems that the extant Icelandic *langfeðgatöl* are based, for the section covering the Skjöldungs, on *Skjöldunga saga* rather than vice versa (cf. pp. xxix and lii, and see A. Faulkes, 'Descent from the gods', *Mediaeval Scandinavia*, 11, 1978-9, pp. 102 and 117-18). The earliest form of the Skjöldung genealogy seems to be that preserved in Árni Magnússon's copy in AM 1 e β II fol., and the list of Óðinn's ancestors that became traditional in Icelandic genealogies was evidently known already to Snorri Sturluson (cf. pp. lii-liiii, and

see A. Faulkes, 'The genealogies and regnal lists in a manuscript in Resen's Library', *Sjötíu ritgerðir helgaðar Jakobi Benediktssyni*, 1977, pp. 177-90). The *langfeðgatal* in *Alfræði íslenzk*, III, 55-9, contains all three sections of the genealogy, back to Noah and down to historical times, like the genealogical compilation in *Flateyjarbók*, I, 26-7, though the arrangement is different. It appears that especially in relation to non-Icelandic history and sources, the editor has been relying heavily on some rather ancient and perhaps out-dated books (note, for instance, p. vii, n. 3 and p. 79, n. 7, where *Norðhumrúland* is erroneously given as the Anglo-Saxon name for Northumbria).

Among the minor faults of presentation in the edition are the lack of a proper bibliography and the inadequacy of the bibliographical references (e.g. p. xxxvi n. 1, where the reader, in order to find out about editions and critical works on *Sögubrot*, is invited to search through two volumes of *Islandica* and 16 volumes of *Bibliography of Old Norse-Icelandic studies*), many of which will be confusing even to specialists; the lack of proper accounts of the sources of the interesting but arbitrarily chosen illustrations (e.g. no date or provenance is given for the picture of the martyrdom of St Edmund facing p. 94); and the fact that the otherwise helpful maps of various parts of Europe at the end of the volume seem in many cases to show modern political boundaries and names rather than medieval ones. It would also have been helpful if the list of contents had made more immediately clear what in fact is included in the edition under the heading *Skjöldunga saga*. There are a few misprints: Ívarr is called 'víðgaðmi' on p. xxxiii, and for *skrin* there appears rather confusingly *skírn* on p. cxxxi. The manuscript ÁM 764, 4to is given as 746, 4to on p. 2.

But this massive and authoritative work of scholarship will nevertheless be an invaluable guide to the complexities of the background to the works edited in it, two of which are of central importance to the history of Icelandic literature and the early history of Scandinavia. And the editor never loses sight of the fact that they are both written by extremely skilful and entertaining authors, whose writing, like Bjarni's own, is not only important, but a pleasure to read.

ANTHONY FAULKES

EDDA. PROLOGUE AND GYLFAGINNING. By SNORRI STURLUSON. Edited by ANTHONY FAULKES. *Clarendon Press*, Oxford, 1982. xxxiv+177.

One cannot but welcome a new edition of two complete parts of Snorri Sturluson's *Edda*, Prologue and *Gylfaginning*, prepared by Anthony Faulkes with English-speaking students in mind. As he has noted in his Introduction (p. xi), such readers have not been well served in the past and it will be of great advantage to students and their teachers to have available a reliable and complete text of the first two parts of Snorri's *Edda* with a comprehensive glossary and index of proper names together with a general introduction and a small selection of explanatory notes. Faulkes's edition has come at an opportune moment in *Edda*-scholarship, which in recent years has shown a renewed interest in assessing Snorri's originality in his treatment of early Norse religion and poetry against the background of Christian-Latin theories about the origin and nature of heathen religions and in the light of medieval grammar and rhetoric.

One of the greatest merits of this new edition is Faulkes's text of Snorri's Prologue. Here for the first time we have a text based on the Codex Regius (R)

and employing seventeenth-century manuscripts derived from R when it was still complete, that is, before its first leaf had been lost. Faulkes bases his text of the first section of the Prologue on one of these seventeenth-century manuscripts, K (AM 755 4to); but from the point where R begins, his text is based solely on it. As most scholars, including Anthony Faulkes, agree that R has the most coherent text of the *Edda*, the version of the Prologue in this edition is an advance on all previous ones, for earlier editors have used either the often prolix Codex Wormianus or the terse Codex Upsaliensis to supply R's lack of initial leaf. Snorri's Prologue provides a key to his presentation of Norse myth in *Gylfaginning* and of skaldic poetry in *Skáldskaparmál* and so a new text of this part of the *Edda* (previously published in unnormalized spelling in *Gripla* III (1979)) should allow greater precision in the evaluation of Snorri's attitude to his subject-matter, which, as Faulkes rightly states, 'is almost as interesting as the mythology itself' (Introduction, p. xvii). A study of the Prologue also clarifies Snorri's organization of his material in *Gylfaginning* and *Skáldskaparmál*, for many of the intellectual concerns of these two sections are anticipated there. In this context, it is gratifying to read Faulkes's caveat to those who wish to use Snorri's presentation of Norse myth as a direct source for the nature of pre-Christian Scandinavian religion (Introduction, pp. xxvii-xxix).

Faulkes's edition is a text of R with normalized spellings and editorial punctuation. The textual notes (pp. 73-6) cite readings from other manuscripts of the *Edda* only when R is incoherent or incomplete. Such a procedure seems logical in an edition where space is obviously at a premium, where the editor has determined — rightly, in this reviewer's opinion — that the extant manuscripts of the *Edda* are such that it is not possible to judge which have the more original readings but that R has overall the most consistent text (Introduction, p. xxxii). The various verses that Snorri quotes in *Gylfaginning* also appear as they are in R. Although one can see that editorial consistency demands such a treatment of the verses, the failure to present textual variants from other manuscripts of Snorri's *Edda* and, in many cases, from manuscripts of other works, places substantial limitations upon one's understanding of these embedded texts unless one has recourse to other editions and, in some instances, places too great a load on the glossary and General notes, where Faulkes tries to give some indication of what variant readings and possible emendations exist. Students, in particular, are likely to find some of the notes and glosses difficult to follow, as examples below indicate.

In many ways the notes and glosses Faulkes provides are admirable, though they may prove to be of greater use to someone who already has a reasonable knowledge of Norse mythological and historical texts than to the 'student with a basic grasp of Icelandic grammar', to whom, the dust-jacket suggests, the edition is primarily directed. The glossary, in particular, is a work of meticulous scholarship, recording with fine discrimination the nuances of meaning of many words that Snorri uses in a variety of contexts. It is good to see that the textual variants also appear in the glossary and that specifically poetic usage is marked.

The coexistence of a detailed glossary and rather sparing General notes makes for certain difficulties. Quite often the reader can only speculate on the underlying rationale for certain editorial suggestions in the glossary in the absence of any general note to the word or passage in question. For example, why does Faulkes consider that R's *stormr* in 4/7 (*ok þar með stormi sævarins*) is perhaps an error for *straumr*, 'current'? His gloss on *stormr* refers one to the only instance of *straumr* in the first two parts of the *Edda*, where it occurs in Snorri's quotation of *Vǫluspá*,

39/2, the reference being to the *þungir straumar* that perjurers and murderers wade through on *Nástrandir*. This citation does not seem particularly relevant to the passage in the Prologue which appears to concern the chief elements (*hofuðskepnur*, 4/3) from which those who had lost the name of God considered the world was made. In this passage *vindr* (*loptsins*) and *stormr* (*sævarins*) together seem to typify the element air as it disturbs the sky and sea respectively. As we find in numerous instances in the Prologue, Snorri suggests a similarity between the systematization of knowledge he sets out there and the specific religious beliefs of the historical Æsir to be found in *Gylfaginning* and *Skáldskaparmál* (compare with this section of the Prologue the wind-kennings of *Skáldskaparmál*, ch. 36; these in their turn are reminiscent of learned non-Scandinavian traditions such as the notion of the four primary elements).

The glossary is most cryptic in its treatment of the verse texts quoted in *Gylfaginning*. In some cases General notes expand the glossary, e.g. those to p. 17, l. 27; p. 19, ll. 20-27; p. 52, l. 24, but in others, even where there is a note, its references to secondary sources are sometimes inadequate to explain the implications of the glossary entry. The gloss to 7/13 *ǫðli*, 'fatherland, inherited land', in Bragi Boddason's Gefjun-strophe is far too compressed in view of the fact that the general note to this verse refers the reader only to Roberta Frank's interpretation of the first four lines (*Old Norse court poetry*, pp. 108-10) which is largely based on Anne Holtmark's text and discussion (*Maal og minne* (1944), 169-79), not mentioned by Faulkes. Both Holtmark and Frank offer the form *oðla* as an alternative to *ǫðla*, but suggest a different meaning for it from the 'swiftly' given as a possible alternative in Faulkes's glossary.

The General notes are a mixture of useful information and a certain amount of the statement of the obvious; the note to p. 35, l. 10, for example, on the giant builder's method of constructing the wall of Ásgarðr, seems self-evident and the information contained in the note to p. 35, l. 20, on the lexical set *hestr/merr/hross*, is a duplication of material in the glossary. The allocation of space to entries such as these in the General notes seems hard to justify, especially as one of the most disappointing economies in this section is the inclusion of only two short notes on the Prologue. This is regrettable in an edition of the *Edda* which assigns high value to the Prologue (cf. Introduction, pp. xiv-xv, xxii-v and xxviii) and prints a reconstructed text of it. A merit of the General notes is Faulkes's drawing attention to the major discrepancies and inconsistencies in Snorri's systematization of his mythological sources so that we can more clearly see his shaping hand at work on a body of material which was probably by no means systematic (as he points out, Introduction, p. xxviii). Here also Faulkes includes a succinct listing of the major known sources and analogues of Snorri's mythological narratives in *Gylfaginning*, though some of these may perplex the novice; apropos the note to the giant builder tale on p. 66, why is it 'uncertain whether Snorri is right to connect *Vsp* 25-6 with this story'? There is no reference to the secondary literature on this question, in the first place to Jan de Vries, *The problem of Loki* (1933), and then to more recent discussions (e.g. J. Harris, U. Dronke).

The Index of names is concerned to present the names of Snorri's *Edda* beside what is known of the personae of Norse mythology from other primary sources, with some few exceptions where secondary sources are mentioned (most often the various interpretative works of Anne Holtmark) or where etymologies are proposed. It is a most useful tool, listing in small space the major sources for our knowledge of Old Norse cosmogony and eschatology and pointing out the

differences Snorri establishes between the historical Æsir from Troy and the gods, of similar name, in whom they claimed to believe. The decision (Introduction, p. xi) to confine comment on mythological matters for the most part to the Index of names has the double advantage of succinctness and relative impartiality and one disadvantage, that the edition as a whole gives no comparative framework in which the reader may place the narrative structures of the tales Snorri tells in *Gylfaginning*. The listing of names and the various contexts in which they appear does not necessarily tell one very much about the types of narrative in which the personae who bear those names are participants. Without greatly expanding the General notes it would have been possible to refer to relevant tale-types (as classified, e.g., in Inger M. Boberg, *Motif-index of early Icelandic literature* (1966)).

Faulkes has compressed a great deal of information and some valuable and judicious critical analysis into his Introduction. I would have preferred to see the more technical sections placed towards the beginning rather than towards the end; as it is, the chapter numbers of *Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* I (1848), which appear in the text margins, are indicated in the synopsis (pp. xi-xiii) but are not explained until p. xxxiii. The section on the manuscripts (pp. xxix-xxxiii) might have been combined with the section on authorship (pp. xii-xvii), which of necessity treats manuscript relations. The question of Snorri's authorship of the *Edda* and the related question of what constitutes the core of the work are sensibly treated; the suggestion that none of the various extant manuscripts preserves the *Edda* quite as Snorri wrote it and the notion that the work may have undergone many revisions seem sensible inferences from the nature of the texts we have. Faulkes deals with the problem of whether the Prologue and the first and last paragraphs of *Gylfaginning* are likely to be interpolations by an appeal to their thematic and intellectual value to the *Edda* as a whole. It is one of the virtues of this edition that it treats the *Edda* as a coherent work, organized, in spite of some inconsistencies, as a literary account of the religion and poetry of Snorri's pre-Christian ancestors.

The section of the Introduction on models and sources is excellent. Although one may disagree with Faulkes on some points of detail and emphasis, one welcomes his general assessment of Snorri's *Edda* as a systematic and humanistic presentation of a diverse body of inherited traditional knowledge in the context of the learned writings of the Christian Middle Ages. This point of view is not new (and I miss in the short bibliography that ends the Introduction any reference to two of the earliest works on the subject, R. M. Meyer's 'Snorri als Mythograph', *Arkiv för nordisk filologi*, XXVIII, N. F. XXIV (1912) and Andreas Heusler's *Die gelehrte Urgeschichte im altisländischen Schrifttum* (1908)), but Anthony Faulkes has restated and refined it in the light of his own and other scholars' recent research. This new edition of the first two parts of Snorri's *Edda* will be of invaluable assistance to those who wish to understand the complexity and sophistication of one of the finest literary works of medieval Iceland.

MARGARET CLUNIES ROSS

THE MEDIEVAL SAGA. By CAROL J. CLOVER. *Cornell University Press*. Ithaca and London, 1982. 219 pp.

In one of his reviews of contemporary theatre Bernard Shaw summed up the intellectual content of Shakespeare's writing as distinct from its poetry, asserting that any famous passage, if reduced to prose paraphrase, would present 'a platitude

that even an American professor of ethics would blush to offer to his disciples.' Shaw, of course, lived in a Golden Age, one when it was possible to picture an American professor blushing to utter platitudes. Nowadays he would dress them in jargon, express them as diagrams, or, in despair, do as Shakespeare did and clothe them in metaphor. I am driven to these thoughts by Professor Clover's book on the structure of the saga as seen in a medieval context. In one chapter she speaks of 'stranding', and thereafter, though her ideas are simple enough, the language develops an involute life of its own. 'Strands' are made up of 'stitches': they are 'braided', 'knitted', 'spliced'. They are sometimes discontinuous (not a characteristic I would like in a strand of a rope I had to depend on). They help to form a 'complex moving tapestry' on to whose edges 'tangential themes' are woven. They are secured in a selvage 'from which they emanate in parallel lines to form the warp of the story'. Indeed, practically anything that can happen to a textile happens to them though perhaps their adventures reach a climax in 'It is in such lonely stitches that we glimpse most clearly the mechanics of interlace' (p. 73).

I realise that in making these comments on Clover's prose I may be guilty of unjustified assumption — that she is writing English. It is an assumption British scholars make too easily; a few years ago (in *Saga-Book*, XX, 145-6), R. W. McTurk rebuked Lars Lönnroth for not writing Oxford English, when Lönnroth was presumably attempting Berkeleian American. It may be that in that dialect strands can be discontinuous and made up of stitches, and the selvage can secure the warp of a piece of cloth rather than the weft. It may have been consciousness of these semantic difficulties that led Clover to give us the few simple diagrams that explain her simple ideas. Or it may be that the confused language reflects mental confusion. A cluttered desk is said to indicate a cluttered mind: what, I wonder, does cluttered prose show?

Whatever Clover's prose shows, it fails to hide the fact that much of her book consists of commonplaces, and in this it follows a good deal of modern transatlantic saga criticism. Her thesis begins with a discussion of saga structure. She spots — what indeed it would be difficult not to spot — that saga construction is not governed by classical principles. There is 'open composition', which seems to mean that the writer may draw into his story any material that he thinks appropriate, even though it is only marginally relevant. Here, she thinks, the saga matches other late medieval prose literatures, notably romance; and is also consistent with the teaching of some medieval rhetoricians. The proliferation of material in the sagas is not essentially different from that in the great codices, so that *Flateyjarbók* also exemplifies the thesis. Clover goes on to look at two different, though related, aspects of her subject: (a) 'Stranding', 'a shift of narrative focus from part to part', usually entailing 'discontinuous telling of something that could . . . be told all at once'. A strand, Clover claims, could be practically anything (and it would be interesting to see her justify her claim that the place Bergþórshváll is a strand, presumably in *Njáls saga*). In practice, most of her examples are of 'stranding by character', where the stories of different characters are intermingled, the teller turning now to one group of people, now to another. (b) 'Simultaneity', techniques of story division whereby the teller can treat events happening at the same time in different places. For each of these, Clover claims, there is developed a 'language', a group of set phrases to enable the teller to shift his view-point or to return to a place or time he has left for a while. In this again she sees links with rhetorical theory. Much of what Clover says in these chapters is true and much, moreover, is obvious, the only justification for saying it being that not all recent writers

have found it equally obvious. For instance, she takes issue, courteously and by implication, with Andersson's surprising remark that 'saga economy allows nothing superfluous' (*The Icelandic Family Saga*, p. 33; to be fair, Andersson's own discussion of individual sagas in that book also contradicts this claim) by pointing to 'sizable chunks of narrative matter which are marginal by any logic' or which 'may be considered a clear digression'.

How much of what Clover discovers so excitedly is specific to saga and the contemporary European prose, and how much is common to most literatures, it would be interesting to speculate. 'Simultaneity' is a case in point. If you have to describe things happening at the same time but in different places, there are, particularly if you cannot use multiple column setting, only a couple of ways of doing it. Saga-writers find them; so do many other literatures. For instance, *The Anglo-Saxon chronicle* entries for 757 (755) and 893/4 solve the problem in much the same way as the saga-writers, and the latter annal even has one of those retrieval formulae (*swa ic ær sæde*) which so impress Clover. As for 'stranding by character' it would be interesting to compare saga practice with the way Bede introduces the complex tale of St. Wilfrid's life bit by bit into the confused story of early Christianity in Anglo-Saxon England.

Clover's criticism suffers, as indeed does much American criticism of this school, from its tendency to generalise. It tries to find standard patterns and episodes, and thereby stresses similarities and hides differences. As an example I quote the treatment of the 'Travel Patterns' in *Gunnlaugs saga ormstungu* and *Víga-Glúms saga*. These Clover defines respectively as 'digressive and unintegrated . . . in structural terms, at least, an intercalation' (following Andersson here), and 'unnecessary and . . . a digression'. In fact, the 'Travel Pattern' works hard in *Gunnlaugs saga*. The poet's ill-planned journeys stress his *óráðinn* nature (contrasting with Hrafn's decisiveness), which is something of a *Leitmotiv* of the tale. They also supply him with certain properties that are to follow him, the sword he will kill Hrafn with, the cloak that somehow symbolises his love for Helga, and the splendid clothing that is to make such an effect on her when they meet again after her marriage. For the first time, too, we see in these travels Gunnlaugr impressing people of rank (which would not be guessed at from what goes before), and making his mark as a court poet. He achieves the friendship of Earl Eiríkr, thus making it possible for him to return to Norway for the duel with Hrafn, a duel which arises from their quarrel during the journey. He receives such honour from Aethelred of England that he becomes his retainer, and is required to promise to return to support the English king — which delays his journey back to claim Helga. Gunnlaugr appears briefly as a cripple (*eigi skal haltr ganga, meðan báðir fætr eru jafnlangir*) and this image is reflected in the accident to his leg that prevents him getting to Borg in time to intervene in Helga's wedding; also in the maiming of Hrafn who, decisive as always, does not let it prevent him killing Gunnlaugr. Finally, it is in this 'Travel Pattern' that the prophecy is made that Gunnlaugr's arrogance will lead to an early death. For an unintegrated digression, this is not doing too badly.

Whether you think that the 'Travel Pattern' of *Víga-Glúms saga* is of more than casual importance to the tale will in part depend on the significance you attach to Glúmr's meeting with Vigfúss, and the latter's gift of a spear, cloak and sword. Clover thinks the whole episode an unnecessary digression. For G. Turville-Petre, arguing with unusual cogency in the introduction to his edition of the saga, these gifts of power display, perhaps even initiate, the theme of destiny, fate or luck that

is predominant in Glúmr's story. Whatever you think of this, there is no doubt that, by his exploits in Norway, Glúmr achieves a recognition and a self-confidence that he did not have when he left Iceland. He shows *skorungskapr* and becomes a force to be reckoned with, as Porkell notes, because of what he has done abroad. By treating these two examples as simple 'Travel Patterns', Clover disguises their specific purposes in their sagas.

Much more successful is Clover's treatment of more complex episodes, those whose very complexity makes it likely that the saga-writer is working creatively, even if within a convention. So, she shows the workings of the 'Atlantic Interlude' in *Njáls saga* (though whether that is important enough to warrant detailed summary three times — pp. 29-32, 73-5, 124-8 — is a different matter), and she stresses the care with which that set of interlocking incidents is organized. From this she suggests an important conclusion about the audience appealed to, that it was a sophisticated one with the time, training and opportunity to appreciate this sort of skill: 'These are the sagas' literary features, intended for the enjoyment of their private readers.'

This conclusion is put forward in the last chapter, which is the best part of the book though not necessarily the most convincing. In it Clover tries to determine at what stage in the evolution of Norse prose these structural and rhetorical characteristics evolved, so she searches for them in the 'pre-Classical' Scandinavian prose works. The trouble is, as she points out, that (i) there are few early texts, (ii) what survives is 'not entirely apposite, consisting of translations of foreign works, history writing (partly in Latin) . . . , and royal biographies of a strong clerical stamp', (iii) it is hard to derive a typological sequence from these texts. There are, of course, more problems than Clover admits: (iv) the texts come from two different countries, Norway and Iceland, with different social systems and, probably, educational influences: they should not simply be lumped all together; (v) why were some of these texts chosen and others, equally marginal, omitted: as, for instance, Saxo's *Gesta* or even the *Encomium Emmae Reginae* which certainly comes from a Scandinavianized milieu? (vi) one of the texts chosen, *Íslendingabók*, is not in its original state. Ari tells that the earlier version was altered at the request of three readers, and this involved both suppression and addition of material. The composition of the present *Íslendingabók* may not represent Ari's plans; (vii) another chosen text, now called *Ágrip*, is by its nature a summary and so is not likely to demonstrate the open composition of the thirteenth century; (viii) other of the chosen works are, as Clover confesses in her separate accounts of them, of uncertain textual validity. For instance, *Landnámabók* survives only in later recensions, and Oddr's Saga of Óláfr Tryggvason only in Norse translation of the Latin original. Obviously one must be very careful in using evidence of this sort.

Despite — and even to some degree admitting — these problems, Clover thinks she can detect, in the late twelfth and early thirteenth century, the development of the digressive mode of story-telling, of open composition and stranded narrative. By comparing the early and the later narrative types, she distinguishes 'oral' from 'literary' characteristics. The similarities of saga narrative and prose romance she explains as 'independent responses to a common medieval aesthetic'. In the increased complexity of narrative technique in the thirteenth century she sees an appeal to a reading rather than a listening audience.

Many will not follow Clover all the way in this, yet her last chapter certainly has the material for an interesting article of the kite-flying kind. Alas, it seems that the article is not an art form favoured by American professorial economics, and

hence, I suppose, the quantity of limp books that cross the Atlantic. Readers of this book may deduce a good deal about American university fashions; whether they come away from it knowing more about the sagas is another matter.

R. I. PAGE

FEUD IN THE ICELANDIC SAGA. By JESSE BYOCK. *University of California Press*. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1982. xx+293 pp.

This is an ambitious book, which attempts to establish a new basis for the study of the Icelandic saga. The controversy over the status of the sagas as literature or as history is an old one; here it is side-stepped by asserting a historicity which depends not on the factual accuracy of saga narrative, but on its reflection of the 'societal normative code' of the culture which produced it. Feud is the central concern of the sagas because it was the effective means of regulating Icelandic society. It is argued here, with some plausibility, that the differences between thirteenth-century and tenth-century Iceland have been exaggerated; the preoccupation with feud and the conventions for conducting it remained constant throughout the period of the Free State.

The endeavour to throw light on the sagas through sociological study of thirteenth-century Iceland is a potentially useful one. Unfortunately, however, Byock by no means justifies his conflation of literary and historical material. The complex question of the attitude of a thirteenth-century audience to semi-historical accounts of their forebears is not solved by such vague formulations as: 'Medieval Icelanders told the tales of their people not as history or literature, but as narratives springing from societal relationships. Their stories are about the conflicts and the anxieties inherent in their society; between the medieval audience and the sagaman there was a contract of *vrausemblance*' (p. 38). This over-simplification leads to a number of problems, among them that of the status of the Sturlunga sagas. A detailed consideration of their similarities in theme and structure to the Family Sagas would indeed be welcome, but Byock makes no distinction between the two groups of sagas in illustrating a thesis which, he implies, applies to both equally. Worse, the process of feud is presented as identical in literature and in society, although its presentation in the sagas must surely be determined to some extent by literary tradition. The author, however, discounts literary features, and is, in general, dismissive of literary analysis of the sagas: 'Saga scholarship during the past half century has tried to pry the sagas loose from their traditional social moorings in order to raise the status of these tales from bits and pieces of folklore and history to the realm of great literature' (p. 7). However, he does concede considerable freedom to the saga author to manipulate the traditional elements of his technique, and where he allows himself to expand on the choices made in a particular saga, shows a perception which could have made this a more satisfying book.

As a former student of Theodore Andersson, Byock may have had as a starting point the wish to discover a more flexible and sophisticated definition of saga narrative than that outlined in Andersson's *The Icelandic Family Saga*, which Byock discusses in some detail. Like Andersson, Byock considers feud to be not just the main content of the saga, but its very backbone. The structure of the narrative is determined by the progress not necessarily of a single feud escalating to a climax, as Andersson suggested, but of an indefinite number of feuds linked

in 'feud chains'. Within a single feud, too, there is flexibility. Byock adopts the Structuralist analogy between literary and linguistic forms to coin the term 'feudeme', referring to a single, indivisible unit of feud, dealing with 'conflict', 'advocacy', or 'resolution', and active in that it is recounted directly in the narrative. Incidents merely reported ('units of information') are inactive, as are 'units of travel', which usually act as prefix or suffix to a feudeme. There is no fixed order or frequency for the use of these elements, hence the saga author's freedom to expand or vary the details of any feud or 'cluster' of feudemes within the feud chain. There is no doubt that the flexibility of this scheme does away with the problems Andersson faced in forcing each of the Family Sagas into his six-point pattern; but it falls a victim to a contrasting defect, in failing to register the escalation which Andersson considered so important, or, in fact, any development in the narrative scale at all.

Most of the book is devoted to the articulation and illustration of this structural theory. Of the three categories of feudeme, 'conflict' and 'resolution' more or less define themselves. Byock is most concerned with 'advocacy', a rather catch-all term which covers any seeking or proffering of support, goading, or passing of information, which either hinders or promotes conflict or resolution. But 'the major and most varied form of advocacy was brokerage' (p. 74), his term for the contract by which a man, usually powerful, undertakes to act as middleman in the quarrels or lawsuits of others. For Byock, this is the mainspring of Icelandic political interaction: 'What was unusual in Iceland was that brokerage was so pervasive and became the normal way in which Icelanders dealt with each other' (p. 42). The broker had a self-interested and political motive: brokerage was a means of acquiring wealth, and of maintaining or improving alliances. The emphasis on brokerage as a social reality, however, is cast into serious doubt by the book's blurring of the distinction between literature and history, since in the sagas the process clearly has a literary function. Involvement of a powerful chieftain in a petty quarrel is an effective device for maintaining the realistic texture of everyday life, while gaining significance and the escalation of a minor to a major feud. As Byock himself says, 'it is likely that many confrontations were quickly and reasonably settled . . . and were not worth a story. The sagas, however, are about disputes that continued and involved other people' (p. 40).

Much care has gone into the presentation of this book, although it is not clear what audience it is intended to reach. For the beginner, or the student of medieval history or other literatures, translations are provided, both of terms occurring in the text and of saga extracts. These are generally scrupulous, though infelicities, such as 'a worthy housemistress' (p. 135), for *gild húsfreyja*, do occur. But the general reader would find the summaries of saga incidents difficult to follow, particularly as a large amount of material from a single saga is often used non-sequentially, to illustrate various units of narration. The experienced reader, on the other hand, will find the remorseless cataloguing unnecessary and repetitious. Other features of the book plainly meant to be helpful, but serving little apparent purpose, are the four maps and the nine substantial translated saga extracts forming part of the introduction. These are referred to only generally in the body of the book; where detailed reference is to be made, the material is summarized or paraphrased again in the course of the discussion. The three appendices B, C and D also duplicate many references already made.

Repetitiousness is frustrating when more might usefully have been said. One cannot fairly accuse of lack of breadth a book which attempts to generalize a

structure for the whole body of sagas, and does indeed deal at length with many. But sagas which do not fit readily into Byock's pattern are more summarily dealt with. These, primarily the outlaws' and poets' sagas, he groups together as 'saga narratives with a low cluster density', and by stressing their non-conformity with his scheme, exaggerates the extent to which they are exceptional. He could have investigated how, in the poets' sagas, an originally psychological conflict is worked out through the apparently inappropriate confrontations of feud; he discusses an analogous adaptation of the technique in his account of the legalistic dealings with ghosts in *Eyrbyggja saga*. The common saga theme of travel and adventures outside Iceland is also excluded from the scope of the book. In short, comprehensive as this study may seem, there remain many traditional and important features of saga narrative which it fails to take into account.

ALISON FINLAY

ISLÄNDISCHE MÄRCHENSAGAS. STUDIEN ZUR PROSALITERATUR IM SPÄTMITTELALTERLICHEN ISLAND. By JÜRIG GLAUSER. *Beiträge zur nordischen Philologie*, 12. Herausgegeben von der Schweizerischen Gesellschaft für skandinavische Studien. Helbing & Lichtenhahn Verlag AG. Basel and Frankfurt am Main, 1983. viii+357 pp.

The Germanic requirement that doctoral dissertations be published is often a regrettable one as not every dissertation, however worthy, is automatically a book suitable for launching on the market. Occasionally however there is an exception and the Swiss scholar Jürg Glauser has provided us with a book that should be read by many more than just his examiners.

The object of the investigation is the corpus of late medieval Icelandic prose narratives which have gone under many names but which may, in English, best be called 'romances' after Agnete Loth's edition of some of them (*Late medieval Icelandic romances*, 1962-5). The exact delimitation of the corpus has also been disputed, but Glauser selects 27 sagas which fulfil his criteria of being original (not translated like *riddarasögur*) and international (as opposed to *fornaldarsögur*). The aim of the investigation is a literary-historical description of this genre, both internally, as a literary system, and externally, as a constituent part of the society in which it was produced. After an introduction in which Glauser rescues the romances from the clutches of earlier scholars who saw in them only the decline of Icelandic literature after its period of greatness, the book is divided into two sections corresponding to this dual aim, 'the context' and 'the texts'. In the first section, Glauser has a chapter outlining the history of Iceland 1262-1550 and another chapter in which he considers aspects of 'Erzählkommunikation', or how literary texts were actually communicated to their recipients, in this period. In the three chapters of the second section, Glauser describes the narrative methods of the romances, their narrative content and gives his interpretation of their original function in Icelandic society. In an appendix, he provides a relatively extensive summary of each romance, along with useful information on its manuscript preservation, editions and any relevant secondary literature. The whole is rounded off with a full bibliography and index.

Glauser deserves the same praise he has given another scholar (p. 14), for his work is also 'philologisch sorgfältig wie methodisch modern'. His summaries, where I have checked them against the texts, are accurate and representative. All medieval quotations in the text, but not in the notes, as well as quotations from modern

Icelandic (but not other Scandinavian) secondary literature, are translated into German. These translations are, as far as can be judged by a foreigner, accurate, if a little dry. Thus, translating *at faar er so med baugi borinn at eigi sie nockurs afaatt* as 'dass nichts vollkommen ist' (p. 170) does not quite give the flavour of the Icelandic, and the same problem is evident when Glauser translates pairs of adjectives or nouns with a single word (e.g. several examples on pp. 181-2). The bibliography is full and up to date and the obligatory 'Forschungsbericht' is kept to a necessary minimum while we are convinced of its necessity, for Glauser is offering an approach to 'Märchensagas' that is diametrically opposed to what has been said about them before. The work is thus an example of Germanic thoroughness put to good use rather than pursued for its own sake, only occasionally betrayed by an irrelevant footnote (e.g. p. 57, where Glauser points out that Iceland lacks historical sources of the type used in *Montaillou!*).

Glauser's methodological modernity is almost as confidence-inspiring as his philological care, for he has an independent and critical attitude to his theoretical models, with a tendency to take the best bits of each theory that is close to eclecticism. His interpretations arouse objections, but these are of a positive kind, deriving from the stimulating nature of his book. Not all the strands of his argument are equally convincing and this is particularly true of that part concerning the 'context' of the literature he is discussing. That his historical survey occasionally seems to be drawing large conclusions from small evidence should not be held against him, for Glauser is no historian and very little work has been done by historians on this period. The problem comes more in establishing the lines of connection between the historical situation and the literary one, what he calls 'Erzählkommunikation'. His argument that the romances, like all medieval literature, were 'Auftragsliteratur', that is commissioned by patrons, is convincing but fails to illuminate the process by which this literature came to reflect the underlying ideological (in this case feudal) assumptions of its patrons. For, as he admits (p. 69), rich patrons commissioned all sorts of literature, not just the romances, yet these other commissioned works apparently do not, in his analysis, represent the world-view of their patrons. Later (p. 229), Glauser hints at a distinction between the literature that was copied in late medieval Iceland (after all, most of our manuscripts of *Íslendingasögur* date from the 14th and 15th centuries) and the literature that was actually created then. This distinction should be explored further and we need studies like Glauser's of the other literature produced in this period (particularly *rimur*, as he implies on p. 230) to understand this process of patronage, its manifestations and the degree and type of influence it had on literary texts. For Glauser is right in stressing (pp. 223-4) that the relationship between literature and society was quite another in the middle ages than today.

Glauser's section on 'the texts' is a thorough analysis of his corpus, drawing largely on structuralist theories. Such an analysis seems particularly appropriate to the highly schematic romances and my only complaint is that Glauser's alphabetical formulas (p. 151) do not add anything to his analysis, for the structure of the sagas is made equally clear by a summary with a verbal analysis. Unlike some devotees of structuralism, Glauser sees the method as a tool to assist his interpretation, rather than as an end in itself. The structural analysis is necessary for exposing both the themes of the romances and how these themes are manipulated in the texts, interacting with the ideological assumptions of the people who produced and consumed the texts, and determined by the conditions of a literature designed to be read aloud. Here, Glauser makes use of the methods of reception theory, a

form of literary analysis which has been dominant in Germany for ten years or more, though still little known in Britain, and which rightly urges us to focus more attention on the relationship between literature and its consumers.

British readers will want to know for what audience such a book is suitable. It can be recommended to advanced students who have got beyond reading only Family Sagas and Kings' Sagas, although it does assume a knowledge of Scandinavian languages. For teachers of Old Icelandic, it is a very useful introduction to and reference book for a genre of Icelandic literature hitherto neglected, despite its sheer quantity (and hence importance to the Icelanders). For anyone interested in literature and society in late medieval Iceland, it is a stimulating and inspiring read.

JUDITH JESCH

EDDA. A COLLECTION OF ESSAYS. Edited by ROBERT J. GLENDINNING and HARALDUR BESSASON. *University of Manitoba Icelandic studies*, 4. *University of Manitoba Press*. [Winnipeg], 1983. [xii]+332 pp.

The arrangement of the twelve essays in this significant volume of Edda studies reflects the division which the compiler of the Codex Regius made between mythological and heroic poems. Seven deal with mythological poems, three with heroic, one with imagery in the whole corpus of the Codex Regius and one with the Prologue of *Snorra Edda*.

Einar Haugen ('The Edda as ritual: Odin and his masks') takes up the old question of whether the written poems we have might have been 'texts for cultic occasions'. He points to the dramatic, agonistic qualities of Eddic verse and decides the question in the affirmative. Hilda Ellis Davidson ('Insults and riddles in the Edda poems') is also concerned with this question, though she rejects Bertha Phillpotts's view of the texts as the remains of ritual drama. She writes somewhat discursively on the common structural patterns and themes that emerge from a comparative study of Eddic mythological poetry. The important questions of structure and form are discussed incisively by Joseph Harris ('Eddic poetry as oral poetry: the evidence of parallel passages in the Helgi poems for questions of composition and performance'). He looks at parallel passages in the Helgi poems that belong to a traditional compositional unit, the *senna*, for insight into the Old Norse oral poetic tradition and proposes a comparative method for parallel texts similar to that of Bjarne Fidjestøl in his recent study of skaldic encomia (*Det norrøne fyrstediktet*).

Many of the contributors to this volume touch on the relationship between Eddic poetry and 'real life', including religious ritual, formal insult contests and the conceptual bases of poetic imagery. This interest is not new but we now have a better understanding of the artistic products of primary oral cultures; we know, for instance, that oral art forms are frequently more agonistic than those of literate cultures. Only Harris, of the present contributors, makes use, and judicious use, of advances in this field, but several essays point to related issues.

A number of essays are concerned with questions of style, theme and form in individual poems or groups of poems. Important here is the determination of revisions, additions and radical remodellings of 'original' or 'earlier' texts in accordance with the tastes of a later age and the phenomenon of literacy. Here the question of what criteria we apply to Eddic texts comes into play. Paul Schach

(‘Some thoughts on *Völuspá*’) and Régis Boyer (‘On the composition of *Völuspá*’) opt for the individual critical reading, though the former prunes and the latter conserves his text; Peter Hallberg’s statistical method (‘Elements of imagery in the Poetic *Edda*’) throws up interesting distributional patterns; Christopher Hale (‘The river names in *Grímnismál* 27-29’) concentrates on *þulur*-like strophes and their onomastic field; Theodore Andersson (‘Did the poet of *Atlamál* know *Atlaqviða*?’) uses schematic comparison of the two texts to show how the one is an expansion of the other and to point to differences between ‘old style’ and ‘new style’.

A comparative structural method is implicit in the essays of Harris, Glendinning, Grimstad and Klingenberg. Robert Glendinning (‘*Guðrúnarqviða forna*. A reconstruction and interpretation’) places *Guðrúnarqviða* II as a unified narrative within the distinctively Scandinavian treatment of the Nibelung legend; Kaaren Grimstad (‘The revenge of *Völundr*’) is convincing in her assignment of *Völundarqviða* to the mythological rather than the heroic lays of the *Edda* on the basis of its folk legend structure, but unconvincing in her invitation to consider this poem, like *Grímnismál*, as the representation of an initiation ritual with *Geirröðr/Völundr* as initiators. I prefer Heinz Klingenberg’s ironic interpretation with *Geirröðr* as unwitting initiand (‘Types of Eddic mythological poetry’) in his impressive analysis of the two major kinds of mythological verse, the continuous narrative and the enumerative types.

Klingenberg’s suggestion that at least some of the Eddic poems as we now have them are neo-mythologizing works, which place particular myths at the service of overriding ideas (he was perhaps slightly carried away by eschatology in his view of *Locasenna*), brings us close to the conceptual world of Snorri Sturluson the mythographer. Anthony Faulkes (‘Pagan sympathy: attitudes to heathendom in the Prologue to *Snorra Edda*’) expounds the intellectual bases of the Prologue thoroughly and sensitively. His essay has suffered most from the delay in publication of this volume, as it overlaps with, though comes to slightly different conclusions from, an essay on the same subject published by Ursula and Peter Dronke in 1977.

MARGARET CLUNIES ROSS

THE VIKINGS. Edited by R. T. FARRELL. *Phillimore & Co. Ltd.* London and Chichester, 1982. xiv+306 pp.

Enough is enough. Something really must be done to stop publishers putting the word ‘Viking’ in the titles of all books that have vaguely medieval and faintly Germanic subjects. Apparently the present travesty reflects the content of the ‘Cornell Viking Lecture Series’. The lecturers did not hold themselves bound by the series’s title, and the result is a book that shares much of the inaccuracy of the film of the same name, but is neither as funny nor as apposite. Here, for instance, is Leslie Webster writing on the Franks casket which even the book’s editor finds so far off the point that he has to excuse it. His excuse begs as many questions as does his inclusion of the article, which is obviously a spin-off from that magnificent volume that the British Museum devised to celebrate the centenary of the Franks gift in 1867. Or again, what is J. L. Barribeau’s study of Morris’s translation of *Magnús saga Erlingssonar* — a non-Viking saga translated by a non-Viking — doing here? T. D. Hill tries to illuminate the Old English *Beowulf* by comparing it with the post-Viking *Völsunga saga*. Surely books called *The Vikings* ought to be about Vikings; it is not enough that they should have a nodding acquaintance with Scandinavia and deal with events that took place ‘in those days’. This is not just a

terminological objection. It is exactly this sort of fluffy-mindedness that has caused confusion in Viking studies; it led a pair of distinguished scholars to write a book called *The Viking achievement* that dealt largely with stay-at-home Scandinavians (who by definition were not Vikings), and which therefore neglected one of the Vikings' major achievements, their enterprise in travel; and worst of all, it has encouraged historians to imply, in the teeth of the evidence, that only they can think precisely and constructively about the Viking Age.

The relevant contents of this book — and even then I must use the word 'relevant' fairly loosely — are in three fields, literary, historical and archaeological. D. M. Wilson, in his foreword, finds in them 'passion and research, individuality and brilliance', but then he is easily satisfied. On the whole, the literary efforts, linking Old English with Old Norse literature, by J. Harris, T. D. Hill and R. T. Farrell, are the least impressive. The tools they use are too blunt to attack the problems of a pair of literatures surviving in random sample and with a complete absence of chronology. The archaeological contributions seem to me the best. For the most part they do not try to say anything new but are content to summarise aspects of Viking Age archaeology: J. Graham-Campbell customarily lucid on the silver hoards; Charlotte Blindheim bringing us up to date on urban archaeology and carefully explaining to the unlearned that of the Nordic countries only Denmark has a land link to the Continent; Martin Blindheim with his ship vanes; Rosemary Cramp rather confused about Viking-Age sculpture — she really should have come to some agreement about Kirklevington with the man who made the plates, and she will certainly perplex the poor student who looks for a manuscript with the press-mark Bodleian Auct. Fig. IV 32; and, best of all, Christopher Morris's excellent summary of the work achieved and planned on settlement sites in northern areas of the British Isles.

The historical articles fall betwixt and between. Some are concise summaries of current thought: W. F. H. Nicolaisen's useful essay on place-name evidence for the Vikings in Scotland; Gwyn Jones writing with his usual ebullience on the Vikings and North America; P. H. Sawyer once again discoursing on the causes of the Viking Age. One, however, is more ambitious. Patrick Wormald is one of the most celebrated of younger Dark Age historians, and his challenging piece, 'Viking studies: whence and whither?' cannot go unchallenged. The 'whence' is easy enough, for Wormald starts with Sawyer's *The age of the Vikings*. He examines the effect on other historians of Sawyer's kaleidoscopically changing theories, and the modern tendency to shift 'from settlement to trade as the "peaceful" dimension of Viking expansion', and sets out his own view of the way forward. To a historian his ideas may challenge 'the established school of Viking studies', but the philologist will find them less revolutionary. Wormald has spotted that simply to throw out the Scandinavian written sources is to throw out, with the bath water, not only the baby but the soap and flannel as well. Philologists remember that it is many years since Peter Foote clobbered those who 'find it easier to dismiss Icelandic sources altogether than to undertake the arduous task of sifting them'. Nor does the runologist need to be reminded that there was a battle, murder and sudden death side to the Viking Age. What, after all, do the memorial stones record; and though the inscriptions may not record accurately — 'an epitaph is not an affidavit' — they at least show what Vikings thought it was worth being remembered for. Upon members of the Cambridge Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic, who for years have been teaching an interdisciplinary course on Dark Age kingship, Wormald's discovery that kings cannot be omitted from a discussion of the Viking

Age bursts with all the effulgence of a penny candle. Some inspiration Wormald finds in A. P. Smyth's recent work on the Vikings in Ireland and northern England, which implies — what will interest the philologist — that a historian need not be able to command the source material of his subject. Admitting the inaccuracy, Wormald commends Smyth's work as 'brave, comprehensive and imaginative', interesting adjectives all for those who would understand the historian's craft. 'Scholarly caution is all very well, but, if carried to excess, will obstruct any further advance in Viking history.' Whether excess caution *is* scholarly is a matter for discussion; what I find interesting here is the implication that any advance is desirable, even advance in the wrong direction. It was, after all, the leader of the Gadarene swine who boasted of being in the forefront of progress. The philologist's case against the historian is summed up in one example from Wormald: 'and "pirate" is a very common Latin term for the Vikings in Frankish sources'. Myself, I do not believe that 'pirate' is a Latin term at all. What the historian must learn to ask here is, what is the Latin term used, what semantic range does it have, what connotations, what register? What other examples are there, what word associations, what literary use? Until he does, the historian may make advances, but they may be towards a deeper wilderness.

In this last example I have assumed that Wormald wrote 'pirate' and not *pirata*, but I admit it is a false assumption. There is little reason to think that what this book prints is what the contributor wrote. Wormald's Scots background may have led him to put 'this in turn suggests that conversion was no so rapid' (p. 141), but I doubt it. It is not that the editing and proof-reading have been badly done, as that they seem not to have been done at all. The book's production is of a shoddiness that has to be seen to be disbelieved. Misprints abound. Sentences are sometimes so savaged that they make no sense at all (see, for instance, the quotation from Cruden on p. 79). Students searching the gazetteer for foreign place-names (e.g. Gallerhus, Aska Aagabyhögen) will despair. Undergraduates trying to follow up, in the bibliography, Farrell's references to (Kemp) Malone 1962 and 1965 will be disappointed. The browser through the index will learn that Beginish is in Iceland, that Corpus Christi, Cambridge, has joined Agatha and Julie in adding *-e* to its name, that there is a metre called *drottvætt* and a saga called *Víglundear saga Værna*. Incompetence reaches its peak in the bibliography, though Farrell has been markedly ungallant in naming the students who made such a dog's breakfast of it. As a Cambridge man I look forward to reading G. Speake's *Anglo-Oxford Animal Art*, though my colleagues in another place may equally wonder where David Dumville keeps his *Anglian collections of . . . genealogists*. Sean Binns will enjoy reading of his contributions to knowledge. Gillian Fellows Jensen, poor lass, has been sliced in two (for the same book), half hyphenated, half not. This is in (fe)male-chauvinist distinction to W. G. and R. G. Collingwood who have been conflated to one. *Íslenzk fornrit* is quite a well-known series, but the compilers had half a dozen attempts at it before getting it right. Errors of this sort are in the dozens, probably hundreds. No foreign language is safe, and even English is in peril. A random check of twenty titles revealed only nine without positive error: the other eleven shared twenty errors between them. These are not simple misprints passed over in the proof-reading. The shoddy compilation is shown by the complete lack of consistent style of reference (see the various ways in which Boyer's *Les Vikings et leur civilisation* is referred to, not to mention the various dates given it). Titles are guessed at: as Richard N. Bailey, *Viking Age Sculpture in the North*, and H. Marquandt (this is presumably the same scholar as appears under the nom de

plume H. Marquand in Leslie Webster's article, p. 20), *Bibliographie der Runen nach Fundorten: I*. Some scholars, when they reach a certain stature (and there can be no two opinions on Farrell's stature) feel themselves absolved from the duties of care, consistency and accuracy which, I hope, they recommend to their students. There is no excuse for it.

This book is a disgrace to its editor, to Cornell University and to its publishers. It costs £20.

R. I. PAGE

KINGS AND VIKINGS. SCANDINAVIA AND EUROPE A.D. 700-1100. By P. H. SAWYER. *Methuen*. London and New York, 1982. 182 pp.

THE VIKINGS IN HISTORY. By F. DONALD LOGAN. *Hutchinson*. London, 1983. 224 pp.

Of these two books Sawyer's, though published a year earlier than Logan's, is much the more up-to-date bibliographically. It appeared in the same year as Patrick Wormald's stimulating article, 'Viking studies: whence and whither?', in R. T. Farrell, ed., *The Vikings* (1982), and one year later than the *Proceedings of the Eighth Viking Congress* (1981), and refers to both of these; Logan's refers to neither. Another work relevant to their subject, Jørgen Jensen's *The prehistory of Denmark*, also appeared in 1982, and although neither Sawyer nor Logan refers to it, Sawyer does refer to an earlier version of it published in Danish in 1979.

Einar Haugen's article in the *Viking Congress* volume (1981, pp. 3-8) helps to answer the question, 'Is L'Anse aux Meadows, then, Vinland?' raised by Logan (p. 104) in his fourth chapter, 'The Vikings and the New World'; and both Wormald's article and Jensen's book, with their different emphases on the centuries preceding the Viking Age, would have been of value to Logan in his first chapter, 'The Vikings on the eve'. Sawyer (p. 67) makes use of Jensen's work in his fifth chapter, 'Scandinavia and Europe before 900', and could profitably have done so in his fourth, 'Scandinavian society'; Jensen's discussion of iron production (Jensen, 1982, pp. 228-31) helps to clarify Sawyer's remarks on this subject (Sawyer, p. 63).

Sawyer's relative up-to-dateness also shows itself in his second chapter, 'The twelfth century', where he points out (p. 13) that the discovery in 1961 of a church unusually far away (some 200 metres) from the farm in Greenland identified as Eiríkr rauði's seemed to confirm the accuracy of *Eiríks saga* in reporting that Eiríkr's wife built a church 'at some distance from the farm' in the face of her husband's hostility to Christianity. More recently, however, says Sawyer (following Magnus Magnusson's *Vikings!* 1980), an apparently older farm has been discovered much closer to the church. This farm had been abandoned when *Eiríks saga* was written, and the story of how the church came to be built seems to have been invented by the saga-writer to explain its unusual distance from the new farm. Logan shows in his third chapter, 'Across the North Atlantic', that he is unaware of this more recent view. On the other hand, it is clear that Logan (pp. 26-8) is aware, like Sawyer (pp. 73-4), of the dendrochronological evidence (apparently established in 1976, see Sawyer, p. 73) that the Danevirke was originally built in the seven-thirties, rather than during the reign of King Godfred I (d. 810). See further Jensen (1982), pp. 265-6.

Sawyer's statement in his sixth chapter, 'The raids in the west', that 'The Viking armies of the ninth and early tenth centuries were normally fairly small, numbering hundreds rather than thousands of men' (p. 93), should be seen against the

background of his earlier scepticism as to the density of Viking settlement in England in particular (documented by Wormald in Farrell, 1982, pp. 134-7), and in relation to Logan's view that the army arriving in East Anglia in 865 numbered 'between about 500 and 2000 Vikings' (Logan, p. 143); Niels Lund's view in the *Viking Congress* volume (1981, pp. 147-71) that 5000 was the number of Vikings who settled in England in the eight-seventies, having arrived as members of armies; and Wormald's suggestion that, in the second half of the ninth century, the Viking armies were 'numbered in thousands, if not tens of thousands' (Farrell, 1982, p. 137). In his seventh chapter, 'Conquests and settlements in the west', Sawyer adopts a cautious approach, emphasizing the obscurity of the early history of Viking settlements, and the uncertainty of the place-name and linguistic evidence.

According to Wormald, it is high time historians stopped thinking in terms of 'good things or bad things' (Farrell, 1982, p. 148), an approach immortalized by W. C. Sellar's and R. J. Yeatman's *1066 and all that* (1930; hereafter simply '*1066*'), and deriving currently, in the case of the Vikings (who are now regarded as 'a good thing'), from a misunderstanding of Sawyer's work, as Wormald shows (Farrell, 1982, p. 129). Logan is not entirely free from its influence, however: 'The Viking civilization of the north, vibrant, untamed, and raw, had a strong and unmistakable impact' (Logan p. 16), and his sixth and longest chapter, 'The Danes in England', includes two sections dealing respectively with the first (835-954) and second (980-1035) Viking 'waves', thus recalling *1066*, p. 4: 'that long succession of Waves of which History is chiefly composed'. Reminders of *1066*, whether conscious or unconscious, by serious historians are not altogether 'a bad thing'; the book is, after all, a satire, and important lessons can be learnt from it. One is the danger of confusion as to the identity of historical figures ('Alfred ought never to be confused with King Arthur. . . . There is a story that King Arthur once burnt some cakes. . . .', *1066*, p. 10), particularly if they have the same name ('Walpole ought never to be confused with Walpole. . . .', *1066*, p. 81). Sawyer himself could profit from this lesson. In his third chapter, 'Contemporary sources', he speaks of medieval writers 'muddling references to different individuals' (Sawyer, p. 26), but later reveals twice that he is prone to this sort of muddling himself; in the first instance (Sawyer, pp. 87-8) he refers to the Roric mentioned in the *Annales Bertiniani* for 850 as the nephew of the exiled leader Harald, thus apparently ignoring Vogel's carefully argued view (in his *Die Normannen und das fränkische Reich*, 1906, p. 407) that Roric was the brother of this Harald (II) and the nephew of an earlier Harald (I) who died probably before 804; and in the second instance (p. 136), he states that the Rimbert sent by Anskar to Sweden after Gauzbert's death in 859 was Anskar's biographer, thus apparently ignoring Trillmich's view that this Rimbert was 'Nicht der Verfasser der Vita Anskarii!' (see Werner Trillmich and Rudolf Buchner, eds., *Quellen des 9. und 11. Jahrhunderts zur Geschichte der hamburgischen Kirche*, 1961, p. 105, n. 154). Sawyer refers to both Vogel's and Trillmich's books, and the further lesson thus emerges that it is not enough simply to refer to authorities; one should also pay attention to what they say.

Sawyer (pp. 25-6) seems to leave open the possibility that the Viking attack on Luna (as opposed to Hasting's involvement in it) was historical rather than legendary. Logan (p. 127) is more responsible here in emphasizing that the legend of Luna's attack by Vikings 'merits no serious consideration'. Neither scholar seems to have used de Vries's ingenious explanation of how the legend originated (in *Arkiv för nordisk filologi*, XLIV, 1928, 122-5), however; Sawyer (p. 95) refers to de Vries's article, it is true, but in another context.

In his sixth chapter Sawyer provides a satisfying chronological framework for studying the raids in the west, seeing them develop from the small-scale raids of the early ninth century to extensive ones in Frankia and Ireland in the eight-thirties; become concentrated in Frankia after the death of Louis the Pious in 840; move to England in 865-66 as fortifications in Frankia developed under Charles the Bald; return to Frankia after Charles's death and Alfred's victory in 877-8, concentrating this time on the areas left unfortified by Charles; return to England between 891 and 896 as they meet with less success in the face of further fortifications; and sink into relative obscurity until the cession of Rouen to Rollo in 911. The placing of Sawyer's eighth chapter, 'The Baltic and beyond', near the end of the book reflects his view that the Viking movement eastward received part of its impetus from the decrease in opportunities for Vikings in the west around 900 (Sawyer, pp. 4-5). Sawyer's framework invites comparison and amalgamation with Wormald's more broadly conceived 'model', according to which 'the Viking Age was caused by the same sort of forces that produced the *Völkerwanderung* itself, but delayed for four centuries, and perhaps given a more pagan flavour, by Scandinavia's relative isolation' (Farrell, 1982, p. 148). A recognition of Wormald's view that Scandinavian kingship and paganism need to be brought more into the foreground of Viking studies is perhaps reflected in the titles of Sawyer's last two chapters: 'Pagans and Christians', 'Kings and pirates'.

Logan is less concerned than Sawyer with the Vikings in their original homelands, and noticeably more concerned than he is with the Norse discovery of America. Logan is at his best when discussing the Vinland map and other forgeries relating to this discovery though even here he is not as up-to-date as he might have been; in wishing the Kensington 'rune stone' a 'fervent *requiescat*' (Logan, p. 98) he seems not to have reckoned with Robert A. Hall Jr.'s *The Kensington rune-stone is genuine* (1982).

R. W. McTURK

THE TRADITIONAL BALLADS OF ICELAND. HISTORICAL STUDIES. By VÉSTEINN ÓLASON. *Stofnun Árna Magnússonar á Íslandi, rit 22. Stofnun Árna Magnússonar*. Reykjavík, 1982. 418 pp.

This book has a twofold purpose. It is partly a work surveying the whole corpus of Icelandic ballads (110 items). The edition in eight volumes by Jón Helgason (1962-82) presented abundant material for a general conspectus and classification of variants. Now the ballads are examined *seriatim* in terms of content, style and provenance, in a chapter comprising nearly three-quarters of the work. It is shown that most types were brought from Scandinavia, from the West Nordic area in particular. But at least a dozen were composed in Iceland.

The prelude to this admirable work is a wide-ranging discussion, placing the ballad-genre in the cultural environment of pre-Reformation Iceland, and assessing its relation to other kinds of popular poetry. Here there was more variety than in other Scandinavian areas, where the ballad predominated. Snatches of lyric are preserved in prose texts, and these can be connected with the *vikivakakvæði*, dance-songs mainly of love, which are recorded in manuscripts of the late sixteenth century onwards. A narrative genre, the *ritma*, is found in full fling by the middle of the fourteenth century. The author argues convincingly that this genre took over the heroic material rendered in ballads (*kæmpeviser*) elsewhere in the West Nordic

area. The four chief metres used offer far more vigour and variety than the narrow range of ballad measures. Dismissing suggestions of influence from the ballad, Vésteinn develops the theory of Guðbrandur Vigfússon that *rimur* metres originated in European verse of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. He has explored this background in an article published in Icelandic (*Skírnir*, 1976), to which he refers. In this article examples were drawn chiefly from Latin and German lyrics; but he also cited Middle-English metrical romances as the 'missing link' with narrative poetry. Here, he dwells on the stanzaic forms traceable in these romances. Such parallels can be extorted, but in fact surviving Middle-English romances are mostly composed in couplets or tail-rhyme. Their metrical technique is manifestly inferior to the patterns used with such verve by Icelandic *rimur* poets. With a strong tradition of stanzaic poetry behind them, and the ample material of prose narrative to draw on, Icelanders would seem well able to evolve a new style of narrative poetry without taking models from England. The *rimur* metres remain of commanding interest. Bergen as a cultural meeting-point (see pp. 76-7) would supply contacts with the Continent as well as with England.

Evidently the ballad had much to compete with in Iceland. Its prehistory, before the scanty recordings of the sixteenth and early seventeenth century, can be only lightly sketched in. Systematic collecting, begun in N. W. Iceland in 1665 and followed up by Árni Magnússon, was clearly the product of the antiquarian interests pursued especially by Danish scholars of the period (see pp. 17-19). Modern scholars can find some useful sidelights on the development of Scandinavian ballads. Occasionally Icelandic variants will reveal an older stratum which has vanished elsewhere. An example is no. 60, *Ásu kvæði*, a confused version of a very popular ballad; it has archaic features indicating that it reached Iceland before 1500. More generally, ballads bearing traces of Norwegian originals attest genres not on record in Norway itself. Jocular ballads, for instance, and those with a strong supernatural interest are traceable to the East Nordic area, while their Norwegian counterparts have been lost.

By now it is no novelty to find the fun and games of past ages as a subject of professional scrutiny. The literary scholar needs to know these areas of cultural undergrowth. Vésteinn offers a good example of such material analysed and presented in an attractive way.

J. E. TURVILLE-PETRE

UM UPPRUNA SVERRISSÖGU. By LÁRUS H. BLÖNDAL. *Stofnun Árna Magnússonar á Íslandi, rit 21. Stofnun Árna Magnússonar*. Reykjavík, 1982. xi+220 pp.

This monograph began as an M.A. dissertation at the University of Iceland, supervised by Sigurður Nordal and presented in 1945; work on it was continued in preparation of an edition of the saga, which Lárus Blöndal now feels that he cannot complete on account of his health. The material presented here would have been better suited to an edition; it is necessary to read it with the saga open beside it.

The author has re-examined the textual relationships of the four versions of the saga, and has come to substantially new, and convincing, conclusions, in particular that the F-version is independent of the others for the earlier part of the saga. His discussion of the notorious difficulties of the Preface to the saga is full and persuasive, but not always convincing. His most important contribution, however, is his demonstration that the saga is based upon earlier written texts, in all

probability including a longer version of the Saga of Magnús Erlingsson than now survives.

Despite some reservations about the treatment of the Preface to *Sverris saga*, and also about the (quite understandable) respect which the author feels for Sigurður Nordal, whose influence permeates this work, it constitutes a contribution of permanent value to the study of *Sverris saga*. It is handsomely and accurately printed, and contains an English summary.

PAUL BIBIRE

KING ARTHUR NORTH-BY-NORTHWEST. THE MATIÈRE DE BRETAGNE IN OLD NORSE-ICELANDIC ROMANCES. By MARIANNE E. KALINKE. *Bibliotheca Arnamagnæana*, XXXVII. C. A. Reitzels Boghandel A/S. Copenhagen, 1981. xii+277 pp.

This, the first book-length study of the subject in English since H. G. Leach's *Angevin Britain and Scandinavia* (1921), attempts a wide-reaching survey of the genesis, nature, purpose, style and influence of the 'Arthurian riddarasögur' (*Erex saga*, *Ívens saga*, *Parcevals saga* from Chrétien de Troyes's *Erec et Enide*, *Yvain*, and *Perceval*; *Tristrams saga* from Thomas of England's *Tristan*; *Möttuls saga* from *Le mantel mautaillié*; two *Strengleikar* from the *Lais* of Marie de France), although its main interest lies in questions of manuscript transmission rather than in the 'matière de Bretagne' and 'romances' of the title. Chapter 3 ('Exegetes and editors'), the longest in the book, is an assessment of the reliability of riddarasögur texts (preserved for the most part only in Icelandic copies) as a guide to the work of their translators in thirteenth-century Norway, and the author is to be commended for her painstaking research into this difficult area. An introductory note tells us that there has been extensive checking of quotations against manuscripts (p. xii). Regrettably, the rest of the book does not match these rigorous standards of scholarship. Overlong, it lacks direction, clarity and any useful analysis of the literary and cultural significance of the 'matière de Bretagne' in its northern incarnation.

Chapter 1 indicates that the Arthurian riddarasögur are to be considered in the literary context of their fosterage (Iceland) rather than that of their production (Norway), and the author would have been well advised to bear a steady course northwest to her 'Saga-Insel' (p. 241) instead of steering into what appear to be on her part the uncharted waters of medieval socio-cultural affairs. Chapter 2 ('Royal entertainment') displays no awareness of at least three decades of relevant scholarship by dismissing the French romances imported into Norway solely as 'a literature of fantasy and escape intended to amuse and distract' (p. 45). The absence of any reference to the influential and illuminating work on the nature of chivalric romance, a complex issue, by Auerbach, Bezzola, Frappier, D. H. Green, Haidu, Hanning, Köhler, or Vinaver (the last gets a brief mention in connection with an article on the Prose *Tristan*) is conspicuous in a book which purports to deal with the subject. To argue that the riddarasögur offered anything other than literary distraction for their original audience, the court of Hákon Hákonarson, is, in Kalinke's opinion, to 'mistake the nature of the translated romances as well as the sophistication, the intelligence, and capacity for amusement of the Norwegian court' (p. 21), an extraordinary claim supported only by references to *gaman* and/or *skemmtun* at the beginnings or endings of *Elis saga* (translated from the *chanson de geste*, *Elie de Saint Gille*) (*yör til skemmtunar*), the *Strengleikar* (*til skemmtunar*)

oc margfræðes viðrkomande þjóða), and *Möttuls saga (til gamans ok skemmtanar)*. These, the author herself volunteers, 'sound like clichés, and indeed they are' (p. 27). One wonders why Dr Kalinke found it necessary to include a chapter which will probably discourage the medievalist from reading further, offers the Scandinavianist an outmoded view of chivalric romance and serves merely as a distraction (and by no means an entertaining one) from the discussion of manuscript matters begun in Chapter 1.

Lengthy though it is, the examination of *riddarasögur* texts, essentially an effort to establish which modifications to the French originals are to be attributed to Norwegian translators and which to Icelandic copyists, is somewhat muddled in its findings. The state of the primary manuscripts of *Ívens saga* (Stockholm Perg. 4:0 nr 6 and AM 489 4to from the fifteenth century and Stockholm Papp. fol. nr 46 from the seventeenth) forms a large part of the evidence leading to the conclusion of Chapter 3: 'As represented by the aggregate of preserved manuscripts, every *riddarasaga* still reflects — although not each to the same degree — the principles of composition and style favoured by the Norwegian translators' (p. 96). Stockholm 46, a reduced version of *Ívens saga* considered worthless for editorial purposes by Eugen Kölbing, is accounted in this chapter as 'indispensable for assessing the character of the Norwegian translation' (p. 63). Elsewhere it is described variously, and confusingly, as 'a different version of *Ívens saga*' (p. 118), 'an Icelandic revision of parts of the tale' (p. 191) and 'the intermediate step between translation and re-creation' (p. 198). The analysis of *Erex saga* is marred by some seemingly illogical argument: the work's overtly didactic elements, at odds with the author's view of *riddarasögur* as 'amusement' can, we are told, be safely assumed to be the work of a later redactor (p. 45). The reader is referred to pages 191-8 for confirmation and there finds none: Kalinke has nothing to say here about the saga's 'pattern of interpolated didactic comments voiced by various characters' (p. 41) but a lot about interpolated episodes involving robbers and a flying dragon which may derive from *Þðriks saga*.

Chapters 4 ('Thematic and structural extravagations') and 5 ('Stylistic configurations') turn to more literary matters. The first looks at some motifs common to medieval romance in general (abduction, love at first sight, etc.) and their treatment in *riddarasögur* (some consideration of the central motif of the genre, the quest, would have been interesting here), and the second examines characteristic features of style in the translations like alliteration and amplification. Chapter 6 ('Icelandic metamorphoses') is a bit of a hodgepodge: it returns to manuscripts, translators and redactors by way of the interpolated adventures in *Erex saga* and yet another discussion of the *Ívens saga* texts; it also contains an unconvincing interpretation of the Icelandic *Saga af Tristram ok Ísodd* as a parody of Arthurian romance 're-creating' the Tristan legend, a paragraph on *Tristrams kvæði*, and a brief look at the *Skikkju rímur* (from *Möttuls saga*). Chapter 7 considers *riddarasögur* motifs again, this time as an influence on independent Icelandic romances.

The excision of repetitious material in this book would probably reduce it by at least a third and might give it the form and focus it lacks. Kalinke's inability to move on from the point, having made it at length, that some modifications to French originals may or may not be the work of translators or redactors makes the book frequently seem to go round in circles. Curiously, despite her emphasis on problems of transmission, she does not allow for possible variants in those French manuscripts used by the translators but not necessarily known to modern editors.

It is difficult to imagine the audience for which *King Arthur north-by-northwest*

is intended. Aspiring editors may find it useful, but it has little to offer the student of Arthurian literature. The uninitiated should be alerted to, and readers familiar with *Perceval* may or may not be amused by, Kalinke's own 're-creation' of the story. According to her: '*Percevals saga* adheres to Chrétien's text in depicting how the marriage of Parceval and Blankiflúr came about' (p. 109) and Parceval, 'having been separated from his wife for a long time' (p. 203) is reminded of her in the blood-on-the-snow episode. Hero and heroine are certainly not man and wife at this point in either French or Norse version. Parceval marries Blankiflúr in the concluding lines of the saga, but whether or not Chrétien intended such a union, had he finished the work, remains one of the great unknowns of *Perceval* scholarship.

GERALDINE BARNES

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