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MEETING IN NORWAY: NORSE–GAELIC RELATIONS IN
THE KINGDOM OF MAN AND THE ISLES, 1090–1270

BY ROSEMARY POWER

I Introduction

LITTLE INVESTIGATED IN THE HISTORY of medieval Scandinavia lies the kingdom of the Isle of Man and the Hebrides. From a Scandinavian perspective the islands to the west of Scotland and the Isle of Man appear peripheral, and to have little in common geographically with each other, as one of the largest islands, Man, is separated from the others by the narrow and frequently dangerous straits of the North Channel. The Isle of Man is well recorded in Irish literary tradition and history, and while in recent centuries the Hebrides and Man have been divided politically, until relatively recently they shared with each other and with Ireland a Gaelic language. Not greatly dissimilar to Norway in terrain, and possessed of a milder climate, both Man and the Isles attracted settlers from the north in Viking times. The kingdom, a coherent unit by the mid-eleventh century, was attached to Norway at least in name from the time of the ninth-century Haraldr hárfagri, and remained, however tenuously, subordinate to the frequently turbulent kingdom of Norway until acquired by Scotland under the Treaty of Perth in 1265. It was later divided again, with England taking possession of Man.

This article addresses some aspects, from the perspective of the Norse sagas, of the period from the time of the incursions of Magnús berfœtr at the end of the eleventh century to the sale of the Isles and Man by his more peaceful successor Magnús lagabœtir. This article is, therefore, an attempt to provide a context for the main events noted in Norse sources, from a Norse perspective. It does not seek to provide a complete historical overview of the kingdom of Man and the Isles in the period, a subject which is being addressed by scholars of medieval Scottish and Irish history and culture,¹ but to take the key references in the sagas and consider them in the context provided by other records. The wider

¹ Among them Duncan 1975, Barrow 1981, Fenton and Hermann Pálsson, eds, 1984, Crawford 1987 and 1988, Duffy 1997, Duffy, ed., 1999, McDonald 1997, Cowan and McDonald, eds, 2000, Beuermann 2002, Duffy, ed., forthcoming. Key articles include Duncan and Brown 1959, Sellar 1966,

Scandinavian picture, which must also cover the history of the Northern Isles, will not be addressed here, but the intent is, through reference to the Norse sources, to consider the subject of Norse–Gaelic contacts as a contribution to a discussion which must also cover these aspects. Other sources include Norwegian diplomatic and church records; the Irish annals which provide the chronological backbone to events; the *Chronicle* of the Kings of Man and the Isles; and historical works and diplomatic records from Scotland, England and elsewhere. The saga-writers provided details of colourful events from their own perspective, but what is often confusing and fragmentary material can often be related to what we know from other, non-Norse, sources. Furthermore, comparison of these other sources with the sagas can sometimes show how Norse visitors contributed to life in the Isles in a manner never apparent to them at the time.

Much of what we know concerns events in the twelfth century. Events in the kingdom of Man and the Isles took place within a society that was culturally and linguistically Gaelic as well as Norse, to an extent that may have changed during the period. For instance, in the Isle of Man, the practice of carving inscriptions in Norse appears to have come to an end at about the middle of the twelfth century, and not long afterwards the King of Man is extolled in a Gaelic praise poem rather than in Norse skaldic verses.

There are very few contemporary records from this period other than verses which are said to date from the time but which were transmitted orally until they came to the attention of writers in the following century. How close any of these oral accounts were to what eyewitnesses observed must have varied with each teller. Colourful descriptions, such as that given by Snorri Sturluson of the Irish dress worn by Haraldr gilli, are presumably derived from what he saw or heard described in his own time, a hundred years later (*Hkr*, III 267–78). His own first visit to Norway in 1218–20 had provided him with much material which he set down during the next decade, and when he visited Norway again between 1237 and 1239 he had opportunities to meet significant people, and then to tell of his encounters on his return home (see Whaley 1991, esp. 29–40). For much of the thirteenth century there is the almost contemporary saga by Snorri's nephew Sturla Þórðarson, who arrived in Norway in 1263 after King Hákon Hákonarson had left for the Isles, and

Megaw 1976, McDonald and McLean 1992, Duffy 1991 and 1992. Many of the sources are translated in Anderson 1922.

whose life of Hákon was written at the behest of the reigning King Magnús, when key informants were still alive.

Another reason to consider the sources for this period is the question of the Gaelic influence on the literature of Iceland. It is generally recognised that there was an influence, but conclusions on its nature and extent remain tentative. It is normally assumed in discussion of both Gaelic influence on the Scandinavian world, and Norse influence on the Gaelic world, that transmission of tales and other linguistic or cultural material took place during the Viking Age. Gaelic influence in Iceland is usually thought to have taken place in the early years of settlement, when the population included those who could have transmitted material which then had time to adapt and acculturate. Some particular stories and linguistic similarities have been examined in recent years, but the extent to which Gaelic material, whether factual or fictional, entered Iceland orally is still under consideration.²

The references to the Gaelic world in the *Íslendingasögur* consist mainly of personal descriptions, or accounts of events said to have taken place in unidentifiable or vaguely realised regions. A number of attempts have been made to identify these instances, but knowledge of relations in this early period is limited. There are practically no references to monasteries or other settlements known to be the targets of Viking attention. As far as Gaelic influence in Iceland is concerned, some Gaelic names are recorded in *Landnámabók*, though the majority of the male leaders who settled Iceland had Norse names. A few place-names of Gaelic origin are found around the island, including the *papar* names believed to refer to the settlements of the early monks. It is assumed that any Gaelic cultural element had time in the following centuries, first pagan then Christian, to circulate and take on specifically Icelandic forms within the dominant culture. Certain stories are then thought to

² The subject was debated in the early twentieth century by Carl von Sydow, who was in favour of, and Finnur Jónsson, who was opposed to, the possibility of Gaelic influence on the literature of medieval Iceland. Extensive work was undertaken by Einar Ólafur Sveinsson (1940, 1959, 1975a and 1975b), and Gísli Sigurðsson (2000) has recently surveyed some of the writings on Norse–Gaelic and specifically Icelandic–Gaelic literary contacts. Other contributions include Andersson 1964, 56–61; Chesnutt 1968 and 2000; Almqvist 1991 and 1996. Specific stories are treated in Simpson 1966 and 1997, Almqvist 1978–81 and 1997, Power 1985a, 1985b and 1987, Chesnutt 1989, O'Connor 2000 and in numerous brief articles on linguistic matters in *Saga-Book* and *Arkiv för nordisk filologi*.

have surfaced in these new forms in the writings of the thirteenth and later centuries and in oral tradition collected mainly since the mid-nineteenth century.

It has been suggested by a few scholars that contact and the passage of anecdotes might have occurred not only in the Viking Age itself, but also in the medieval period, in particular by way of the Northern Isles (see Almqvist 1978–81, Chesnutt 1968 and 2001). Research on this paper began as a contribution to the debate on the possibility of later transmission, but through the Western rather than Northern Isles. In addition to the material relating to the lives of named people of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the intention was to consider whether fictional material as well as historical anecdotes might have been transmitted between the Norse and Gaelic cultural worlds in the period of Norwegian overlordship of the kingdom of Man and the Isles, and if so, by what means.

II The sources

While Norwegian historical records are scanty for this period, there are sources that can supplement what is known from the Scandinavian viewpoint. These include the Irish annals; the *Chronicle* written on the Isle of Man; the limited but invaluable records of the kingdom of Scotland such as the fourteenth-century *Chronicle of Melrose* (1936) and John of Fordun's *Chronicle* (1871–72); various English chronicles, both Saxon and Norman; and genealogies and similar material from the Western Isles of Scotland which were transmitted orally and preserved in later written works. Together with the Icelandic sagas on early medieval or near-contemporary issues, they provide a substantial corpus from which can be pieced together not a continuous history, but a depiction of a series of events. The sources also shed light on the relations of the kingdom of Man and the Isles with Ireland. These were brought about initially by proximity and at least in part by a common language and culture, but towards the end of the period were maintained through alliances, both with the Anglo-Norman invaders and with those leading the attempts to re-establish Gaelic autonomy in the thirteenth century. The sources also identify occasions on which *Sudreyingar* (Manx and Hebrideans) and Icelanders seem to have been in contact. It is assumed there would also have been opportunities for them to meet and share a common language in the royal homesteads, trading centres and monasteries of Norway. There are almost no sources which indicate direct contact between the Norse and the Irish in the period, and it may be assumed that any trans-

mission of information and stories was instigated by Hebrideans and Manx at ease in both cultures. The only work that deals explicitly and extensively with Ireland, the thirteenth-century *King's Mirror* (*Konungs skuggsiá* 1983; trans. Larson 1917), seems to have derived its material from written sources rather than first-hand knowledge.

The main Norse texts are in the Kings' Sagas, which cover in retrospect the start of the period in the late 1090s, and also include the contemporary account, preserved only in two fragments, of the life of Magnús Hákonarson some 180 years later. There is some evidence of Norwegian involvement in the Irish Sea area in the mid-eleventh century, when an expedition is associated in insular but not Norse sources with a very youthful Magnús, son of Haraldr harðráði.³ From the 1090s onwards, when the Irish had established their interest in the Isles, a clearer picture emerges. From this time the kingdom is treated as a single unit which includes the Isle of Man and *Innsi-Gaill*, the Islands of the Foreigners. At a time of Irish expansion into these strategically placed islands, there is also evidence of active interest in them by the kings of Norway, nominal overlords since the ninth-century conquest by Haraldr hárfagri.

III Magnús berfœttr and the Isles

The activities of Magnús are well recorded in sources from all the countries with which he came in contact. The Icelandic sources, particularly Snorri Sturluson (*Hkr*, III 210–37), provide a tale of pillage, depredation and vainglorious loss, much of it happening outside of Norway. This allowed a relatively indulgent view of his forays, in particular on the part of Icelanders who were not directly affected. Magnús, who became king in 1093, sailed west five years later, gaining the Hebrides and Man and killing a Norman earl in Anglesey. On his return to these islands four years later, he pillaged in Ireland and met his end in

³ For an expedition of 1058 see *Brut*, and *Willelmi Malmesburiensis monachi de Gestis Regum Anglorum* 1887–94, II 376. Other English sources state that Magnús, son of Haraldr, attempted action in the Irish Sea area at about this time. However, they call Magnús the son of Haraldr hárfagri, not harðráði, and it is not always clear whether they are referring to the expeditions of Magnús berfœttr, the grandson of Haraldr harðráði, rather than to an expedition by his uncle. See Jesch 1996 for a discussion of the apparent confusion of the two Haraldrs. The events of 1058 and the Orkney involvement are discussed by Gade (2003), who points out that Magnús Haraldsson was under ten at the time. He died in 1069. A recent review of insular though not Norse sources is in Etchingham 2001.

battle. The two earlier Norwegian sources and the Danish history of Saxo Grammaticus give brief accounts of his life (Theodoricus, 59, 63–64; McDougall, trans., 1998, 49–51; *Ágrip* 42, 46–47; Driscoll 1995, 46, 48–53, 58; Saxo Grammaticus, I 342:10–16; 362:10; 363:8–14). Magnús was an ‘unquiet man’, who met his end when acting incautiously. Both Snorri and the writer of *Orkneyinga saga* (1965, 93–102) contrast a part of Magnús’s story with that of his gentler cousin, Magnús of Orkney, who sat in the crossfire during one of Magnús’s battles, reading his Psalter and refusing to fight. This alternative and virtuous view of heroism is reinforced in the accounts of the namesakes’ respective ends (*Ork*, 95–96).

Accounts of Magnús’s exploits, though not of those of his saintly cousin, have the support of independent insular sources, and what is recounted from the northern perspective as the tale of a latter-day Viking is seen from the other sources in terms of the situation into which Magnús forced himself. Here he may have met his end by playing political games beyond his reach in terms of their complexity and their proximity to the sources of power in these islands (Duffy 1992, Power 1986, Holland 2000, esp. 128–32). In the north Magnús’s activities were recorded in the Norwegian *Historia Norwegiae* and *Ágrip*, but in more detail in *Orkneyinga saga*, in *Fagrskinna* (*Fsk*, 301–02, 307–10, 312–15), written in Norway but closely related to the Icelandic *Morkinskinna* (*Msk*, 316–22, 331–37), and in the *Heimskringla* of Snorri Sturluson, which drew on all of these with the exception of the *Historia*.⁴ One of Magnús’s two daughters married into the Oddaverjar family (Whaley 1991, 38, Einar Ól. Sveinsson 1937) and it may have been Magnús’s connection with these patrons of saga-writing that ensured an interest in his exploits both in his homeland and in the west. Magnús and his sons are mentioned in the Danish history of Saxo Grammaticus, who regards the woes of Norway as caused by Magnús’s putative son, Haraldr gilli.

Of the insular sources, the most extensive is the *Chronicle of Man and the Sudreys*, apparently compiled at the Cistercian abbey of Rushen on Man in the thirteenth century.⁵ A single text survives, though the Latin *Chronicle* was known to both Irish and English historians. While the

⁴ *Morkinskinna* now ends with the capture of Eysteinn Haraldsson in 1157. For a translation, see Andersson and Gade 2000, and for commentary, Ármann Jakobsson 2002. For a translation of *Fagrskinna* see Finlay 2003.

⁵ Referred to henceforth as *Chronicle*, with citations from the 1874 edition. An earlier edition of the Latin text only, containing some additional documents relating to the kingdom, is *Chronicle* 1860. See too Broderick 1979.

chronology for this period is confusing, and its political slant needs to be interpreted through the thirteenth-century relations of Man with England and Ireland, it gives a wealth of detail not found elsewhere. The Irish annals (*AI, AU, AC, ALC, AFM*) provide the chronological framework of events of interest from an Irish, and sometimes regional, perspective. For this period the *Annals of Inisfallen*, the house chronicle of the dominant Uí Briain dynasty, are particularly significant. From these and other works (Evans 1990, *Peterborough Chronicle* 1958, Ordericus Vitalis 1969–80, III 149, IV 194–95, V 219–25, VI 49–51) a fairly extensive understanding of Magnús’s activities may be gained, and also those of his successors, including the sons and supposed sons who ruled, or aspired to rule Norway after him.

Magnús assumed kingship on the death of his father, the popular Óláfr kyrri, in 1093, settled affairs in his own country and in 1098 suddenly moved westward, pillaging the *Sudreyjar* (the Hebrides) and the western seaboard of Scotland.

The situation in the Isles is far from clear, not least because of the chronological confusion in the main source, the *Chronicle of Man*, in these decades. Guðrøðr (Godred)⁶ nicknamed *crovan*, King of Man, also ruled Dublin until its capture by the Munster king Muirchertach Úa Briain (1086–1119) in 1094. It seems that Guðrøðr also controlled the Hebrides and may well have fled there, for his death in 1095 is recorded (*Chronicle*, 52–55). He died on Islay in the southern Hebrides, which overlooks the northern coast of Ireland and which probably already functioned as the secondary centre of power in the region.⁷ Guðrøðr’s death seems to have led to upheaval on Man, a situation of advantage to the Uí Briain. The following year Amlaíb (Óláfr) mac Taidc, a nephew of Muirchertach, was killed on the island (*AFM*). The *Chronicle* states that on the death of Guðrøðr there was strife between two of his sons, Lagman and Haraldr, and as a result the Manx asked Muirchertach to send them

⁶ There is currently no common convention for the citing of personal and topographical names in a cross-regional survey of this kind. For the purpose of this article, Norse names will be given in Norse form and Gaelic names in Irish. Where the name of a Manx or Hebridean personage is well known in an anglicised form, such as Lagman, Somerled or Reginald, this form will be used. Otherwise, the form of the name that most closely reflects its linguistic origin will be used. While this approach may lead to inconsistencies, it is hoped that it will avoid confusion.

⁷ During the period of the Lordship of the Isles, the Council was held at Finlaggan on Islay, where substantial ruins remain.

a ruler. He sent them Domnall mac Taidc, almost certainly his nephew of that name and the brother of the dead Óláfr. Domnall, the *Chronicle* continues, ruled as monster for three years, after which he was ejected. Lagman remained in the vicinity, and was captured by Magnús in the Hebrides (*Ork*, 95; *Msk*, 318).

Snorri and the redactors of *Morkinskinna* and *Fagrskinna* give the names of various islands pillaged by Magnús and his followers, and in *Heimskringla* and *Morkinskinna* verses said to be contemporary are given in addition. The order in which the islands are named in the prose texts is slightly different but in each case logical, indicating that the writers had some understanding of the geography of the area. While the verses in *Morkinskinna* do not relate directly to the prose text or the north-south geography of the islands, Snorri ensures that they relate as closely as possible to each other and to the order in which the islands may have been reached from the north. The most difficult to place is Sandey, which is named in a couplet within a verse. Snorri includes a reference to this island in his text as well as citing the verse, which is also recorded in *Morkinskinna*. Snorri places the island north of Islay, apparently referring to the island of that name in the Small Isles south of Skye.⁸

Iona, the Holy Island, was not plundered. Magnús entered the centre of the site, looked in the ‘little church of Columcille’, but did no harm, locking the door. Snorri says the building remained unopened from that day to his own, a comment that may relate in some way to the early thirteenth-century violence on Iona of which Snorri would have been aware. The *Chronicle*, which compresses Magnús’s activities into a single expedition to the west, provides him with a dream before he leaves Norway. According to this Magnús, against the wishes of the church custodians, opened the shrine of his great-uncle Saint Óláfr, only to be filled with fear at what he had done. That night

⁸ There are two other Hebridean islands with the name: Sanda Island, a tidal point off Kintyre; and Sandera in the Outer Isles, noted by Martin Martin in the late seventeenth century as being fruitful in corn and grass (Martin 1934, 159). None of the three fits the order of the verses, and it remains possible that an island now known by another name is intended. The decision on where to fit this couplet, however, may have been poetic rather than geographical. The Sandey, now Sanda, in the Small Isles is almost certainly the one referred to in the events of 1202 discussed below. The Sandey named in the expedition of Hákon Hákonarson in 1263 must however be the small island south of Kintyre. See *Flateyjarbók*, III 457, *Skálholtsbók yngsta*, 349. This reference is absent in *Frísbók*, where the narrative at this stage is much curtailed. For a burnt ruin of the period, see Crawford and Switzer 1977, 131.

while the king slept, the saint appeared to him and gave him a choice of dying within thirty days or leaving Norway for ever, and Magnús chose to leave. This is one of a number of instances in which the *Chronicle* echoes material found in Norse sources, for the dream is not unlike that attributed by Sturla Þórðarson to the Scots King Alexander II, who in 1249 was approached by Saints Óláfr, Columba and Magnús of Orkney and warned against invading the Hebrides.⁹

Magnús passed through the straits between the Kintyre peninsula and Ireland, and went on to Galloway, which was part of the Scots kingdom but was largely autonomous. While Galloway was never claimed by the Norwegians, the assertion of power here was a strategic move to control the passage through the North Channel into the Irish Sea. Magnús is said by Snorri to have pillaged on both sides, and the *Annals of Ulster*, the *Four Masters* and *Loch Cé* all record the slaying that year of the crews of three ships of the Foreigners of the Isles, possibly members of a fleet intending to combat Magnús, or perhaps some of the men of Mull who, according to a verse in *Morkinskinna*, fled exhausted southwards (*Msk*, 317).

Although a verse mentions that Manxmen fell, they may have already done so by the time Magnús reached the island which Snorri describes as the best of the *Sudreyjar*, and which lies within easy reach of the ports of Dublin and Chester. According to Ordericus Vitalis, it was in a desert state, the consequence, the *Chronicle* relates, of battle between the men of the south and the north of the island. This description may reflect Irish dominance and settlement on the northern plain. According to the *Chronicle*, Magnús restored

⁹ Eirspennill, 630; *Hákonar saga* 1887, 260–61 (Skálholtsbók yngsta). Sturla Þórðarson's *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar* is found in five medieval codices, including two Norwegian texts dated to the early fourteenth century: Eirspennill (*Eirspennill: AM 47 fol.* 1916) and Fríssbók (*Codex Frisianus* 1871). Eirspennill, though somewhat condensed and ending in its present form with the crowning of Hákon's son Magnús in 1261, is the preferred text. This is the primary source for Anderson 1922. After 1261 Anderson follows Fríssbók, which also has a compressed text, but gives copious references to the other texts, including the one which remained unpublished in his time. Of the three Icelandic texts, the late fourteenth-century section of Flateyjarbók contains all of *Hákonar saga* though the end is somewhat condensed. The incomplete text in Skálholtsbók yngsta ends in 1258–59, and dates from about 1450–75. This text is also printed in *Hákonar saga* 1887, and translated in Dasent 1894. The remainder of this Rolls Series text has been taken mainly from the final medieval codex; see *Hákonar saga* 1977 and Knirk 1980.

the island, using timber from Galloway, and set up his winter base here (*Hkr*, III 221; *Chronicle*, 57–59; Ordericus Vitalis, V 225).

Magnús then turned his attention to Anglesey, a part of the northernmost and most powerful of the Welsh principalities, Gwynedd. Here again he found a state of chaos, caused in this case by Norman English invasion. One of its leaders, Earl Hugh of Shrewsbury, was slain, apparently by Magnús himself, an event recorded in all the sources. The Norse sources indicate that Magnús regretted the deed when he knew who the dead man was, a view also held by Ordericus Vitalis (V 225), which suggests that Magnús may already have been interested in alliances with the Norman English (Jesch 1996).

Any wish Magnús may have had to engage with Norman English politics was premature, and the death of Hugh prevented further involvement at this stage. Magnús, it is said, considered raiding in Ireland, but he had overreached himself, and returned to Man and then north. The sagas say he made a treaty with the Scots king, whom they name Malcolm but who must have been his son Edgar, by which Norwegian ownership of all the islands was recognised. The ninth-century rule of Haraldr hárfagri was thus re-established in the view of the writers and of their audience, which included later kings of Norway. A popular account is Snorri's description of Magnús's attempt to claim Kintyre by drawing his ship over the isthmus at Tarbert (*Ork*, 98–99; *Hkr*, III 224).

Scandinavian sources attribute the first excursion of Magnús to his lust for expansion, developed at a time when the troubles initially besetting him in his own kingdom had been subdued. He may also have wished to provide a realm outside Norway for his second son Sigurðr, then aged eight, who accompanied him. The Norse accounts also suggest that Magnús wanted to take revenge on the English for the death of his grandfather Haraldr harðráði in 1066, and to pillage in Ireland (*Ork*, 94). These suggestions may relate to expansion of Irish power into the Isles, in particular after Muirchertach Úa Briain's capture of Dublin, and Magnús may also have known of Irish ambitions in England. Two of Harold Godwinson's sons may have fled to Ireland after their father's defeat at Hastings.¹⁰

¹⁰ William of Malmesbury says that Harold, son of Harold Godwinson, went to Norway after the defeat at Hastings in 1066, and that he was present on Magnús's 1098 expedition. William is however confused about Magnús berfœttr, perhaps because his uncle Magnús, son of Haraldr harðráði, is associated with an expedition in the Irish Sea in 1058; see note 3 above. The writers of the Welsh *Brut* also believed that Magnús berfœttr had ambitions in England in 1098.

Magnús left the islands alone for nearly four years, but he may have received a Norman–English envoy during this period. It has been suggested that the Giffarðr of *Morkinskinna* is identifiable as one of the family of Earl Walter Giffard, who at that stage was plotting rebellion against the new English King Henry I, in conjunction with Henry’s brother Robert of Normandy and three brothers of the Hugh of Shrewsbury killed by Magnús in 1098 (*Msk*, 323–36, Freeman 1882, II 451, Toll 1927, Gade 2000).

The sagas present Magnús’s second voyage in much the same terms as the first, as a pillaging expedition, but it may be that as well as reinforcing his presence in the Isles, he was intent on negotiations with the purpose of an alliance in Ireland with potential repercussions in England. A raid in 1101 by unnamed sailors on Scattery Island in the Shannon estuary, near Muirchertach’s base at Limerick, may have been initiated by Magnús to test the situation (*AI*, *AU*; see also the quatrain in *AFM*). The Norwegian king set sail the following year to an island kingdom uncharacteristically subdued, possibly indicating strong government undertaken on his behalf and that of his son Sigurðr, whom he had made the nominal ruler. Magnús set up his base again on Man, and then sailed to Dublin to meet Muirchertach Úa Briain, the Mýrkjartak of the sagas.¹¹

The sagas see Muirchertach as the junior partner who made submission to Magnús and then engaged with him in indiscriminate raiding in Ireland. The *Chronicle*, written in the thirteenth century when the power of Gaelic rulers had greatly declined, describes Muirchertach, the kingmaker of 1095 and sender of the ferocious Domnall, as eager to make peace with Magnús at all costs.¹² However, the significantly more

¹¹ Also written as Mýrjartak and Mýr(k)jartan. The latter form may have been influenced by the name Kjartan (Irish Ceartán), popularised by *Laxdæla saga*, or it may reflect an Irish diminutive. For a summary of his career see Ó Corráin 1972, 142–50.

¹² The *Chronicle* (58–59) says that Magnús sent his shoes to Muirchertach for him to wear on his shoulders in his hall on Christmas Day as a token of submission, and Muirchertach replied that he would not only wear them but eat them if it prevented Magnús from ruining a single province of Ireland. Gade has suggested that the anecdote, which has no known analogues, may contain a vague reference to Magnús’s cognomen, usually rendered *berfættr* (personal communication). There are other similarly vague resemblances between descriptions in the Norse sources and the *Chronicle*, such as the dream discussed above. Saxo’s explanation of Magnús’s cognomen is that he was caught unawares by his Swedish enemies and had to flee barefooted (Saxo Grammaticus 1931–57, I 342:10–16, trans. Christiansen 1980–81, I 108, 291 n.).

powerful figure known from Irish sources, the ‘high-king with opposition’ who controlled most of the island, was on his home territory, and in a position to view Magnús as a potentially useful ally in the short-term and a means by which control over Man and the Isles could be achieved later (Duffy 1992, 110–13).

The depiction of Ireland in Norse sources as a land of many small kings was accurate for much of the Viking Age, and also to some extent for the period in which many of these sources were composed, when Irish society was in the process of disintegration and reorganisation which followed the Anglo-Norman invasion of 1169. They do not take account of the rise in the intermediate period of a few powerful families aiming to achieve rule of the entire island. By 1102 Muirchertach controlled or at least influenced most of the island, with only one significant opponent, Domnall Mac Lochlainn, king of the northern dynasty of Cenél nEoghain. Muirchertach’s interest in church politics led him to correspond with the archbishops of Canterbury, Lanfranc and Anselm, and he held two synods in an attempt to reform the Irish church. He received a Jewish deputation, corresponded with King Henry I of England, and had some contact with the Scots king Edgar.¹³ Magnús represented an additional factor in the shifting alliances of the region, and was potentially the ally that Muirchertach needed. The Norwegian king possessed naval power, and ensured that, while Muirchertach’s long-standing ambitions in Man and the Isles could not be realised in the short term, there was every expectation that they would be later, on Magnús’s return to his homeland (Duffy 1992, 112–13). With Magnús and his fleet controlling Man and the Isles, including Islay, together with the passage through the North Channel, it may have been Muirchertach’s intent to subdue his northern opponent, and then, with Magnús, to benefit from the opportunities provided by instability in England. The Isle of Man was important to him not only for the protection of his chief trading base of Dublin, but because it was central for engagement in the politics of the whole region.

Muirchertach met Magnús in Dublin and the formal ‘peace of a year’ was agreed between them with the normal exchange of hostages, an event referred to in *Jóns saga helga* (*Gísls þátr Illugasonar*), where the Iclander Gísl Illugason and others are described arriving at Muirchertach’s court (*Biskupa sögur* I 2003, 333). The two kings then

¹³ In 1105 Edgar presented him with a camel (*AI*). Edgar’s successor Alexander I possessed an Arab horse and Turkish armour, presumably also evidence of crusading links at this period. See MacQuarrie 1997, 14.

undertook joint raiding expeditions, which the sagas say were interrupted by Magnús's wintering in Connacht, though it seems more likely that he would have kept his fleet in Dublin or in the Shannon estuary (*Ork*, 102; *Hkr*, III 233–34, note 4).¹⁴ More significantly from the perspective of the Irish king's ambitions, Magnús's twelve-year-old son Sigurðr, who again accompanied his father, married Muirchertach's even younger daughter. At about the same time Muirchertach married another daughter to Arnulf of Montgomery, one of the brothers of the Hugh slain in 1098, who at that stage was in open rebellion against Henry I of England.¹⁵

While some regular raiding is said to have occurred, the main consequence of the alliance was that, with Magnús's aid, Muirchertach launched his annual assault upon the Cenél nEoghain that summer. Magnús was apparently absent when Mac Lochlainn attacked, destroying Muirchertach's army. While Muirchertach is known to have remained in the area, probably with his allies, the Ulaid, Magnús seems to have given up for the year, and according to *Morkinskinna*, *Fagrskinna* and *Heimskringla*, demanded provisions of Muirchertach and prepared to go home. An agreement to provide Magnús with food for his voyage indicates an amicable parting, possibly with the intention of future joint attempts to oust Mac Lochlainn. In the meantime Muirchertach had access to Hebridean sea power through his young son-in-law. But Magnús was killed, the Norse sources state *á Úlaztíri*¹⁶ (in the land of the Ulaid), by allies who presumably mistook the Norse-speaking band for Hebridean raiders. Sigurðr, still only thirteen years old, set sail for Norway, where he shared rule of the country with two brothers.

Ordericus Vitalis says that Magnús had left treasure with a wealthy citizen of Lincoln, which the relieved King Henry confiscated at his death. If this treasure was money paid by the Norman earls for Magnús's engagement in their plans, perhaps arranged by the Giffarðr who visited Magnús's court, it would give a reason for the second incursion into lands Norway could not hope to control, but which would provide a lucrative return for a king whose people found him demanding

¹⁴ Muirchertach is incorrectly regarded as king of Connacht.

¹⁵ *AI* s.a. 1102 refers to both marriage alliances this year. See too *Brut*, s.a. 1102. Ordericus Vitalis records that Arnulf's wife was called Lafracoth. Muirchertach later made peace with Henry and took his daughter back, but the couple remarried in Arnulf's old age, and the groom died the next day (Ordericus Vitalis, VI (Book 9) 48–51). See Curtis 1921.

¹⁶ The name *Úlaztír* is discussed by Sommerfelt 1958.

(*Hkr*, III 237). Muirchertach may also have been paid for Magnús's attempts to support the English rebellion.¹⁷

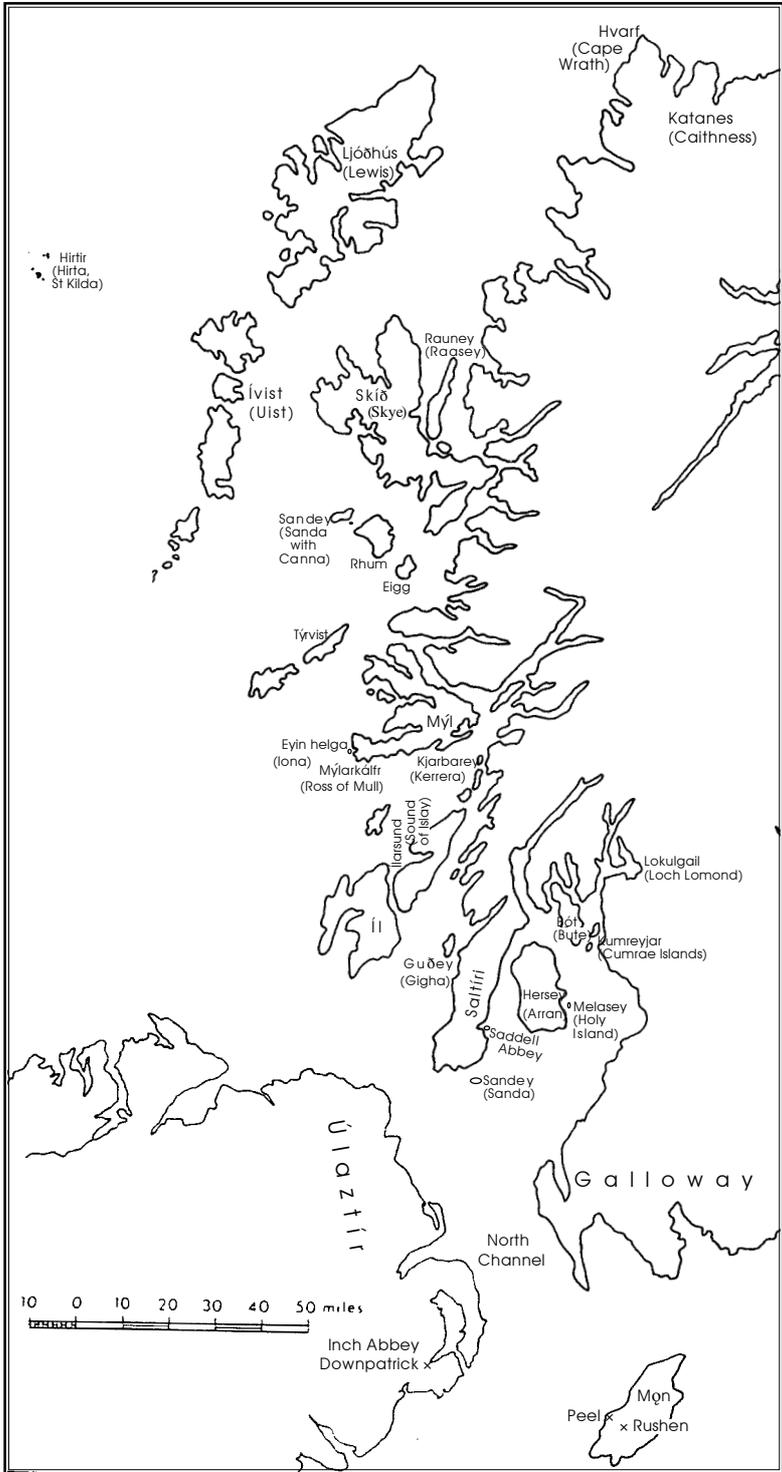
Magnús's name survived, among the Ulaid who buried him at the ancient monastic site of Downpatrick according to the *Chronicle*, and also in two Gaelic ballads (Christiansen 1931, 131–71, 401–06). The place where he died is described in *Morkinskinna*, *Fagrskinna* and more fully by Snorri, indicating a landscape of dykes and ditches, of scrubby copses on low hills, of freshwater and saltwater wetlands. It seems likely that this was not the landscape of Magnús's own day, but that developed later through land reclamation by the monks of the Cistercian abbey of Inch founded on the banks of the River Quoile in the 1180s, and described to the Norse writers by contemporaries who had seen it (Power 1994, 219–21).

Long-standing alliances remained between the Manx and the Ulaid, and also with the latter's more powerful neighbours, the Cenél nEoghain. These were later extended to the Norman conquerors of the Ulaid, the de Courcy family and their successors, the de Lacys. Inch Abbey was, like Rushen on Man, a daughter-house of Furness in Lancashire, and the abbey of Furness had rights in the election of the bishop of the Isles. Particularly after the incorporation of the bishopric into the Norwegian see of Nidaros, it is likely that clerics as well as mercenaries found their way from Man to Norway, and their accounts to the ears of the Norse writers.

IV Magnús's descendants

A passing reference in *Morkinskinna* (*Msk*, 366–67) speaks of tribute received from Ireland about twelve years after the death of Magnús, but the next reference of significance comes some twenty-five years after his end. During the reign of Sigurðr, the longest-lived of the three sons who succeeded Magnús, an Irishman named Gillikriustr came to Norway, claiming to be the posthumous son of Magnús. He brought his mother with him, and as Sigurðr had been on the expedition to Ireland, he may have recognised a former lover of his father's. For this or other reasons he came to recognise Haraldr gilli as a half-brother (see too Saxo Grammaticus, I 363:7–15, 446:14; trans. Christiansen 1980–81, I 139).

¹⁷ See Ordericus Vitalis, IV 194–95. The money said to be left by Magnús is discussed by Gade (2000, 193). William of Malmesbury says that Muirchertach acted insolently towards Henry I, who withdrew his trading rights for a time.



Haraldr's brief reign after Sigurðr's death shows only minor indications of Gaelic involvement or even of Gaelic followers. He had a brother, Krístrøðr, who was killed in battle, and he named one of his daughters Brigitta after the Irish saint. When he captured his nephew and rival King Magnús Sigurðsson in 1135, he behaved in a manner unique in medieval Norway, though common in Ireland and further afield, by having him deposed and mutilated rather than executed. The story of the swift runner, well known in the Gaelic world, is associated with Haraldr (*Hkr*, III 267–78).¹⁸ Snorri depicts him as dressing in Irish fashion and speaking Norse haltingly. The cult of the mythical Irish Saint Sunniva is not, however, referred to in this period. Although in the following century the writer of *Konungs skuggsjá* described the Irish as bloodthirsty but as never having killed their holy men, the author would have known that in 1135 Haraldr gilli hanged Reinaldr, the bishop of Stavanger (*Konungs skuggsjá* 1983, 22:10–13, trans. Larson 1917, 106; *Hkr*, III 288).

After Haraldr was killed in 1136 the domains were shared between his three young sons. An older son, born in the west, arrived in the kingdom in 1142, after the death of one of these young brothers and of two adult contenders for the kingship.¹⁹ Eysteinn, a grown man on his arrival, is likely to have been born in about 1123 and named after his putative uncle, the eldest son of Magnús berfœttr, King Eysteinn Magnússon, who had just died. The later Eysteinn, like his father, brought his mother with him, a woman Snorri names Bjaðok, which is possibly the Gaelic name Bethoc.²⁰ While nothing is known from Irish or Scottish sources about Haraldr gilli or Eysteinn, it is possible that Bjaðok had powerful relatives able to vouch for the veracity of the claim, as did the people who brought

¹⁸ For references to other Gaelic runners see Peete Cross 1952. The swift runners who survey the countryside in *Eiríks saga rauða* (223) are Scots who run dressed in garments called 'kjafal', which the editor identifies as the Gaelic word *cabhal*.

¹⁹ The adults were Magnús blindi, who later left the monastery to which he had retired after his mutilation by Haraldr gilli, and Haraldr's killer, Sigurðr slembidjárn, who claimed to be yet another son of Magnús berfœttr.

²⁰ For an alternative suggestion for the Gaelic origin of the name see Craigie 1897, 444. The daughter of the Hebridean leader Somerled, the first prioress of Iona, was named Bethoc (Martin 1934, 290–91). The suggestion that Bjaðok might be an aunt of Somerled, who was said in later clan tradition to have married a King Harald and gone to Norway with him, was made by Sellar (1996), and discussed more recently by Beuermann (2002, 171–74). There are, however, no references early enough to exclude the possibility of influence from printed versions of *Heimskringla*.

Eysteinn to Norway. His parentage was accepted, and he survived as king for fifteen years. In spite of his Gaelic origins, he took no interest in affairs to the west, even his extra-territorial raiding taking place elsewhere.

In the Isle of Man the departure of Magnús berfættr was followed by the 40-year reign of Óláfr, the third son of Guðrøðr crovan. This was largely unhindered by Muirchertach, whose significance declined after 1114 as he became ill and the power of the western Uí Chonchobhair increased. Óláfr was still alive in 1152 but it appears that his son Guðrøðr was by then the major force in the kingdom, though he appears only briefly in Norse sources. At the end of 1152 he went to Norway, where the *Chronicle of Man* says he rendered submission to King Ingi Haraldsson (*Chronicle* 62–63; the dates for the period are out by some ten years). It may be relevant that Ingi's co-regent Eysteinn was probably absent when Guðrøðr arrived, as that summer he gained the forced submission of Haraldr Maddaðarson in Orkney, burnt Aberdeen and raided, then wintered in England.²¹ It seems likely that the ten marks of gold tribute that, according to Robert of Torigni, the kings of Man and the Isles paid at the accession of a new king of Norway was paid only to one of them when more than one held the kingship.²² It may also be that Guðrøðr selected his king strategically, to avoid Eysteinn and any Hebridean or Irish kinsfolk with whom Eysteinn had retained contact.

While Guðrøðr was in Norway there was an incursion from Dublin into Man by his cousins, in which they killed Óláfr. This was possibly in revenge for the conquest of Dublin by a Hebridean named Óttarr in 1142, and his subsequent six-year rule, which may have had Manx assent (*Chronicle*, 62–65, *AFM*; see Duffy 1992, 121–23). While little is known

²¹ *Hkr* (III 327–30) records the plundering of Aberdeen, a battle south of Hartlepool and the burning of Whitby and Langton, as well as more indiscriminate actions. Eysteinn's activities in England, including the raid on the abbey of Whitby, are recorded by Hugh of Peterborough (1723, II 86). He notes that Eysteinn's band killed nobody; see Johnsen 1965, 5–7. Verses in *Heimskringla* refer to a battle near Whitby. Eysteinn's *strandhogg* of the sheep on the Farne Islands off the coast of Northumbria, and his repairing of his ships there using wood from the resident hermits' houses, are recorded in Reginald of Durham 1834, 615–16.

²² *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I* 1884–89, IV 228–29. Robert speaks only a few years later, in 1166, of Man and thirty-one other islands that lie between Scotland, Ireland and England. A number of the major ones are listed by Reginald of Durham, 251, note 1. Others are named in the founding Charter of the Benedictine monastery of Iona, discussed below. Another list is in John of Fordun's fourteenth-century *Chronicle of the Scottish Nation* (1871–72, II 39–40).

of Guðrøðr's intentions from the Norse sources, he may have remained in Norway seeking support for regaining Man. His visit coincided with that of the papal legate, Nicholas Breakspeare, who was in Norway in 1152 from July until about September, and whose task was to establish the new metropolitan archbishopric of Nidaros. The inclusion of the western bishopric of Man and the Isles under Nidaros rather than York may reflect the Vatican's strained relations with the English king Stephen but may also be the consequence of a recognised Manx secular presence in Norway at the time. Recent research suggests that Guðrøðr may have travelled to Norway on hearing of Breakspeare's journey, and that the reinforcement of Man's Norwegian link was related to the recent establishment of the archbishopric of Dublin and a desire to prevent the extension of its power to the kingdom (Beuermann 2002, 203–23). The attack by the Dublin cousins and the slaying of Óláfr would then have been directly related to Guðrøðr's move towards protection from Norway and the apparent encouragement of acceptance of the kingdom into Norwegian ecclesiastical as well as secular structures. The Manx king's centre of power was close to the Cistercian abbey of Rushen, which he endowed at about this time. Though currently dispossessed, he had done homage to Ingi, the Norwegian king whom Breakspeare favoured over both his brothers Sigurðr and Eysteinn, who, while the Legate was in his native England *en route* to Norway, had been plundering its trading centres and the monastic settlements of Whitby and the Farne islands. Not long before, in 1148 at the Synod of Rheims, Pope Eugenius III had specifically made excommunication the penalty for pillaging church property.²³

The strengthening of the Norwegian connection was of little help to Guðrøðr when he returned home in 1154 and made an unsuccessful attempt to take Dublin. Retreating to Man, he seems to have been at enmity with Hebrideans led by one Óttarr, possibly the Óttarr who had previously ruled Dublin. At Epiphany 1156 he was forced to engage in a sea-battle with their main supporter, his brother-in-law Somerled, *regulus* of Argyll on the western mainland.²⁴ Somerled was triumphant and in consequence the kingdom was divided (*Chronicle*, 68–69).

²³ Johnsen (1965, 8) refers to von Hefele, V 515, Leclercq, trans., 1907–21, V i 826.

²⁴ The anglicised form Somerled is used here for convenience. The Norse form was Sumarliði, and the Gaelic Som(h)airle, or in the older form in the Annals, Somurli. His descendants became known generically as the mic Somhairle, and the identification of individuals is not always clear in the Annals. See McNeill and Nicholson 1975, 161, map 53, with commentary by David Sellar, pp. 51–52.

The Isle of Man remained in Guðrøðr's hands, as did the island of Lewis in the Outer Hebrides. Skye was later added to the Manx possessions. The remainder went to Somerled and his descendants. While Guðrøðr regained Dublin in due course, apparently with the support of its citizens, many of his core domains had been lost. Forced out of Man itself in 1158, Guðrøðr went first to Scotland, where his request for support merely resulted in Somerled making his own peace with King Malcolm, and he then went to Norway.²⁵

In Norway, King Sigurðr Haraldsson had been killed in 1155, and two years later his half-brother Eysteinn was cornered by his enemies and put to death. The raider of 1151, who was reputedly mean with money, but was the patron of Einarr Skúlason, author of the religious poem *Geisli*, faced his execution bravely, possibly modelling his end on that of his supposed kinsman Magnús of Orkney some forty years previously (*Hkr*, III 345).²⁶ Like his father Haraldr gilli, Eysteinn was hailed for a time as a saint (Cormack 1994, 199–200). In consequence of Eysteinn's death, his half-brother Ingi was briefly Norway's sole ruler. In 1161 Guðrøðr of Man took the field to support his patron Ingi against his nephew and rival, only to abandon him before the battle commenced, creating a situation that led to Ingi's death (*Hkr*, III 367).

The partition of the kingdom of Man and the Isles, peripheral to Norwegian and Icelandic affairs, is not mentioned in Norse sources. Sturla Þórðarson was aware of the two lines of kingship when he wrote his *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar*, but makes no reference to how they came about. Somerled figures briefly in *Orkneyinga saga*, where he is named as a friend and raiding partner of Sveinn Ásleifarson, with whom he later fell out. Sveinn is said to have killed Somerled, but this must be a reference to another person, for Somerled, who was Sveinn's brother-in-law, was much engaged with the Scots crown, and was killed along with his eldest son during an incursion into Renfrew in the autumn of 1164 (*Ork*, 268, 274, 275; *Chronicle*, 74–75; see McDonald 2000).

²⁵ He witnessed the Great Charter of Kelso Abbey in April or May 1159 (*Regesta Regum Scottorum*, I. *The Acts of Malcolm IV, King of Scots 1153–65* 1960, 8, 192–95 (No. 131) (text), 194 (signature); *Chronicle*, 68–69; see too Barrow 1994, 222–23).

²⁶ *Msk*, 446. Snorri, who is less sympathetic towards Eysteinn than the *Morkin-skinna* author and more sceptical about his veneration, makes no reference to the début of this poem or to its patron in *Hkr*, although the farm in Iceland he had gained by marriage had connections with the poet Einarr (Whaley 1991, 38).

Little assistance for the kingdom could have been expected during the reign of the young Magnús Erlingsson (1161–84). The silence from Church sources may reflect the relative paucity of official records for the period, and the relative insignificance of the Church in the Kings' Sagas.

V The church in the kingdom

a) *The bishopric*²⁷

The bishopric, established in about 1133, appears to have been originally coterminous with the islands claimed for the kingdom by Magnús berfættr, and included Bute, Arran and the smaller islands within the Firth of Clyde, but not the peninsula of Kintyre. Despite the activities of Magnús and the claims of his successor Hákon, these remained politically within the kingdom of Scotland (see McNeill and Nicholson 1975, 136, map 32 (c.1274), commentary by Watt, pp. 35–37). Few of the bishops are named in the sagas, and there is little indication that they occupied a significant place in the politics of the larger kingdom. Records for the early period are sketchy, and the main source is the list of bishops at the end of the *Chronicle*, with some corroborative evidence provided by Icelandic annals and Irish sources (*Chronicle*, 112–21, Watt 1994, Holland 2001, Beuermann 2002, 259). Until the visit of Nicholas Breakspeare to Norway, bishops were consecrated in York, Canterbury and Dublin. The bishop's seat was at Saint Patrick's Isle at Peel on the Isle of Man, near the royal seat of the kingdom.

Breakspeare's visit to Norway in 1152 produced the plan for the new archbishopric which was agreed in Norway the following year and confirmed by the Pope at the end of November 1154 (Johnsen 1945 and 1967). The role of electing the bishop of the Isles remained, as it had been since 1134, with Rushen's mother-house, the Lancashire monastery of Furness in the Province of York. Óláfr's founding charter for Rushen makes explicit his desire to have a single bishop for the kingdom, possibly showing a reforming emphasis on territorial rather than tribal or monastic organisation of the bishopric and as a means of unification (*Monumenta de Insula Manniæ* ii, 1–2; Beuermann 2002, 206). Pope Eugenius III, himself a Cistercian, may have been predisposed to

²⁷ For an overview see Imsen, ed., 2003. Woolf (2003, 171–82) addresses evidence for Episcopal succession. Beuermann (2002) addresses the establishment of the bishopric.

the plan which ensured the inclusion of the Cistercian abbey of Rushen in the Norwegian Church Province. This was at the time the only foundation belonging to one of the recognised continental orders in the kingdom, and it was perhaps argued that Rushen would be a counter-balance to the Columban foundation on Iona. Guðrøðr's granting of various estates to Rushen at about this time, referred to in a Papal Bull of 1152–53, may have been intended to assist in this process (Atkinson, ed., 1876–88, XIV 591–95). It certainly appears that the move was not entirely welcome in the kingdom, for the *Chronicle* says nothing of the establishment of the bishopric as part of the metropolitan see of Nidaros; and Guðrøðr's return home with five ships may have been intended to impress the ecclesiastical as well as the warrior leaders on Man. There is also a degree of uncertainty over the identity of early bishops and their consecration, which may indicate that rival factions provided their own candidates.

Breakspeare's inclusion of the bishopric within the archdiocese of Nidaros does not seem to have resulted in much Norwegian engagement in affairs in the west, even where these directly concerned the Church. Although the bishops of the Isles owed obedience to Nidaros, it appears that, in addition to the uncertainty relating to the validity of consecration in the early days, three of the four known bishops for the period 1154–98 were consecrated at York (Watt 1994, 112). There seems to have been trouble in filling the see, and only one early bishop, Reginald, possibly appointed in 1153, was Norwegian. Later there were to be complaints over the long and dangerous journey, complaints that seem weak considering that the provision of bishops was required for the Faroes, Iceland and distant Greenland, which was to suffer long vacancies as the changing climate made travel more difficult and the settlement became more isolated. The complaints may reflect not so much the actual difficulties of voyaging as the alien nature of the Isles.²⁸

²⁸ *Chronicle* 1860, 156–57. See also *DN*, I 22–23, no. 28. *DN IX* contains many of the records relating to Britain and Ireland and reference to those printed elsewhere. See *Regesta Norvegica* 1978– for summaries of diplomatic records and their places of publication. Vol. I 312–30 contains a 'Regesta Sodorensia', while Vol II also contains relevant material. The excuse of the dangerous voyage to the Hebrides was used again in 1349: see *Regesta Norvegica*, V 410, no. 1171. The situation in Greenland was far worse. In 1242, Nicholas was consecrated to a see already vacant for ten years. He died in the same year, never having gone to Greenland. In 1246 his successor, Óláfr, was consecrated, and went to Greenland the following year. Notwithstanding a

In 1244 it was agreed that the archbishop of York might, with the consent of the archbishop of Nidaros, consecrate bishops of the Isles (*DN*, I 22–23, no. 28). Three years later in 1247 the abbots were given special powers in the diocese and their independence of Scottish monastic authority was reasserted by the papacy (*Chronicle* 1860, 157–58; Anderson, trans., 1922, II 361; see Easson 1957).

The bishopric had responsibility for the impoverished bishopric of Lismore, which itself seems to have been created under pressure from Somerled to cover his mainland possessions. This responsibility was a hardship, and Simon, Bishop of the Isles, asked in 1236 to be freed of the burden (*DN*, VII, no. 12, summary *DN*, XIX 152, no. 225).

b) *Iona*

This small, barren but strategically significant island in the southern Inner Hebrides is referred to a number of times in Norse sources, not least as the resting place for the wave-borne coffin of the troublesome Hallfreðr, poet to Óláfr Tryggvason (*Hallfreðar saga vandræðaskálds*, 199). Although knowledge about Iona in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries is limited to a few written sources and some archaeological evidence, it must have had a significant impact on the life of the Hebrides as a place of trade, pilgrimage and political intrigue. It had a substantial monastic community, with a hospital and a secular burial ground. After the Scandinavian conversion to Christianity it appears to have been raided only occasionally.

The monastery was founded by the Irish Colum(b) Cille, also known as Columba, in 563, and early became established as a seat of learning with a major scriptorium. As the place of Columba's death, Iona flourished as the leading house of the Columban *familia*, the federation of monasteries associated with the founder.²⁹ An early and regular target of Viking raids, the monastery declined in the Viking period, and inland Kells in Ireland took over as head of the federation. A community

journey to Iceland in 1262–64, he survived until 1280. The see was then vacant for another eight years. See Ólafur Halldórsson 1978, 67. For an overview of North Atlantic travel, see Marcus 1980, 1998.

²⁹ The definitive work is Herbert 1996; see too Easson 1957, 52; *Argyll* 4, 420–26; Gwynn and Hadcock 1988, 38; Gwynn 1992; McDonald 1997, 200–33; Dunbar and Fisher 1995; and Ritchie 1997, esp. 36–46. For an archaeological commentary see O'Sullivan 1999.

remained on the island and retained contact with Kells and with Derry, Columba's first great monastic centre in his dynastic heartland across the North Channel. In the late eleventh century Iona's buildings were restored by the Scots Queen Margaret (died 1093), who did not follow her usual practice of introducing continental orders (Ordericus Vitalis, IV (Book 8) 272–73). Margaret's foundation at Dunfermline in the heartland of Scots power ended the practice of burying Scots monarchs on Iona, and perhaps opened the way for the ruling dynasties of the kingdom of the Isles to establish themselves on the island.³⁰

The bishopric may have been vacant at the time of the division of the kingdom in 1156. The Manx kings, however, did not view the political disaster of that year as automatically preventing their access to Iona, and Guðrøðr or his father Óláfr may have built the mortuary chapel on the island, just outside the innermost circle of the monastic enclosure. This building, the oldest to survive on the island, shows evidence of Irish architectural influence and appears to date from the middle of the twelfth century. Its building at this time, and the occasional references to royal visitors in the annals, indicate that the monastery had recovered, if Ordericus' comment on its ruinous state in Margaret's time is to be taken as factual. Though the mortuary chapel was used by the Somerled family, Guðrøðr was buried on the island in 1188 (*Chronicle*, 78–79).

The bishopric seems to have been vacant again in 1164 at the time of an event not recorded at all in Norse sources but which could hardly have escaped the attention of the forceful archbishop of Nidaros, Eysteinn Erlendsson. It seems, however, that though he had just ensured the crowning of Norway's new king, Magnús Erlingsson, he had no power to address a major change in the southern end of his see. In that year Somerled proposed the reinstatement of Iona as the head of the Columban *familia* and the residence of the federation's leader Flaithbertach Úa Brolcháin (*AU*). Flaithbertach was a reformer within the existing tradition rather than, as was happening contemporaneously in Ireland, through the importation of the European orders, and he had shortly beforehand moved the headship of the Columban federation from Kells to Derry. The proposed move to Iona was opposed as much by ecclesiastical figures as it was by the Irish and Scots kings (Herbert 1996,

³⁰ *Argyll* 4, 48. Malcolm III was buried with Margaret at Dunfermline, but his brother Donald Bán, who reigned briefly twice in the 1090s, may have been buried on the island.

120; Dunning 1959). From a Norwegian perspective, the anomaly of a Columban house must have been compounded by an attempt at reorientation towards Ireland and its ancient monastic system. In fact the proposal came to nothing and the chief instigator, Somerled, was killed later that year (*The Chronicle of Melrose* 1936, 79; Anderson 1922, II 254–55). Ireland's political life was shortly afterwards substantially changed by the Anglo-Norman invasion, while the power of the Columban federation waned after the death of Flaithbertach in 1175. His chief supporter, Gilla Mac Laig, archbishop of Armagh and a former abbot of Iona (who had opposed Flaithbertach moving to Iona), had died the previous year. While the Isles were, as always, peripheral to the saga writers, the proposal must have had considerable significance to the Church, and the lack of Scandinavian reference may reflect an absence of surviving sources rather than the seriousness with which the proposal was viewed.

Iona's local significance does not seem to have diminished greatly, though four churches in Galloway were removed from its patronage in 1172–74 by William I (*Argyll* 4, 48; *Regesta Regum Scottorum* II, 213–14, no. 141), as a punishment, it seems, for the attempted change of 1164. Notable Irish pilgrims and penitents are recorded as dying on Iona in 1174, 1188 and 1199 (*AU*; *Argyll* 4, 49).

The entry in the *Annals of Ulster* indicates that in 1164 the monastery contained not only the main community led by the abbot, but also a community of ascetics living within the enclosure, and at least one hermit. It may have been at this stage or shortly afterwards that another member of the Uí Bhrolcháin family, Domnall, was made abbot. His death in 1203, apparently in old age, was to occasion a much greater change.

The *Annals of Ulster* state that in 1204 Cellach built a new monastery on Iona in the middle of the enclosure, without permission. Angry clerics, supported by a wide alliance of native and Norman clergy and by the new Norman rulers, sailed from Derry and beyond, razed the new buildings, deposed Cellach and set another abbot in his place (*AU*). This prompt response to the establishment of a new foundation of the Benedictine rule proved ultimately ineffectual.

Somerled's son Reginald is named as the initiator in the seventeenth-century *Book of Clanranald* (II 148–309, 156–57; cited in *Argyll* 4, 143), though the decision to establish Iona as Benedictine must have involved the agreement of all the leading members of the family in so far as it concerned the endowments. The founding Charter, dated the

ninth of December 1203 (*Chronicle* 1860, 152–53), indicates that Cellach acted swiftly on the death of Domnall Úa Broilcháin, and that he had the Somerled family behind him. The charter granted so rapidly from Rome places the new abbey directly under papal protection, and endows it with lands from all parts of the Isles in the control of members of the Somerled family. These endowments are so large that the demise of the Columban monastery must have been inevitable.

The physical remains indicate that the Benedictine foundation was intended as a replacement for, and not, as in some other places, a supplement to, an existing foundation. The building of the Benedictine church the Irish clerics objected to so strongly appears to have been started immediately, over the central sacred space of the Columban monastery, with only the reliquary chapel, ‘the little church of Columcille’, visited by Magnús in 1098, surviving demolition (*Argyll 4*, 41, 85). It is unusual to have an independent Benedictine house founded so late and unaffiliated to any of the reformed congregations, and the change of Rule was apparently a decision made by the existing community, as there is no indication of monks being brought in from elsewhere.³¹ A papal interest in reform of this monastery must be considered, and may have been encouraged by the presence in Rome that summer of a visitor from an even more distant part of the northern archdiocese. Jón Árnason smyrill, bishop of Greenland, had journeyed there by way of Iceland and his native Norway (Ólafur Halldórsson 1978, 66–67; Imsen 2003, 15).

The intent seems to have been to build fast and obliterate the older monastery, for the earliest surviving stonework of the church is dated to the turn of the thirteenth century (*Argyll 4*, 85). As the natural watercourse runs to the north of the central site, the domestic buildings were situated on this side rather than, as is normal, to the south of the abbey church, a circumstance which again suggests that the work was done in haste, without time allowed to divert the stream.

The change may have been brought about by secular pressure, and perhaps through a desire to have papal protection in a time of difficulty. Shortly afterwards an Augustinian nunnery associated with Reginald’s

³¹ See *Argyll 4*, 143–44 for a discussion. Reference is made to John de Courcy’s foundation some twenty years previously near Downpatrick, the monastery associated with Patrick’s remains, where later the bodies of Patrick, Columba and Bridget were said to have been discovered. However, de Courcy’s Cistercian house, a daughter-house of Furness, was situated outside the original monastic settlement, not, as on Iona, on top of it.

sister Bethoc, its first prioress, was built a little to the south.³² Almost immediately afterwards, the Scots kings appear to have forcibly redistributed lands among the branches of the Somerled family, with regard to both their Scots mainland possessions and the island possessions which they held from Norway (Duncan and Brown 1959). Reginald may have kept the peace between the different branches until his death in about 1207, and the donations to Iona might have been part of the agreement.

The see of Man and the Isles appears to have been vacant during the early years of the thirteenth century. The bishop, Michael, a Manxman, had died in 1203 in old age, and was buried at Fountains Abbey in England. He had originally, it seems, been a Cistercian of Rushen Abbey, but his consecration had been problematic, and possibly took place at York rather than Nidaros (Watt 1994, 119). This, together perhaps with strong arguments against overmuch Manx influence, may have influenced the decision to make the new Benedictine house exempt under its founding charter from the authority of the Bishop of the Isles.

Norwegian influence on Iona cannot be proved or entirely discounted. The country had its own Benedictine foundations and the period was dominated by two prominent archbishops of Nidaros, Eiríkr Ívarsson (1189–1205) and Þórir Guðmundarson (1206–14), both of them Augustinians. However, the dominant influence appears to have been that of the Somerled family. It was not their first foundation, for Reginald, or possibly his father Somerled, had by this date founded a Cistercian monastery at Saddell on Kintyre within the family's traditional heartland (Easson 1957, 66).

While Iona itself was plundered in 1210 by Norwegians without retribution being possible (Eirspennill 465; *AU*, s.a. 1210, where the origins of the perpetrators are not given), punishment was merely delayed for those who had attempted to prevent the Benedictine foundation on Iona. In 1212 the two sons of Reginald, together with Alan of Galloway, led a ferocious raid on Derry and its hinterland, and two years later Ruaidhrí (Ruairí), son of Reginald, and Alan again attacked Derry and took away many of the church's prize possessions (*AU* 1212, 1214).

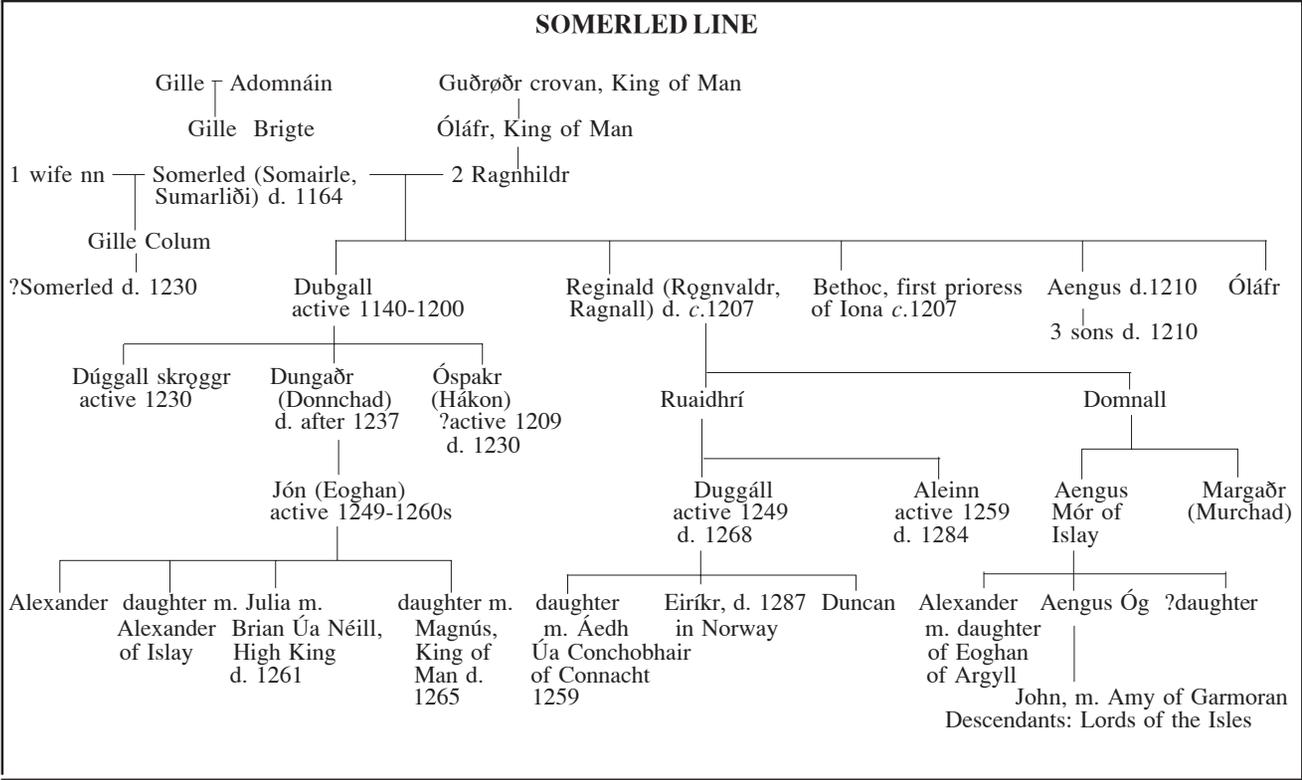
³² See Martin 1934, 290–01; Sellar 1966, 129. It has been suggested that Bethoc was the first owner of the Iona Psalter (Lib. Scot. MS 10000), written and illuminated probably at Oxford in the early thirteenth century, for an Augustinian canoness with an interest in Iona saints (*Argyll* 4, 178). See too Easson 1957, 127; and note 20 above.

Little is known about events on the island in the following years, but there are indications that it was increasingly popular with pilgrims, for the original church was extended westwards in the 1220s, a bare twenty years after the original construction. Both the *Chronicle of Man* and the Icelandic annals refer to the battle on the island in 1223 involving Manx factions, as a consequence of which delegations were sent to Norway to seek help. The accounts of the resultant expedition in 1229–30 do not refer to Iona specifically, and when Hákon finally set sail in 1263 to establish his authority in the face of Scottish invasion, the fleet sailed south by the eastern route through the Straits of Mull. Those wounded on the expedition were given into the care of the Cistercians at Saddell. Hákon must have passed Iona on the return journey when he spent time by the Ross of Mull, but again there is no reference to the monastery.

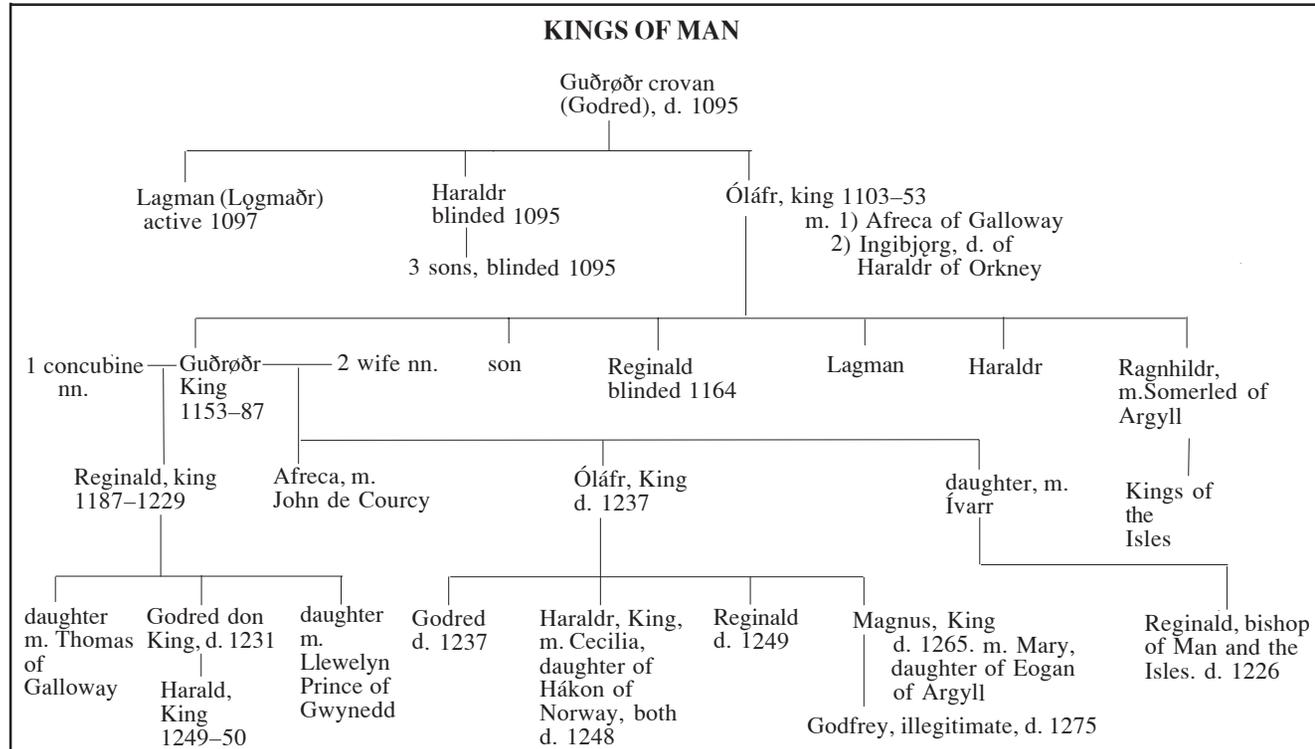
The monastery on Iona, whether Columban or Benedictine, occupied a key position. Yet as far as can be determined from the personal names that have survived and its dealings with Norway, it looked to Ireland for its origins, and this lasted until the re-foundation in 1203. Iona may have supplied bishops to the Isles, but the community appears to have had few dealings with the archbishopric. It was granted special powers in the bishopric, but it is not known how these were used, or how the monastic community maintained contact with the bishopric or archdiocese. After 1204 the references in the *Annals of Ulster* cease, as Iona fell outside the Irish sphere of interest. The place of much intrigue as well as many funerals, the monastery appears to have remained largely beyond the knowledge or control of the Church authorities in Nidaros.

c) *Rushen*

While the abbey at Rushen is not mentioned in any of the Norse sagas, its central role in the contacts of the Irish Sea area means that this Cistercian abbey, probably the place where the *Chronicle* was written, may have been more significant than has been recorded in the north (see Davey, ed., 1999). The bishopric had acquired not only Iona but a number of other monastic sites in the Hebrides which followed the Irish rules. Rushen on Man, however, was from the start Cistercian, a daughter-house of Furness in Lancashire on the English side of the Irish Sea, founded with Manx royal approval. Though its monastic buildings remained more modest than those of Benedictine Iona, its lands were extended by Guðrøðr in 1152 during his visit to Norway. In the 1180s Furness supplied monks to another daughter-house, Inch Abbey near Downpatrick on the Irish side of the Sea. This was founded by the



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new Anglo-Norman ruler of Ulaid, John de Courcy, who took advantage of long-standing alliances between his new homeland and the Isle of Man (Gwynn and Hadcock 1988, 135). His wife Afreca, daughter of the King of Man and a participant in the alliance, herself founded a Cistercian monastery a few years later at Grey Abbey, supplying it from Holmcultram in English Cumbria.³³ While little is known of this link, Inch and Rushen, as daughter-houses of Furness, may have had substantial contacts, and it may be from monastic as much as mercenary visits to Norway that what little is known about Ireland at the time is derived.

The connection of Man with Furness remained strong, and in 1227 Henry III of England wrote to Óláfr, then at war with his brother Reginald, to warn him against harming Furness, which belonged to the king of England, and against harassing its occupants or dependents (*DN XIX*, 133–34 no. 185). Óláfr heeded the warning, and the following year was given safe conduct to Henry's court in order that the English king, whose Irish affairs meant that he had substantial interests in Man, could broker a peace between the warring brothers (*DN XIX*, 135 no. 188).

VI The thirteenth century

There is little information on the Isles in the early years of the thirteenth century from a Norse perspective, perhaps because of the fragmented nature of the sources for the period. The end of the twelfth century, however, saw a degree of stability under Sverrir, and provision was made by English and Norwegian rulers for shipwrecked mariners.³⁴

The understanding of kingship on the Isle of Man appears to have resembled that in Ireland more than that in Norway. This in practice

³³ Gwynn and Hadcock 1988, 134. This abbey was originally founded from Melrose by David I and his son Henry, and retained Scottish links after it came under political control from England in 1157. See Stringer 2000, 154.

³⁴ *DN XIX*, nos 51 (before 1170), 63 (1185–88, from original of 1182). Henry III wrote to Magnús on his succession in 1263 confirming the mutual arrangements for merchants (*Close Rolls of the Reign of Henry III AD 1261–1264* 1936, 388). The rights were broken, for example in 1227 when the English robbed a ship and slew those on board, including a Norwegian bishop-elect: see *DN XIX*, nos 186 (1227) and 188 (1228). In 1258 an Icelandic ship was wrecked, and rumour had it that it had come to shore in Scotland and that the men and women aboard had been killed (*Sturlunga saga*, I 523). Similar agreements were made between Norway and Scotland and confirmed under the Treaty of Perth in 1266.

meant that the strongest claimant within the kin-group acquired the land, which at his death was again claimed by the single strongest claimant, with the consequence that rivals were often removed by killing, maiming or imprisonment. In the Hebrides and the associated mainland possessions, as in Norway, however, any acknowledged son of a previous king was in a position to claim kingship, and if his claim was accepted and he was strong enough to enforce it, the kingdom was partitioned for his lifetime.³⁵ The division of the kingdom in 1156 between the Manx and Somerled lines proved permanent, and during much of the long reign of Reginald (Rognvaldr) of Man, his lands were, unusually, also subdivided, with a part of them being held by his younger brother and eventual successor Óláfr. It may have been the proliferation of males in the Somerled line that led the Scots king to intervene as he may have done at the beginning of the thirteenth century to determine the permanent boundaries between the lands of each subdivision of the family (Duncan and Brown 1959). In the first half of the thirteenth century, as Hákon Hákonarson increased his power in Norway, he sought to appoint kings of Man and the Isles from among eligible candidates in order to limit their numbers. While the evidence is scanty, he may have intended to impose succession through male primogeniture here as in Norway, based on his experience of being posthumous and illegitimate, of facing opposition from the other claimant, Skúli, until the latter's death in 1241, and of addressing similar circumstances in Orkney. Hákon's crowning of his legitimate sons in his own lifetime is likely to have influenced the sense of what was acceptable in his western possessions. The political history of the Isles in the thirteenth century as known from the surviving sources revolves around Hákon's increasing power and his adoption of a more European understanding of kingship and succession.

The title adopted by the rulers of the kingdom was 'rex'. While this title was used by others with reference to the Manx rulers, those of the Somerled line are referred to as 'regulus' or merely 'dominus'. The Gaelic 'rí', a title carrying less weight in terms of land and power, continued to be used throughout the period and beyond (Munro 1961, 56). The sagas and Icelandic annals use the term 'konungr'.

³⁵ There is no instance in which female descent, unacceptable in the Irish system, was allowed, as happened in Norway in 1161 when, in the absence of a choice from the male line, candidates descended through kings' daughters were proposed, of whom one, Magnús Erlingsson, became king (*Hkr*, III 373).

Sturla depicts the Manx kings as the senior line, represented after Guðrøðr's death in 1188 by his elder, illegitimate, son, who had the same name, Røgnvaldr, as the dominant son of Somerled.³⁶ The latter, who figures little in Scandinavian sources, is known from the other sources as a warrior, monastic patron and chivalric ideal, whose personal seal depicts a galley on one side and a knight on the other, a combination of types not unlike that of the Lewis chess pieces with their traditional and chivalric figures.³⁷

The King of Man, usually known by the Latinised name Reginald, figures in *Orkneyinga saga* as the Røgnvaldr who in the earlier years of his reign was engaged in mercenary activities for the Scots king. He became increasingly involved with the English crown following its engagement in Ireland, and as such figures in the records of the period. A formal praise poem in Irish credits him with rule not only of his own lands but of islands actually under the control of the Somerled family.³⁸ He was able to raise forces composed of Hebridean, Kintyre and Irish followers, activity which indicates the cultural complexities of the Irish Sea area with its shifting alliances and patronages (*Ork*, 293; McDonald 1997, 86–87).

The protection of Dublin figures heavily in insular sources but is also clear in the Norse. At the end of the 1160s, Sveinn Ásleifarson from Orkney had successfully raided an English ship making for the port. He was killed on a later raid on the city, on the eve of the Anglo-Norman invasion.³⁹ Shortly afterwards Guðrøðr, King of Man, joined with a united Irish force to blockade the new Norman hold on Dublin, effectively using his ships to prevent supplies being brought in by sea (Giraldus Cambrensis 78–79, 306 note 117). The lesson was not forgotten and Guðrøðr's son Reginald enjoyed a lucrative arrangement with the English court which involved annual maintenance payments of corn

³⁶ In Gaelic Ragnall, Raonall. For a discussion of the various branches of the Somerled family see Sellar 2000.

³⁷ McDonald 1995. The bishops in the chess pieces found in the early nineteenth century on the Atlantic coast of Lewis wear their mitres with their points to front and back rather than to each side, thus following the fashion new in the early to mid-twelfth century, which was perhaps introduced to England and Scandinavia by Breakspeare. See Taylor 1978, 14–15 for dating based on the mitres, and Stratford 2001, 12, 48–49.

³⁸ Ó Cuív 1957. Islands named are Mull and Coll, and there is also a reference to Aran. The poet also associates Reginald with Dublin (verse 19).

³⁹ *Ork*, 287–89. See also *AU*, s.a. 1171, and Giraldus Cambrensis (1978, 76–77), where the leader, here called Askulv, is portrayed less heroically.

and an ever-increasing number of barrels of wine, in return for protecting the sea passage to Dublin. The warrior of *Orkneyinga saga*, who once spent three winters with no more cover than the awning on his ship, was provided with travel expenses when visiting the English court, and the drawn-out struggles of the English kings to force the Irish government to pay for the protection of the Manx are recorded in the diplomatic records of the time (*DN XIX*, 99–101 nos 124–26; 103 no. 129; 130 nos 178–79; 148–50 nos 219–20; 152 no. 224).

The only narrative in Norse sources for the beginning of the thirteenth century is the compilation known as *Boglunga sǫgur*, and also as *Birkibeina saga*, or as *Inga saga* after the dominant king. It survives in Eirspennill in a version which covers the period 1202–10.⁴⁰ The saga is also known in a more expansive version which also covers the years up to 1217. Only a Danish translation of the longer text, made in about 1600, is complete (see *Boglunga sǫgur* 1988).

Iona was engaged in building its Benedictine abbey in the first decade of the century, under the protection of Reginald, son of Somerled. By about 1207, work on the Augustinian nunnery had been started. The island was pillaged in 1210, according to *Boglunga sǫgur*, by a band of Norwegians twelve ships strong, raising funds for a pilgrimage to Jerusalem (Eirspennill, 468). The deed was made possible, the saga recounts, because the kings of the Isles were at war with each other. It was nonetheless ill-thought of, and the transgressors were reprimanded by the church authorities on their return to Norway. Further, when the plunderers journeyed south the following year, two of their ships sank.

The Icelandic annals record the fitting-out of an expedition for the Isles the previous year, and in 1210 the appointment to the diocese of a Bishop Koli followed by the pillaging of Iona by unnamed persons.⁴¹ The longer saga explains that the expedition was caused by the failure of the kings of the Isles and Man to pay tribute for many years. If this was the case, it may have been viewed as particularly relevant, either as justice or as the last opportunity to raid, at a time when the Isles were acquiring a new bishop after a long delay. Raising capital by plundering

⁴⁰ A similar text is in Fríssbók and Skálholtsbók yngsta, but the ending, which includes the reference to the Norwegian expedition to the Hebrides, had been lost when these versions were written.

⁴¹ *Íslandske Annaler*, 188, s.a. 1209, 1210 (*Skálholtsannálar*), 478, s.a. 1210 (*Oddaverja Annáll*) for the raid on Iona; 182 (*Skálholtsannálar*) and 30–31 (*Konungsannáll*), where King John's conquest of Ireland is also noted.

the lands to the west was not new: it had been suggested by the followers of King Sverrir while he was establishing his own rule in Norway (*Sverris saga*, 81).

Whether the expedition of 1210 was intended as a formal punishment which descended into anarchy is hard to determine, but the comment that plundering was made possible by civil war in the Isles is borne out by other events. In 1209 there was a dispute on Skye involving the two sons of Reginald son of Somerled and Reginald's brother Aengus, who had previously defeated his brother in a dispute of 1192. Reginald may have kept the peace during his lifetime, but in 1210 Aengus and his three sons were killed. The events may be connected with each other and with a redistribution of lands in the Somerled family (Anderson 1922, II 378–82).

This internecine slaughter may have distracted other members of the family away from Iona. The leader of the Norwegian expedition, the saga says, was a Hebridean named Óspakr. If he is the same Óspakr who in 1229 was to lead an expedition to the Isles at the behest of King Hákon of Norway (*Flateyjarbók*, III 100–02), he was himself a member of the Somerled family.

Reginald of Man appears to have played no direct part in these events, and may have been preoccupied with defending his own island, which was plundered that year in his absence by English soldiers engaged in the conquest of Ireland, a matter recorded in the Icelandic annals (*Chronicle*, 82; see Duffy 1997, 103). Reginald's younger brother Óláfr, who ruled Lewis and perhaps Skye, was at that time in prison in Scotland.

The comment regarding the failure to pay dues to Norway may suggest what lay behind some at least of the violence of this year. The longer version of the saga states that as a result of the Norwegian expedition two kings came to Norway and paid their dues. One is named Rognvaldr, the name of the then King of Man, and also of the recently deceased son of Somerled. The other is named Guðrøðr, which may be an error based on the Manx king's patronymic, for his father had died in 1188. The saga may reflect a joint visit by leading members of the two families over the issue of outstanding tribute to which Robert of Torigni refers (Johnsen 1969).

The plundering of Iona may have had additional cause if Óspakr was indeed identical with the brother of the Hebridean kings Duggáll and Dungaðr named in *Hákonar saga* in relation to events of 1229–30. Had this Óspakr been in Norway at the time of the redistribution of

lands within the Somerled dynasty and the apportioning of family estates to the new monastery of Iona at the beginning of the century, his claim to Hebridean possessions may have been disregarded. This may in turn have led him to take this opportunity to acquire compensation by direct means. The attack on Iona was unique and sacrilegious according to the saga, which carries no reference to the Viking ancestry of the perpetrators. Whatever his intent, if he is the same Óspakr, he ultimately achieved reconciliation with his brothers and was accepted by them on his return to the Isles. He is depicted in both *Hákonar saga* and the *Chronicle* as popular with his followers and willing to act in conjunction with his kin.⁴² Iona's inhabitants may have held less positive views, and the expedition to the Isles in 1229 does not mention the island.

The Norwegian tribute may have produced little in return, and for Reginald of Man there were lucrative opportunities nearer to home. His need to protect Man against casual violence such as that of 1210 may have brought him to the English court. In 1212, notwithstanding his Norwegian obligations, he became a vassal of King John of England and of the Pope, John then being also a papal vassal (*DN* 19, 83–84, no. 95). In 1119 Reginald tried to avoid his obligations to the Norwegian king by offering an annual payment to the Pope, making his case on the basis that he had been invested in his realm by the papal legate.⁴³

Reginald had succeeded his father Guðrøðr in 1188 when his father's preferred heir, his legitimate son Óláfr, was still a child. As a young adult, Óláfr was awarded the Isle of Lewis for his maintenance. This proved so barren in revenues that Óláfr unwisely complained, and his elder brother arranged for his imprisonment in Scotland, where he remained until the death of King William in 1214. Óláfr may have come

⁴² McDonald (1997, 110–11) suggests that the Ruðri who, according to *Hákonar saga*, claimed and was nominally awarded Bute in 1263 may have been a son of Óspakr. McDonald links this suggestion to Óspakr's attack on the garrison on Bute in 1230, although this earlier incident could have been the main requirement of Hákon, who claimed the islands within the Clyde estuary as part of the settlement agreed with Magnús berfættr. The Scots kings had garrisoned this strategic island to prevent incursions towards the Central Belt and the centre of royal power.

⁴³ Theiner 1864, II 21–22. See too *DN* VII, 11–12, no. 11, of 1223. Reginald had received a visit from the papal legate Cardinal Vivien in 1177. See *Chronicle*, 77, and Flanagan 1976–77.

into possession of the revenues of Skye too, either at this early stage in his career or after his release and reconciliation with his brother.

The Hebrides were at the time dominated in the Somerled line by Somerled's sons Dubgall and Reginald, and also until 1210 by Aengus and his three sons. The distribution of lands appears to have left Dubgall and his descendants with the central part of the Isles and mainland, while Reginald's son Ruaidhrí gained Garmoran, the Rough Bounds further north on the mainland, the Uists and the Small Isles, and this branch appears to have also retained some claim to Kintyre. Divisions within the Outer Isles south of Lewis remain speculative. Ruaidhrí's brother Domnall gained Islay and the mainland region of Argyll, including the Kintyre peninsula. The members of this branch turned early to Ireland and rarely if ever went to Norway.

In 1202 a party of Icelanders were storm-driven to the Hebrides in an incident that displays how little was known about the kingdom, in spite of a language and trading practices held in common. The sagas relating to Hrafn Sveinbjarnarson and Guðmundr Arason tell of the difficult journey to Norway for Guðmundr's consecration as bishop of Hólar. The story is told in *Hrafns saga*, and also in versions of the saga of Guðmundr. The oldest, *Prestssaga Guðmundar Arasonar*, like *Hrafns saga*, was written in the first half of the thirteenth century, though it no longer survives independently. Hrafn was killed in 1213. The *Prestssaga* is believed to be by Lambkárr, a friend of Guðmundr's who died in 1249, and survives in the compilation *Sturlunga saga*. The interrelationships of the texts are so great that they must be regarded as a single source with variations rather than as corroborative accounts. The story as a whole, however, sheds light on how material may have been derived from more than one informant.

Guðmundr and Hrafn took passage that summer in a ship which twice attempted to take the northern passage from Iceland to Norway, only to be blown back on each occasion. A dream in which Guðmundr was seen by one of those on board being blessed by the saintly bishop Jón of Hólar led the bishop-elect to advise the crew of traders to take the south-eastern route, which they did successfully, only to be then blown severely off course. During the ensuing storm they managed to recognise the *Suðreyjar*, and according to the *Prestssaga* they identified *Hirtir*, the remote islands of Saint Kilda. The version in *Sturlunga saga* says that they landed here and learnt that King Sverrir had died that March, some four months before the voyage. The other accounts say that they learnt this news only on reaching Norway. Whether they landed or not, the weather

did not abate, and they were blown towards the coast of Ireland, and heard the waves breaking on all sides. While Guðmundr's prayers calmed the worst of the storm, their situation remained perilous. *Hrafns saga* has a shorter opening account of the journey, which names only the severe weather, the difficulties of leaving Iceland, and of being driven off-course around *Hvarf* (Cape Wrath); but it then emphasises, as do the other sources, the insistence by the bishop-elect that Hrafn take charge. At the time of greatest danger, the *Prestssaga* tells, the travellers confessed their sins, then the clerics repaired their tonsures and the traders promised wadmál, wax and a pilgrimage by one of their number should death be averted. After this they came to peaceful harbour at Sandey in the Suðreyjar. Here they stayed for some days, but landing tax was demanded of them on behalf of the king, who is named Óláfr. Guðmundr went on land to say the Office, the *Prestssaga* noting that he entered the church there. They were then met in person by Óláfr, king of the Isles, and given hospitality, but when Guðmundr and Hrafn sought to leave, they were detained and the payment of the landing tax again demanded. The Icelanders, who had just promised a considerable amount to the Church in return for their survival, were reluctant to pay the amount of wadmál demanded, a hundred ells for each of the twenty on board, as they would have to pay the same again in Norway. A compromise was reached under which the Icelanders paid merely six hundred ells between them.⁴⁴

The saga accounts focus upon the holiness of Guðmundr, and the extent to which the forces of evil, in the form of the weather and human cupidity, opposed him and the virtuous Hrafn. From a Hebridean viewpoint, the event can be seen as a run from the storm by all concerned to the safe harbour made by Sanda, Sandey, and the sand spit that joins it to Canna. The king of the Isles was Óláfr, the younger brother of Reginald of Man, who was ruler of Lewis, and possibly also of Skye. There is no evidence, however, that the Manx line had any rights in Sandey or its neighbouring islands, and he may have been storm-driven there himself. He settled with the traders for what he could get and left as soon as he

⁴⁴ *Hrafns saga Sveinbjarnarsonar* 1987, 19–23. See too *Hrafns saga Sveinbjarnarsonar: B-Redaktionen* 1967, XXV 26–30, *Guðmundar sögur I* 1983, 141, *Prestssaga Guðmundar góða* 1946, 159, *Guðmundar biskups saga hin elsta*, in *Biskupa sögur* 1858–78, I 483–85. The king is incorrectly named Haraldr in the abridged *b*-redaction of *Hrafns saga*, a slip possibly influenced by the reign in Man of Haraldr the Black during the 1240s, the assumed time of composition. The St Kilda incident is discussed in Taylor 1966–69, 120–22.

could, making up on this occasion for the poverty from which he suffered in his barren domains. Canna's long association with Iona, from the presence of an early Christian religious site there, through its naming in the founding document for Benedictine Iona the following year, to the late-medieval accounts of dues and sailing requirements (Campbell 1984, 13–20; Rixson 2004, 103–06), indicate that rights on landing dues may have lain with Iona as much as with secular rulers, and lay least of all with Óláfr. This factor, together with the known safety of its harbour, marked by the distinctive outlines of the neighbouring islands Eigg and Rhum, may have made it the destination of choice. With regard to secular divisions, not far away was Moidart, in Garmoran, ruled by the singularly fierce Ruaidhrí son of Reginald, who may already have made a base at Tioram, the site of the family's thirteenth-century castle. The Small Isles were within his domain at this period or very shortly afterwards.

The Icelanders, uncertain of the territorial boundaries within the Isles, and perhaps too weakened by the storms to argue the point, set sail to reach Norway without further mishap. Here the traders sold their wares, Guðmundr was duly consecrated, and no word of insular trickery was recorded in the sagas.

Óláfr's activities were curtailed shortly afterwards when he complained to his brother about his poverty and was imprisoned in Scotland.

VII The reign of Hákon Hákonarson

The weakness of local power and the increasing strength of Norway in the thirteenth century provided opportunities for Hákon to extend authority in the Isles as he developed his own power at home. The *Chronicle* reports a violent fight on Iona in 1223, when Óláfr and his supporters fought Óláfr's nephew Guðrøðr and his men, who had just attacked them on Skye and had then taken themselves to the supposed safety of Iona. Those outside the monastic church were killed, and Guðrøðr son of Reginald was captured, castrated and blinded, an act attributed to Óláfr in the Icelandic annals, while the *Chronicle* agrees that it occurred but says it was done by his followers without his consent. The deed ended any opposition to Óláfr as Reginald's heir, and led to the division of the Manx territories between the brothers and Óláfr's accession to kingship in 1227 while Reginald was still alive.

A rumour circulating in the spring of 1224 that Hákon was coming to Ireland to assist in the insurrection of Hugh de Lacy, the Norman ruler of Ulaid, was sufficiently powerful for Scotland's Queen Joan to warn her

brother, Henry III of England, about his new correspondent Hákon.⁴⁵ The combination of internal violence and the possibility of Hákon's involvement in Ulaid, the control of which affected the shipping channels, may have been behind the Hebridean deputation of nobles, supported with letters, to Hákon in 1224, and a second deputation which included abbot and bishop in the summer of 1226 (Eirspennill, 455, 546, *Hákonar saga* 1887, 128, *Islandske annaler*, 127, 185, *DN XIX* 120, no. 157). Iona's participation is understandable in view of the recent violence there and because the new abbey church was already being extended, probably to accommodate the number of pilgrims and perhaps a growing community in need of a larger choir (*Argyll* 4). Further news of disturbance in the Isles, related to renewed aggression between Reginald of Man and his brother Óláfr, reached Norway in 1228 (Eirspennill, 555, *Hákonar saga* 1887, 144).

The expedition Hákon arranged in 1229 was led by a Hebridean, Óspakr, whom Hákon appointed king. He was said to be a member of the Somerled family, and was perhaps the Óspakr who raided the Isles in 1210. On the eve of setting sail the fleet was given new strength by the arrival in Norway of Óláfr of Man. A battle that year between the brothers Reginald and Óláfr had led to Reginald's death, and Óláfr had come to Norway for help against his brother's ally Alan of Galloway (Brooke 1998, 130–33, McDonald 1997, 88–91). Finding a fleet ready to sail, he joined forces with them, with Hákon's support. In the ensuing events Sturla distinguishes between *Nordmenn* and *Sudreyingjar*, but without indicating the extent to which the distinction was territorial, cultural or linguistic.

According to Sturla, Óláfr was faithful to Hákon while the kings of the Somerled line were often treacherous. Certainly Hákon appointed as leader of the force a Hebridean of his own choice, who by making a career in Norway may have given up all realistic claim to holding land in Scotland, unlike his relatives with mainland possessions. When the expedition set out and came to the Hebrides, it met with the kings named by Sturla as Dungaðr and Duggáll skrogggr, who, like Óspakr, were the sons of Dubgall son of Somerled.⁴⁶ Dubgall may well have been considered treacherous by Hákon, as he enjoyed the patronage of the Scots king, in particular towards the end of his life. The saga also refers to an

⁴⁵ *DN XIX*, 117–18, no. 153 (1223–24) for Hákon's writing to Henry to commence the correspondence, *DN XIX*, 120, no. 157 (March 1224?), also Shirley (1862–66, 219–20 no. cxcv) for the rumour.

⁴⁶ The name is found in Norse texts as Dubgall, Dufgall and Duggáll.

otherwise unknown Somerled (Sumarliði), who died in the course of the expedition. The saga makes no mention of Dubgall's cousin Domnall nor others of the Islay branch, who may already by this date have engaged in activities in Ireland. Further, the saga does not refer to Domnall's brother Ruaidhrí who, in spite of a formidable reputation among the Scots, is named only once, later and in patronymic form in the Codex Frisianus (Fríssbók) and Eirspennill texts of the saga (Eirspennill, 627, *Hákonar saga* 1887, 255). He was absent from the Isles on the mainland that summer, supporting insurrection in Badenoch and burning Inverness (Barrow 1988, 5–6).

The attempt to assert control through a person selected by Hákon proved unsuccessful, as local family relations took precedence over the commands of the Norwegian monarch. Óspakr did however lead an assault on the Scots garrison on the Isle of Bute. Hákon regarded Bute and the other islands within the shelter of the Firth of Clyde as part of the western kingdom, but they were strategically significant to Scotland and were fortified by this time to guard the route through the Clyde estuary into the Central Lowlands and from there to the heartland of royal power. Óspakr's death at the end of the summer, whether, as Sturla says, from wounds suffered in the attack, or from sickness according to the *Chronicle of Man*, impeded further action. Sturla says that Óláfr now assumed control over the fleet, and they sailed *yfir undir Kaupmannaeyjar*, 'over to the lee of the merchants' islands' (Flateyjarbók, III 102 and *Hákonar saga* 1887, 148). This seems to refer to the Copeland Islands off the Ards peninsula, the choice of the Irish side of the North Channel made possible by long-standing marital alliances the Manx had in this region.⁴⁷ This windy refuge may have been chosen in order to prevent Alan of Galloway, who had just married a daughter into the ruling Anglo-Norman de Lacy family, from drawing together a fleet with support from Ireland to attack the expedition led by Óláfr.⁴⁸ Óláfr's

⁴⁷ See Eirspennill, 557; Anderson, trans., 1922, II 472–78. Eirspennill has *bá til* 'then to', and instead of having them remain there long into the winter, as do the other texts, says that they sailed to Man. The identification of the islands is uncertain, but there are no other islands in the vicinity capable of providing shelter for a fleet. The current English name may reflect the later influence of the de Copeland family.

⁴⁸ Manx fleets under Reginald had assisted the de Lacy family during the 1220s. The rumour that Hákon was coming to assist with the de Lacy rebellion might actually relate to Reginald and to his doing homage to England for the Isle of Man while assisting a rebellion (*DN*, XIX 105–06, no. 132).

ships may have been in part provisioned from Grey Abbey, nearby on the landward side of the Ards peninsula, the monastery founded by Óláfr's elder sister Afreca. Help might have been provided too by Inch Abbey, further south near Downpatrick, the foundation of her husband John de Courcy, the de Lacys' predecessor. Further south down the coast in the Carlingford area, across from Man and within provisioning distance by sea, was a fief which in 1212 Reginald had received from King John (*DN*, XIX 83–84, no. 93).

Hákon's increasing power was exercised when he summoned Óláfr back to Norway in 1236. After returning home Óláfr died the following spring, and after a period of dissension his fourteen-year-old son, Haraldr, succeeded as king. Hákon sent a force the following year to depose him for failing to have had title and succession conferred in Norway. Haraldr submitted the following year, and spent three years at Hákon's court. On being sent home he was accepted by the Manx, and was at the English court in 1246–47, an indication of recognition by Hákon of the Manx dependence on England. He was then summoned to Norway again, where he stayed for two years and attended Hákon's coronation in 1249. Haraldr's second visit coincided with the arrival in 1248 of two leaders from the Somerled line, Jón and Duggáll, each asking Hákon to confer kingship on them in their respective families (*Flateyjarbók*, III 174–75). Jón's father Duggáll may have recently died in his eighties. His cousin, Duggáll's father Ruaidhrí, who was at least in his sixties, may have been the 'mac Somurli' killed in battle at Ballyshannon in Ireland in 1247.⁴⁹

Sturla recounts that Haraldr, married to Hákon's widowed daughter Cecilia, was sent back in 1249, only for the bridal ship to founder off Sumburgh Head at the south of Shetland. When the news reached Norway, Jón, now with the title of king, was sent back to ensure order throughout the entire kingdom; and Duggáll, apparently more reluctantly chosen as king by Hákon, seems to have left at this time too. Jón's immediate problem, however, was not acceptance on Man but incursions into his own territory in the Isles.

Scotland made representations as early as 1244 regarding its claims to the Isles and Man as part of the kingdom of Scotland. Diplomatic

⁴⁹ *AU*. Jón's father Duggáll had signed a Charter at Durham in 1175 (*Liber Vitae Dunelmensis* 1841, 135). He fades out of Scottish records after the early 1240s. The Irish reference may be to Ruaidhrí's brother Domnall, head of the Islay branch. Both brothers were active by 1210 and probably for some time prior to that date.

efforts failed and an attempt at invasion followed in 1249, which Jón, known to Scots sources as Eoghan of Lorn, encountered on his return from Norway (McDonald 1997, 100–02). This put him in a divided position, holding lands as he did in Scotland, and a conference was arranged between him and Alexander II, for which his safety was guaranteed, Sturla says, by four earls of the realm. Alexander asked Jón to give up to him the possessions he held from Norway in exchange for the friendship of the king and wider lands in Scotland. Jón declined, in spite of encouragement from his kinsfolk and other friends, and the saga says that given the opportunity to leave, he made for the fastnesses of Lewis in the Outer Hebrides, which were in the territory of the Manx kings. Scots sources note that he was then expelled from Argyll on the mainland (Duncan 1975, 550–51). His difficulties ended abruptly with the death of Alexander II. The English writer Matthew Paris was in Norway on monastic business in 1248 and may have known Jón there. He writes sympathetically of him (Matthew Paris 1880, 88–89; Anderson 1908, 360–61), and blames Alexander's death on his pursuit of an innocent man, an act which offended both God and Saint Columba. This tallies with Sturla's explanation that having failed to heed a dream which warned him against invading the Isles, Alexander died on the island of Kerrera, just off the coast.

The dream as reported by Sturla involves an alliance of royal saints to whom Alexander would have done well to pay attention, and in case the point is lost, the saga explains their identities. The royal saint Óláfr, from whom Hákon traced collateral ancestry, was accompanied by the martyr Magnús of Orkney, whose ancestral lands were likewise held from Norway and who attracted pilgrims from throughout Scotland and Scandinavia. The fiercest of the three and their spokesman was the Irish Columba of Iona.⁵⁰

The Scots threat was put in abeyance by the succession of the seven-year-old Alexander III, and Jón was free to find a suitable Manx heir to send to Hákon. Haraldr's brother had already been slain and the next choice was a kinsman, Godred *don* (Gaelic 'brown(-haired)'; Norse *Guðrøðr*), who was sent to Norway although Jón himself championed another contender. The Hebridean Jón's influence was resented on Man,

⁵⁰ Columba appears in the dream *mjök framsnoðinn*, 'cut very short in front'. The ancient Irish frontal tonsure was abandoned on Iona in 718 (Herbert 1996, 60).

and this may have been compounded by his choice of Magnús, who was, or was to become, his son-in-law. That year the Icelandic annals record the death of Bishop Simon, who may have been a negotiator in similar situations previously. The Manx eventually, in 1252, accepted Magnús, and in what was by now the accepted form he went to Norway to have his kingly title conferred.

On this occasion Hákon was able to summon both claimants to his court, made his choice and sent the successful candidate home. He was also able to recall the Hebrideans Jón and Duggáll in 1253. In his Swedish parley that year, those present are named in descending order of status, beginning with Hákon, followed by his son Hákon, who had by then been crowned king, then by Jón followed by Duggáll, and only then by Hákon's younger legitimate son, Magnús, who at the time of writing was king of Norway and Sturla's patron. The list then continues with other dignitaries, including Hákon's oldest, illegitimate son. Both status and *regalitas* had been determined by Hákon, with the kings of Man placed before those of the more barren Hebrides, but with all three western kings appointed by Hákon taking precedence over uncrowned members of Hákon's own family.

Friendly relations between Hákon and Henry III of England, both of whom mentored and knighted young Manx kings, benefited the inhabitants of Man and their pursuance of income by protecting the Irish Sea routes. The Hebrideans, in particular those of the two more northern branches of the Somerled family, were slower to become involved in Ireland, and when they did so it was not with the dominant Normans but with the leaders of the Gaelic resurgence. Little is known about the economy of the period, but as well as fishing, subsistence farming, trade in wool and piracy, mercenary activity seems to have been a major element, and Hebridean interest in Ireland came at a time when Norwegian opportunities were in decline.

Sturla makes little reference to Scotland during the minority of Alexander's son, though there is one possible indication of interest. The Icelander Gizurr Þorvaldsson, who had led the killers of Snorri Sturluson at Hákon's behest in 1241, visited Norway in 1257 where he was given the title of jarl and sent home to persuade his countrymen to accept Norwegian overlordship. According to one text of *Sturlunga saga* (the later *Króksfjarðarbók* (AM 122a fol.)), he first wintered in the Isles and stayed on into the summer (*Sturlunga saga* 1946, II 524, 577). Gizurr had no ship of his own, and if he took passage by such an indirect route to Iceland, it may be worth considering that he was sent

by Hákon to encourage loyalty from Jón and Duggáll. All three had been at the Norwegian court at the same time, ten years previously.⁵¹

Shortly beforehand, in 1255, Jón had recovered his lands in Argyll through the intercession of Henry III (Duncan 1975, 35, 551). Jón was the only Scottish lord for whom Henry pleaded, at a time when the Scots were concerned that Jón's cousin Aengus, head of the Islay branch, and other 'Scottish malefactors' should not find a welcome in Ireland (Bain, ed., 1881, I 2041; Sweetman, ed., 1875–86, II 490). This welcome was made likely by the Islay family's involvement through fosterage, marriage and military support with the northern Irish dynasty of Cenél Conaill; and Henry opposed their activities in Ireland on his own account and that of his young son-in-law Alexander. His success in making an exception placed Jón firmly in the Scottish ambit, as Hákon may have feared. If Gizurr did indeed visit the Hebrides, he might have been more successful in retaining the loyalty of Duggáll mac Ruaidhrí, and it is tempting to imagine that Gizurr gained his sword *Eyfararnautr* ('island-journey booty') while taking part in the expedition that summer to Connacht where the Norman invaders were routed by a 'mac Somurli' (AC, ALC s.a. 1258). This must have been Duggáll. The following summer he and his daughter sailed to Derry where she married Áedh Úa Conchobhair, son of the king of Connacht, who was at that time leading the Gaelic resurgence against the Normans. With her went one hundred and sixty warriors from the Isles, led by her uncle Aleinn (AC, ALC, Lydon 1988).

The wedding party travelled overland from the chief port in Uí Néill territory, visiting Brian Úa Néill, who had been newly accepted as high king in a move supported by Áedh. Brian's wife may have been the Hebridean Jón's daughter and cousin to the bride, though if this is the case, the alliance with the Lorn branch of the Somerled family came to nothing (Duffy 1993, 125 note 57). Áedh and his father proved successful in uniting opposition to Norman rule, but Brian was killed in 1261. Matters took a new turn for Áedh two years later when Hákon moved against Alexander's attempts to take the Isles for Scotland.

VIII Hákon's expedition to the Isles

The final attempt to retain the kingdom of Man and the Isles for Norway, and the expedition west of Hákon Hákonarson, is a subject

⁵¹ It is however usually taken that Gizurr was given the title in 1258 and returned direct to Iceland. See Jón Samsonarson 1954–58, 339.

that can only be given rudimentary treatment here, and then only from the perspective of the saga account.⁵² This was written by the Icelander Sturla only a few years after the events. He arrived in Norway in the summer of 1263 to find that Hákon had already left for the west. His own position at the court of Hákon's son Magnús was an uncomfortable one, which was fortunately eased by the interest shown by Magnús's queen in Sturla's store of stories. Magnús, on his father's death, set Sturla the task of composing Hákon's biography, a task in which Sturla had the help of eyewitnesses. These included the king, the dowager queen, and veterans of the final expedition who between them gave him the material for an accurate, if diplomatic, account of Hákon's life, including the final voyage. At the time of writing the Isles had been handed over to Scotland and there was little likelihood of Norway obtaining more than a fraction of the substantial price agreed for them.

Alexander III of Scotland set out, on achieving his majority, to complete what his father had failed to achieve, first by diplomacy and then by force. His diplomatic initiatives were not successful, and when in 1261 his ambassadors attempted to leave Norway without permission, Hákon held them as a punishment, while treating them well and ensuring they attended the coronation of Hákon's son Magnús. Meanwhile, Alexander's father-in-law, the English King Henry III, attempted to mediate. His own position was however precarious by 1263, with disturbance in England which was shortly to break out in full-scale rebellion.⁵³

When Hákon determined to go west in 1263 to assert control of the kingdom in person, he was at the height of his powers and his surviving son had recognised right of succession in Norway. Notwithstanding the complication of Scots involvement, establishing firm control in the Hebrides and Man may have seemed not dissimilar to his recent achievement, the submission of the Faroese, the Greenlanders and the majority of the Icelanders. Hákon did not sail until the fifth of July, late in the year for a

⁵² A full discussion of the events of the summer of 1263 requires a more detailed analysis of all the sources, Scots and Norse, than may be attempted here (see McDonald 1997, 117–28, Thomson 1987 and 2001, 138–48).

⁵³ *DN*, XIX 174–77, nos 271, 272, 273; *Close Rolls of the Reign of Henry III AD 1261–1264* 1936, 116–17, 165. See too *Close Rolls*, 388 for Henry's condolences to Magnús in 1264 on hearing of the death of Hákon. The rebellion in England led by Simon de Montfort was to break openly the following year, but already in 1263 there was unrest in London and warfare with the Welsh, referred to in the Icelandic annals.

major expedition. The start was perhaps delayed until news came from the Icelandic Alþing, held in late June, which confirmed his acceptance as overlord by most of the remaining chieftains.

For most of the Hebridean magnates it must have appeared inevitable that Scots power was increasing in their domains, and the main support for Hákon came from Man where the lucrative arrangement with England was not impeded by the distant overlordship of Norway. Duggáll mac Ruaidhrí was the only king of the Isles who offered support immediately to Hákon, together with his brother Aleinn, who had by now returned from Ireland. Before the fleet had set sail from Norway there were rumours that Alexander was preparing to invade the Isles, and Duggáll counteracted this with a rumour that forty ships were coming from Norway. The fleet swelled in size with the telling and Hákon was soon said to be accompanied by the king of Denmark, whose daughter was married to Hákon's son Magnús.

Hákon, who, perhaps as a safeguard, had Duggáll's son Eiríkr with him on board,⁵⁴ sailed with his substantial fleet first to Shetland and Orkney, and stayed there until the second week of August. On 9 August he would have seen the solar eclipse, which was particularly visible from Bergen, where his son Magnús remained. He then moved southwards, to be met in the Hebrides by Magnús of Man, who pledged support. Magnús's father-in-law, Duggáll's cousin Jón (Eoghan of Lorn), came to make submission to Hákon but refused to engage in warfare against Alexander, citing the possessions he held from Scotland. He was held captive by Hákon but not otherwise penalised. The leaders of the Islay branch of the Somerled family, not recognised as kings in the saga, are identified there as Margaðr and Aengus of Islay, though the later Scots accounts focus upon the latter, Aengus.⁵⁵ They now submitted to Hákon, Aengus giving up his territorial heartland of Islay. Hákon in return gave his word to settle on their behalf with the Scots king for the losses they would sustain on the mainland.

⁵⁴ He is named incorrectly in *Flateyjarbók* as the father, not the son, of Duggáll. *Eirspennill* 627 earlier identifies Duggáll correctly as Ruðrason on his visit to Norway in 1247. This reference also occurs in the *Fríssbók* (*Codex Frisianus* 1871, 535) and *Skálholtsbók yngsta* (*Hákonar saga* 1887, 255) texts.

⁵⁵ In one of the verses in the *Fríssbók* text (*Codex Frisianus* 1871, 573), and in *Skálholtsbók yngsta* (*Hákonar saga* 1887, 337), the two brothers Aengus and Margaðr are termed 'jöfrar', but this is the nearest they get to receiving acknowledgement of kingly status.

The route taken by the fleet can be determined by the islands named in *Hákonar saga*, as the fleet sailed down the coast, passing through the Sound of Mull and south to the Firth of Clyde. It was a particularly hot summer (*AC, ALC*). A skirmish occurred on land, and there was a bad storm during which the king's own ship broke anchor and was for a time storm-driven (*Codex Frisianus* 1871, 576). The company visited *Melasey*, Holy Island, where they may have carved the late runes at the shrine there. There was another storm in August and an inconclusive naval engagement at Largs in the Firth of Clyde on 2 October (*Codex Frisianus* 1871, 577–78).

The question of where to winter must have been considered from the start of the expedition, and English records express concern that the fleet would make for one of their northern harbours, increasing the instability of the time. Messengers from Ireland then arrived and offered Hákon not only shelter but also the high-kingship if he would free them from the Normans. Hákon sent a Hebridean named Sigurðr to learn more (*Codex Frisianus* 1871, 574–75, 478; Anderson, trans., 1922, II 622, 634).

To consider accepting hospitality for a large fleet in a scarcely known land appears on the surface to be the product of literary hyperbole and a conscious patterning of Hákon's activities on those of Magnús berfœttr. Yet the political situation gives the suggestion credence. In spite of his long correspondence with Henry III of England, it may have been Hákon's intention to take power, benefiting from England's internal difficulties. The Irish offer is unlikely to have come from areas of Manx influence on the east coast, which were vulnerable to English reprisals even under a weakened monarchy. Áedh Úa Conchobair, Duggáll's son-in-law, is the most likely source.

Áedh had endeavoured to unite opposition to the English conquest by reviving the high-kingship, but the first choice, Brian Úa Néill, was now dead and there was no other candidate. While an invitation to a king who was not Irish is extraordinary, Hákon may have been seen as a short-term and remote choice who could provide *gravitas* and a unifying element, as a figurehead in opposition to the almost equally remote Henry, and as someone who would not greatly influence future events in Ireland. While Hákon's envoy is otherwise unknown, the king had with him others who knew the situation in Ireland and were at ease in both cultures and languages, most notably Eiríkr Duggálsson and his uncle Aleinn mac Ruaidhrí. Hákon's messengers returned to encourage acceptance of the offer, but the

king was dissuaded from taking his fleet along the treacherous north coast of Ireland. He remained in the Hebrides and distributed lands among his supporters, though the endowments were not later recognised by Scotland. Those benefiting in name include a certain Ruðri, who received Bute in the Firth of Clyde, although it was fortified and claimed by Scotland (*Hákonar saga* 1887, 338, 350, also *Codex Frisianus* 1871, 574),⁵⁶ and Duggáll who received a castle on Kintyre, which provided a nominal restoration of the peninsula to Duggáll's line (*Flateyjarbók*, III 222, 227, *Hákonar saga* 1887, 350, Duncan and Brown 1959, 200).⁵⁷ Hákon now experienced another severe storm, but retreated in good order, released Jón from captivity, and wintered in Orkney, where he died in December (*Codex Frisianus* 1871, 587–81). News of the death and of the birth of his first-born son reached Alexander on the same day in January (*The Chronicle of Melrose*, 190, John of Fordun 1871–72, I 300, II 295–96).

The only set battle had been at Largs, where both sides had claimed victory. The *Chronicle of Man* states that Hákon achieved nothing on this expedition. The *Annals of Ulster and Connacht*, ignoring Largs entirely, state merely that Hákon died on his way to Ireland.

The fragmentary *Magnús saga lagabætis* (*Hákonar saga* 1887, 361–73, Dasent, trans., 1894, 374–87) indicates that Magnús Hákonarson had no interest in continuing the dispute. In a section relating to early 1264 when there was Scots violence in the kingdom, it refers to rudimentary protection ordered for both the Northern and Western Isles, with responsibility for defence given to Duggáll. He sought aid unsuccessfully in Orkney with the support of his son Eiríkr, who, having returned to Norway after Hákon's death, had been sent back by King Magnús to restore order. The fragment relates that when pursued by Alexander's men, Duggáll made for Lewis in the Outer Isles, the lands of Magnús of Man, who had been forced to submit to Scotland but remained in favour of Norwegian rule. At the same time, negotiations with Scotland were reopened, and when Magnús died in 1265 the way became open for the sale of the kingdom. Magnús's father-in-law Jón had already chosen a future with Scotland, and now his Islay kinsmen did the same. Other leaders

⁵⁶ See note 42 above. His claim on this island is otherwise unknown. He had been outlawed by Alexander (McDonald 1997, 111).

⁵⁷ Duggáll is named lord of land in Kintyre in a document of 1247 (*Chronicle*, 157, John of Fordun 1871–72, I 299–300, 295).

submitted to Scotland and began a new series of alliances that were to exercise the Scots and the English rulers of Ireland for centuries to come.

Duggáll, merely *herra* Duggáll in *Magnús saga lagabætis*, seems never to have submitted. He is referred to as ‘king’ in both Irish and Icelandic annals at his death in 1268 (*AC*, *ALC*, *Islandske annaler*, s.a. 1268). His brother Aleinn submitted, and he and his two kinsmen, Alexander the son of Jón (Eoghan of Lorn) and Aengus of Islay, were among the barons of Scotland who in 1283 recognised Margaret, the ‘Maid of Norway’, the granddaughter of both Alexander and Magnús lagabætir, as heir to the crown of Scotland, Man and ‘all the other islands of Scotland’ (*APS*, I 424; translation in Donaldson 1974, 37–38).⁵⁸ In Ireland, the Connacht alliance involving Duggáll’s daughter had come to nothing. Áedh continued to resist English rule. He succeeded his father, lost his only son as a young child and himself died in 1274, an event which plunged Connacht into civil war. His wife’s brother Eiríkr Duggálsson was the only Hebridean who is known to have taken advantage of the clause in the Treaty of Perth which allowed those who wished to leave for Norway. There he made a career with the dowager Queen Margaret and, like her, died in 1287 (*Árna saga biskups* 1998, 170–71; Helle 1972, 582).

The discontinuation of the writing of Kings’ Sagas after the time of Magnús lagabætir represents the loss of a major historical resource, but contact between Man and the Isles and Norway was in effect severed with the Treaty of Perth in 1266 (*APS* I, 78–79, 420; *DN* 8, 13–17, translation in Donaldson 1974, 34–36; *Islandske annaler*, 136; Anderson 1922, II 655–56). Only a part of the large sum demanded for the Hebrides was paid, but there are few indications of why the price was set so high. In the new laws of Magnús from 1276 the list of lands with which Norway traded did not include Ireland, Man or the Isles. There are no accounts of Hebrideans among those who travelled to the shrine of Saint Óláfr, and even the shrine of Magnús of Orkney is not said to have received pilgrims from the kingdom. However, according to *Þorláks saga* there were *Sudreyingar* among those who paid for the building of the cathedral church at Skálholt in Iceland, and they may have been among the barelegged crusaders and pilgrims who travelled

⁵⁸ Alexander, Aengus and Aleinn, in that order, are the last to be named.

south.⁵⁹ At some stage the Norse language, apparently so strong among the kingdom's aristocracy, also died.

Attempts to regain independence for Man in the 1270s met with failure, and the island then changed hands several times between Scotland and England. At the end of the fourteenth century, Man came firmly under English control, and the bishop fled from Peel on Man to Iona, making the abbey church his cathedral. The church was rebuilt and extended in the fifteenth century under the guidance of another of the Uí Bhrolcháin family of Derry, whose carved signature remains visible. In 1472 the bishopric passed from Norway to Scotland, with Iona remaining the episcopal seat. Known in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries as a centre for the West Highland sculptural tradition, the abbey flourished until the Reformation.

IX Conclusions

While a systematic account of the history of the kingdom requires different treatment, a considerable amount of information can be pieced together from a Norse perspective, and much of what is recorded can be supplemented from other sources. The sagas, together with diplomatic records, papal letters, monastic annals and house chronicles, give an account, albeit broken and biased, of events in Man and the Isles during the later eleventh and the twelfth centuries, and much of the thirteenth. The sources are by and large complementary, and while there are many matters for which there is very little information, further investigation of the sources from each area may assist a better understanding of the events of this period, the oral recollection underlying the records, and the structured ways in which the authors relate their subject. There is no source specific to the Isles, and what can be learnt needs to be constructed from works in which insular concerns were of peripheral interest. The Isle of Man is better served, and research into the influences on its life and politics throws light on the region as a whole.

The later Norse sources are quite different from those which touch on Ireland and the Isles in the Viking Age, and from which no continuous narrative can be extracted. They are similar in that the parameters of

⁵⁹ Barelegged Scots crusaders were noted on the continent, for example by the Picard chronicler, Guibert de Nogent. See MacQuarrie 1981, 133, 135 and 1997, 10. *Heimskringla's* account of Magnús berfættr's adoption of the dress common in western lands may reflect fashions Snorri had seen for himself (*Hkr*, III 229). Saxo has another explanation of the cognomen (Saxo Grammaticus 1931–57, 342:10–14); see footnote 12 above.

what they recount are determined by their purpose in telling the history of a particular person of high status, or of a family whose activities were of interest to the audience. It is fortunate that they have considerably more to say on matters affecting the Isles and Man in this period than did those writing about more distant times. The writers view the world from a Norse perspective, referring to other lands and the activities of individuals only where they affect the narrative, or provide colourful and entertaining asides. Even so, they provide a substantial amount of information concerning a period and part of the world about which there would otherwise be little known, and they give an insight into the ways in which the Scandinavian and Gaelic cultures of the Isles and Man coexisted and permitted information to pass from one culture to another.

It can be seen that the Norse accounts can be correlated with other sources written from other perspectives. Although in this article a narrative has been pieced together from the main Norse sources, this degree of continuity is not found in the sagas, whose writers had varying purposes, and may or may not have known the works of others concerned with events earlier or later than their own period of interest.

Attempts have been made recently to view the picture by more regular crossing of modern geographical, political and disciplinary boundaries, but too little is known to confirm patterns of events and of continuity between them. Magnús berfætr's expeditions may have been part of a pattern of Norwegian activity in the Irish Sea area which later fell into abeyance. Magnús's sons may have collected tribute in Ireland on one occasion, but rather as compensation than because there was any long-standing relationship between the areas or any regular threat that had to be appeased. Magnús's journeys appear to have been remembered mainly in a cultural context, as providing new material for songs long after the events in question.⁶⁰ According to the medieval literature his enterprise was emulated in 1263 by his successor Hákon Hákonarson, and the parallels were further drawn out by his biographer Sturla Þórðarson, who was the nephew of one of Magnús berfætr's biographers, Snorri Sturluson. But whatever the writers may have wished to suggest about Norse power, neither king was successful in establishing lasting control in the insular world.

⁶⁰ See Christiansen 1931, 131–71, 401–06. There are two places in the north of Ireland where it is claimed that this Norwegian king met his death, and his popularity has revived in recent times.

A convincing argument has been made recently for the renewal of Norwegian relations with the kingdom in the mid-twelfth century brought about by the needs of the kings of Man to retain their independence from Dublin and their Dublin-based relatives (Beuermann 2002). It is argued there that they used the situation to counter a potential ecclesiastical threat to their independence at a time of reorganisation. The secular support that the kings of Man may have hoped for was not forthcoming, but by the late twelfth century the English conquest of Ireland and the inclusion of Dublin within their sphere of influence gave new opportunities to the kings of Man through engagement with the English crown. Because of the lack of material either from the Norse sources or from the *Chronicle*, all suggestions about the manner in which these changes were viewed from the north are speculative, but would repay specialist investigation.

There is little material for literary analysis in the accounts of matters in the kingdom of Man and the Isles found scattered through the sagas. However lively and incomplete they may be, the sources available are historical, and quite unlike intentionally fictional literary tales in which imaginary characters undertake imaginary deeds. It seems from the surviving written evidence that fiction rarely passed directly between the Gaelic world and Iceland in this period. The sources, whether Gaelic or Norse, are quite different in nature from the stories that have been retained in Iceland's literature and folk tradition. The latter have circulated over time and become acclimatised, and they do not pretend to be the interpretation of events that actually took place. The historical sources for the medieval period are undoubtedly biased, but they are not fictional. They are frequently anecdotal, but their purpose is different and they did not enter the corpus of Icelandic tradition. Nor, as far as is known, did they do so in Norway.

A few anecdotes have been transferred between different characters. One well-known example is the story of the claiming of Kintyre by Magnús berfœtr, a feat also attributed to a mythological character (*Ork*, 6–7). Similarly, Haraldr gilli could run faster than a horse in Norway and as fast as Ireland's mythical Fiana.⁶¹ These anecdotes are however found in sources quite different from the world of story that makes up the *fornaldarsögur* and other such tales. Where Gaelic influence can be

⁶¹ According to a British newspaper report, this feat was emulated in Wales in June 2004, over a 22-mile course, on the twenty-fourth attempt (*The Observer* 13-06-04, pp. 1, 3). See too note 18.

discerned in stories, it was almost certainly transmitted in the Viking Age, and the elements were then absorbed by the dominant culture. During the medieval period direct contact between Iceland and Ireland was, it appears, minimal, and any stories that passed at this stage might be expected to be attributed to their country of origin, as part of the material that composed the wonder literature and travellers' tales popular throughout the Middle Ages. It is also likely that stories of this kind would be found in orally transmitted forms, such as ballads, in other parts of the northern world.

In terms of the historical contacts of this period and the transmission of accounts concerning the Isles, Man and occasionally Ireland, it seems that this occurred when Icelanders and Islesmen met in Norway. Snorri Sturluson never visited western lands, but his writings suggest that he heard stories during his sojourns in Norway, and that he questioned his informants about the politics, customs and geography of the kingdom, and observed the dress and language of those who came from the Isles. His nephew Sturla similarly lacked first-hand knowledge, but spoke with those who did have it. Others, like Guðmundr Arason and his companions, and possibly also jarl Gizurr, visited the Western Isles, intentionally or otherwise, but there is no evidence that they left a mark on the local culture or political organisation.

Regular contacts between the Scandinavian world and the kingdom of Man and the Isles scarcely outlived the selling of the kingdom to Scotland and the consequent change of focus in the politics of the Irish Sea area. England came to control Man, and the Scottish kingdom gained control, at least in name, over the islands which were to form the Lordship of the Isles, and in that state retain a political entity into the fifteenth century. The loss of the Norse language, which could have occurred quite rapidly, may reflect the cultural dominance of Ireland, and the lack of the need to retain the Scandinavian tongue when the political situation required communication in the language of the Scots and English courts.

In 1428 Icelanders put in, whether willingly or storm-driven, at Drogheda, and no doubt from time to time their countrymen were driven to other harbours. The stories they must have brought back were probably the usual seafarers' yarns or accounts of distant lands, and they have not survived. Meanwhile other matters were chronicled in the monasteries, the more soberly as the writers neared their own time and sought to contribute to the wider written history of Europe in the manner expected of them, by recounting the dealings of princes and churchmen

rather than merchants and pirates. As Norway turned eastwards, and Ireland succumbed to centralised England, there were fewer opportunities for contacts between the Norse and Gaelic worlds. From time to time, when the weather or a sense of adventure dominated, travellers from one world no doubt saw the coasts of the other; and sometimes, perhaps, the descendants of the Vikings were blown back to their ancestral haunts, or the Irish followed Saint Brendan to Iceland, and beyond to the fishing banks of Newfoundland.

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LAW AND THE (UN)DEAD: MEDIEVAL MODELS FOR
UNDERSTANDING THE HAUNTINGS IN *EYRBYGGJA SAGA*

BY JOHN D. MARTIN

IN CHAPTER 34 OF *EYRBYGGJA SAGA*, the family of Arnkell Þórólfsson suffers the first of many depredations at the hands of one of the malevolent undead (*Eyrbyggja saga* 1935, 93):

Sá atburður varð um haustit í Hvammi, at hvárki kom heim smalamaður né fét, ok um morguninn var leita farit, ok fannsk smalamaður dauður skammt frá dys Þórólfs; var hann allr kolblár ok lamit í hvert bein; var hann dysjaður hjá Þórólfi, en fénaður allr, sá er verit hafði í dalnum, fannsk sumr dauður, en sumr hljóp á fjöll ok fannsk aldri. En ef fuglar settusk á dys Þórólfs, fellu þeir niður dauðir.

This event took place in the autumn at Hvammr, that [one day] neither the shepherd nor the sheep came home. In the morning a search was made, and the shepherd was found dead not far from Þórólfr's cairn; he was completely coal-black and every bone was broken. He was buried near Þórólfr. Of all the sheep in the valley, some were found dead, and the rest that had strayed into the mountains were never found. Whenever birds landed on Þórólfr's grave, they fell down dead.

The malevolent undead in question is Þórólfr bægifótr himself, Arnkell's father. His continued presence in and baleful influence on the community from which his death, by rights (and rites), should have separated him provide one of the major narrative threads in the saga. Þórólfr's violent haunting of his family and neighbours is but one of three major haunting plots in *Eyrbyggja saga*—Þórgunna's return and the hauntings at Fróðá being the other two—and it provides an excellent contrast with these others, a contrast that opens up the medieval Icelandic conception of the undead for the modern audience in a unique fashion. Þórólfr is malevolent in his presence and his actions, while Þórgunna, in her brief visitation, is benevolent if eerie. The revenants at Fróðá do not evince any determined malice, but are by their very nature baneful and frightening to the living persons whom they encounter. *Eyrbyggja saga* alone, then, presents modern readers with at least three possible conceptions of the revenant's nature. That Old Norse literature presents competing, contradictory notions of the essential character of the undead has prompted Vésteinn Ólason (2003, 166–67) to remark,

These various forms of afterlife: in the body, as a shadow in Hel, or as an eternal warrior in Valhøll, as a reborn individual, or even as an animal, raise

the question of the distinction between body and soul, or spirit. The question is whether the same people could have held so many seemingly contradictory ideas about afterlife or whether different ideas were held by different people at different times. The unavoidable answer to these questions is of course that there were many conflicting beliefs.

Vésteinn goes on to discuss the possible origin of the conflicts in saga depiction of the undead in the conflict between pagan and Christian ideas, criticising as he does so Jan de Vries's remarks on the Germanic beliefs concerning the dead (167):

I am not prepared to make any declarations about the ideas of the Germanic peoples as a whole, but the texts we have been looking at are all Icelandic, from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. They are, therefore, written by Christians, although it is obvious that many of the ideas must be an inheritance from pre-Christian times. In some of these texts it seems equally obvious that Christian ideas about evil spirits or demons have influenced the narrative. This applies to the narrative of the wonders of Fróðá in *Eyrbyggja saga* as well as to the tale of Glámr in *Grettis saga*. Nevertheless, the basic idea that some life remains in a dead body and that the dead are able to move around in the world of the living and affect it physically, must be a pagan idea.

In essence, Vésteinn's criticism of de Vries (1970, I 218) amounts to a joint charge of overgeneralisation and of failure to take into account the Christian character of the society that committed the sagas to writing. Vésteinn's own account only modifies de Vries's views by reducing the continuity between early medieval pagan Germanic beliefs about the undead (ghosts, revenants) and high medieval Christian beliefs on the subject to a few essential characteristics. One of the common features mentioned by de Vries—in an observation that Vésteinn does not cite but which specifically refers to *Eyrbyggja saga*—was this (1967, II 370):

Spuk und Zauberei sind diesem Mann [the saga author/compiler] besonders wichtig erschienen, aber das beeinträchtigt natürlich seine Wahrheitsliebe auf keine Weise, weil man auch im 13. Jahrhundert nach Ausweis der *Sturlunga saga* von der Realität dieser Erscheinungen fest überzeugt war.

Vésteinn's article on the living dead in Old Norse literature represents some of the most recent work to devote considerable attention to the roles and functions of supernatural elements in saga narratives. In scholarship on the Icelandic sagas Claude Lecouteux (1986), John Lindow (1995), this author (1998) and others have contributed to our understanding of Old Norse literature and its world-view by elucidating the various uses to which supernatural beings and events are put in saga narrative. Largely absent from much of this recent scholarship has been an explicit effort to

connect the saga's understanding of the supernatural in the pagan past with larger European concepts of the supernatural and the medieval Scandinavian understanding of its own then-recent pagan past in the context of its then-Christian present. Building on the recent scholarship on the supernatural in the sagas and on the medieval Christian understanding of the role of the dead, the following is an attempt to demonstrate how the medieval Icelandic conception of the living dead, *aptrgöngumenn*, *draugar* and other such beings conformed to one branch of continental European Christian thought on the fate of the dead and their continued relationship to the living. This approach will necessitate a reevaluation of the view held by Vésteinn and others that the 'basic idea' about the living dead in the sagas 'must be a pagan idea'.

According to Jean-Claude Schmitt's work on medieval concepts of ghosts and revenants, the two competing ideas in Christian medieval Europe were the Augustinian concept of the dead and the non-Augustinian 'popular' conception (1998, 1–27). Augustine's view, articulated in *De cura pro mortis gerenda*, asserts that the dead can have no further contact with the living once their souls have been taken up into heaven or consigned to perdition. Apparitions of the dead were, in Augustine's view, only simulacra of once-living persons. The idea that the dead can communicate with the living, for whatever purposes, was not to be believed (Migne 1845, col. 600):

Narrantur visa quædam, quæ huic disputationi non negligendam videantur inferre quæstionem. Feruntur quippe moritui nonnulli vel in somnis, vel alio quocumque modo apparuisse viventibus atque ubi eorum corpora jacerent inhumata nescientibus, locisque monstratis admonuisse ut sibi sepultura quæ defuerat præberetur. Hæc si falsa esse responderimus, contra quorundam scripta fidelium, et contra eorum sensus qui talia sibi accidisse confirmant, impudenter venire videbimur.

Certain visions are reported, which seem to raise a question that should not be disregarded in this disputation. For they say that some dead [persons] have appeared either in sleep or in some other manner to the living, even to people who did not know where their bodies lay unburied, and that, the places having been revealed, they admonished them that the burial that was lacking should be provided for them. If we respond that these things are false, contrary to the writings of certain of the faithful, and contrary to the perceptions of those who affirm that such things have happened to them, we shall be seen to be proceeding shamelessly.

Augustine goes on to argue that the dead are neither concerned with nor aware of the acts of the living, much less willing or able to communicate with those yet alive (Migne 1845, col. 602–05).

Apparent visions of or visitations by the dead experienced by the living were, in Augustine's view, not real visitations by the dead but either imagined events or visitations by benevolent or malign supernatural beings that had assumed the *semblance* of formerly living persons (Schmitt 1998, 25–27). Central to Augustine's conception of the ghost or apparition is the proposition that the souls of the dead are immediately transported to either heaven or hell on the moment of physical death (the concept of purgatory had not yet developed in any systematic fashion at the time when he lived and wrote). This idea is only slightly modified by Gregory the Great, whose *Libri Dialogorum* contain several tales in which the spirits of the dead saints return to aid those dying in a state of grace with their transition to heavenly life, admonish the wayward or confront the guilty. Writing in the early seventh century, he responds to a question about reported visitations from spirits of apparently righteous people who have not yet ascended to heaven with a departure from the strictly Augustinian model (Migne 1849, cols 356–57):

Hoc neque de omnibus justis fateri possumus, neque de omnibus negare. Nam sunt quorundam justorum animae que a cœlesti regno quibusdam adhuc mansionibus differentur. In quo dilationis damno quid aliud innuitur, nisi quod de perfecta justitia aliquid minus habuerunt?

We are neither able to admit nor deny this of all of the righteous. For there are spirits of some of the righteous who still are set apart from the kingdom of heaven in certain mansions. In this penalty of separation what else can be indicated but that they have something lacking from perfect justice?

Gregory, then, is the first to depart significantly, though not wholly, from the Augustinian concept of the spirits of the dead with his assertion that the spirits of deceased persons can, for a time, remain on earth. Centuries were to pass before a competing model was fully developed by Christian thinkers in medieval Europe. The competing model described by Schmitt—one that we may rightly call 'popular', 'folkloric' and specifically 'Germanic'—holds that the dead can, indeed, return from their particular otherworldly habitations—Heaven, Hell or Purgatory—to interact with the living, with intentions either malevolent or benevolent. Schmitt writes (1998, 13):

We know of ancient Germanic cultures for the most part only through later texts, but such texts convey traditional and perhaps very ancient representations of those cultures: notably, the anonymous *Edda*, which was composed between the tenth and the twelfth centuries but which goes back to the seventh century; and Scandinavian and Icelandic sagas, written between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries at a time when Christianity was already well established in northern Europe. Examples include *Eyrbyggja saga* or *Saga of Snorri the*

Chieftain, written around 1230, *Laxdæla saga*, written around 1250, and *Saga of the Inhabitants of Vale of Svörfud*, reworked around 1300. In these tales, the dead, or *draug[a]r*, return in great numbers, mutilating and killing anyone they encounter, wiping out entire regions, forcing people and animals to leave their dwellings. Unlike the ghosts of classical antiquity, these dead are not described as 'images'. They seem to be endowed with real bodies, as if the cadavers themselves, having returned to life, had left their graves.

Schmitt goes on to contrast the 'Germanic' model, here adduced from the Icelandic sagas, with the biblical rejection of the ghost, the rejection that formed the basis for the Augustinian model (31–32). According to that model, the dead remained dead, and any apparitions or visitations were demonic deceptions or angelic visitations. There was, for Augustine and those who followed his view on the subject, no question of the dead returning to aid or harm the living; the dead were, upon physical death, irrevocably consigned to heaven or hell, with no possibility of communicating with or returning to the living world. Summarising Augustine's arguments from his correspondence with Evodius and his *De cura*, Schmitt writes (1998, 26–27):

Let us repeat: for Augustine, what appeared was neither the dead person's body nor the dead person's soul, which was an immaterial essence and had absolutely no reason to come into contact with the living. It was an *imago*, a spiritual image—not 'corporeal'—that had only the appearance of a body. Let us recall that for Augustine, there was no essential difference between the apparition of the image of a dead person and the apparition of the oneiric image of a friend who lived far away . . . All these images were perceived not by the eyes of the body but by the 'eyes of the soul', to which they were brought by angels, both good and evil . . . Thus Augustine was sure that the only 'spirits' that ensured a mediation between the hereafter and the here-and-now were angels (among them, the evil angels, demons).

Augustine, then, denied even the possibility that the dead could return to the world of the living. This first Christian model of ghosts and revenants, promoted by the most influential of the post-apostolic Fathers of the Church, was in the centuries that followed almost completely ignored in favour of another model, one which treated the prospect of the dead returning to visit the living, for reasons benign or fell, as a real possibility (Schmitt 1998, 27). This second, non-Augustinian model that Schmitt adduces from his chosen medieval texts is the one that allows for the real return of the dead as spirits, apparitions, or in bodily form, and therefore the one which best fits the Icelandic sagas. That is, the once-living bodies of known people—and not angelic or demonic simulacra—can, in this second model, interact with the living. The primary medieval sources for

the second model, Gregory the Great, Thietmar von Merseburg, Peter the Venerable, Honorius of Autun, Caesarius von Heisterbach and others all contradict the Augustinian model in that they maintain that the undead who return are, however altered, the very persons who once lived in the communities that they now haunt. These authors, however, qualified their ideas about the returning dead in various degrees. Concerning the question whether the spirits of the saints can appear to the living, Honorius writes in his *Elucidarius* (Migne 1854, col. 1182):

D. Possunt animæ apparere quando volunt, vel quibus volunt?

M. Animæ sanctorum apparent quando volunt, et quibus volunt, sive vigilantibus, sive dormientibus. Quæ autem in pœnis sunt, non apparent, nisi ab angelis permittantur, et ut pro liberatione sua rogent, aut liberatæ gaudium suum amicis suis nuntient. Quæ autem in inferno sunt, nulli apparere, sive in somnis, sive vigilantibus, non illæ sunt, sed dæmones in illarum specie, qui etiam in angelos lucis se transfigurant, ut decipiant.

D: Are spirits able to appear when they want, or to whom they want?

M: The spirits of the saints appear when they want and to whom they want, either to those who are awake, or to those who are asleep. Those [spirits], however, which are in punishments [Purgatory] do not appear unless they are permitted by angels, and in order that they may ask for their deliverance, or, having been freed, announce their joy to their friends. Those ones, however, which are in Hell appear to no one, either in dreams or to the waking; it is not those [spirits] but demons in their semblance, who also transfigure themselves into angels of light in order to deceive.

In this view, the saints and those in Purgatory, at least, can return to the living when permitted by the angels, in order to accomplish a good purpose for those who survive them. The damned, however, cannot appear to anyone. Persons who believe themselves to have been visited by the spirit of someone known to be damned have, according to Honorius, been visited instead by demons in human guise. Honorius's conception therefore conforms to Augustine's views on the ability of the damned to return to earth (they can't), but contradicts Augustine on the ability of the saints to return to visit the living (they can). Though it may not be possible to demonstrate that any specific works of either Augustine or Honorius were known to the composer of this saga, it is reasonable to posit some familiarity with their ideas about the afterlife on the part of Icelanders in the thirteenth century. An Augustinian monastery had been founded at Helgafell in 1184 (Turville-Petre 1953, 243), and the *Elucidarius* had been translated into Icelandic by 1200, perhaps earlier (Turville-Petre 1953, 138–39). As for the continuation of identity after death and the possibility of certain of the dead themselves visiting the

living, the Icelandic undead fall within the range of medieval Christian—but not Augustinian—conceptions of the ‘undead’, but also evince characteristics that depart from that model. Both righteous and unrighteous dead return in the sagas, and they not only retain the identities they had possessed in life, but are also physically present, unlike the apparitions described by Augustine and Honorius.

To account for the Icelandic revenant, we have to take up Schmitt’s ‘folkloristic’ or ‘Germanic’ model. Typical of the ‘Germanic’ model of the undead are the accounts found in Thietmar von Merseburg’s early eleventh-century *Chronicon*. In that work, Thietmar recounts numerous tales of very corporeal undead visiting the living. Perhaps the most dramatic of these accounts is that of the priest whose church was taken over nightly by revenant parishioners who came to celebrate a ghostly mass: when the priest attempted to drive the unwanted dead out of the sanctuary, the revenants responded by beating him, tying him to the altar, and setting him on fire. Thietmar recounts the tale as told him by his niece (Holtzmann 1935, 18–19):

Tempore Baldrici presulis, qui octoginta annos vel plus Traiecti sanctam regebat sedem, in loco, qui Deventre dicitur, ecclesiam senio dirutam renovans benedixit ac presbitero suimet commendavit. Qui in una dierum valde diluculo ad eam pergens, vidit mortuos in ecclesia et atrio offerentes atque cantantes audivit. Quod mox episcopo ut primum is retulit, iussus ab eo in ecclesia dormire, cum lecto, quo requievit, sequenti nocto a defunctis eiectus est. Ob hoc idem trepidus apud antistitem talia queritur. Is autem precepit ei, ut cum sanctorum reliquiis signatus, aqua aspersus, suam custodire non desisteret ecclesiam. Qui iussa secutus domini, iterum in ecclesia dormire voluit, sed stimulatus timoris sic iacendo evigilavit. Et ecce solita venientes hora, elevaverunt eum, coram altari eum ponentes et in favillam tenuem corpus igne resolventes. Hoc ubi presul audivit, penitencia ductus triduanum indixit ieiunium, ut sibi animeque defuncti succurreret. Multa, fili, de hiis omnibus, ni infirmitas obstaret, dicere potuissem. Ut dies vivis, sic nox est concessa defunctis.

In the time of Bishop Baldric, who ruled in a place called Deventer over the holy see of Utrecht eighty years ago or more, renovating a church ruined by age, he consecrated it and put it in the care of his own priest. One day, when the sun was fully up, this man [the priest], approaching it [the church], saw the dead making offerings in the church and porch, and heard them singing. As soon as he could, he told this to the bishop, and having been ordered by him to sleep in the church, he, together with the bed on which he had been lying, was the following night thrown out by the dead. Being frightened by this, the man complained about these things before his bishop. He, however, gave orders to him that after being crossed with relics of the saints and sprinkled with water, he should not cease from guarding his church. He carried out the orders of his lord and tried again to sleep in the church, but being worried by fear, he lay

awake like that all night. And behold, coming at the customary hour, they lifted him up, placed him in front of the altar and reduced his body to fine ashes with fire. When the bishop heard of this, he was moved by penitence to impose [on himself] a fast of three days, in order to aid himself and the soul of the dead man. I could tell much about all these things, my son, if illness did not prevent me. Just as the day is granted to the living, so is night to the dead.

Continuing in this vein are the accounts of the undead or resurrected dead in Caesarius von Heisterbach's early thirteenth-century *Dialogus miraculorum*. Caesarius's many accounts of the returning dead in his *Dialogus miraculorum* are, judging from their frequent appearance in his chapter 'de conversione', intended to propound sound doctrine concerning the eternal fates of the deceased, and so they provide modern readers with a medieval view of the revenant that harmonises Christian theology and folklore elements, blurring Schmitt's clear line between the two. The concept that the soul retained its personal identity after death occurs in nearly all of Caesarius's accounts in the *Dialogus miraculorum*, where the soul of the sinner returning from Purgatory, either in a vision or reanimating its own dead body, to deliver a warning to the errant living, is a frequently occurring motif (1929, I 38–42). An exceptional tale is the account of the dead priest whose corpse was inhabited and animated by a demon (1929, II 292). This tale provides negative evidence of the principle of post-mortem survival of identity, though in so far as the priest is impersonated, his own soul would have been, presumably, safely in the eternal realm.

To grasp the importance of Þórólfr's hauntings to our understanding of the medieval Icelandic conception of the revenant it is first necessary to form a clear picture of his character in life. In saga terms he is a typical *ójafnaðarmaðr*, one who abuses, cheats, and murders any who even potentially threaten his own interests. The term carries a strong tone of moral condemnation, as Klaus von See has pointed out (1964, 246–47), and as such further contributes to understanding that Þórólfr's post-mortem fate is best understood in a Christian metaphysical framework.

Returning to the haunting itself, the revenant Þórólfr's murderous violence continues to escalate, as does the number of victims he claims, until his son Arnkell temporarily lays him to rest. Later in the saga, after Arnkell has been treacherously killed by Snorri goði, Þórólfr again haunts the area around Hvammr, killing a number of men before his body is disinterred and burned to ash by his former rival Þóroddr. Even annihilation does not end his harmful influence completely; when a crippled cow licks his ashes it conceives a monstrous bull-calf, Glæsir, that eventually kills Þóroddr (*Eyrbyggja saga*, 172–75). Jesse Byock comments (1982, 133):

How does this story of Þórólfr's hauntings fit into the saga? Is it simply an isolated folkloristic digression? The principle of integration may be perceived in the aid that Þórólfr gives his son, Arnkell goði. By leaving Arnkell's farm in peace while driving the neighbors out of the locality, Þórólfr increases Arnkell's wealth and status. This aspect of a tale which is otherwise a simple tale of hauntings helps us to understand the saga man's narrative strategy . . . Indeed, Þórólfr's acts of vengeance would hardly be unusual if he were not dead. But Þórólfr is dead, and the hauntings that lead to the death of Þóroddr are not only an interesting variation on a theme, but one that yields insight into the rationale of the saga man. Þórólfr's acts are explicable and important because Arnkell's death had never been adequately atoned for. The legal settlement that followed his death had determined a compensation that was far too low for a great chieftain.

Fundamental to Byock's claim about Þórólfr's motivations is the proposition that the living dead of the Icelandic sagas still recognise and heed the legal conventions that they knew when alive. The proposition is, *prima facie*, tenable, and as an explanatory premise, it contributes significantly to our understanding of another haunting in the saga, namely that of Þórir and Þóroddr (see below). However, Byock's application of the premise to explain the undead Þórólfr's motives seems misplaced here. While it is true that atonement for the killing of Arnkell is never adequately achieved by his legal heirs (all of them female), this fact, I assert, plays no role in explaining or motivating Þórólfr's first or second series of hauntings. Indeed, Þórólfr's later undead rampages are not directed against his son's killers, and so can have no satisfactory value in the economy of revenge. That is to say, were Þórólfr's murderous career as a revenant motivated by the need to avenge his son's killing, then the second group of violent hauntings would have harmed only those responsible for the murder (Þórleifr kimbi, Snorri goði, et al.). As things stand in the saga, Þórólfr's attacks are indiscriminate, claiming human and animal victims of all types. Sheep, cows and birds, as well as dozens of human beings, die at the hands of the undead Þórólfr. In life Þórólfr had often used murder and trickery to circumvent the law, murdering even those under his son Arnkell's protection (here I refer to Úlfarr, murdered by Spá-Gils at Þórólfr's request in chapter 32). Only Arnkell's own use of force against him stayed his hand. His very presence undead is thoroughly malevolent, as it had been in life, only unchecked by legal conventions and enhanced with uncanny power to work his bloodthirsty malice.

Where Þórólfr provides us with the type of the malevolent undead, Þórgunna's return from beyond the grave strongly resembles accounts of revenant priests or monks from Caesarius's *Dialogus*. Þórgunna's death is presaged by a series of eerie omens, among them a shower of blood and

her own premonition of death (*Eyrbyggja saga*, 140–42). Where Þórólfr has been an archetypal saga villain in life and only increases in malevolence and power after his death, Þórgunna returns to provide food for the party of men who have been charged with transporting her body to Skálaholt for a church burial. She appears to them after they have received inhospitable treatment from a farmer and his wife (144):

Ok er menn kómu í rekkjur, heyrðu þeir hark mikit í búrit; var þá farit at forvitnask, hvárt eigi væri þjófar inn komnir; ok er menn kómu til búrsins, var þar sén kona mikil; hon var nokvið, svá at hon hafði engan hlut á sér; hon starfaði at matseld; en þeir menn, er hana sá, urðu svá hræddir, at þeir þorðu hvergi nær at koma. En er líkmenn vissu þetta, fóru þeir til ok sá, hversu háttat var; þar var Þórgunna komin, ok sýndisk þat ráð ǫllum, at fara eigi til með henni. Ok er hon hafði þar unnit slíkt er hon vildi, þá bar hon mat í stofu. Eptir þat setti hon borð ok bar þar á mat. Þá mæltu líkmenn við bónda, ‘Vera má, at svá lúki við, áðr vér skilim, at þér þykki alkeypt, at þú vildir engan greiða gera oss.’ Þá mæltu bæði bóndi ok húsfreyja, ‘Vit viljum víst gefa yðr mat ok gera yðr annan greiða, þann er þér þurfuð.’ Ok þegar er bóndi hafði boðit þeim greiða, gekk Þórgunna fram ór stofunni ok út eptir þat, ok sýndisk hon eigi síðan.

But when people went to bed they heard a loud noise in the pantry; they went to find out whether thieves had broken in, but when they got to the pantry, they saw a large woman and she was naked; she didn't have anything on. She worked at preparing a meal and those people who saw her became so terrified that they didn't dare approach her. When the corpse-bearers learned of this, they went and saw how it was. Þórgunna had come and it seemed wise to all not to go near her. And when she had done what she wanted there, she took the food to the living room, set the table and served the meal. Then the corpse-bearers said to the farmer, ‘Things may yet end very dearly for you before we leave, since you were unwilling to entertain us properly.’ Then the farmer and his wife said, ‘We will certainly give you food and whatever entertainment you need.’ And as soon as the farmer had offered them entertainment, Þórgunna went from the living room and out after that and was never seen again.

Þórgunna's undead activities fit readily into the typical folkloric pattern of the dead who return to the world of the living in order to ensure that some injustice is amended, a pattern that remained typical in the Christian Middle Ages (Schmitt 1998, 1–4). In her case, the injustice that she amends is the poor treatment of her pallbearers by an anonymous farmer and his wife. While she is not avenging a gross evil of any kind, she nonetheless functions here as a sort of protective ghost or spirit, attending to the needs of those who had fulfilled her final wishes.

Important also is the fact that Þórgunna was, in life, a devout Christian. This is emphasised several times in the course of the events leading up to her death, and it is the location of the church at Skálaholt that

motivates Þórgunna to command that her body be interred there. Christian salvation did not, in the mind of the saga author, hinder the dead from returning to look after their own affairs. In this the sagas conform to common high- and late-medieval conceptions of the undead, as continental literature attests numerous episodes involving priests, bishops, and even whole undead congregations haunting churches (Schmitt 1998, 27–28, 36–39). Another significant convergence with the continental tradition in this and all other Icelandic hauntings discussed here is the corporeality of the revenant Þórgunna. Here *Eyrbyggja saga*, like continental literature that mentions the undead, ignores the Augustinian theory of ghosts in favour of one that has strong roots in pagan beliefs but which both Paulinus and Evodius, two of Augustine's correspondents, regarded as compatible with Christian teaching about the nature of the soul and the afterlife (Schmitt 1998, 17–27). Like many continental authors of the high and late Middle Ages, the compilers of the Icelandic sagas did not see belief in ghosts, even the corporeal walking dead, as inherently contradictory of Christian faith.

The final significant haunting examined here involves not one but two groups of revenants, all of them troubling the farm at Fróðá. Following the appearance of an eerie moon-like object in the farmstead, a shepherd in Þóroddr's employ dies and then returns as an undead in order to terrorise the farmstead. His first victim is Þórir viðleggr, who then joins the shepherd in a murderous, horrifying rampage through the early winter (*Eyrbyggja saga*, 146–47). There ensues a series of events that finds its modern analogues in numerous zombie and vampire films, with each of the subsequent victims of the revenant shepherd joining Þóroddr in his reign of undead terror, each revenant remaining disquietingly familiar to the living inhabitants of the farm (Waller 1986, 16). These events continue until a group of six *aptrgöngumenn*, the revenants of Þórir and his wife among them, haunts the farm at Fróðá (*Eyrbyggja saga*, 146–47, 150):

Eptir andlát Þóris tók sótt húskarl Þórodds ok lá þrjár nætr, áðr hann andaðisk; síðan dó hverr at öðrum, þar til er sex váru látnir . . . Næst þessum tíðendum tók sótt Þorgríma galdrakinn, kona Þóris viðleggs; hon lá litla hríð, áðr hon andaðisk, ok it sama kveld, sem hon var jörðuð, sásk hon í liði með Þóri, bónda sínum.

After Þórir's death one of Þóroddr's farmhands took ill and lay three nights before he expired. Afterward one died after another until six had died . . . Right after these events Þorgríma galdrakinn, the wife of Þórir viðleggr, took ill. She lay a brief time before she expired, and the same night as she was laid to rest, she was seen in the company (of revenants) with her husband Þórir.

The contrast between the types of haunting seems clear enough. Þórólfr bægifótr, the unnamed shepherd and the shepherd's victims all return from the dead as highly malevolent, powerful, deadly presences, while, as we shall see, the revenants Þórgunna, Þóroddr and the other men drowned in Þóroddr's company prove merely disquieting and eerie to the living people they visit. The three hauntings even neatly divide into well-attested folkloric types: the malevolent undead, the dead who have returned for a benevolent purpose, and the unquiet dead who can be laid to rest by social ritual. The three hauntings also reveal that the medieval Scandinavian ghost, like its southern cousins, maintained more than mere vestiges of its pre-mortem existence. These ghosts retain aspects of the personalities they demonstrated in life that go beyond the usual attachments to still-living family and friends. Þórólfr, in his career as an *aptrgöngumaðr*, further demonstrates the irrationally violent character that he had in life. Largely consonant with Christian teaching about the immortality of the soul, these hauntings also reveal a belief in the immutability of character in a way that seems to depart from the model advanced by Schmitt. More striking, and therefore more valuable to us in our attempt to understand the medieval Scandinavian concept of the ghost, is the reaction of the ghosts of Þóroddr and his men when they are sued. In that incident we find our clearest window into the medieval Scandinavian concept of the afterlife and the transcendence of the law (*Eyrbyggja saga*, 148):

En er þessi tíðendi spurðusk til Fróðár, buðu þau Kjartan ok Þuríðr nábúum sínum þangat til erfis; var þá tekít jólaöl þeira ok snúit til erfisins. En it fyrsta kveld, er menn váru at erfinu ok menn váru í sæti komnir, þá gengr Þóroddr bóndi í skálann ok fǫrunautar hans allir alvátir. Menn fǫgnuðu vel Þóroddi, því at þetta þótti góðr fyrirburðr, því at þá hǫfðu menn þat fyrir satt, at þá væri mǫnnum vel fagnat at Ránar, ef sædauðir menn vitjuðu erfis síns; en þá var enn lítt af numín forneskjan, þó at menn væri skírðir ok kristnir at kalla. Þeir Þóroddr gengu eptir endilǫngum setaskálanum, en hann var tvídyrðr; þeir gengu til eldaskála ok tóku einskis manns kveðju, settusk þeir við eldinn, en heimamenn stukku ór eldaskálanum, en þeir Þóroddr sátu þar eptir, þar til er eldrinn var fǫlskaðr; þá hurfu þeir á brott. Fór þetta svá hvert kveld, meðan erfit stóð, at þeir kómu til eldanna.

When the news came to Frodriver, Kjartan and Þuríðr invited their neighbours to a funeral feast there; then their Christmas ale was taken and used for the funeral. On the first evening of the feast, when all of the guests were seated, Þóroddr and all his companions came into the room drenched to the skin. Everyone welcomed Þóroddr, for this was considered a happy omen, because in those days it was believed that drowned people had been well-received by Rán, goddess of the sea, if they came to their own funeral feast. At

that time heathendom was still hardly abolished at all, though people were baptised and supposed to be Christians. Þóroddr and his men walked along the main room, which had two doors, and into the living room. They ignored the greetings people gave them and sat down at the fire. The people bolted out of the living room, but Þóroddr and his men stayed until the fire began to burn very low, then went away. This went on as long as the funeral feast lasted; every evening the drowned men would come to the fires.

Þóroddr and his drowned companions transform the farmhouse's living room into a 'living-dead room', staying on after their funeral feast is over. The first night after the feast, they are joined at the fire by the other group of local revenants, Þórir viðleggr and his ghastly entourage. With the kind of terse, macabre humour that saga connoisseurs come to expect if not appreciate, the saga describes how Þórir and his men, who have been properly buried, start throwing dirt and mud from their clothes at Þóroddr and his men (*Eyrbyggja saga*, 149). Amusing as the moment is, it is also significant for our understanding of the concept of the undead at work in the text. The two groups are behaving as living rivals might, the buried dead taunting the drowned dead by flinging mud at them.

There are numerous parallels between the episode cited above and the hauntings in the texts that Schmitt cites that reveal a common view that the dead still participate in the social conventions of the living: deceased priests and parishioners returning to celebrate mass in abandoned churches, monastic teachers returning from the dead to impart vital instruction to their still-living pupils. However, there are significant differences between this saga episode and those Schmitt treats in his study. The undead Þóroddr and his men return for a typical folkloric reason—the unquiet death—but their haunting is not particularly malevolent or vengeful. Indeed, were it not for the fact that their very presence induces fear and causes several deaths, their activities might seem entirely benign or perhaps even comical. They sit around the long fires and throw mud at each other. Their presence, however, has the aforementioned harmful effects, though they, unlike typical folkloric ghosts of this kind, seem singularly uninterested in the affairs of the living people around them. It is their very presence that is a threat to the world of the living, not their activities, and the pagan interpretation, that the arrival of the dead at their own funeral feast is a good omen, is subsequently shown to be mistaken.

The most significant difference is their reaction to Kjartan's lawsuit. Lawsuits in medieval Iceland were a potentially dangerous business, fraught with the possibility of armed conflict between plaintiff and accused party (Andersson and Miller 1989, 22–32). What, then, do we make of the successful and uncontested lawsuit against the revenants? One

possible interpretation, already hinted at, is that the dead are present here not merely as intruders into the world of the living, but as full participants in the living world, subject even to its legal conventions. Another is that the episode is meant to tell us as much about the Icelanders' conception of the law and its power as it is about their beliefs concerning the dead (*Eyrbyggja saga*, 151–52):

Kjartan gekk inn þegar ok sá, at þeir Þóroddr sátu við eld, sem þeir váru vanir. Kjartan tók ofan ársalinn Þórgunnu, gekk síðan í eldaskála, tók glóð af eldi ok gekk út með; var þá brenndr allr rekkjubúnaðrinn, er Þórgunna hafði átt. Eptir þat stefndi Kjartan Þóri viðlegg, en Þórðr kausi Þóroddi bónda, um þat, at þeir gengi þar um hýbýli ólofat ok firrði menn bæði lífi ok heilsu; öllum var þeim stefnt, er við eldinn sátu. Síðan var nefndr duradómr ok sagðar fram sakar ok farit at öllum málum sem á þingadómum; váru þar kviðir bornir, reifð mál ok dæmð; en síðan er dómsorði var á lokit um Þóri viðlegg, stóð hann upp ok mælti: 'Setit er nú, meðan sætt er.' Eptir þat gekk hann út þær dyrr, sem dómrinn var eigi fyrir settr. Þá var lokit dómsorði á sauðamann; en er hann heyrði þat, stóð hann upp ok mælti: 'Fara skal nú, ok hygg ek, at þó væri fyrr sœmra.' En er Þorgríma galdrakinn heyrði, at dómsorði var á hana lokit, stóð hon upp ok mælti: 'Verit er nú, meðan vært er.' Síðan var sótt hværr at öðrum, ok stóð svá hværr upp, sem dómr fell á, ok mæltu allir nokkut, er út gengu, ok fannsk þat á hvers orðum, at nauðigr losnaði. Síðan var sókn felld á Þórodd bónda; ok er hann heyrði þat, stóð hann upp ok mælti: 'Fátt hygg ek hér friða, enda flýjum nú allir.' Gekk hann þá út eptir þat.

Kjartan went in at once and saw that Þóroddr and his companions sat at the fire, as was their custom. Kjartan took down Þórgunna's bed-canopy and went then into the living room, took a brand from the fire and went out with it; then all of the bed clothes that Þórgunna had owned were burned. After that he summonsed Þórir Wood-leg, and Þórðr Cat summonsed Þóroddr because they were walking around the house without permission and depriving men of life and health; the same was done to all of them who sat around the fire. Then a doorway-court was appointed and accusations were presented and all of the matters were handled as at thing-courts. Verdicts were pronounced there, cases summed up and judged. And when sentence was pronounced against Þórir Wood-leg, he stood up and said, 'I've sat now, as long as could be sat.' After that he went out at the door where the court was not being held. Then sentence was pronounced against the shepherd; when he heard it, he stood up and said, 'I'll go now, but I think sooner would have been better.' And when Þorgríma Witch-face heard that her case was decided, she stood up and said, 'I have now stayed as long as I could.' After this each was summonsed in turn, and each one stood up when sentence was passed on him, and all of them said something when they left. And it seemed from each one's statement that they left unwillingly. Finally judgment was pronounced against Þóroddr; when he heard that, he stood up and said, 'I find little peace here, and now we all leave.' After that he went out.

In the resolution of the Fróðá episode, the living (Kjartan, Þórðr kǫttr) and the dead (Þóroddr, Þórir viðleggr, et al.) accept as binding not only their common legal code, but also the metaphysical proposition that this code has authority over the living and the dead, provided that all proper forms are observed. Living and dead alike are bound by the proper, felicitous execution of speech acts (Austin 1961, 12–28 and 138–64, on verbal acts applicable in legal contexts) and by their common volitional acceptance of speech acts as binding ethical constraints. The culmination of these speech acts is religious in nature: the priest comes to the farm to exorcise the spirits and consecrate the space anew (152). No distinction is made at that point between the more malevolent undead and those who seemed essentially harmless. The dead are made to leave by an appeal to legal and metaphysical rights and obligations. They no longer have any right to inhabit the farm and are therefore obliged to leave. The peaceful end of the hauntings therefore rests on mutual submission to a metaphysical proposition about the nature of law and language. Respect for the law is what frees the living from the baneful influence of the undead and sends the unquiet dead—presumably—onward to an undefined rest.

Particularly important for our understanding of the medieval concept of the revenant dead in all three of these episodes is the contrast between the conclusion of the Fróðá haunting and the others. No attempt is ever made to press legal claims against Þórólfr, though grounds for this certainly exist. No legal action against Þórgunna is either desirable or needed, as she ceases spooking about as soon as her loyal servants are granted the basic hospitality that they had been denied. The hauntings in *Eyrbyggja saga* underscore the ‘consistency of character’ in the medieval Icelandic concept of the undead. These dead, who, according to Saint Augustine, should not be able to communicate with the living at all, remain to the saga imagination essentially the same people they were in life. In this respect they are not unlike those returnees from the grave described by Caesarius von Heisterbach, Honorius of Autun, Thietmar von Merseburg or Peter the Venerable of Cluny, demonstrating that the ‘Icelandic’ concept of the revenant dead was not quite unique to Iceland. Far from being wholesale ‘pagan survivals’, or even of questionable theological soundness in a Christian metaphysical framework, these visitors from beyond the grave conform to distinctly high medieval Christian ideas about the dead that were current on the continent throughout much of the period from 1000 to 1500, as Schmitt’s research on the Latin sources has demonstrated.

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HÁVAMÁL B: A POEM OF SEXUAL INTRIGUE

BY JOHN MCKINNELL

1. The sections of *Hávamál*

IT IS FASHIONABLE THESE DAYS to consider Old Norse literary works strictly as they appear in the manuscripts, and there are usually excellent methodological reasons for adopting this approach, but in the case of *Hávamál* it is not very useful.¹ Admittedly, the scribe of the Codex Regius, the only authoritative manuscript, gives all of it the title *hava mal* ‘The Words of the High One’, and we may be tempted to take this as the name of a single poem, like *Atlamál* or *Hamðismál*. However, this heading is clearly derived from the opening of the last stanza, which has usually been regarded as the work of the most recent redactor of this anthology:

Nú ero Háva mál qveðin, Now the High One’s words have been spoken
Háva hǫllo í in the High One’s hall

(*Hávamál* 164,1–2)

and this implies only that Óðinn is imagined by the composer of this stanza to be the speaker throughout, not necessarily that the whole text originated as a single poem.

As long ago as 1891 Karl Müllenhoff suggested that *Hávamál* should be regarded as an anthology of Odinic poetry rather than a single poem, and many other scholars have followed that view since his time (Evans, ed., 1986, 8–35 and refs). Müllenhoff divided the poem into six parts:

- I. Stt. 1–79 (approximately): ‘The Gnostic Poem’;
- II. Stt. 95 (or earlier)–102: ‘Óðinn’s adventure with *Billings mær*’;
- III. Stt. 103 (or 104)–110: ‘Óðinn’s adventure with *Gunnlǫð*’;
- IV. Stt. 111 (or 112)–137: *Loddfáfnismál*, ‘the poem addressed to (an otherwise unknown man called) *Loddfáfnir*’;
- V. Stt. 138–145: *Rúnatal*, ‘the list of (runic) secrets’;
- VI. Stt. 146–163: *Ljóðatal*, ‘the list of magic songs’.

But this division is open to three objections. First, it does not account for all the stanzas in the text, since at least some of those between st. 80

¹ Even von See (1972a, 1–2) accepts that it was compiled using parts of pre-existing poems, not all of which have been successfully integrated into the structure of *Hávamál* as a whole.

and st. 94 have apparently little to do either with what precedes them (a catalogue of miscellaneous pieces of pragmatic advice) or with what follows (Óðinn's unsuccessful attempt to seduce *Billings mæx*). Second, it is unclear why, if the text consists effectively of six independent poems laid 'end to end', most of the boundaries between them are not clearly distinguished by the scribe (though there are large initials at the beginnings of stt. 1, 111 and 138, Müllenhoff's poems I, IV and V). Finally, and to my mind most seriously, Müllenhoff's division of the text into six distinct poems seems to be based on intuition rather than on any objective evidence.

2. *Hávamál*, *Hugsvinnsmál* and the *Disticha Catonis*

A quite different approach has been adopted by Klaus von See (1972b), who maintains that *Hávamál* as a whole is a product of the Christian Middle Ages. In particular, he argues that its gnomic sections have been influenced by *Hugsvinnsmál*, an Old Norse verse translation and adaptation of the Vulgate version of the *Disticha Catonis*, a popular work of moral advice in Latin verse. If this theory is right, *Hávamál* is essentially the work of a single poet and must be one of the latest poems in the *Poetic Edda*.

In comparing texts that contain traditional and proverbial wisdom, it is difficult to be sure of influences from one work to another, because similar fragments of proverbial wisdom are likely to surface independently in different cultures. There certainly are some striking resemblances between *Hugsvinnsmál* and more than one section of *Hávamál*, but if von See's theory were correct, we should expect most or all of these to reflect sentiments derived from the *Disticha Catonis*, and in fact this is not the case. There are six stanzas in which there are significant agreements of substance between *Hávamál* and *Hugsvinnsmál* where the *Disticha Catonis* has something different (e.g. *Hávamál* 6,1–3, cf. *Hugsvinnsmál* 71,1–3, *Disticha Catonis* II, 18), two agreements between *Hávamál* and *Hugsvinnsmál* where there is no corresponding text in the *Disticha Catonis* (e.g. *Hávamál* 120,5–7, cf. *Hugsvinnsmál* 13,5), and seven contexts in which *Hugsvinnsmál* echoes the sense of the *Disticha Catonis* but the phrasing of *Hávamál* (e.g. *Hávamál* 44, cf. *Hugsvinnsmál* 25, *Disticha Catonis* I, 9).² Hermann Pálsson has also suggested a number of other correspondences between *Hávamál* and *Hugsvinnsmál* which seem to

² The stanza numbers given in this article for *Hugsvinnsmál* are those used by Tuvestrand and Hermann Pálsson; von See and Ruggerini adopt the slightly different numbering of Finnur Jónsson's edition (*Skj.*, II B 185–210).

me to be fortuitous grammatical coincidences or explicable in other ways; two of these are considered in the discussion of *Hávamál B* below.³

If von See's theory were correct, it would also be necessary to posit a very short period of transmission between the source-MS of the *Disticha Catonis* and the composition of *Hávamál*. Ruggerini (1990, 286) has shown that the MS of the *Disticha Catonis* used by the poet of *Hugsvinnsmál*

can be assigned to the period of transition from *Vulgata recentior* to *Vulgata recentissima*, i.e. between the second half of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth century.

Von See's theory would require us to assume that this manuscript reached Iceland almost immediately after it was copied, that *Hugsvinnsmál* was composed shortly after that, and that the composition of *Hávamál* followed almost immediately. Even then, when *Gylfaginning* ch. 1 (composed around 1225) quotes from *Hávamál* 1 with the evident implication that it is a piece of traditional verse, its author would have to be assumed to be mistaken in this belief.

In fact, it seems more likely that *Hávamál* has influenced *Hugsvinnsmál* than the reverse.⁴ This would explain why *Hugsvinnsmál* deviates from its main source at so many of the points where it shows correspondences with *Hávamál*. It would also supply a more probable time-frame for the origin of *Hugsvinnsmál*. The earliest known evidence for the text of the *Disticha Catonis* in Iceland is an entry in the *máldagar* (inventories of movable property of churches and monasteries) for 1397, when the monastery at Viðey possessed a *Cato med Glosa* (Hermann Pálsson 1985, 16, *Diplomatarium Islandicum* IV, 111). This was probably a glossed copy of the Latin text; the earliest surviving manuscripts of *Hugsvinnsmál* date from the fifteenth century (Tuvestrand, ed., 1977, 7–9; Hermann Pálsson 1985, 16), and the work itself need not be much older than that.

We are thus driven back to some idea of the genesis of the poem more like that proposed by Müllenhoff. Perhaps the most cautious and sensible of the arrangements proposed so far is the one suggested by Bjarne

³ I shall present a more detailed answer to von See's theory, along with my own view of the origins of the text, in a forthcoming article.

⁴ For this view see Fidjestøl 1992, 5, Köhne 1983, 383. Hermann Pálsson (1985, 23) suggests that the relationship is more complex, and that each text may have influenced the other; Ruggerini (1988, 237–44) concludes that *Hávamál* may have influenced *Hugsvinnsmál* while the reverse seems unlikely, though the poet of *Hávamál* may have known the first two books of the *Disticha Catonis* directly.

Fidjestøl (1999, 218), who divides the poem at the points at which the scribe has placed large capital letters of the sort that he generally uses at the beginnings of poems. Fidjestøl's division, assumed for the purposes of linguistic analysis and statistics, runs:

- I. Stt. 1–110 ('*Hávamál I*')
 - II. Stt. 111–137 ('*Hávamál II*')
 - III. Stt. 138–164 ('*Hávamál III*')

Some 17th- and 18th-century paper manuscripts observe the same division, adding the titles *Loddfáfnismál* for II and *Rúna(tals)þáttur* for III. This division has the virtue of proceeding only from a piece of objective evidence, though of course it cannot be certain that the scribe of the Codex Regius knew what the original sections of the text had been. But if he had some idea that his material consisted of more than one poem, it may be useful to consider how these poems could have come to be blended together. Rather than adopting Müllenhoff's idea of *Hávamál* as a series of more or less complete poems that have been laid 'end to end', I would suggest that the compilation of the text may have gone through three main periods, whose remains can be seen in different 'archaeological strata' within it:

1. A number of more or less complete poems were grouped together, possibly in oral tradition but probably in a manuscript which is now lost. Their only common feature was that Óðinn was probably imagined by their collector to be the speaker in all of them. Each one probably began with a large capital letter in the lost manuscript, and three of these capitals (in stt. 1, 111 and 138) have been copied into the Codex Regius.

2. Various other scraps of verse were interpolated at points where they seemed relevant to topics under discussion. These added stanzas show a common 'encyclopaedic' tendency to add mundane practical detail without much regard for the artistic form of the poems to which they have been appended. This impulse towards encyclopaedic collection is a characteristic feature of twelfth- and thirteenth-century learning throughout Europe, and some of these interpolations look as if they were made in more than one stage (see below).

3. Finally, there is an 'editorial' stratum of stanzas whose addition seems to be designed to stress the role of Óðinn as speaker and to impose an apparent unity on the whole collection.

The most recent stratum of the poem, that of the organising editor, may have provided st. 80; st. 111,1–3 and 9–10; st. 162,4–9; and st. 164. He

may have modelled st. 80 on the material about runes in st. 142; added the Odinic references in st. 111 to what was originally a regular stanza of *ljóðahátttr*; added six lines (at a rather inappropriate point) to the incomplete st. 162, to create a link with the refrain of *Loddfáfnismál*; and composed the closing st. 164 as a coda to the whole text.

The material added at the second, ‘encyclopaedic’ stage may have consisted of:

1. A list of things which one should approve only when they are complete, or of which one should take immediate practical advantage, presumably because they are unlikely to be available for long (stt. 81–83). This was probably ‘hooked on’ to the theme of mutability in the preceding stanzas, especially stt. 76–78.

2. A composite list of things not to be trusted (stt. 85–87 and 89–90 in *fornyrðislag* metre, and st. 88, in *ljóðahátttr*, probably a secondary addition in the same vein). This has probably been added to amplify the statement of the unreliability of women in st. 84.

3. A list of medical remedies (st. 137), added in a rough form of *fornyrðislag* to the end of the generally ethical advice in *Loddfáfnismál*, but mechanically re-using the refrain of that poem. Since this begins with what seems to be a remedy against accidentally poisoned ale (see Evans, ed., 1986, 131), it may take its cue from the warning in st. 131,7 to beware of excessive drinking.

4. A fragment of advice about runes (stt. 142–43 and 145 are in *ljóðahátttr*, while the series of *fornyrðislag* questions that make up st. 144 are probably a secondary addition on the same general theme). These stanzas are often regarded as part of the same poem of esoteric wisdom as the preceding ones which describe Óðinn’s sacrifice, but it seems more likely that they have been ‘hooked onto’ the mention of runes in st. 139,4–5. Certainly, the speaker of stt. 138–41 must be Óðinn, while that of st. 143 distinguishes between himself and Óðinn.

When we remove all the material in these two later strata of the text, there remains the problem of how many ‘original’ poems there were. The evidence of the large initials at the beginnings of stt. 1, 111 and 138 might suggest the answer ‘three’, and it is true that each of them marks the beginning of what is obviously new subject matter. There may also, however, be a similar ‘new beginning’ at st. 84, which the scribe of the Codex Regius has not recognised because it has become buried among the added ‘encyclopaedic’ stanzas (see above). When

these are removed, it becomes clear that the long sequence of gnomic advice comes to an end with st. 79, while stt. 84, 91–110 form a brief but elegant *ljóðaháttir* poem which narrates two of Óðinn's sexual intrigues in a light-hearted demonstration that men and women behave treacherously towards each other. I would therefore suggest that there were perhaps four 'original' poems, all in the metre known as *ljóðaháttir* 'the metre of magic songs':

- A. The Gnomic Poem (roughly stt. 1–79).
- B. The Poem of Sexual Intrigue (stt. 84; 91–110).
- C. *Loddfáfnismál* 'Advice to Loddfáfnir' (stt. 111,4–8 and 11; stt. 112–36).
- D. *Ljóðatal* 'List of Magic Spells' (stt. 138–41; 146–61; 162,1–3; 163).

They are probably of various dates, and at least one of them (*Hávamál B*) may itself be composite (see below). Leaving aside the question of whether C and D are distinct poems (I think they are, but for an eloquent argument to the contrary see Jackson 1994), I shall devote the rest of this article to a study of the structure and origins of *Hávamál B*, the poem of Óðinn's sexual intrigues.

3. The Unity and Structure of *Hávamál B*

It is first necessary to show that *Hávamál A* (the Gnomic Poem, stt. 1–79) and *Hávamál B* are distinct from each other. Both are in the same metre (*ljóðaháttir*), but the similarity ends there. *Hávamál B* has a single theme—sexual treachery—and is neatly structured to introduce two narrative episodes about named individuals, each consisting of six narrative stanzas and one summarising stanza. *Hávamál A*, by contrast, is discursive and loosely structured, covering many themes and focussing on pragmatic advice. It rarely alludes to specific stories (the only exceptions are st. 13,4–6 and st. 14,1–3 on Óðinn and Gunnlǫð; st. 78,1–3, on the begging of the sons of Fitiungr; and possibly st. 49, on Óðinn's encounter with two unnamed *trémenn*), and it never sustains a narrative for more than the length of a single stanza. Where it does conjure up a semi-narrative situation, it is usually a typical one, for example:

Ósnotr maðr	The unwise man
hyggj sér alla vera	thinks that all
viðhlæiendr vini;	who laugh with him are friends;
þá þat finnr,	then he finds,
er at þingi kǫmr,	when he gets to the assembly,
at hann á formælendr fá.	he has few to speak in his favour.
	(<i>Hávamál</i> 25)

Only one myth—that of Óðinn and Gunnlǫð—is alluded to in both poems, and they treat it in radically different ways. In *Hávamál A* (stt. 12–14) it is rather frivolously used as a warning against excessive drunkenness, while in *Hávamál B* (stt. 104–10) it becomes an illustration of sexual treachery. This theme is not handled at all in *Hávamál A*, where the only stanza that mentions the love of women (st. 79) links it with money, as just another asset which the fool never acquires the common sense to use effectively.⁵

Hávamál B also shows some specialised use of words in senses different from those found elsewhere in *Hávamál*. One example is the adjective *horskr* ‘sensible’ (91,6; 93,4; 94,4; 96,5; 102,8) and synonyms for it (*snotr* ‘wise’, 95,5; *ráðspaca* ‘the resourceful woman’, 102,5; *sviðr* ‘shrewd’, 103,3; *margfróðr* ‘wise in many things’ 103,5), which in this part of *Hávamál* are used only in senses related to sexuality. Applied to a woman, they always refer to her caution in dealing with wooers (91,6; 96,5; 102,8; and compare *ráðspaca*, 102,5). When they refer to men, they are used either to contrast an intelligent man’s wisdom about other matters with his folly in love (93,4; 94,4; and compare *snotr*, 95,5), or to introduce the fluent and unprincipled wooer under cover of apparently harmless aphorisms (103,3; 103,5). The three instances of *horskr* in *Hávamál A* (6,4; 20,5; 63,3) all refer to the social wisdom by which a man knows when to speak and when to stay silent, and these probably represent a more usual use of the same aphorisms. In short, the use of the word *horskr* and its synonyms seems to be adapted by the poet of *Hávamál B* to the particular and restricted meaning of ‘clever in dealing with the opposite sex’.

A similar specialisation occurs with the verb *njóta* ‘to use, enjoy’ in the Gunnlǫð episode (107,2; 108,4). *Njóta* appears in *Hávamál A* in the statement that no one has any use for a corpse (71,6), and in the repeated refrain to *Hávamál C* (*Loddfáfnismál*, Müllenhoff’s *Hávamál IV*, e.g. 112,3), it is connected with the potential usefulness of specific pieces of (mainly moral) advice. But the two cases in *Hávamál B* are quite different from either of these. The first governs the obscure genitive phrase *vel keyptz litar*, which may refer to a magical transformation by which Óðinn gives himself a handsome appearance for use in his seduction of Gunnlǫð. The second refers to his cynical use of her love for him in his escape from

⁵ Evans (1986, 24) suggests that st. 79 might also be part of the poem about *Billings mæz*. It is true that it is partly about sexual relations, but not about sexual betrayal, and its opening formula links it to a recurring theme in the Gnostic Poem, that of the foolish man who does not know how to behave (compare stt. 23–27 and the second half of st. 21).

the giants' dwellings. Both imply the sense 'to exploit (someone or something) for sexual purposes or by using sex as a weapon' and both suggest a determination to profit at the expense of the sexual partner.

The next obvious question is why one should regard Müllenhoff's poems II and III (the episodes of *Billings mæx* and *Gunnlǫð*) as parts of a single *ljóðaháttur* poem, together with stt. 84 and 91–94. When the encyclopaedic list of things not to be trusted is removed, st. 91, on the subject of male falsity to women, follows immediately and naturally after the statement about female inconstancy in st. 84. However, this sequence implies that the following poem will concern the falseness of *both* sexes to each other. The tale of *Billings mæx* (stt. 96–102) illustrates the female unreliability stated in st. 84, but the statement of male perfidy in st. 91 remains irrelevant until it is illustrated in the story of *Gunnlǫð*.

This balanced structure is emphasised by the device of framing. The first and last stanzas of *Hávamál B* begin with negative statements involving the verb *trúa* 'to trust' (See Appendix for this and the other detailed patterns in the text):

Meyiar orðom scyli mangi trúa, né því er qveðr kona;	The words of a girl no one should trust, nor in what a woman says;	(84,1–3)
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Baugeið Óðinn hygg ec at unnit hafi, hvat scal hans trygðom trúa?	an oath on the ring I think Óðinn has sworn— how can his oaths be trusted?	(110,1–3)
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The verb *trúa* appears nine times in *Hávamál* as a whole, but these are the only two instances where it refers to trust in what someone says.

A similar device can be seen at the beginning of the poem and in the coda at the end of the episode of Billingsr's maid, in the use of the noun *brigð* 'inconstancy' (84,6) and the feminine adjective form *hugbrigð* 'fickle in mind' (102,3). This is also used to make a link with the parallel theme of male inconstancy (91,3), where it is again used with the noun *hugr* 'mind'. The episode of Billingsr's maid itself is similarly 'framed' at beginning and end with the idea of 'testing' a preceding general statement:

96,1: Þat ec þá reynda / er . . .
102,4: þá ec þat reynda / er . . .⁶

⁶ Von See (1972a, 56) also suggests that a similar 'testing' is implied at the beginning of the *Gunnlǫð* episode, where the aphorism *fimbulfambi heitir, sá er*

and the three mentions of the giant Suttungr are used in an analogous way to begin and end the Gunnlǫð story (104,6; 109,7; 110,4).

But even if both narrative episodes are admitted to be part of the same poem, Finnur Jónsson (1920, 235) and David Evans (Evans, ed., 1986, 24) both reject some stanzas which I have included in it. Finnur would omit stt. 92, 94 and 95 from the poem about Billingr's maid (but does not explain why). Evans suggests omitting stt. 94 and 95, arguing that the opening statement of st. 96 ('I proved that when I sat in the reeds') ought to refer, not to the aphorism that no sickness is worse than lack of contentment, but to the irresistible power of love and the deceitfulness of women. He therefore thinks that st. 96 should be immediately preceded either by st. 84 (on the deceitfulness of women) or by st. 93 (on how intelligent men are susceptible to the good looks of women). But the sequence in the text makes perfectly good sense, as an illustration of the frustration and humiliation of rejected desire. The argument runs:

No sickness is worse than an obsessive love which prevents one from taking pleasure in anything else (95,4–6). I proved that for myself when I sat in the reeds, waiting fruitlessly for the woman I desired (st. 96). The man in love desires only one thing, and without it he could not even enjoy the status of being a jarl (97,4–6).

The 'Poem of Óðinn's Sexual Intrigues' survives in a form complete enough for us to be able to recognise a purposeful and elegant structure in it. This falls into three main sections:

- A: Theme: the deceit of both sexes and the folly of love (5 stanzas):
- i) the unreliability of women (1 stanza, st. 84);
 - ii) the unreliability of men (2 stanzas, stt. 91–92);
 - iii) the folly of love, balanced against its irresistibility, seen from a male point of view (2 stanzas, stt. 93–94).

fátt kann segja 'he who can't say much is called a mighty fool' (st. 103,7–8) is 'tested' in the next stanza's *fátt gat ec þegiandi þar; / mǫrgom orðom mæltu ec í minn frama* 'I gained little by silence there—I spoke many words to my own advantage' (st. 104,3–5). He thinks, however, that the following story does not altogether fit the advice given in st. 103, which also states that a man at home should be cheerful towards a guest (st. 103,2), whereas Óðinn is the guest, not the host, in the story that follows. But the myth reveals Suttungr as a mean and grudging host when he refuses his guest even a drop of his mead (see Faulkes, ed., 1998, I 4, Faulkes, trans., 1987, 63). This forces his 'guest' to acquire the drink by other means, thereby illustrating that Suttungr would have been wiser to follow the advice in st. 103 to entertain his guest well.

B: Woman as deceiver (8 stanzas):

- i) gnomic (or mock-gnomic?) introduction (1 stanza, st. 95);
- ii) the story of Billingr's maid (6 stanzas, stt. 96–101);
- iii) coda: comment and final snapshot scene (1 stanza, st. 102).

C: Man as deceiver (8 stanzas):

- i) gnomic (or ironic?) introduction (1 stanza, st. 103);
- ii) the story of Gunnlǫð (6 stanzas, stt. 104–09);
- iii) coda: comment and final snapshot scene (1 stanza, st. 110).

The tone is light and sometimes self-mocking, with an air of cynical balance which implies that both men and women behave either as exploiters or as fools and that they are as bad as each other. This poet is treating Óðinn and the giantesses as if they were all human beings—and that may have implications for the date and meaning that we attach to the poem.

4. Dating

The most objective evidence for the date of any eddic poem is that provided by its language, but such evidence is often slight. One linguistic test that may perhaps be applied to *Hávamál B*, however, is the frequency of the 'expletive particle' *um* or *of*. Fidjestøl (1999) has shown that in datable skaldic verse this is commonest in the work of the earliest poets and then becomes progressively rarer. Furthermore, while there are some early poets who make less use of it than one would have expected, there are *no* poets later than *c.*1030 whose use of it is above the average for the whole corpus. A high incidence of the expletive particle may therefore be quite a reliable indicator of early date, since there is no reason why the language of eddic verse should not have changed in the same way as that of skaldic verse. A low incidence is less conclusive, but may be tentatively used to support other evidence for a later date.

There are nine examples of the expletive particle in the 134 lines of *Hávamál B*: *um lagit* (84,6); *um vakin* (100,3); *of vitaðr* (100,6); *um kominn* (101,2); *um sofín* (101,3); *um kominn* (104,2); *um gaf* (105,1); *um fá* (106,2); *of sóit* (109,6), where the expected average number of cases would be only 3.5. Fidjestøl warns that short poems can produce statistical freaks, and employs a complex statistical formula to mitigate this; but even allowing for this, the test would place *Hávamál B* among the five or six oldest eddic poems, with statistics very

comparable to those of *Vafþrúðnismál*. It may also be worth noticing, however, that eight of these nine cases of the expletive particle are in the twelve ‘story’ stanzas, with only one in the other nine (in the possibly proverbial *brigð í brióst um lagit* (84,6) ‘(and) deceit lodged in their breasts’).

A second linguistic test concerns the West Norse change by which the initial consonant combination *vr-* was simplified to *r-*. West Norse skaldic poets ceased to use alliterations that depend on the *vr-* pronunciation just before the year 1000, and Fidjestøl cautiously concludes that in eddic poetry too, the presence of alliteration between *r-* and original *vr-* indicates West Norse origin after *c.*900, while *vr-* alliteration with *v-* shows either East Norse origin or a date before *c.*1000. *Hávamál B* shows only one relevant form:

Rata munn	The auger’s mouth
léto mc rúms um fá	I caused to make room for me
	(106,1–2)

Rati ‘auger’ is related to the Old Danish *vraade* ‘to bore a hole’, and thus shows original *vr-* alliterating with the original *r-* of *rúms* (see de Vries (1977, 434). For what it is worth, this suggests that the poem (or at least the *Gunnloð* episode) dates from after *c.*900 and is of West Norse origin.

The linguistic evidence (such as it is) therefore suggests a date around the later tenth century, but nearly all of it is derived from the twelve narrative stanzas. A radically different impression emerges, however, when we consider the possible links between *Hávamál B* and other literary works. Admittedly, some such links must be regarded as due either to the influence of *Hávamál B* on other works or to common echoes of proverbial phrases. The second half of st. 84 is quoted in *Fóstbræðra saga* ch. 21 (*Vestfirðinga sögur*, 225) by a man supposed to have been speaking in Greenland in the early eleventh century, but this proves only that these lines were known in Iceland when the saga was written, probably about 1260 (see Jónas Kristjánsson 1972, 292–310 and 325–26). Similarly, st. 108,6 is ironically echoed (and salaciously distorted) in *Lokasenna*:

oc þú lagðir lær yfir	and you laid a thigh over (<i>Lokasenna</i> 20,6)
þeirar er lögðomc arm yfir	whom I laid my arm over (<i>Hávamál</i> 108,6).

Hávamál B must surely be the source here, but most recent critics have regarded *Lokasenna* as a poem of the later twelfth or even the early thirteenth century (see, for example, Ruggerini, ed., 1979, 154–62). If

this dating is correct, this link provides no evidence in favour of an early dating for *Hávamál B*.⁷

Other critics have argued that *Hávamál* as a whole shows influence from post-Conversion Christian culture. As regards *Hávamál B*, von See (1975) argues that the words *lqstr* ‘wickedness’ (98,6) and *flærðir* ‘deceits’ (102,6) imply a Christian view of the sinfulness of the relationship that Óðinn wishes he had had with Billingsr’s maid. But both words are of Germanic origin (with *lqstr* cf. *lasta* ‘to blame’; de Vries (1977, 135) links *flærð* to *flá-ræði* ‘falsehood’) and must have existed before their meanings were influenced by Christian patterns of thought. Even before the Christian period, a sexually loose girl would be thought to have brought blame on herself and committed deceit against her family, whether she was married or not, so this reasoning does not look strong.

A similar argument that has been advanced by Sprenger (1985, see especially 188) in favour of a late date for *Vaffbrúðnismál* would also apply to *Hávamál B*. She argues that the location of emotion and perception in the breast or heart is a development of the early thirteenth century. If this were correct, st. 84 of *Hávamál B* could not be more than a couple of generations older than the manuscript that contains it, since it contains the line *brigð í brjóst um lagit* ‘(and) deceit lodged in their breasts’ (84,6). But in fact the words *brjóst* and *hjarta* can be found in emotional senses in skaldic verse attributed to a much earlier date. The earliest instance I can find, which contains both words, is in *Gísli saga* ch. 21 (Gísli, *lausavísa* 10,6,8; *Vestfirðinga sögur*, 67 and xlii; *Skj.* I B, 98), which if genuine would date from the time of Gísli’s outlawry in 964. Even if this instance is rejected as spurious (as it probably is), there are several others from the first half of the eleventh century (e.g. Sigvatr Þórðarson, *Erfidrápa Óláfs helga* 7,4 and 24,1: both *hjarta*, Kock, ed., 1946–49, I 124, 126; Sigvatr Þórðarson, *lausavísa* 24: *brjóst*, Kock, ed., 1946–49, I, 130). It seems unlikely that all of these are later fabrications. This does not, of course, provide any argument in favour of an early date for *Hávamál B*; it merely shows that any evidence for a late dating of the poem has to be sought elsewhere.

⁷ Einar Ólafur Sveinsson (1962, 299) suggests that there are echoes of *Hávamál* in the poetry of Egill Skallagrímsson, including two of *Hávamál B* in *Sonatorrek* 22–23 (*Egils saga Skalla-Grímssonar*, 255, *Skj.* IB, 37). But the resemblances seem slight, and even if a link were accepted it would be impossible to tell which was the original and which the borrower.

It has also been suggested that *Hávamál* has been influenced by a variety of literary works in Latin, and this would again suggest a post-Conversion date. The most complex argument of this kind is that which claims that *Hávamál* shows influence from *Hugsvinnsmál*, the Old Norse free translation of the *Disticha Catonis*, but as I have argued above, this now seems unlikely. Only two points of resemblance have been suggested between *Hugsvinnsmál* and *Hávamál B*; *Hugsvinnsmál* 42:

Fláráðs manns orðum	In a deceitful man's words
þótt hann fagrt mæli,	though he may speak fair
þarptu eigi þeim at trúa.	you do not need to trust.
Glyslig orð	With specious words
láttu í gegn koma,	you should reply,
gjaltu svá líku líkt.	—thus pay him like for like.

has been linked by Hermann Pálsson (1985, 55) to *Hávamál* 91,4–6:

þá vér fegrst mælom	we (i.e. men) speak most fair
er vér flást hyggiom,	when our thoughts are most false—
þat tælir horsca hugi.	that deceives a sensible (woman's) mind.

but it actually shows a much closer resemblance to the other parallel he draws, with *Hávamál* 45. It seems probable that *Hávamál A* is here presenting a traditional formula which the poets of *Hugsvinnsmál* and *Hávamál B* later used for different non-traditional purposes.

Hugsvinnsmál 69, on not pursuing old grudges, is a fairly close rendering of *Disticha Catonis* II, 15; it renders the last phrase of the Latin, . . . *malorum est* 'is (the behaviour) of bad people', as:

þat kveða ódyggs aðal.	they say that's the nature of a worthless person.
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Hermann (1985, 77) suggests that this might recall *Hávamál* 103,9:

þat er ósnotrs aðal.	that is the nature of a fool.
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but this is a common poetic formula (see e.g. *Lokasenna* 23,8 and 24,6: *oc hugða ec þat args aðal* 'and I thought that the nature of a pervert'), and does not necessarily suggest borrowing, especially since the subject of the stanza in *Hávamál*—inability to speak eloquently—is completely different from that in *Hugsvinnsmál*.

Another point that has raised suspicions of medieval Christian influence is the *hverfanda hvél* 'whirling wheel' of st. 84. This appears in one of a number of stanzas (the others all in *Hávamál A*) which Nore Hagman has derived from the Old Testament apocryphal *Book of Jesus Sirach*, also known as *Ecclesiasticus* (Hagman 1957, 13; for an opposing view, see Larrington 1991, 148):

Præcordia fatui quasi rota carri, et quasi axis versatilis cogitatus illius.

The heart of a fool is like the wheel of a cart, and his thought like a rolling axle-tree.

(*Ecclesiasticus* 33.5)

But this verse of *Ecclesiasticus* is not about women, and it is far from certain that the ‘turning wheel’ of st. 84,4 is thought of as a cartwheel. It has also been suggested that it refers to a potter’s wheel (Meringer 1906, 455, Evans, ed., 1986, 115–16), a lathe (Larrington 1991, 148), the moon as patroness of female menstruation (Kristján Albertsson 1977, 57–58), or to a combination of the moon with the idea of the wheel of Fortune (Singer 1944–47, 16–17; Halldór Halldórsson 1958, 7–12; von See 1978, 16–26 and 1981, 73–83). Elsewhere in Old Norse poetry, the word *hvél* is used almost only of the sun, called *fagrahvél* in *Alvíssmál* 16,5 and *sunnu hvél* in Gamli kanóki’s *Harmsól* 36,7 (Kock, ed., 1946–49, I 270); the moon, which is called *hverfanda hvél* in *Alvíssmál* 14,3 and *hvél mána* in the anonymous thirteenth-century *Líknarbraut* 7,3 (Kock, ed., 1946–49, II 86); or the wheel of Fortune, *auðnu hvél* in Sturla Þórðarson’s *Hákonarkviða* 10,8 (Kock, ed., 1946–49, II 64, later thirteenth century). One reference to the Wolf as *hvélsvelgr* (*Anon X (II) B* 6,7, *Skj.*, I B 172) may allude to either the sun or the moon. The only clear use of *hvél* for a cartwheel is in the compound *hvélvogn* ‘wheeled waggon’ (*Atlakviða* 28,1), though there may be another in the corrupted text of *Sigrdrífumál* 15,5–6; there are no cases in poetry where it refers to a potter’s wheel or to a lathe.

The phrase *hverfanda hvél* (or *hjól*) is also used in some prose texts to refer to Fortune’s wheel. For example, in *Flateyjarbók*, *Ólafs saga Tryggvasonar* ch. 67 (*Flateyjarbók* I, 99), the men of an unnamed Norwegian town surrender it to King Óláfr, reflecting that:

þó at eftir boði náttúrunnar hafi farsælan oss fylgjusöm verit, þá er með engu móti treystanda á hennar hverfanda hvel, því at þat kann oft undan velta, þá er minnst varir.

although Fortune, at the request of Nature, has been supportive to us, her whirling wheel can by no means be trusted, because it can often turn away when least expected.

Both this and the association of Fortune’s wheel with an inconstant mistress were commonplaces of medieval Latin tradition, probably derived ultimately from Boethius’s *Consolation of Philosophy* (Boethius 1973, II prosa 1, 58–60):

Fortunae te regendum dedisti; dominae moribus oportet obtemperes. Tu vero volventis rotae impetum retinere conaris?

You have given yourself over to the control of Fortune: you ought to adapt yourself to your mistress's rules. Are you really going to try to stop the whirl of her turning wheel?

It is not known when the text of Boethius's great work reached Iceland, though there was a copy of it in the cathedral library at Hólar by 1525 (*Diplomatarium Islandicum*, IX 298, where it immediately follows 'Ovideus de arte ama(n)di', see below). Its influence on ideas about Fortune was so pervasive throughout the European Middle Ages, however, that it is not necessary to assume that the poet of *Hávamál* had direct knowledge of it (see Courcelle 1967, *passim*). Fortune was frequently compared with the moon, as in the opening of the *Carmina Burana* (1,1–3; Schmeller, ed., 1904):

O Fortuna velut luna statu variabilis	Oh Fortune, like the moon, variable in state.
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Some of the lyrics in this collection certainly became known in the Norse world, as we can see from lengthy quotations from two of them in a thirteenth-century runic inscription from Bergen (*NIYR* no. 603, VI 1–9). It seems most likely that the 'whirling wheel' according to which women's hearts were made in *Hávamál* 84 was understood to be the moon (or its cycle). However, anyone who knew anything of the tradition of secular poetry which formed part of a medieval training in Latin rhetoric would almost inevitably have associated this with the fickleness of Fortune. This stanza would therefore have had most resonance from the early twelfth century onwards, though it is not impossible that it could be earlier than that.

The influence of Latin rhetorical learning may also lie behind some other details of this part of *Hávamál B*. In particular, much of stt. 91–93 resembles some of the sentiments about love in Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*, as a series of direct comparisons may illustrate:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 91. Bert ec nú mæli,
þvíat ec bæði veit:
brigðr er karla higr konom;
þá vér fegrst mælom,
er vér flást hyggiom,
þat tælir horsca hugi. | Me Venus artificem tenero præfecit Amori.
(<i>Ars Amatoria</i> I, 7)
Saepe viri fallunt: tenerae non saepe puellae.
(<i>Ars Amatoria</i> III, 31)
Ludite, si sapitis, solas impune puellas:
Hac minus est una fraude tuenda fides.
(<i>Ars Amatoria</i> I, 643–44) |
| 92. Fagrt skal mæla
oc fé bióða
sá er vill flióðs ást fá,
líki leyfa
ins ljósa mans— | Promittas facito: quid enim promittere laedit?
(<i>Ars Amatoria</i> I, 443)
Nec faciem, nec te pigeat laudere capillos
Et teretes digitos exiguumque pedem.
(<i>Ars Amatoria</i> I, 621–22) |

- sá fær, er fríar.
 93. Ástar firna
 scyli engi maðr
 annan aldregi;
 opt fá á horscan
 er á heimscan né fá
 lostfagrir litir.
91. Let me speak openly now,
 because I know both (sexes):
 men's minds are faithless to women;
 our words are most fair
 when our thoughts are most false—
 that deceives a sensible mind.
92. He must speak fair
 and offer cash
 who wants to get a lady's love,
 praise the body
 of the lovely woman—
 he who woos will get her.
93. Blaming for (being in) love
 (is something) no man should
 ever do to another;
 it often catches a wise person
 what doesn't catch a fool—
 good looks, attracting desire.
- Penelopen ipsam, persta modo, tempore
 vinces. (*Ars Amatoria* I, 477)
- Illo saepe loco capitur consultus Amori,
 Quique aliis cavet, non cavet ipse sibi.
 (*Ars Amatoria* I, 83–4)
- Venus has placed me in authority as tutor
 to youthful Love.
 Men often deceive, tender maids not often.
 If you are wise, cheat women only, and
 avoid trouble; keep faith save for this one
 deceit.
- See that you promise: what harm is there
 in promises?
- Do not get tired of praising her looks or hair,
 Her shapely fingers and her tiny foot.
 Only persevere—you will overcome
 Penelope herself.
- In that place the advisor is often caught
 by Love, and he who warns others fails
 to beware himself.

If we may believe the L version of *Jóns saga byskups*, which may date from c.1320 (see *Biskupa sögur* I, ccxxxiii), the *Ars Amatoria* was already being read in Iceland by the second decade of the twelfth century, when Bishop Jón of Hólar is said to have come upon the young Klængr Þorsteinsson (later himself bishop of Skálholt, 1152–76) (*Jóns saga ins helga*, L-version, ch. 24, *Byskupa sögur* 1948, II 39–40):

er einn klerkr, er Klængr hét . . . las versabók þá, er heitir *Ovidius de arte*. En í þeirri bók talar meistari Ovidius um kvenna ástir ok kennir með hverjum hætti menn skulu þær gilja ok nálgast þeira vilja. Sem in sæli Jóhannes sá ok undir stóð, hvat hann las, fyrir bauð hann honum at heyra þess háttar bók ok sagði, at mannsins breysklig náttura væri nógu framfús til munuðlífis ok holdligrar ástar, þó at maðr tendraði eigi sinn hug upp með saurugligum ok syndsamligum diktum.

while a cleric called Klængr was reading the book in verse called *Ovidius de Arte*. And in that book Master Ovidius talks about the love of women and teaches how men should deceive them and win them round to their desires.

When the blessed Johannes saw and understood what he was reading, he forbade him to listen to this kind of book, and said that the fickle nature of mankind was eager enough for a life of lust and carnal love, even if one did not inflame one's mind with corrupt and sinful poems.

The somewhat earlier S and H versions of the saga (see *Biskupa sögur* I, ccxix–ccxx and ccxxxvii) say that Klængur was reading *Ovidius Epistolarum* (ch. 8 in *Biskupa sögur* I, 211–12; ch. 13 in *Byskupa sögur* 1948, II 103). This probably refers to the *Heroides* rather than the less objectionable *Epistulae ex Ponto*, but even if we assume this, the description of the book given in the saga fits the *Ars Amatoria* much better than the *Heroides*, as the editors of *Biskupa sögur* I point out. The *Ars Amatoria* is also mentioned in the thirteenth-century Norse translation of the *lais* of Marie de France (*Strengleikar*), where it is called *Bók ástarvéla* ‘a book of love-trickeries’ (*Strengleikar* 1979, 20), and by 1525 the cathedral library at Hólar had a copy of it (*Diplomatarium Islandicum* IX, 298). But in fact a wide variety of Ovid's works were probably obtainable in Iceland. By the middle of the thirteenth century this had been extended to some pseudo-Ovidian or Terentian works, like the comedy *Pamphilus de Amore*, of which a fragmentary Old Norse version also survives (see Hermann Pálsson 1985 for 1984, 13).

According to *Hungrvaka* ch. 9, Klængur was a great scholar *ok it mesta skáld* ‘and an outstanding poet’ (*Byskupa sögur* 1948, I 26). His one extant quatrain of skaldic verse uses the mythological giant-name *Geitir* (Kock, ed., 1946–49, II 252), so he was certainly familiar with native mythological material as well as with the *Ars Amatoria*; there were doubtless others like him. The point here is not so much that individual echoes between *Hávamál B* and the *Ars Amatoria* are particularly close, but rather that there are so many of them in so few stanzas. Both poets regard love as a cynical contest in which the one constant fact is that men and women do their best to deceive each other; and both illustrate this opinion with stories drawn from their respective mythologies.

Stt. 94–95 show some possible echoes of another source about erotic love that was well known to Latin-educated people in the twelfth century, namely Virgil's *Eclogue X*:

94. Eyvitar firna

er maðr annan scal,
þess er um margan gengr guma;
heimsca ór horscom
gorir hǫlða sono
sá inn mátki munr.

Omnia vincit Amor, et nos cedamus
Amori. (Virgil, *Eclogue X*, 69)

95. Hugr einn þat veit,
er býr hiarta nær,
einn er hann sér um sefa:
ǫng er sótt verri
hveim snotrom manni,
enn sér ǫngo at una.
94. For nothing should anyone
blame another
that happens to many a man;
fools out of wise men
it makes men's sons,
that mighty thing, desire.
95. Only the mind knows
what dwells near the heart,
a man is alone in his mind:
no sickness is worse
for any sensible person
than to find content in nothing.
- 'ecquis erit modus?' inquit. 'Amor non talia curat: nec lacrimis crudelis Amor nec gramina rivis nec cytiso saturantur apes nec fronde capellae.' (Virgil, *Eclogue X*, 28–30)
- Love conquers all things, and we too yield to Love.
- 'Will there be no end?' he says. 'Love cares nothing for such things. Cruel Love is no more sated with tears than the grass with streams, bees with clover, or goats with the leafy branch.'

There are probably other Latin or Norse sources (possibly proverbial) for the first half of each of these two stanzas, but the second half of each may well recall Virgil's famous poem. Certainly, the line *Omnia vincit Amor, et nos cedamus Amori* was well enough known to be quoted in Latin in a surviving runic inscription from Bergen (*NYR* no. 605, VI 11–13; thirteenth century).

The balance of the linguistic evidence suggests that the narrative parts of *Hávamál B* may date from the later tenth century, while the cultural links of the non-narrative stanzas seem to be with the twelfth. The best explanation of these apparently conflicting indications may be that *Hávamál B* in its present form dates from the twelfth century, but that its poet was led by the example of Ovid to illustrate his attitude to the war of the sexes by using fragments of the text of one or two older mythological poems, which told the stories of Billings's maid and of Gunnlǫð.

5. *Billings mæ*r

It would be a mistake, however, to assume that the poet leaves his two received myths untouched. It is usually assumed that the story of *Billings mæ*r is not found anywhere else in Old Norse mythology, but it is alternatively possible that it is a familiar myth, but told only in part and with a slant that has prevented it from being recognised (further, see McKinnell 2005, ch. 10). As told in *Hávamál B*, it may be summarised as follows:

There is no worse suffering than to be without contentment (95), as the speaker discovered when he sat in the reeds waiting for his beloved, but never won her (96). He found Billings's maid asleep on a bed (97) but was persuaded by her, for the sake of secrecy, to leave and return in the evening (98; in this stanza she calls him Óðinn). When he returned, he found the warlike household ready with burning torches and cudgels (100). Returning towards morning, he found the household asleep, but a bitch tied to the girl's empty bed (101). The girl devised only mockery for the speaker, and he never gained her (102).

In *Völuspá* 13,7 (Hauksbók text only) *Billingsr* is a dwarf. The kenning *Billings burar full* 'the cupful of Billings's son' (= the mead of poetry; Ormr Steinþórsson 4,3, Kock, ed., 1946–49, I 191) could also allude to a dwarf, but since there are *two* dwarves in the story of the killing of Kvasir, from whose blood the mead of poetry was made (*Skáldskaparmál* ch. G57, Faulkes, ed., 1998, I 3–4), it seems more likely that *Billingsr* is here a giant, the father of Suttungr. *Billings hviða*, perhaps 'a mighty attack' (*Anon (XII) B* 11,4, Kock, ed., 1946–49, I 289) would also make better sense if *Billingsr* were a giant.

Mær can mean 'daughter', 'wife', or simply 'woman', but its commonest meaning is 'virgin, unmarried woman'. *LP* gives fifteen other examples where the meaning 'daughter' is unavoidable, of which eight name the father in the same phrase, (e.g. *Gerðr is in góð mær Gymis* in *Skírnismál* 12,5). In one case a daughter is defined by both her parents (*Sigurðarkviða in skamma* 63,5–6) and in one by her mother (Einarr Skúlason, *Þaxarflokkur* 5,5–7, Kock, ed., 1946–49, I 221). I can find only one case where it certainly means 'wife' (*Óðs mey*, referring to Freyja in *Völuspá* 25,8), and one where it means 'sexual partner' (*Heðins mær*, referring to Hildir, a pun on *hildir* 'war', in Hallfreðr, *Óláfs erfidrápa* 17,4, *Skj.*, I B 154). *LP* gives four other examples of the sense 'wife', but all of these may have the general sense 'woman' (e.g. *Guðrúnarkviða I* 16,8). Both meanings are therefore possible, but 'daughter' is commoner than 'wife', at least in verse. It has sometimes been argued that *Billingsr* must be the woman's husband because the references to her putative affair as *lǫstr* 'fault, wickedness' (98,6) and *flærðir* 'deceit, treachery' (102,6) are more appropriate to an adulterous wife than to a seduced girl (see e.g. Sigurður Nordal 1936, 288–95; Evans, ed., 1986, 118–20). But this ignores the enmity between Óðinn and the girl's (probably giant) family: she knows who he is (98,2), and it would be treachery for her to sleep with the enemy of her family whether she were married or not.

Another distinctive feature is the bitch bound on the bed. The word *grey* is rather uncommon in ON verse, and almost always appears

in mythological contexts. Wolves may be called *Viðris grey* ‘Viðrir’s (= Óðinn’s) bitches’ (*Helgakviða Hundingsbana I* 13,7) or *grey norna* ‘bitches of the Norns’ (*Hamðismál* 29,4), and bitches are part of a giant’s household property in *Skírnismál* 11,6 and *Þrymskviða* 6,3. Most famously, Hjalti Skeggjason is said to have been exiled for blasphemy after reciting the couplet:

Vil ek eigi goð geyja:	I don’t want to bark at/abuse the gods:
grey þykki mér Freyja.	Freyja seems a bitch to me.
	(<i>Íslendingabók</i> , 15)

Freyja is famously associated with lascivious animals (see Turville-Petre 1964, 176), but even heathens who accepted this were apparently outraged by the suggestions of bestial female lust in this couplet. The only non-mythological use of *grey* in verse is the phrase *gamna greystóði* ‘to give (sexual) pleasure to the stud of bitches’, used by Gunnarr to insult his Hunnish enemies in *Atlakviða* 11,7; again, the connotations are of extreme and disgusting female lust.

The most distinctive feature of this story, however, is that it is the only known episode in which Óðinn fails in an attempted seduction. But it does somewhat resemble Saxo’s tale of Rinda (*Gesta Danorum*, I 70–73, III.iv; trans. Fisher and Ellis Davidson 1979–80, I 76–79, II 56–58), where Othinus is rejected three times before he is ultimately successful. Similarly, Óðinn makes three journeys here: the first when he finds the girl asleep in her bed and is then persuaded to wait until night before enjoying her; the second when he finds a military force waiting; and the third when he finds a bitch tied to the bed. The female bound on the bed also occurs in the Rinda story, but here it recurs as bestial parody. If Rindr was thought to have been driven mad with frustrated sexual desire by Óðinn’s *seiðr* (illicit magic), she could be said to have become a ‘bitch’ in the same sense as is intended in Hjalti’s accusation against Freyja.

The tale of *Billings mær* may be partially derived from the myth of Rindr, but it presents us with a number of apparent illogicalities. We first see the lover waiting in the reeds for his mistress to appear, but we never learn whether she comes or not. In stt. 97–98, Óðinn suddenly and without explanation has unopposed access to her private quarters, where she is asleep although it is the daytime, and where he could apparently have forced her to have sex with him. Then he loses this access, and returning after dark is opposed by armed men with torches. This ought to warn him that his lady has already alerted her family, and therefore that he has been tricked—but he still returns again towards morning to experience the final insult.

The episode of the lover waiting in the reeds (st. 96) has no counterpart in the Rindr myth, but may draw on an early form of the medieval courtly *chanson d'aventure*, in which two characters meet in a wild countryside setting and the man urges the girl to have sex with him, either immediately or later.⁸ The version of it in *Hávamál B* is quite closely paralleled in a number of later ballads, which usually allow a girl who has promised to meet her would-be lover to keep her promise and yet defend her virginity successfully by making him fall asleep at the vital moment. In the Swedish *Sömn-runorna* (Arwidsson 1834–42, II 249, no. 133) and the Danish *Søvnerunerne* (*Danmarks gamle Folkeviser* 1853–1967, II 337, no. 81) she uses runes to make him fall asleep, while in the Anglo-Scottish *The Broomfield Hill* (Child 1882–98, I 390–99, no. 43) an old witch casts a spell for her to make him fall asleep. The last also places the encounter in the open air, among the broom bushes on a hill. In *Hávamál B* we never learn whether Billingr's maid keeps her tryst or simply stays away, but it is at least possible that she should be assumed to have employed magic in order to humiliate Óðinn by ensuring that he will be asleep when she comes.

The idea of Óðinn's three visits to the home of *Billings mæ*r may come from the myth of Rinda, in which Odinus makes four visits to the giant's household, disguised as a general, a smith, a soldier and finally an old woman. If, as seems likely, the soldier disguise is an addition by Saxo himself (see McKinnell 2005, ch. 10), Óðinn may originally have made three visits to Rindr, adopting a more humiliating disguise with each visit. His repeated rejections by her suggest that she sees through these disguises, just as Billingr's maid calls him plainly by his real name. Similarly, there are three episodes here. The first presents an image of *Billings mæ*r as the desired but unattained beauty, although the delaying promise, which in the traditional *chanson d'aventure* situation is quite logically made when the girl is away from the protection of her family, is instead attached to the erotic scene of her in bed (*Hávamál* 97–98). The second episode frustrates the lover by physically preventing his access to the sexual pleasure which he could have taken earlier. The third replaces the desired mistress with her bestial counterpart, the bound and sexually available (but aesthetically repulsive) bitch. It is even possible that the twelfth-century Christian poet has created a

⁸ See Dronke 1968, 200–06; one of his major examples is by Walter of Chatillon (c. 1135–after 1184), whose *Alexandreis* became the source of *Alexanders saga*. This particular example may not have been known in Iceland in the twelfth century, but the genre as a whole surely must have been.

deliberate contrast between the lover's illusion (the erotic dream of unattained beauty) and the beastly reality that human beings driven by sexual desire are no better than dogs.

Another European story-pattern which might be thought to have influenced the episode of Billingr's maid can be seen in the collection known as *The Seven Sages of Rome*, which first appears in the late-twelfth-century Latin *Historia septem sapientium* by Johannes de Alta Silva (Hilka, ed., 1913, 63–68). An emperor's daughter volunteers to sleep for one night with any of her wooers in return for a hundred marks, but protects her virginity by keeping in the bed an enchanted feather which makes them fall asleep. A young nobleman loses his only hundred marks to her, but then borrows another hundred, throws the pillow out of the bed to keep himself awake, and accidentally throws out the feather with it, after which he is able to make love to the princess and subsequently marry her. All the stories in the *Seven Sages of Rome* collection are thought to be of Arabic origin (Hilka, ed., 1913, XII–XIII), and as its framework narrative is set in Palermo they may have become known in Latin-speaking Europe through the mixed Christian/Muslim university which flourished there under the Norman kings of Sicily.

An adapted version of the same story appears in the *Gesta Romanorum*, which was probably compiled in England in the late thirteenth century (*Gesta Romanorum* XL, Heritag, ed., 1879, 158–65, 474–76; on the origins of its Latin original see xvii). Here there is only one lover, and the emperor's daughter initially rejects his attempts to woo her with fine words ('for trowist thou', *quod she*, 'with thi deseyvable and faire wordes to begile me?'). The owl's feather is replaced by a written charm, of which the lover learns through the advice of the philosopher Virgil. His two attempts to have sex with the girl become three: the first financed by his own money, the second by pledging his lands, the third by a bond of flesh made with a merchant (which resembles the pact between Antonio and Shylock in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, except that it is the lover himself who is at risk, not his friend). Most of the changes in the *Gesta Romanorum* version have the effect of bringing the tale closer to those of Rindr and Billingr's maid: the lover makes three visits, exposing himself to greater humiliation and danger on each occasion. As in the Rindr story, he finally overcomes the girl's magic and gains her lasting love by wisdom rather than by accident. This may suggest that the Arabic tradition did not in fact influence the Norse stories, but picked up some of their features as it became 'naturalised' in western European tradition. Another basic difference between the Norse and other European

traditions is that, whereas the latter always end in reconciliation and a happy marriage, the Scandinavian stories are confrontational and conclude either with the rape and exploitation of the giantess (Rindr) or with the humiliation of the would-be lover (*Billings mær* and the ballad tradition).

Once the lover was no longer a master of disguise and magic, it might become difficult to explain how he could gain unopposed access to the girl. Johannes de Alta Silva solves this difficulty by making the emperor die early in the story, but this solution was not available within the tradition of Óðinn's seductions, where the father of the giantess is important as a threatening, suspense-bringing figure. In *Hávamál B* Óðinn's magical powers appear to be at best sporadic: they may enable him to get into the girl's sleeping quarters during the daytime in stt. 97–98, but they do not help him in the reeds, or when he faces physical exclusion or the insult of the tethered bitch. This inconsistency may result from the story having had more than one source.

This story differs from all Óðinn's other seduction expeditions, first in that it appears to fail, and secondly in that he has no ulterior motive for it, but only a sexual desire for its own sake which is markedly at odds with his usual character. One possible explanation for this is that this poet needed a story about Óðinn's sexual adventures which included an example of female duplicity. Since Óðinn is usually successful in gaining and keeping the love of his giant mistresses, this was hard to find, and the poet therefore used only the first half of a myth in which Óðinn would eventually triumph, told from his point of view but before his final success. This enabled the poet to make use of the paradox (comically infuriating, from the male point of view), that it is precisely the 'good' woman who brings the lover no sexual good:

Morg er góð mær	Many a good girl is,
ef gǫrva kannar,	if one properly tests her,
hugbrigð við hali.	fickle of mind to men.

(*Hávamál* 102,1–3)

She may be *ráðspaca* and *horsca* 'wise in plans' and 'prudent' (st. 102,5,8), and perhaps Óðinn even reluctantly admires her for this, but he would certainly have preferred her to be among the more foolish virgins who are the usual victims of his seductions.

6. Gunnlǫð

This poem tells the story of Gunnlǫð only in part, as we can see from a comparison with the more complex account of the origins of the mead of

poetry in Snorri's *Skáldskaparmál* (Introduction and ch. 3), and also from the fact that many of the details of Snorri's story are confirmed by tenth- and eleventh-century skaldic kennings for poetry (Einarr Skáláglamm's late-tenth-century *Vellekla* (*Skj.*, I B 117–24) is particularly rich in them). These vouch for the mead of poetry having been made from the blood of Kvasir, hoarded by dwarves, taken by giants and kept in the vats Boðn and Són, and plundered by Óðinn, who turns into an eagle in order to bring it to Ásgarðr.

Almost nothing of this is mentioned in *Hávamál B*—only Óðinn's theft of Óðrerir (but not his transformation into an eagle)—and yet the poet clearly knew many details of the traditional story, such as Óðinn's use of the auger Rati to bore through the mountain, and the fact that the giants only know their visitor under the pseudonym Bǫlverkr 'the one who does harm'.

There are also hints that the version of the myth known to this poet was not exactly the same as the one in *Skáldskaparmál*: Gunnlǫð places him in a golden seat (105), which Snorri does not mention; he only gets one drink of the mead, not three (105); Óðrerir is a name for the mead itself, not for a vessel in which it is kept (107); and Óðinn apparently needs Gunnlǫð's help in his escape (108). Perhaps, since *Skáldskaparmál* calls the mountain *Hnithbjörg* ('colliding rocks'), it was a mountain which could open and close, like those to be found in many folktales (*Skáldskaparmál* ch. 3, Faulkes, ed., 1998, I, 11, Faulkes, trans., 1987, 70; Simek 1993, 154, and see e.g. *Sir Orfeo* 347–54, Bliss, ed., 1954, 31). The belief in various types of beings inside stones seems to have been widespread in pre-Christian times (see McKinnell 2001). Gunnlǫð may have opened the mountain to let Óðinn out, or carelessly revealed to him how to open the mountain; since Óðinn leaves her in tears, the latter may seem more likely. Her tears also suggest that she remains in love with him when he abandons her. The much-discussed *vel keyptz litar* of st. 107 may indicate that the one-eyed old man has transformed himself into a handsome youth to achieve the seduction. Such magic naturally presents no problems for one who can transform himself at will into a snake or an eagle, and it may have been a traditional feature of his seductions. One of his by-names is *Svipall* 'the changeable' (see e.g. *Grímnismál* 47,1, *þula* IV jj 3,2, Kock, ed., 1946–49, I 337; further, see *LP*, 554, de Vries 1977, 571, Simek 1993, 306), and at least some of his transformations may have been designed to give himself a sexually attractive appearance.

The omission of a large part of the myth clearly has a literary purpose: this poet knows about the theft of the mead of poetry, but is telling the

story for a reason which has nothing to do with that. His focus is on Gunnlōð's sexual betrayal by Óðinn, not on what leads up to it or the motive for it, and he reshapes the episode to fit the argument of his poem rather than the traditional meaning of the myth he is transmitting. Nor is he alone in this, for the Gnostic Poem also alludes to the myth of the theft of the mead (*Hávamál* 12–14), but turns it, grotesquely, into a warning against getting too drunk. The end of *Hávamál B* even reduces those cosmic foes, gods and giants, to the status of neighbouring farmers. The frost-giants turn up to ask their neighbour's advice: has anyone on Óðinn's farm seen that escaping criminal Þolverkr? They evidently have their suspicions that Óðinn may be harbouring the miscreant, since he has to take a legal oath about it, and lies shamelessly, which even the cynical Víga-Glúmr does not dare to do except as verbal equivocation (*Víga-Glúms saga* ch. 25, *Eyfirdinga sögur* 1956, 85–87). This ending brings us back to the opening theme of male unreliability, and is probably part of the witty 'modernisation' of the myth.

7. Conclusion

In this article I have argued that the collection of verse which we now call *Hávamál* has gone through at least three stages of textual development, but that the major part of it consists of a number of more or less complete poems, probably four. The second of these is a wittily expressed and artfully constructed comment on the sexual deceptions practised by both men and women, and this is illustrated by two stories about Óðinn. In its present form, *Hávamál B* must date from the twelfth or the early thirteenth century, but much, perhaps most, of its narrative content is probably a good deal older.

I have also suggested that the non-narrative sections include many echoes of the sentiments of classical poetry on secular love, especially Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*. The two narrative sections, by contrast, use traditional Norse myths to illustrate a worldly argument about the war of the sexes. This also reflects Ovid's methods, although the poet of *Hávamál B* probably echoes the actual phrases and even whole stanzas of earlier mythological poetry. Although he uses only two mythic episodes and his work is on a tiny scale compared with that of Ovid, it seems quite likely that its composer was directly inspired by the *Ars Amatoria*. Perhaps, after the saintly bishop Jón had gone away, Klængur Þorsteinsson or some other young cleric like him not only continued to read Ovid's 'corrupt and sinful poem', but even tried his hand at producing the same kind of work within the terms of his own culture.

The result certainly seems Ovidian in its witty use of aphorism, its comically rueful acknowledgement of the power of sexual passion and its perceptive mockery of the sexual strategies of both men and women. It is a thoroughly urbane poem, its outlook a world away from the basic myth-pattern from which its two exempla are derived, and it seems to look forwards towards the high Middle Ages. Nonetheless, it can still draw, apparently effortlessly, on the strength of the old mythological pattern of Óðinn's seduction of giantesses in order to produce an innovative poem of very high quality.

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APPENDIX
HÁVAMÁL B—A RECONSTRUCTED TEXT

I The Theme*(a) On women:*

- | | |
|---|--|
| 84. Meyiar orðom
scyli mangi trúa,
né því er qveðr kona;
þvíat á hverfanda hvéli
vóro þeim hiqрто scöpuð,
brigð í bríóst um lagit. | The words of a girl
no one should trust,
nor in what a woman says;
for on a whirling wheel
their hearts were shaped,
inconstancy lodged in their breasts. |
|---|--|

(b) On men:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 91. Bert ec nú mæli,
þvíat ec bæði veit:
brigðr er karla hugr konom;
þá vér feqrst mælom
er vér flást hyggiom,
þat tælir horsca hugi. | Let me speak openly now
because I know both (sexes):
men's minds are faithless to women;
our words are most fair
when our thoughts are most false—
that deceives sensible minds. |
| 92. Fagrt scal mæla
oc fé bióða
sá er vill flióðs ást fá,
líki leyfa
ins líósa mans—
sá fær, er fríar. | He must speak fair
and offer cash
who wants to get a lady's love,
praise the body
of the lovely woman—
he who woos will get her. |

c) On the folly of love:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 93. Ástar firma
scyli engi maðr
annan aldregi;
opt fá á horscan
er á heimscan né fá
lostfagrir litir. | Blaming for love
no one should do
to another, ever;
it often catches a sensible person
what doesn't catch a fool—
good looks, attracting desire. |
| 94. Eyvitar firma
er maðr annan scal
þess er um margan gengr guma;
heimscá ór horscom
gorir hqlða sono
sá inn mátki munr. | By no means
should one person blame another
for what afflicts many a man;
fools out of wise men
it makes men's sons,
that mighty thing, desire. |

II Woman as deceiver

a) Gnostic Introduction (1 stanza):

95. Hugi einn þat veit,
er býr hiarta nær,
einn er hann sér um sefa:
öng er sótt verri
hveim snotrom manni,
enn sér öngo at una.
- Only the mind knows
what dwells near the heart—
one is alone in one's thoughts:
no sickness is worse
for any sensible person
than to find content in nothing.

b) The Story (6 stanzas):

96. Þat ec þá reynda,
er ec í reyri sat
oc vættac míns munar;
hold oc hiarta
var mér in horsca mæri,
þeygi ec hana at heldr hefic.
- I proved that
when I sat in the reeds
and waited for my beloved;
she was flesh and heart to me,
that prudent girl,
but for all that I have not got her.
97. Billings mey
ec fann beðiom á,
sólhvíta, sofa;
iarls ynði
þótti mér ekki vera,
nema við þat líc at lifa.
- Billings' maid
I found on a bed,
fair as the sun, sleeping;
the joy of a jarl
seemed nothing to me,
unless he could live with that body.
98. 'Auc nær apni
scaltu, Óðinn, koma,
ef þú vilt þér mæla man;
alt ero óscöp,
nema einir víti
slícan lōst saman.'
- 'Once more, near evening,
you must come, Óðinn,
if you want to win a girl by talking;
all is ruined
unless we alone know
such shame, between ourselves.'
99. Aprt ec hvarf,
oc unna þóttomz,
vísom vilia frá;
hitt ec hugða,
at ec hafa mynda
geð hennar alt oc gaman.
- I turned away—
and I thought myself in love!
—away from certain bliss;
I thought this:
that I would have
all her love and pleasure.
100. Svá kom ec næst,
at in nýta var
vígdrót öll um vakin;
með brennandom líósom
oc bornom viði,
svá var mér vilstígr of vítaðr.
- The next time I came
the efficient
war-band was all awake;
with burning lights
and bearing torches:
thus a fruitless journey was intended for me.

101. Oc nær morni,
er ec var enn um kominn,
þá var saldrót um sofin;
grey eitt ec þá fann
innar góðo kono
bundit beðiom á.
- Also near morning,
when I had come back,
then the household had gone to sleep;
I then found only a bitch
of that good woman
bound on the bed.

c) Coda (1 stanza):

102. Mǫrg er góð mær,
ef gǫrva kannar,
hugbrigð við hali;
þá ec þat reynda,
er iþ ráðspaca
teygða ec á flærðir flióð;
háðungar hvernar
leitaði mér it horsca man,
oc hafða ec þess vætki vífs.
- Many a good girl,
if one gets to know her thoroughly,
is fickle in mind to men;
I proved that then,
when that resourceful lady
I enticed towards deceits;
every scorn
the prudent lass sought out for me,
and I did not get that lady at all.

III Man as Deceiver

a) Gnostic Introduction (1 stanza):

103. Heima glaðr gumi
oc við gesti reifr,
sviðr scal um sic vera,
minngr oc málugr,
ef hann vill margfróðr vera,
opt scal góðs geta;
fimbulfambi
heitir, sá er fát kann segia,
þat er ósnotrs aðal.
- A man (should be) happy at home,
and cheerful towards a guest,
must be shrewd about himself,
good at remembering, able to talk,
if he wants to be wise about much,
must often mention what's good;
an enormous idiot
he's called, who has little to say—
that is the nature of a fool.

b) The Story (6 stanzas):

104. Inn aldna iǫtun ec sótta,
nú em ec aprt um kominn,
fát gat ec þegiandi þar;
mǫrgom orðom
mæltu ec í minn frama
í Suttungs sǫlom.
- I visited the ancient giant,
now I have come back,
I got little there through silence;
many words
I spoke for my own advantage
in the halls of Suttungr.
105. Gunnlǫð mér um gaf
gullnom stóli á
drycc ins dýra miaðar;
ill iðgiǫld
lét ec hana eptir hafa
síns ins heila hugar,
síns ins svára sefa.
- Gunnlǫð gave me
in a golden seat
a drink of the precious mead;
a poor repayment
I let her have in return
for that sincere heart of hers,
for that sorrowful mind of hers.

106. Rata munn
 létomc rúms um fá
 oc um griót gnaga;
 yfir oc undir
 stóðumc iǫtna vegir,
 svá hætta ec hǫfði til.
- The auger's mouth
 I caused to make room for me
 and to gnaw through the rock;
 over and under me
 stood haunts of giants;
 thus I risked my head for that.
107. Vel keyptz litar
 hefi ec vel notið,
 fás er fróðom vant;
 þvíat Óðrerir
 er nú upp kominn
 á alda vés iaðar.
- My profitable looks (?)
 I've made good use of—
 the shrewd man wants for little—
 because Óðrerir
 has now arrived
 at the edge of the shrine of men.
108. Ifi er mér á,
 at ec væra enn kominn
 iǫtna gǫrðom ór,
 ef ec Gunnlaðar né nytac,
 innar góðo kono,
 þeirar er lǫgðomc arm yfir.
- I doubt whether
 I would have come back even yet
 out of the courts of giants,
 if I had not used Gunnlǫð,
 that good woman
 whom I laid my arm over.
109. Ins hindra dags
 gengo hrímþursar,
 Háva ráðs at fregna,
 Háva hǫllo í;
 at Bǫlverki þeir spurðo,
 ef hann væri með þǫndom kominn,
 eða hefði hánom Suttungr of sóit.
- The next day
 the frost-ogres went
 to ask the advice of Hávi
 in the hall of Hávi;
 they asked about Bǫlverkr,
 if he had come among the gods,
 or had Suttungr slaughtered him?
- c) Coda (1 stanza):*
110. Baugeið Óðinn
 hygg ec at unnit hafi,
 hvat scal hans trygðom trúa?
 Suttung svikinn
 hann lét sumbli frá
 oc grætta Gunnlǫðo.
- An oath on the ring
 I think Óðinn has sworn
 —how can his oaths be trusted?
 with Suttungr betrayed
 he left that drinking party
 and with Gunnlǫð in tears.

NOTE

THE EARLIEST ICELANDIC GENEALOGIES AND REGNAL LISTS

BY ANTHONY FAULKES

THE GENEALOGIES AND REGNAL LISTS copied by Árni Magnússon in AM 1 e β II fol., ff. 85v–91r from three pages of a now lost vellum manuscript written in about 1254 that had belonged to P. H. Resen were discussed in my article ‘The Genealogies and Regnal Lists in a Manuscript in Resen’s Library’, in *Sjötíu ritgerðir helgaðar Jakobi Benediktssyni 20. júlí 1977*, Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar 1977, 177–90 (see also my ‘Descent from the Gods’, *Mediaeval Scandinavia* 11 (1978–79), 92–125). Because of limitations on space, the texts of the lists (which are still unpublished) could not be reproduced in that article, and they are now transcribed here so that the contents of the three vellum pages can be clearly seen. Árni’s spelling, punctuation and capitalisation are reproduced as closely as possible, except that non-initial small capital consonants are printed as double lower-case letters, the nasal stroke and other standard abbreviations are expanded, and suspensions are expanded within round brackets. Where Árni wrote what is apparently a *p* representing an insular *v* or *w* (‘wyn’), *p* has been printed (and *p* for his *y* in ‘Alfiyv’ on his last page, col 1/16). Letters that Árni could not read in the vellum have been restored from other versions of the lists and placed in square brackets; alternative readings he recorded where he was uncertain of what was intended in the vellum have not been included, since nearly always his first interpretations are more plausible. Nor have Árni’s Latin annotations been included; they are mostly to indicate the layout of his exemplar, and I have tried to interpret these in the present edition, placing the contents of each of the three original vellum pages on a separate page here.

The lists on the first page comprise a genealogy from Sesecef (Old English *se Sceaf* ‘this Sceaf’) to Woden/Óðinn, and genealogies of the kings of Wessex, Kent and Deira beginning with sons of Woden (Árni notes that the first line of these genealogies, which might have contained the name Woden, may have been cut away), followed by a list of kings of England from Alfred to Henry III. These are all derived from Anglo-Saxon sources.

The second page of Resen's vellum contained genealogical lists of the Skjöldungar, Ynglingar and Hlaðjarlar from Óðinn down to the earliest historical rulers of Denmark and Norway, derived mainly from the genealogical poems *Ynglingatal* and *Háleygjatal*, and from either *Skjöldunga saga* or perhaps a lost genealogical poem used by the author of *Skjöldunga saga*; and a list of the children of Haraldr hárfagri.¹

The third page of Resen's vellum contained genealogies/regnal lists of the kings of Norway, Denmark and Sweden, all three starting with Ragnarr loðbrók and going down to the mid-thirteenth century. The names at the end of these three lists that are here printed in italics are stated by Árni Magnússon to have been written in a different hand and ink from the preceding names, and were evidently added later.

The first two pages of lists in Resen's manuscript must represent the earliest stage of royal genealogy in Icelandic prose sources, and lists very similar to them were used by Snorri Sturluson in his *Edda* and *Heimskringla*. In the prologue to *Gylfaginning*, ancestors of Óðinn are added back beyond Sesecef to King Priam of Troy. Later writers extended the line even further back, to the Greek gods, from them to descendants of Noah through links which are paralleled in early Welsh genealogies, and so back to Adam. Icelandic genealogies from the late thirteenth century and later trace the ancestry of thirteenth-century Icelanders to settlers descended from kings of Norway, and the line from Adam to Haraldr hárfagri is followed through seventy or more generations. It is likely that these lists were all literary constructions, to begin with based on Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, to which material was added from Norwegian poems, the Bible and other foreign written sources.

¹ The corresponding list in *Heimskringla* is almost identical to that in AM 1 e β II fol., but those in Snorri's separate *Óláfs saga helga* and *Haralds þáttur hárfagra* in Flateyjarbók diverge considerably and must be derived from a quite different source. See Jónas Kristjánsson, *Egilssaga og Konungasögur*, also in *Sjötíu ritgerðir*, 458–59.

[Odinn]	[Odinn]	[Odinn]
Sciavldr h(ans) s(on)	Niendr i noatvnm	Niendr i noatvnm
Friðleif h(ans) s(on)	Yngvi frevr	Yngvi frevr
Friðfroði h(ans) s(on)	Fíolnir	Fíolnir
Friðleifr h(ans) s(on)	Svegbir	Svegbir
Havarr handrame h(ans) s(on)	Vanlandi	Vanlandi
Froði h(ans) s(on)	Visbur	Visbur
Varmundr vitri h(ans) s(on)	Domalldr	Domalldr
Olafir litillati h(ans) s(on)	Domarr	Domarr
Dann mikilati við hann er Danmorc kend:	Dyggvi	Dyggvi
Froði fríðsami h(ans) s(on)	Dagr	Dagr
Friðleifr h(ans) s(on)	Alrekr	Alrekr
Froði enn fræni h(ans) s(on)	Agni Scialfar bõndi	Agni Scialfar bõndi
Ingialdr starcaðar fostri h(ans) s(on)	Yngvi	Yngvi
Halfdan b(rodir) hans	Iqruendr	Iqruendr
Helgi oc Hroarr hans s(ymir)	Avn en gamli	Avn en gamli
Hroflr kraci Helga s(on)	Egill tunna dolgr	Egill tunna dolgr
Hręrecr hnogvambavgi Ingialls s(on) starcadar	Ottar Venndilceraca	Ottar Venndilceraca
Froði s(on) h(ans)	Apils at Vpsolv	Apils at Vpsolv
Halfdan s(on) h(ans)	Evsteinn	Evsteinn
Hręrecr Sløngvambægi s(on) h(ans)	Yngvar	Yngvar
Haralldr Hilldi tavn s(on) h(ans)	Braut Aunundr	Braut Aunundr
Sigurðr hringr.	Ingialldr illraði	Ingialldr illraði
Ragnarr loðbroc h(ans) s(on)	Olafir tretelgia	Olafir tretelgia
Sigurðr ormr i aęga h(ans) s(on)	Halfdan hvitbeinn	Halfdan hvitbeinn
Havrða knutr h(ans) s(on)	Evsteinn	Evsteinn
Gormr gamli h(ans) s(on)	Halfdan milldi	Halfdan milldi
Haralldr h(ans) s(on)	Guðrøðr gofuglati	Guðrøðr gofuglati
Sveinn tivgv sceg h(ans) s(on)	Halfdan Svarti	Halfdan Svarti
Knvir riki h(ans) s(on)	Haralldr harfagri.	Haralldr harfagri.
Valldarr milldi var s(on) Hroars h(ans) s(on)	þessi ero born harallz harfagra. oc Asu Hac(onar) d(ottur) Godormr. Halfdan hviti	þessi ero born harallz harfagra. oc Asu Hac(onar) d(ottur) Godormr. Halfdan hviti
Haralldr s(on) h(ans)	halfdan svarti oc Sigfrøðr. þessi varo Gydu b(orm) Eirics d(ottur) Alof hręrecr.	halfdan svarti oc Sigfrøðr. þessi varo Gydu b(orm) Eirics d(ottur) Alof hręrecr.
Halfdan snialli s(on) h(ans)	Sigtrygr. frodi. þorgils. þessi varo born Svanhilldar Evsteins d(ottur) Olafir. biorn.	Sigtrygr. frodi. þorgils. þessi varo born Svanhilldar Evsteins d(ottur) Olafir. biorn.
Ivarr viðfaðmi s(on) h(ans)	Ragnarr rykill. Alfhilldar b(orm) hringis d(ottur) Dagr. hringr. Gvðrøðr sciria.	Ragnarr rykill. Alfhilldar b(orm) hringis d(ottur) Dagr. hringr. Gvðrøðr sciria.
Avör divpvðga h(ans) d(ottir)	ingendr. þessir varo Snefridar s(ymir) halfdan halegr Guðrøðr liomi Sigurðr risi.	ingendr. þessir varo Snefridar s(ymir) halfdan halegr Guðrøðr liomi Sigurðr risi.
Haralldr hillditõnn hennar s(on) oc	Rognvalldr rettil beini Jngtiborg. Eiricr bloðox s(on) ragnhilldar riku. d(ottur)	Rognvalldr rettil beini Jngtiborg. Eiricr bloðox s(on) ragnhilldar riku. d(ottur)
Randver radbards s(on)	Eirics k(onungs) af Jotl(andi) Hacon godi s(on) þoro Mostr stangar.	Eirics k(onungs) af Jotl(andi) Hacon godi s(on) þoro Mostr stangar.
Sigurð hringr hans s(on)		

Ragnarr loðbroc	Ragnarr loðbroc	Ragnarr loðbroc
Sigvrðr ormr í a/ga.	Sigvrðr ormr í a/ga	Biorn iarnnsíða.
Aslavg	Horða Knvtr	Eiricr biarnar s(on)
Sigvrðr hiortr	Gormr in gamli.	Eiricr refils s(on)
Ragnhilldr	Haralldr	Emundr oc Biorn at haugi
Haralldr harfagri	Sveinn tivgv sceg.	Eiricr Emundar s(on)
Eiricr bloðþox	Knvtr ríki	Biorn s(on) hans.
Hacon goði	Horða knvtr	Eiricr Sigrsēli 7 olafir
Haralldr grafelldr	Magnus O(lafs) s(on)	Olafir Sǫnsci
Hacon j(arl) en ríki	Sveinn vífs s(on)	Onundr iacob.
Olafir Tryggva s(on)	Haralldr hein s(veins) s(on)	Emundr olafs s(on)
Eiricr j(arl)	Knvtr en helgi s(veins) s(on)	Steinkell
Sveinn j(arl) oc hacon j(arl)	Olafir s(veins) s(on)	Hacon.
Olafir en helgi	Eiricr evgoði s(veins) s(on)	Ingi Steinmkells s(on)
Knvtr in ríki	Nicvlavs s(veins) s(on)	oc hallsteinn 7 blot sveinn
Sveinn Alfijv s(on)	Eiricr Eimuni ífj ar.	Ingi 7 filippus hallsteinns s(ynir)
Magnus in ríki O(lafs) s(on)	Eiricr Lamb v ar	Rognvalldr s(on) olafs nes k(onungs).
Haralldr inn harðræði	Sveinn Svidandi viii ar	Kolr blotsveins s(on) hann kolluðu
Magnus inn goði	Valldimarr xxi ar.	Sviar Eiric arseða.
Olafir inn kyrrí	Knvtr xx.	Sorkvir Cols s(on)
Magnus berfétr. hacon þoris f(ostri)	Valldimarr xxix	Eiricr helgi iatvardar s(on)
Sigurdr Jorsalaf(ari) Evsteinn	Eiricr ix	Magnus Heinrecs s(on)
Haralldr gilli. Magnus blinndi	Abel .ífj.	Karl Sorkvis s(on)
Ingi Sigvrðr Evsteinn	Kristoforos.	Knvtr Eirics s(on)
Hacon herdi breiðr.	<i>Eiríkr.</i>	Sorkvir Karls s(on)
Magnus Erlings s(on)		Eiricr Knvtz s(on)
Sveirir		Ion Sorkvis s(on)
Hacon.		Eiricr Eirics s(on)
Goðormr lavarðr		Valldimarr birgis s(on)
Ingi erlingr st(ein)v(eggr) filippus		<i>Magnuss birgis s(on)</i>
Hacon gamli Sigvtr		<i>Birgir Magnuss s(on)</i>
Hacon vngi		
<i>Magnuss.</i>		
<i>Eiríkr</i>		
<i>Hakon</i>		
<i>Magnus rex nor(vegiæ) Suta gota</i>		

REVIEWS

BISKUPA SÖGUR I: KRISTNI SAGA; KRISTNI ÞÆTTIR: ÞORVALDS ÞÁTTIR VÍÐFÖRLA I, ÞORVALDS ÞÁTTIR VÍÐFÖRLA II, STEFNIS ÞÁTTIR ÞORGILSSONAR, AF ÞANGBRANDI, AF ÞIÐRANDA OK DÍSUNUM, KRISTNIÞOÐ ÞANGBRANDS, ÞRÍR ÞÆTTIR, KRISTNITAKAN; JÓNS SAGA INS HELGA, GÍSLIS ÞÁTTIR ILLUGASONAR; SÆMUNDAR ÞÁTTIR. Vol. 1: FRÆÐI, Vol. 2: SÖGUTEXTAR. Edited by SIGURGEIR STEINGRÍMSSON, ÓLAFUR HALLDÓRSSON and PETER FOOTE. *Íslensk fornrit XV. Hið íslenska fornritafélag*. Reykjavík, 2003. ccclxii + 395 pp. 38 genealogical tables, 6 maps, 15 colour plates, 1 black-and-white plate. ISBN 9979 893 15 X.

This latest volume in the *Íslensk fornrit* series is the first of the planned five-volume edition of all the sagas of Icelandic bishops. The third volume, containing *Árna saga biskups*, *Lárentús saga biskups*, *Sögubáttur Jóns Halldórssonar biskups* and *Biskupa ættir*, was published in 1998 (reviewed in *Saga-Book XXVII* (2003), 118–20); the second, containing *Hungrvaka*, the sagas and miracle collections of Saint Þorlákr, *Páls saga biskups*, *Ísleifs þáttur biskups* and the Latin fragments about Saint Þorlákr, was published in 2002 (reviewed in *Saga-Book XXVIII* (2004), 110–13).

Biskupa sögur I is divided into two volumes. Volume 1 presents a scholarly discussion of the texts included; volume 2 contains the texts themselves. The former opens with two essays treating the bishops' sagas as a genre and the period in Icelandic and European history with which the texts are concerned. One essay is by Ásdís Egilsdóttir, the editor of *Biskupa sögur* II, who writes about saints' lives in general and then turns to the sagas of Icelandic bishops, paying particular attention to their structure and characteristic features as history and hagiography. The other essay is by Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, the editor of *Biskupa sögur* III, who gives a broad outline of the history of Christianity in Europe and then treats in more detail the first centuries of the new faith in Iceland. There follow introductions to the three main texts edited in *Biskupa sögur* I: Sigurgeir Steingrímsson writes about *Kristni saga*, Ólafur Halldórsson about *Kristni þættir*, and Peter Foote about *Jóns saga ins helga* as well as *Gísls þáttur Illugasonar* and *Sæmundar þáttur*. The first volume concludes with a bibliography; an eminently useful list of popes, bishops and kings, and their years of office; 38 genealogical tables intended as an aid to the reading of, especially, *Kristni saga* and *Kristni þættir*; and six maps showing the place-names mentioned in the texts and associated with the origins of Christianity in Iceland, the missionary activities of Þorvaldr víðförla and Þangbrandr, the Conversion, the miracles narrated in *Jóns saga ins helga* and the journeys of missionaries and bishops in Iceland.

The texts edited in *Biskupa sögur* I—the sources about missionary activity in Iceland and the Conversion, and the saga of Jón Ögmundarson of Hólar—are presented in an order which, as the general editor, Jónas Kristjánsson, admits, somewhat disrupts the chronology of the history of Christianity in Iceland, because before (and during) Jón's episcopacy two bishops, Ísleifr Gizurarson and Gizurr Ísleifsson, held the see in Skálholt. His rationale for this division or ordering of the material is as follows: *Kristniþoð hófst í Norðlendingafjórðungi sem síðan varð biskupsdæmi Jóns helga, og með þessari skipan kemur í öðru bindi samfeld saga*

sjö fyrstu biskupanna í Skálholti ('the propagation of the Gospel began in the northern quarter, which later became the bishopric of Saint Jón, and in line with this division the continuous saga of the first seven bishops of Skálholt appears in the second volume', vol. 1, p. v).

Kristni saga survives only in *Hauksbók* (AM 371 4to; c.1300) and a later paper copy (AM 105 fol; c.1650) by Jón Erlendsson, which conveniently fills the lacunae in the vellum manuscript. Sigurgeir Steingrímsson notes, however, that the last chapter of *Kristni saga* is also preserved in *Skarðsárþingabók*, in which the description is fuller and more detailed. He believes that *Skarðsárþingabók* probably preserves this chapter in its original form and that the text of the saga in *Hauksbók* has here been abridged by the redactor of the work, Haukr Erlendsson. For this reason, the *Skarðsárþingabók* chapter is printed as an appendix to the text. *Kristni saga* is usually ascribed to Sturla Þórðarson, though Haukr Erlendsson and Ari Þorgilsson have also been proposed as likely candidates. Sigurgeir demonstrates that it must have been composed during the years 1237–50 or thereabouts, but stresses that

höfundur sögunnar er óþekktur . . . Af sögunni virðist mega ráða að höfundur hennar hafi verið þökkalega menntaður klerkur og ættfróður og að hann hafi haft aðgang að gömlum og nýlegum bókakosti tengdum bæði Þingeyraklaustri í Húnaþingi og Reykholti í Borgarfirði; staðþekking hans virðist líka einna best á þeim slóðum (vol. 1, p. clv).

the author of the saga is unknown . . . From the saga it appears that its author was a reasonably well-educated cleric and knowledgeable about genealogy, and that he had access to old and new books connected with the monastery of Þingeyrar in Húnaþingi and with Reykholt in Borgarfjörður. His topographical knowledge also seems best in relation to these areas.

Kristni saga covers a period of 140 years, from 981 to 1121. Although pieced together from older sources, it is an independent and continuous work, and has long been used to supplement Ari's *Íslendingabók* as a major source about the conversion of Iceland. In his introduction, Sigurgeir Steingrímsson analyses the relationship of *Kristni saga* to other preserved works containing accounts of the same events in great detail, in an attempt to determine which sources the compiler of *Kristni saga* used, and which works used *Kristni saga* as their source. Sigurgeir points out that

kjarni Krs. [Kristni sögu] er hin gamla frásögn Íslb. [Íslendingabókar]: trúboð Þangbrands, leiðangur Gissurar og Hjalta og kristnitakan og frásagnir af biskupstíð Ísleifs og Gissurar. Þessa sterka tenging Krs. við Íslb. sýnir að það hefur verið ásetningur höfundar að semja ítarlegri frásögn af kristnun Íslands á þeim grunni sem var lagður í Íslb. (vol. 1, p. cxxix).

the core of *Kristni saga* is the old account in *Íslendingabók*: the missionary activity of Þangbrandur, Gissur and Hjalti's journey and the Conversion and accounts of the episcopacies of Ísleifr and Gissurr. *Kristni saga*'s strong connection with *Íslendingabók* shows that it was the intention of the author to compose a more detailed account of the Christianisation of Iceland on the foundation that was laid in *Íslendingabók*.

Kristni þættir—that is, *Þorvalds þáttur víðförla*, *Stefnis þáttur Þorgilssonar*, *Af Þangbrandi*, *Af Þiðranda ok dísunum*, *Kristniboð Þangbrands*, *Svaða þáttur*, *Arnórs þáttur kerlingarnefs*, *Þórhalls þáttur knapps* and two chapters on the Conversion (*Kristnitakan*)—are preserved as parts of *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta*. Although the *þættir* differ with regard to their origins and historical value, they are here removed for the first time from the context of *Óláfs saga* and conveniently printed as a unity. The text of the *þættir* is based on Ólafur Halldórsson's three-volume edition of *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta* in the Editiones Arnamagnæanæ series (Copenhagen, 1958–2000), which uses AM 61 fol. (c. 1350–1400) as the primary manuscript.

In his informative introduction to *Kristni þættir* Ólafur Halldórsson comments that the compiler did not rely much on *Íslendingabók* as a source, but that most of what is said in *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta* about the introduction of Christianity in Iceland has parallels only in *Kristni saga* and to some extent in *Njáls saga*. In his view this strongly suggests that these works draw on the same sources. He proceeds to analyse each individual *þáttur*, often with reference to Björn M. Ólsen ('Om Are frode', *Aarbøger for nordisk Oldkyndighed og Historie*, 1893), who maintained that most of the *Kristni þættir* in *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta* are drawn from Gunnlaugr Leifsson's *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar*, although Ólafur expresses doubts that the tales about Þiðrandi and Þangbrandr and the chapter about the Conversion go back to Gunnlaugr. He concludes that basically the *Kristni þættir* fall into two groups: on the one hand, there are those which are associated with the propagation of the Gospel in the northern part of the country (*Þorvalds þáttur víðförla*, *Svaða þáttur*, *Arnórs þáttur kerlingarnefs* and *Þórhalls þáttur knapps*), and on the other, those which show connections with the eastern and southern parts of the country (*Af Þiðranda ok dísunum*, *Af Þangbrandi* and the tale about Hjalti Skeggjason and Gizurr the White). *Stefnis þáttur Þorgilssonar* is not associated with a specific area, except perhaps the west. He argues:

Augljóst er að norðlensku þættirnir eru samdir af staðkunnugum manni, og ekki hefur sá sem samdi Þiðranda þátt og frásagnir af ferðum Þangbrands og þeirra Gissurar og Hjalta verið ókunnur staðhátum á sunnanverðum Austfjörðum og á Suðurlandi. Gunnlaugur munkur Leifsson hefur áreiðanlega þekkt vel til bæði í Skagafirði og í Húnavatnssýslu, en af heimildum verður ekki ráðið að honum sé ætlandi staðþekking á sunnanverðu landinu (vol. 1, p. ccx).

It is obvious that the northern *þættir* are composed by someone familiar with the area, and whoever composed the *þáttur* about Þiðrandi and the stories about the journeys of Þangbrandur and of Gissur and Hjalti did not lack knowledge about local conditions in the southern part of the East Fjords and the southern part of the country. The monk Gunnlaugur Leifsson was certainly well acquainted with Skagafjörður and Húnavatnssýsla, but there is nothing in the sources to suggest that he can be credited with familiarity with places in the southern part of the country.

Jóns saga ins helga now exists in three recensions. Recension S best represents the oldest *Jóns saga*, but has been abridged; it is associated with Skálholt and

preserved in AM 221 fol. (c.1300), AM 234 fol. (c.1340), NRA no. 57 (c.1350) and AM 235 fol. (c.1400). Recension L is a refurbishment of the oldest saga, incorporating new material from Gunnlaugr Leifsson's Latin *vita* and from a lost **Gísls saga Illugasonar*, and is characterised by a Latinate style; it is extant in Stock. Perg. fol. no. 5 (c.1360), AM 219 fol. (c.1400), NRA no. 57, Stock. Papp. 4to no. 4 (c.1630) and AM 392 4to (c.1600–1700). Recension H is essentially a conflation of S and L; it is associated with Hólar and preserved in Stock. Papp. 4to no. 4 and AM 392 4to. The three recensions have recently been edited by Peter Foote and published in the Editiones Arnarnæanæ series (Copenhagen, 2003; reviewed in this volume of *Saga-Book*, pp. 124–26). This edition serves as the scholarly basis for the *Íslensk fornrit* text, though to avoid unnecessary repetition the decision was made not to include all three recensions:

Í stað þess var með samþykki nefndarinnar sem hafði tilhögun útgáfu biskupasagnanna á hendi ákveðið að ganga frá einum samfelldum valtexta. Í slíkri útgáfu skyldi vera allt það sem gæti gefið vitneskju um efni frumgerðar Jóns sögu, sem einnig virðist hafa borið keim af latneskri lífssögu Jóns eftir Gunnlaug munk Leifsson. Allar jarsteinir sem Jóni voru eignaðar eftir að heilagur dómur hans var tekinn úr jörðu 1198 og dýrkun hans lögtekin á Alþingi árið 1200 skyldu teknar með . . . Þættir Gísls Illugasonar og Sæmundar fróða, sem fyrst voru felldir óstýttir í söguna í L-gerðinni, skyldu teknir með sem viðaukar (vol. 1, p. cccxix).

Instead, with the approval of the committee responsible for the preparation of the edition of Bishops' Sagas, the decision was made to produce one continuous optimal text. Such an edition should contain everything that could provide information about the content of the original *Jóns saga*, which also seemed to have had some of the features of the Latin *vita* of Jón by the monk Gunnlaugur Leifsson. All the miracles attributed to Jón after his holy remains were translated in 1198 and after his cult was made law at the Alþingi in 1200 should be included. . . The *þættir* of Gísl Illugason and Sæmundur fróði, which were first interpolated unabridged in the L-recension, should be included as additions.

Accordingly, the S-redaction is printed here in its entirety. Material omitted or abridged in this recension is supplemented from the L- and H-recensions. Foote notes that in all three recensions there are a few very long chapters, the texts of which differ considerably; the chapters of these recensions are printed synoptically, although attempts are made in the introduction to determine which redaction preserves the original text. In addition to a description of the three redactions of *Jóns saga ins helga*, the introduction also includes discussions of the oldest (now lost) *Jóns saga*, its sources and its relationship to *Egils þáttur Síðu-Hallssonar* and *Þorláks saga*, as well as the miracles in *Jóns saga* and other sources, the *Vita Sancti Johannis* by Gunnlaugr Leifsson, and the cult of Jón.

At the end of the volume chapters from medieval sources other than *Kristni saga* and *Kristni þættir* which tell of the conversion of Iceland are printed as Appendix 2 (Appendix 1 comprises the *Skarðsárþók* chapter of *Kristni saga*). As the general editor points out, *er það hagræði öllum þeim sem fræðast vilja eða*

Þjalla um kristnisögu landsins að hafa saman dregnar á einum stað allar helstu heimildir sem varðveist hafa um þetta efni ('It is convenient for all who wish to obtain information about or study the ecclesiastical history of the country to have all the main sources that have been preserved about this topic gathered in one place', vol. 2, p. 353). These texts, which were prepared by Jónas Kristjánsson, Ólafur Halldórsson and Þórður Ingi Guðjónsson, comprise extracts from *Íslendingabók*, the monk Theodoricus's *Historia de antiquitate regum Norwagiensium* (given also in Icelandic translation), Oddr Snorrason's *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar* and *Njáls saga*. An index of names and a list of the illustrations in volume 2 conclude *Biskupa sögur I*.

The contributors to this first volume of the sagas of Icelandic bishops are to be commended for their fine work. It will be received with much gratitude by students and scholars in the field of Old Norse–Icelandic literature, who now have accessible, eminently readable and authoritative texts detailing the introduction of Christianity and the life of the first bishop of Hólar. The introductions, which succinctly present a remarkable collection of facts and findings pertinent to each of the edited texts, are lucid and authoritative. Readers now eagerly await the publication of the last two volumes of the *Biskupa sögur*.

KIRSTEN WOLF

JÓNS SAGA HÓLABYSKUPS ENS HELGA. Edited by Peter Foote. *Editiones Arnarnænar*. Series A, vol. 14. C. A. Reitzels Forlag. Copenhagen, 2003. xxxv + 273* + 191 pp. 4 facsimiles. ISBN 87 7876 349 5.

With the publication of this substantial volume the field of Old Norse–Icelandic has gained a definitive edition of the saga of Saint Jón Ögmundarson (1052–1121), who was consecrated in 1106 as the first bishop of the diocese of Hólar, and whose feast (April 23) was formally adopted as a Holy Day of Obligation at the Alþingi in 1200.

Three recensions of *Jóns saga Hólabyskups ens helga* are known. Until now, only two of the three redactions (traditionally referred to as *A* and *B*) have been published (in *Biskupa sögur* (Copenhagen, 1858–78), I 151–202, 215–60). The third redaction (traditionally referred to as *C*) was not included, but readings are given as footnotes to *A*, and a series of miracles from it were printed (*Biskupa Sögur* 1858–78, I 203–12).

Peter Foote's edition, dedicated to the memory of Jakob Benediktsson (1907–99), prints all three redactions of the saga. He abandons the *ABC* sigla, arguing that they prejudicially imply a given order, in favour of *S* and *H* for the recensions whose primary sources were manuscripts associated with Skálholt and Hólar respectively, and *L* for the recension whose style is characterised by Latinate floridity. A full discussion of the relationship between the recensions and their connection with the lost Latin *vita* composed by the monk Gunnlaugr Leifsson of Þingeyrar (d. 1218/9) is not included in the volume but is found in Foote's introduction to his normalised text of *Jóns saga* in *Biskupa sögur I* (Íslenzk fornrit XV), which was published simultaneously with the present volume (reviewed in

this volume of *Saga-Book*, pp. 120–24). The summary of the *Íslenzk fornrit* discussion contained in Foote's foreword is, however, a helpful guide to the three texts included in the edition and their interrelationship:

Not long after the public cult of Bishop Jón was established at the *alþingi* in 1200, a Latin life was commissioned by Guðmundr Arason, bishop of Hólar 1203–37, and at the same time a similar vernacular life was composed—there may well have been give and take between the Latin and the Icelandic from the start. Matter and language shared by the three recensions we have represent either that first Icelandic text or an early revision of it. The S recension, the only one that survives as a unity, may be classified as an abridged descendant from it, while H, as far as it is preserved, often has a fuller and more authentic text than S. H also contains many more miracles than the S recension; these additional accounts were derived from early records but it remains uncertain whether they all accompanied the first version of the saga or whether the H editor obtained them from a separate dossier. The L recension is an early fourteenth-century revision . . . based on a text like S but on one that closely resembled H, even carrying over chronological error from that source. It is notable, i.a., for its inclusion of a complete tale of Sæmundr fróði's escape from his master abroad and a large-scale adaptation of an existing *Gísls þátr Illugasonar* (p. xiv).

The manuscripts of the S-redaction comprise AM 221 fol., AM 234 fol., NRA Norrøne fragmenter 57 and AM 235 fol. There are also several paper manuscripts all derived from AM 234 fol. Foote bases the text on AM 221 fol., the oldest manuscript, dating from c.1300, and lists variants from the three other primary manuscripts. The L-redaction is preserved in Stock. Perg. fol. no. 5, AM 219 fol., NRA Norrøne fragmenter 57, Stock. Papp. 4to no. 4, AM 392 4to, and a number of paper manuscripts derived from Stock. Perg. fol. no. 5, which serves as the basis for the text with variants from the other manuscripts. The manuscripts of the H-redaction comprise Stock. Papp. 4to no. 4 and AM 392 4to. The text is based on the former manuscript with variants listed from the latter. Variants and additions to AM 392 4to entered by Árni Magnússon in AM 391 4to and annotations by Björn Jónsson in Stock. Papp. 4to no. 4 are also noted. The texts of the three recensions are printed semi-diplomatically as is the custom in the *Editiones Arnamagnæanæ*. Accordingly, proper names are capitalised throughout, and suspensions are extended in round brackets while other abbreviations are silently expanded.

The introduction, Foote maintains, 'is not meant to be readable' (p. xiii). He has a point. The lengthy (approximately 245 pages) and painstakingly detailed analysis of the manuscripts of all the three recensions with careful deliberations on their contents, provenance, marginalia, script, orthography and date, is hardly entertaining fare. The analysis does, however, reveal a wealth of information and as such constitutes an authoritative and conclusive examination of the transmission of *Jóns saga*. The fourth chapter, 'Knowledge of Jóns saga: indications from other sources', is somewhat easier to digest. Here Foote looks at church inventories and annals as well as episodes pertaining to Bishop Jón or relevant to *Jóns saga*

in *Guðmundar sögur Arasonar*, *Egils þátr ok Tófa*, *Laurentius saga* and the so-called *Helgidagabod* in AM 687c 4to I in order to determine the connection between these works and the recensions of *Jóns saga*. He then proceeds to discuss post-Reformation sources, noting that 'in the description of the paper manuscripts of *Jóns saga* it was occasionally possible to point to the use of some particular one among them by a scholar in the post-Reformation period, from about 1600 until the saga recensions, S and L complete and H in excerpts, were printed in Bps. I (1858–78)' (p. 267*). The scholarly works examined here are those of Gottskálk Jónsson, Absalon Pedersøn Beyer, Arngrímur Jónsson, Jón lærði Guðmundsson, Bishop Finnur Jónsson, Hálfdan Einarsson, Bishop Hannes Finnsson, Gísli Konráðsson and P. A. Munch. Indices of names in the introduction, names in the texts and manuscripts conclude the volume.

The edition of *Jóns saga Hólabyskups ens helga*, half a century in the making, is a fine and fitting tribute by one eminent scholar to the memory of another, and takes its deserved place among the distinguished volumes of the *Editiones Arnamagnæanæ* series.

KIRSTEN WOLF

EYRBYGGJA SAGA. THE VELLUM TRADITION. Edited by Forrest S. Scott. *Editiones Arnamagnæanæ Series A* 18. C. A. Reitzels Forlag. Copenhagen, 2003. xiv + 156* + 339 pp. ISBN 87 7876 354 1.

The first edition of *Eyrbyggja saga* appeared in 1787 with a text accompanied by a Latin translation. The editor was none other than Grímur Thorkelín, best known for the part he played in bringing the Old English *Beowulf* to the attention of the learned world. Other notable editions of *Eyrbyggja* before 2003 are those of Guðbrandur Vigfússon (Leipzig, 1864), Hugo Gering in *Altnordische Sagabibliothek* (Halle, 1897) and Einar Ól. Sveinsson in *Íslenzk fornrit* (Reykjavík, 1935). Many have found *Eyrbyggja saga* difficult to approach because of its wealth of characters and many-stranded narrative, and yet it has attracted readers with its rugged charm and dry humour. One of the longest love affairs with this saga has resulted in the publication of Forrest S. Scott's edition of the vellum tradition in *Editiones Arnamagnæanæ*, a project which has taken him half a century to complete. Admittedly, living and working in New Zealand for most of the time he was involved in this project limited the time he could spend with his beloved vellums.

The vellum tradition is preserved in four incomplete manuscripts. The oldest, and most fragmentary, is AM 162 E fol (E) from c.1300 ('or even earlier', p. 43*, with reference to Jón Helgason), containing only about ten per cent of the text. The others, Cod. Guelf. 9.10. 4to in the Herzog August Library, Wolfenbüttel (W) (14th century), AM 445 b 4to (M) (15th century) and AM 309 4to (G) (written 1498), contain more, especially W. This manuscript also has the most coherent text, since it lacks only the first nineteen chapters and a part of the twentieth (according to the numeration of the *Íslenzk fornrit* edition). None of these texts has been properly edited before now, and previous editors have based their main text on the so-called A-class of manuscripts, all of them paper, and most deriving from

the lost codex *Vatnshyrna (also called Resen's ms., hereafter *V). *V was a vellum collection of sagas destroyed in 1728, which according to Stefán Karlsson ('Um Vatnshyrnu', *Opuscula* IV (1970), 279–303) was probably written by Magnús Þórhallsson, one of the two scribes of Flateyjarbók, in 1390–95. Editors have, however, attempted to come closer to an 'original' or archetypal text by including select variant readings from the vellum fragments and from paper copies that fill in the gaps in these fragments. In this new edition the texts of the vellum fragments are printed synoptically on two pages along with that of one paper manuscript of the A-class, AM 447 4to, written in the 1660s. The reason for the inclusion of this text, which is a far from good representative of the A-class, is that in the seventeenth century séra Þórður Jónsson in Hítardalur entered variant readings from M into the manuscript. The editor's wish to present the textual background to these variants as faithfully as possible has led to this somewhat awkward solution. AM 447 and its background is described in the Introduction (pp. 123*–30*), but attention should also be paid to Scott's article (*Opuscula* XI (2003), 161–81) which clarifies the relationship of the exemplar of 447, ÍB 180 8vo, to *Vatnshyrna, from which it is not directly derived.

A large part of the General Introduction (pp. 29*–121*) is devoted to a description and analysis of the linguistic and textual features of the four vellum manuscripts (and 447), as well as their provenance, external features, date and relation to other manuscripts, all done in the detailed and fastidious manner of the Arnamagnæan editions. These sections contain a wealth of information about the history of these manuscripts, but also, more generally, much of relevance to the study of palaeography and the history of the Icelandic language. In the first part of the Introduction the manuscript transmission of the saga is described and the relation between the vellum fragments analysed, leading to a stemma on p. 17* showing the most likely relationship between the vellum fragments and how they are connected with the A-class of manuscripts. Although the edition concentrates on the vellum fragments, the important 'paper tradition' has not been neglected altogether. Scott lists 55 paper manuscripts (Guðbrandur Vigfússon counted only 23) which include the text of *Eyrbyggja saga* (pp. *131–*32) and estimates that about 25 of them belong to the A-class. That leaves about 30 paper manuscripts more closely related to the vellum fragments than to *V; these could well be used to fill in the gaps in the vellums, especially W and M, although this question is not addressed.

The editor has chosen, wisely and in accordance with Arnamagnæan practice, to edit each text diplomatically without any attempt to restore an archetype. However, his stemma is useful to those who want to estimate which variant readings have the strongest claim to represent the archetype. Another resource that would help anyone engaged in such an investigation is to be found in Appendix B to the General Introduction, a 'Collation of selected passages', showing in what ways the various medieval versions (including *A) can be contrasted with each other. The date and background of *Eyrbyggja saga*, as well as its literary characteristics, are discussed briefly in a separate section of the General Introduction. This is useful, especially for newcomers to the field, although the space allotted is too limited to do full justice to research already done, or to allow a discussion in depth of the many problems.

Although one can say with certainty that *Eyrbyggja saga* must be a work from the thirteenth century, since E, no later than 1300, cannot be a direct copy of an original, it seems wise to accept all medieval versions as witnesses of equal value. Previous editors have given preference to *A, partly because it covers all the text, but also because they (at least Guðbrandur Vigfússon and Hugo Gering—Einar Ól. Sveinsson had more reservations) considered it to be closest to the original. Forrest Scott wants to reverse this order:

In my opinion the class of manuscripts to which Aa [AM 448 4to] belongs (the 'A-class') constitutes a revision of the story. If this is correct, the texts contained in the manuscripts E W M G and printed here represent in their various ways an earlier form of the saga than has been previously published (XIII).

Later he lists his most important arguments for this conclusion, but if his statement refers to a consciously made and to some extent consistent revision, I cannot agree. It is difficult, of course, to have a firm opinion about this while the paper tradition has not been properly studied and edited, but a comparison of the vellum texts with good copies of *V seems to me to indicate that the variation is mostly accidental, that all texts contain variation in relation to an archetype, and that there are no traces of a conscious reworking of the text in *V. The E-fragment is obviously very important because of its age, although there are instances of variation where it is certainly not closer to the archetype than one of the others. At some points W and M have readings that are most likely to be secondary, where those of *V seem closer to the archetype. In other instances words or expressions in *V are less archaic than those to be found in the other medieval texts. The only solution seems to be to take all five versions into account in a scholarly discussion of a particular point and accept the variation as part of the medieval work. For the student of the saga as literature this may be only a minor problem. From a literary point of view the medieval (thirteenth-century) *Eyrbyggja saga* can be seen as one 'work', if such a term is accepted at all. The story and the characters are the same in all manuscripts, and the same events are narrated in the same (complicated) order everywhere. There is one exception: in the A-version (and probably in M), Chapter 48 (10 lines in ÍF), which reports what happens to the brothers from Álptafjörðr after the reconciliation with the Eyrbyggjar, is placed at the very end of the narrative strand about the feud between Snorri/Alptfirðingar and the Eyrbyggjar/Breiðvíkingar, whereas in W and the paper manuscripts of the B-class it is placed after ch. 55 (ÍF). This variation does not affect the overall structure of the saga, since this chapter only ties up loose ends and has no importance for the development of the plot. We can speculate about the reasons for this. Was the chapter moved forward to make the saga more coherent, because it was thought best to take leave of the brothers from Álptafjörðr (apart from Þóroddr) as soon as they had played out their role in the saga? In this case the order of *A is secondary. Or was it passed over inadvertently by a scribe who then added it later where it could be fitted in? If so the *A-order would be the primary one. It is impossible to find any decisive answer to these questions or others that this variation raises, and it certainly does not give the literary scholar any reason to say that the B-version is not the same saga as the one we find in *A (and probably M).

Another example of a significant variation is the ‘necrology’ of Arnkell found in ch. 37 (ÍF):

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

Chapter 37 is only preserved in W, without this necrology, and in paper manuscripts of the A- and M-classes, where it is present. Unlike two other short passages containing lists of people or places that are not found in W, which he considers to be abbreviated in this respect (p. 13*), Scott argues that the necrology is an addition in *A and M. His main argument turns on the word ‘hjartaprúðr’ which he considers to be late (pp. 13*–14*). It could be added that the unmitigated praise found in the necrology is rather excessive compared to the generally restrained expression in this saga, although Arnkell has already been described in positive terms. It seems, therefore, that while, as Scott points out, some short pieces of information were left out in W (and probably also in E and G which do not include this part of the text), an emotional tribute was added in *A (and M). These differences in content are not sufficient to change our impression of the saga in any way. It is hard to imagine that they could affect a literary analysis or appreciation of the work. The details of Arnkell’s character given in the narrative are full and positive enough to support the view that he is portrayed in a favourable light—indeed, as a hero.

In my opinion the ‘Collation of selected passages’ on pp. 133*–43* does not support the conclusion that *A has been subjected to consistent revision. On the contrary, it seems to me to confirm the conclusion that the variation is arbitrary. Minor changes of wording and syntax are characteristic of the work of medieval copyists and seldom affect meaning or style. The replacing of nouns or phrases is sometimes more significant. In the case of *Eyrbyggja*, many memorable phrases and even whole dialogues have been preserved quite well in all the old versions. It is tempting to take one example from the part of the text found in EWM, and compare it with *V (pp. 272–73):

E: Úspakr svar(ar): ‘Dragztu eigi til, Álfr. Þú hefir haus þunnan, en ek hefir öxi þunga. Man ferð þín verða verri en Þóris, ef þú gengr feti framarr.’ Þetta heilræði hafði Álfr, sem honum var kennt.

W: Ó(spakr) mælti: ‘Dragz þú frá, Álfr. Þú hefir þunnan haus, en ek hefir egi þunga. Mun ferð þín verða verri en Þóris, ef þú gengr feti framarr.’ Þetta heilræði hafði Álfr, sem honum var kennt.

M: Ó(spakr) m(ælti): ‘Dragzt þú í braut,’ sagði hann, ‘Álfr hinn litli, því at þú hefir haus þunnan, en ek hef[ir] öxi þunga. Mun ferð þín verri en Þóris, ef þú gengr feti framarr.’ Þetta heilræði hafði Álfr, sem honum var kennt.

Aa/Ab (AM 448 4to/AM 442 4to): Óspakr [+svarar, **Ab**]: ‘Far þú eigi til, Álfr,’ sagði hann, ‘þú hefir haus þunnan, en ek hefir öxi þunga. Mun ferð þín verri en Þóris, ef þú gengr feti framarr.’ Þetta heilræði [+ hafði Álfr, **Ab**] sem honum var kennt.

There are only minor variations here: the V text has replaced E's 'dragztu' with 'far þú', which is less expressive and probably more modern; MA have a double inquit, which may well be original. Many other examples of poignant dialogue with minor variation could be pointed out. There are instances where *V retains archaic words modernised in some of the vellums; thus M has an obvious modernisation in ch. 50 (ÍF), where 'torugætr', found in EW*V, has been replaced with 'torfengir'. The editor of a normalised text could find much material in Scott's edition for the compilation of a catalogue of selected variants accompanied by a commentary that could be of interest to literary scholars and non-specialists.

Two major tasks await future editors of *Eyrbyggja saga*. One is an edition of the A-version based on the best direct copies of *Vatnshyrna; the other is a study of the relationship of the remaining paper manuscripts to the vellums in order to find ways to fill in the gaps in the vellums (especially W and M). An edition doing justice to the variation among all the sixty manuscripts of *Eyrbyggja saga* would be impractical and confusing (and probably take much longer than 50 years), while Scott's edition, supplemented with a well-edited *V-text, would give the reader a fair impression of the medieval saga by revealing the most important features of a thirteenth-century archetype and the 'natural' variability among five medieval text-versions, none of which can be characterised as a separate or 'new' redaction of the saga. It is easy to agree with Scott that his edition reveals many early traits of the saga differing from the hitherto published texts based on *V. However, the seventeenth-century copies of *V are sufficiently faithful to substantiate a claim for its status as a medieval 'text' of equal status with the others.

It should be taken as a compliment to this edition that the present reviewer has been inspired to offer comments that fall outside the usual scope of a review. Scott's edition is much to be welcomed: it presents the vellum tradition with all desirable fidelity and gives a detailed description of the characteristics of each vellum fragment. Moreover, the discussion of the relationship between all medieval versions, including the *A-class, leading to a stemma, and the discussion of the date and background of the saga, does much to bridge the gap between this edition and older ones, and is of great help to students of the saga.

VÉSTEINN ÓLASON

LEMMAZED INDEX TO THE ICELANDIC HOMILY BOOK. PERG. 15 40 IN THE ROYAL LIBRARY STOCKHOLM. By ANDREA DE LEEUW VAN WEENEN. *Stofnun Árna Magnússonar á Íslandi*. Reykjavík, 2004. xxxii + 204 pp. ISBN 9979 819 87 1.

The work reviewed here consists of a preface of some 25 pages and a 204-page index of all word-forms in Holm perg 15 40 (IHB). This manuscript is also treated, though somewhat differently, in Larsson's *Ord förrådet* (Lund, 1891), and Andrea de Leeuw van Weenen states that her primary goal has been to create a morphological database that can be used in a new grammar of Old Icelandic.

The main differences between *Ord förrådet* and the present index as far as IHB is concerned are as follows:

1. The cited forms are the actual manuscript forms. Abbreviations are not expanded, and the characters are minutely represented on a subgraphemic level (e.g. all kinds of ligatures and different variants of capital letters are distinguished). This is not likely to cause general problems of interpretation for the reader, for lemma and POS information are provided, but it will necessitate the use of the 1993 edition alongside the index when citing expanded word-forms. The level of text representation will be most useful in the study of palaeography and scribal habits, even if the *raison d'être* of some distinctions is not obvious (since so many subgraphemic distinctions are made, it is difficult to understand why certain others are not, for instance <i> : <j>, the two types of *us*-abbreviation, the normal <z> as against <z> with interlinear dot, and the <F> found in 'Fiat' 92r.20 as against the normal type used in other examples of this word). Though I find the advantages of the approach greater than its disadvantages, a scholar primarily interested in phonology or morphology might find the listing of four different manifestations of the six examples of *fundu* (3pii) somewhat inconvenient. An ideal solution would have been to have two levels of transcription, but that would only be possible in an electronic index.

2. References are made directly to the manuscript, an advantage all the greater for the existence of the author's excellent edition from 1993 in which each manuscript page is reproduced in facsimile and transcribed.

3. The morphological analysis is differently carried out in some cases. According to the author, Larsson on the one hand based his analysis on preconceived rules in a number of ambiguous instances (e.g. subjunctive versus indicative), but on the other hand grouped word-forms that could be tagged unambiguously (e.g. oblique case of weak nouns). The method applied by de Leeuw van Weenen is definitely to be preferred. She primarily bases the POS tagging on the actual context, but takes similar constructions elsewhere in the manuscript into account. Her comparisons seem, however, to be limited to cases where exactly the same construction appears: 'fórn' is thus tagged as acc. or dat. (of *fórn*) in 'þau fkyldu honom gefa erfingia fín i fórn' 57v.5, but as acc. in 'oc féora han fva guþi i fórn' 72r.21 because there are examples of the acc. construction in the case of *fóra* (cf. 57v.14) as opposed to *gefa*.

4. Presumed compounds are differently treated. Forms characterised here as genitive compounds are mostly listed as two words by Larsson. How to classify these forms is indeed a difficult question, especially in a text like IHB where word order does not necessarily provide good evidence for any interpretation. Andrea de Leeuw van Weenen generally settles for compounds in ambiguous cases. Though this definitely produces too many compounds, it has the advantage of enabling the reader to check the interpretation by looking up the second element of the alleged compound in the list of non-initial parts of compounds following the index proper.

Something should be said about the (linguistic) notation in the preface. Although the reader is very rarely in doubt about what linguistic level is being referred to, the description would have benefited from more precision. Often graphs as well as

graphemes and phonemes (and normalised text) are italicised instead of using the established system of notation. Some examples of this can be found on p. x. Here an italicised ‘i’ indicates a normalised ending whereas an italicised ‘e’ indicates the spelling of the manuscript, and normalised text is rendered without italics (‘heit + ek’), a rendering also often applied to individual graphs (letters) or entire words from the manuscript. Phoneme brackets are sometimes used, but more often the phonemes are just rendered with or without italics. Only very seldom is a spelling indicated by the use of grapheme brackets (and then for both graphs and graphemes), e.g. ‘<þei>’ and ‘<un>’ on p. xi. As just mentioned, manuscript forms are often rendered without any special mark, but they are sometimes enclosed in single quotation marks (e.g. on p. xviii). By using the established notation a confusing statement like the following could have been improved: ‘No distinction is made between different types of initials, which are indicated by a prefixed \wedge . This allows us to see that “ $\wedge EN$ ” for *en* is not a case of gemination of the n, nor of confusion of the use of \mathfrak{N} for /nn/, but of the use of (small) capitals instead of minuscules in the first places after an initial’ (pp. xiv–xv).

A final remark concerns not the linguistic notation but the way the author (in the index proper) refers to two graphically identical word-forms in the same manuscript line. In such cases I would have preferred to add a superscript number ‘1’ after the first instance, not just a superscript ‘2’ after the second (see ‘fórner’ 38r.1).

The author has benefited greatly from the experience of semi-automatic lemmatisation obtained during her earlier work on *Möðruvallabók*. The method applied in the lemmatisation and morphosyntactic encoding is described thoroughly in Chapter 2 of the preface, and can thus both serve as inspiration to others and give some idea of the accuracy of the present work. Different problems of disambiguation in the lemmatisation process are discussed. One relates to homographs, where different strategies can be applied. In my opinion the best strategy is to maintain the ambiguity in the index—at least when both lemmata occur in the manuscript. It is thus perfectly possible to have e.g. ‘hlutr *or* hluti’ beside ‘hlutr’ and ‘hluti’ when lemmatising a gen.pl. ‘hluta’. But the author chooses a different approach (or rather approaches). In cases like ‘hluta’ she quite mechanically chooses the strong lemma, while in other cases she attributes the word-form in question to the most frequent (unambiguous) lemma. An example is *auðigr* and *auðugr*, both of which are attested (the former x3, the latter x2). Here all synco-pated forms are attributed to *auðigr*, a strategy which would certainly be the right one when expanding in a text edition but seems less convincing when lemmatising.

The author has had to deal with many other practical problems in the lemmatisation process, and in general her solutions are very reasonable. I do, however, find the lemmatisation of emended forms somewhat problematic. While many scholars would probably not include emendations in the index, de Leeuw van Weenen gives unemended forms under the lemma of the emended form without comment. In cases of scribal correction it would probably also have been advantageous to give information about the forms corrected, since the examples could reflect linguistic developments. A third objection concerns the tagging of plural imperatives, which I think should be tagged as such in all cases, not only in *vera*

and *vita* on the grounds that the imperatives of these verbs are different from the indicatives. Finally, I think some lemmata could preferably have been subdivided (e.g. *einn*, which in all instances is tagged as a numeral).

The author generally follows the normalisation of the *Dictionary of Old Norse Prose* (ONP), but deviates from it in some cases. One significant example is her maintenance of the distinction /á/ : /ǫ/. This could be considered a rather arbitrary decision, given that the manuscript norm deviates from the ONP norm in many other cases as well. For example, the author (like ONP) normalises with a short vowel in words like *halfr/hálfr*, even though the orthography of the manuscript indicates a lengthened vowel. (It is, by the way, not quite correct to call it ‘an inconsistency’ that ONP does not distinguish /á/ : /ǫ/ but normalises with short vowel in words like *halfr*, since this is due to the fact that ONP covers both Old Icelandic and Old Norwegian.) On the other hand, the maintenance of the distinction /á/ : /ǫ/ creates no major problem, since all instances with *ǫ* can easily be changed to *á* if the index is later incorporated in a larger text archive.

Individual normalisations and lemmatisations can always be debated; here I shall only mention some that I find erroneous or inappropriate. I have looked briefly at all lemmata and checked all word-forms in approximately seven columns of the index (from the verb *farga* to the adj. *fótveill*), comprising 122 lemmata with a total of 809 word-forms; on the basis of this sample the work can be declared very accurate. Only a few errors of normalisation or lemmatisation have come to light:

1. The author normalises *anrgrssemi* even though the manuscript form seems to reflect *anrgr-* (cf. also the lemma *anrgrsamliqr*). This normalisation may be due to the ONP word list, which only lists *anrgrssemi*, whereas the dictionary proper has *anrgr(s)semi*. Another, less likely, reason could be that the author considers the manuscript form to be erroneous. I do not think this is the case, but it illustrates how unfortunate it is not to mark erroneous words.

2. The lemma *barnæska* should be *barnǫska*.

3. The author normalises *fjallamannvit*, and the question of how to analyse *man(n)vit* is indeed complex (the Old Icelandic manuscript forms suggest the existence of *manvit*, *munvit* (*monvit*), *mannvit*, *mannsvit* and *mannavit*), but the normalisation *fjallamannvit* is definitely not supported by the orthography of the single example in the manuscript (‘fialla monvit’ 52r.27). The normalisation *monvit/munvit/manvit* is therefore to be preferred.

4. The form ‘fo:vitnif bót’ 9v.6 is analysed as acc. but must be nom.

5. The lemma *fótaumskurðarskírn* is a ghost word and should be analysed as two words. The context is: ‘En þessa fóta umbŕcurþar ŕkírn ef at . . .’ (86r.17–18). The pronoun must be gen.pl. and refer to the noun *fótr* (not *-skírn*). Consequently **fótaumskurðarskírn* must be split up into *fóta* and *umskurðarskírn*, both of which are found elsewhere in the manuscript.

6. The lemma *heimkoma* should be normalised with *-ó-* (it also appears as *heimkoma* in the reference under *heimkváma*, whereas it rightly appears as *-kóma* in the list of non-initial parts of compounds).

7. Modern Icelandic *nokkur* is normalised *nokkurr*, a form traditionally said not to be found before c. 1250. This contrasts greatly with some of the rather archaic normalisation features, e.g. the use of *ó* for /*ój*/, and is not readily comprehensible: in only two cases is the vowel of the first syllable written <o> (normally <e, ø, a>), and in these cases it is unlikely to represent /o/. It is indeed difficult to find a good normalisation for this pronoun, but to choose *nokkurr* at this early stage is particularly unfortunate.

In this review I have primarily focused on the errors or inconveniences found in an otherwise excellent work, and it must be stressed that none of this alters the fact that the *Lemmatized Index to the Icelandic Homily Book* is a very solid and extremely useful book for students of Icelandic language history and related disciplines. Together with the edition of the text with its thorough introduction, and the concordance and grammar of the great Möðruvallabók codex, it provides essential material for the investigation of Old Icelandic.

ALEX SPEED KJELDSEN

MIDDELNEDERTYSKE LÅNEORD I ISLANDSK DIPLOMSPROG FREM TIL ÅR 1500. By VETURLIÐI ÓSKARSSON. *Bibliotheca Arnarnæana* XLIII. C. A. Reitzels Forlag. Copenhagen, 2003. 432 pp. ISBN 87 7876 356 8.

Originally submitted as a doctoral dissertation at the University of Uppsala in June 2001, this study is now published in somewhat revised monograph form. The relatively circumscribed nature of the investigation should be noted, in that it confines itself to the study of Low German loanwords in pre-1500 Icelandic documentary language. The analysis is thus of a very limited range of data, featuring a somewhat unvarying vocabulary, and can therefore offer only a very partial picture of linguistic usage, and takes no account of many Low German loanwords extant in other sources. The decision to concentrate on vocabulary from just these texts is no doubt the result of the availability in published form of the original texts in *Íslenskt fornbréfasafn* and Stefán Karlsson's *Íslandske originaldiplomer indtil 1450*.

Extant sources for the Icelandic language in early periods can offer only a limited picture of the lexicon. After all, words can be much older than written sources indicate; one thinks of the many other texts from the same period—especially *rímur*—that remain unpublished; Jón Helgason's unfinished and unpublished edition of medieval Icelandic verse has never been excerpted by any dictionary; and there is much that remains to be learnt about early prose works. Further research into manuscript production and literary activity in Iceland will help to cast light on various aspects of late medieval and reformation data.

Veturlíði Óskarsson's well produced monograph contains eight chapters. In the first of these, an Introduction, the author notes that Low German linguistic influence in Iceland came about mostly through the Norwegian and Danish languages, though it should be noted that by the end of the period under discussion printed books from Germany were in circulation in Iceland, albeit that the

extent of their influence in this context is uncertain. The research is first and foremost lexical in nature, but the author expresses the hope that scholars of historical linguistics, codicology and literature may find his findings valuable (p. 17). It should be noted that harm has often been caused by the lack of contact between these disciplinary areas.

In the second chapter the primary data is described, with almost 4,500 documents excerpted, some 25% of which survive in original manuscripts. At the beginning of the eighteenth century Árni Magnússon had copies made of many such texts, and almost 6,000 of these survive, whereas many of the originals used for copying are now lost. Veturliði notes that while copies of old texts must be used with caution as source materials for research on phonetic and orthographic change, they are sufficiently accurate as a basis for lexical research (p. 41). Many early documents survive in a variety of inexact copies, and where this is the case it is possible to attempt to reconstruct their original wording by means of textual comparison, although the results can sometimes be problematic. Grammarians are by nature more insistent than others that attempts should be made to establish accurately the original text. Mention may be made here of a group of documents, ecclesiastical inventories, which itemise all the possessions of individual churches in Iceland. These documents have no parallel in other north Atlantic countries and cultures, yet have been little investigated as to their date and vocabulary. Particularly noteworthy is the second section of Chapter Two, in which Veturliði discusses the scribe Jón Egilsson, more of whose written documents survive than is the case with any other copyist of the period under discussion. He worked as secretary to Jón Vilhjámsson, Bishop of Hólar 1429–34, who had at least some connection with England. The book includes lists of Low German loanwords that are only to be found in texts written by Jón Egilsson, as well as other lists of loans whose oldest citations are in Jón's writings. It should be noted, however, that the letter book of Bishop Jón is extant, as are letters written by other scribes. The present study makes it clear that the vocabulary from these sources has not been compared with that to be found in Jón Egilsson's documents (see p. 64).

The third chapter offers an historical account of the period 1260–1500. Though in the period 1412–70 Iceland was a familiar destination for English sailors, their visits appear to have left no imprint on the Icelandic language. The present reviewer's *Miðaldaævintýri þýdd úr ensku* (1976) provides edited texts of 34 English sermon *exempla* which were translated into Icelandic. Veturliði is incorrect in saying (p. 71) that the 1976 volume includes all surviving English *exempla* in Icelandic, for my edition mentions an additional ten such works, most of which are printed in Peter A. Jorgensen, 'Ten Icelandic exempla and their Middle English source', *Opuscula IV*, *Bibliotheca Arnarnagana XXX* (1970). More recently Jorgensen edited *The Story of Jonatas in Iceland* as a volume in the text series published by Stofnun Árna Magnússonar á Íslandi. This edition includes two versions of the Jonatas tale (translated from an English original) together with *rímur* derived from it. Jorgensen thinks it likely that the aforementioned Jón Egilsson, the Bishop's secretary, translated all these English narratives into Icelandic, even though he was said to be a Norwegian. I believe that it is not possible to be certain about the name of the translator, especially as written sources from this period are so meagre, and

it may have been the case that many people whose names are not known to us had the ability to translate from English.

As noted earlier there are very few English loanwords in the translated tales, whereas there are several Low German forms. It might be possible to compare the loans from the translated *exempla* with the language of Jón Egilsson, but any conclusion would be problematic, as the comparison would involve two different sorts of text. We should recall that Jón's texts are extant in their original form, whereas the translated *exempla* survive only in copied versions whose verbal forms would have been subject to alteration.

Chapter Four discusses theories about loanwords, while Chapter Five provides a general overview of loanwords, more than 700 in all, though there are few extant instances of most of them. This fact confirms that random chance can often determine the availability of sources for a particular word. Chapter Six deals particularly with word formation, and with the prefixes and suffixes which characterise loanwords. In the longest chapter, the seventh, the loanwords are analysed in greater detail. The earliest instances are cited, both from official documents or other texts, and so are the cognate forms of individual words in other Scandinavian languages and in Low German. At the end of the book there are essential indexes, including wordlists organised both alphabetically and thematically.

Veturliði Óskarsson's monograph is a substantial achievement, which contributes usefully to the steady advance of knowledge, not just in philology but in other disciplines as well.

EINAR G. PÉTURSSON
Translated by ANDREW WAWN

OLD NORSE MYTHS, LITERATURE AND SOCIETY. Edited by MARGARET CLUNIES ROSS. *The Viking Collection* 14. University Press of Southern Denmark. Odense, 2003. 312 pp. ISBN 87 7838 794 9.

This volume consists of a selection of thirteen papers primarily from the International Saga Conference held in Sydney in 2000. The topics are wide-ranging, and are divided into four sections: archaeological and historical perspectives; magic, death and the other in medieval Scandinavia; Old Norse–Icelandic literature as mythography; and myth and ritual in Old Norse–Icelandic traditions. Despite occasional shortcomings, the volume offers overall a welcome depth and breadth of treatment. Confirming their origin as conference presentations, some of the papers are compressed or selective discussions of topics dealt with in greater detail elsewhere: for example, Jens Peter Schjødt's important discussion of ritual points the reader to his fuller analysis published in earlier articles. Thus to some extent the volume is a series of windows onto a wide variety of independent studies; it is no less valuable for that, however. Given its broad scope, it is bound to appeal to different readers in different ways, and I can only mention a few points as they have presented themselves to me.

Of the three archaeologically focused articles, that of John Hines is the most general in its application. He makes the point that archaeology should not be seen

as ‘filling the gaps’ left by literary texts, but that the two sorts of record complement each other, mythological accounts providing explicit expression of the significance of phenomena present in the material record, while for the literary scholar archaeology identifies topics in the mythological record whose significance would otherwise be unappreciated. There are some interesting presentations of the two sorts of record, for example the deposition of tools in Viking-Age graves, and the significance of the Eddic texts *Völuspá* and *Rígsþula*, though I did not feel the two sorts of evidence were intermeshed in any particularly significant way.

Elena Melnikova’s article relates grave artefacts from Russia to tales recorded in Old Norse which have Russian variants or parallels, in particular that of *Qrvar-Oddr*. Much of this material has been examined before, but the present up-to-date discussion is nonetheless welcome, and offers us some startling conclusions to mull over, for example that ‘it seems possible that the tale about Ol’ga’s third revenge actualises memories of the Old Norse ritual of human sacrifice during burial procedures’ (p. 76). Melnikova concludes that reflections of Old Norse cultic concerns suggest a Scandinavian origin to the story, but that the setting in Russia suggests an origin among mixed groups of Rus. A wider attempt than is made here to identify Slavic and other local non-Norse story elements which may have found their way into Norse tales would be welcome.

In the section on magic, death and the other in medieval Scandinavia, John Lindow makes some important observations in his survey of Norse perceptions of Sami magic, and also stresses how Óðinn in *Ynglinga saga* is depicted not as a god but as a man, specifically one with magical powers. The implication is that we cannot necessarily accept these characteristics as belonging to Óðinn as a god, and make of him a sort of divine shaman.

A similarly revisionist view is adopted by John McKinnell, who examines the prevalence of *vǫlur* and *seiðr*, and concludes that their presence in written sources represents a literary fiction rather than an actual existence in the real world of medieval Iceland (though in Norway this was not necessarily the case). He comes to the conclusion that the connection between *vǫlur* and Óðinn was exceptional, and was probably a creation of the *Völuspá* poet. There is much good analysis here, though I would take issue with some points, such as the dismissal of the account of Sami magic in the *Historia Norvegiae* as merely representing a Norse perspective rather than being a reliable description of actual Sami practices. This is based on assumption, not on an examination of the evidence the source affords us. It is worth mentioning that McKinnell’s article is now largely subsumed within his book-length study, *Meeting the Other in Norse Myth and Legend* (Woodbridge, 2005).

Stephen Mitchell’s article begins with a rather long and inconclusive introduction outlining differences between, for example, the evidence of sagas and of the laws, but moves on to an important examination of learned magic in the sagas. Differences from European tradition, such as the avoidance in Icelandic narrative of the motif of a pact with the devil, are noted. A more detailed discussion of exactly how Icelandic materials fit in with the wider European evidence would have been welcome, and indeed is necessary if a convincing argument is to be constructed, so it is to be hoped that a fuller study of this nature will be produced.

In the section on Old Norse–Icelandic literature as mythography, Elizabeth Ashman Rowe produces an impressively detailed and careful analysis of variations between *Fundinn Noregr*, *Hversu Noregr byggðisk* and *Eiríks saga víðförla*. The complex treatment leads us to the striking conclusion that Magnús Þorhallsson, the scribe of *Hversu*, imagines, with a defiant rejection of contemporary realities, a Norwegian monarchy gloriously independent of the rest of Scandinavia, at the very time that Margareta was forging a united realm under the Kalmar Union.

Diana Whaley offers a satisfyingly well-presented analysis of the conversion verses of *Hallfreðar saga*, and attempts to uncover whether these really are the genuine voice of a reluctant convert to Christianity. She uses various criteria, such as how well the verses fit in their prose context, how much obscure mythological lore is contained in them, how well the vocabulary compares with that of other poems, the state of preservation, and so forth. Since overall there appears nothing to preclude their genuineness, and a number of points are positive indicators in this respect, the conclusion is a cautious acceptance of the verses as genuine.

Stefanie Würth examines *Völuspá* and the imagery of Ragnarök. The most interesting reflections here concern the possible contemporary purpose of the text in its Hauksbók version, with the advent of the new ruler, interpreted as a political redeemer, at the end of the poem; here, the religious content of the text is to be interpreted as a metaphor for the political. It is of course important to consider the reason why old texts should have been recorded where and when they were, and this article opens up some possibilities of interpretation, though the conclusions seem rather vague or stretched. Moreover, some statements about the text are highly contentious: Würth's assertion that 'it has so far not been possible to determine which of the two texts is closer to the lost original' (p. 222) is followed by a reference to Ursula Dronke's edition of the poem (*The Poetic Edda II*, Oxford, 1997), in which considerable effort is expended in demonstrating that the Hauksbók version cannot be regarded as anything other than a late and cobbled-together form of the poem preserved far more authentically in the Codex Regius. Some people may not like the conclusion of the detailed arguments that Dronke adduces, but they should at least present their own counter-arguments rather than simply misrepresent what is said there.

In the section on myth and ritual in Old Norse–Icelandic traditions, Jens Peter Schjødt reviews the nature of our sources for pagan rituals. There is not much probing of how far myth and ritual are actually connected before he moves on to his main theme, a warning against building a series of disparate elements into a connected structure in order to establish a ritual. Schjødt manages to produce some examples where a sufficiently coherent structure is preserved to enable an analysis of the sort he aspires to, and he offers a good example in the form of the tale of Bǫðvarr bjarki, which he takes to show a process of initiation (without precisely reconstructing any specific ritual): 'it is not the concrete sequence of events, but the meaning which the action refers to that can thus be reconstructed' (pp. 275–76). Schjødt's stance is welcome as a warning against uncovering structures which do not exist outside the researcher's mind, but on the other hand it must mean that we will find very few narrative sequences sufficiently well preserved to analyse in the stringent

way he demands. This clear-cut ‘yes-or-no’ approach has an enticing simplicity to it, but its claim to be the only acceptable methodology must, in my view, itself be put under far greater scrutiny than Schjødt’s article offers—though, as noted, he has written more extensively on the topic elsewhere.

Margaret Clunies Ross concludes the volume with an article in which she illustrates how Snorri deliberately avoids ritual in his *Edda*, but places it instead in *Heimskringla*: ‘Snorri’s implicit theory of ritual is dedicated to an explication of royal and aristocratic hegemony rather than being linked to Old Norse myths in any obvious way’ (p. 295). Whereas in pre-Christian times there was probably no clear distinction between beliefs and rituals, Snorri reflects a distinction made possible by the intellectual climate of his time.

CLIVE TOLLEY

RIESEN. VON WISSENHÜTERN UND WILDNISBEWOHNERN IN EDDA UND SAGA. By KATJA SCHULZ. *Skandinavistische Arbeiten 20*. Universitätsverlag Winter. Heidelberg, 2004. 332 pp. ISBN 3 8253 1570 3.

Katja Schulz’s substantial study of giants in edda and *fornaldarsögur* starts with the figure of Hagrid from J. K. Rowling’s Harry Potter series, probably the most widely-known giant (or part-giant) in contemporary literature, though she also invokes Chamisso’s wistful observation, *Und fragst du nach den Riesen / du findest sie nicht mehr* ‘And if you ask after the giants you do not find them any more’. Schulz provides different sorts of discussion in this book: it ranges through an investigation of the different words denoting ‘giant’ in an attempt to map the semantic field, a survey of adjectives collocated with giants, aiming to uncover what they denote, and a thorough description of the roles played by giants in the narratives of eddic poetry and the *fornaldarsögur*—with a brief glance at giants from skaldic verse—and advances a number of interesting and sometimes provocative arguments.

The first analytical pages provide little that we do not already know, but they do give exact references to the evidence for our apprehension of giants as threatening marginal beings, enemies of the gods, original inhabitants of the cosmos, huge and uncultured dwellers in the wilderness, and possessors of ancient wisdom and rich treasure-hoards. Schulz uncovers the contradictions in the eddic picture; eddic giants are not especially large (Skrymir is an exception) nor especially stupid. They need not be ugly—especially the women—and they inhabit an intensely-imagined social world. A socially ambitious giantess can rise in the world if she marries a god, and giantesses are more active in the surviving poetry than their divine female counterparts. Embedded in the survey of giant activity in the *Poetic Edda* is the arresting proposal, following the proposition of Eugen Mogk (1925), that the conflict traditionally labelled as the war between the *Æsir* and the *Vanir* in *Völuspá* vv. 23–26 is actually fought by both tribes of gods in alliance against the giants (p. 108). This interpretation hinges on Gullveig–Heiðr being a giant (analogous to the giant-maidens of v. 8) and explains the giants’ demand for Freyja in v. 25 as compensation for the woman they have lost. When the wall

of Ásgarðr is broken the Vanir advance against the giants on the plain. That they are *vígspár* enables the Vanir shrewdly to position themselves on the side of the victors. Though Snorri's treatment of the war as occurring between Æsir and Vanir is mentioned, Schulz does not explain satisfactorily why he misunderstands *Vǫluspá* so radically. In eddic poetry, Schulz notes, the giants largely stay in their own territory where the gods attack or rob them, except in the context of Ragnarøk. If, as Margaret Clunies Ross has suggested, Old Norse myth is related largely from a standpoint sympathetic to the Æsir, Schulz partially redresses the balance in favour of a giganto-centric perspective in the *Poetic Edda*. Whether myths preserved in eddic narrative and those which happen to be recounted in skaldic poetry, such as *Haustlong*, can be distinguished on that basis is debatable.

Schulz wisely eschews a full treatment of the giants in skaldic poetry, settling for discussion of poems such as *Húsdrápa* and *Þórsdrápa* where giants are active protagonists rather than simply evoked in kennings. She notes the difficulties of analysing what giants signify in skaldic verse when the kennings in which they appear frequently do not refer to giants (e.g. *Ymis blóð* 'Ymir's blood', for the sea); kennings which do have giants as referents often depict them simply as relatives of other giants, dwellers in stone or victims of Þórr. It seems that kennings denoting 'giant' are not particularly inventive, but more might have been made, for example, of the way in which *Þórsdrápa* tailors traditional kennings to emphasise Þórr's propensity in this poem to kill giantesses, rather than, as is conventional, making them into widows.

The second part of the book deals with the giants of *fornaldarsögur*, illuminating how successfully they survive the Conversion, and their relative longevity in literature compared with their divine opponents. *Fornaldarsaga* giants are generally bigger, uglier and more frightening than their eddic counterparts. Associated sometimes with heathenism, sometimes with different types of magical knowledge, they are most frequently depicted as primitive and hostile, and occasionally as man-eaters. The discussion of giants—and, even more, giantesses—in *fornaldarsaga* is perhaps the most valuable part of this book; certainly no one will be able to write in this burgeoning area of investigation without taking Schulz's views into account. In a thorough, if at times repetitive, analysis of the appearances of giants in the genre, Schulz distinguishes carefully and persuasively between their various roles as embodiments of the feminine, of the Other and of the Stranger (the out-group which defines the in-group), and their relationships with the Cyclops tribe, the Dog-Heads and other migrants from learned European tradition. There is a great deal of fascinating material in this part of the book; most suggestive perhaps is the argument that the role of the giants in *fornaldarsögur* as ancestors, though no doubt derived from the eddic understanding of them as the primary inhabitants of the universe, points to the construction of figures like Fornjótr as the ancestors specifically of jarls, rather than of kings, who are generally descended from gods. Thus, Schulz argues, sagas which foreground the histories of jarl-families cast them as descendants of indigenous, legitimate holders of the land, in political opposition to the kings whose genealogy represents them as incomers, whether from Troy or elsewhere.

Some giants, such as Dofri, do act as kingmakers; the aim here (as, she suggests, in *Hyndluljóð*) is bridge-building rather than confrontation. All interest groups—kings, jarls, giants, gods and humans—must be reconciled if social stability is to be achieved.

Riesen is by no means always an easy read. The author admits that it has been only *leicht überarbeitet* from thesis form; its repetitiveness and the plethora of sub-headings betray its origins. In places more careful distinction between troll and giant, or giant and dwarf, could have been made; considering them together needs more local justification than just an appeal to shared narrative function. Yet Schulz's voice is individual, often humorous and always engaging; despite the thesis impedimenta, the book is *sans pareil* as a reference guide to giants in the two genres and its new arguments deserve to provoke responses from eddic and *fornaldarsaga* scholars alike.

CAROLYNE LARRINGTON

TIL HEIÐURS OG HUGBÓTAR. GREINAR UM TRÚARKVEÐSKAP FYRRI ALDA. Edited by SVANHILDUR ÓSKARSDÓTTIR and ANNA GUÐMUNDSDÓTTIR. *Snorrastofa* rit 1. *Snorrastofa, rannsóknarstofnun í miðaldafræðum*, Reykholt, 2003. 174 pp. ISBN 9979 9649 0 1.

The articles in this volume originate in a colloquium on religious poetry in Iceland that was held in Snorrastofa in the autumn of 2001. The nine articles, three in English and six in Icelandic, are arranged in a roughly chronological order, beginning in the late twelfth century and concluding with poetry from the seventeenth century. After each article a summary is provided in either English or Icelandic.

Einar Skúlason's *Geisli* ('Sunbeam'), presented in 1152 to a congregation of royal and ecclesiastical dignitaries in Nidaros, is the earliest preserved hagiographical work on St Óláfr of Norway. In his contribution Martin Chase succeeds admirably in placing the poem within the context of twelfth-century learning. Chase focuses on the imagery of light which pervades the work and, of course, gives it its title. The typology central to Einar's *Geisli* is the relation between St Óláfr and Christ; the latter is likened to the sun while the former represents its rays. Although the sunbeam metaphor is unusual in skaldic poetry it is, as Chase points out, common in Latin hymns that were well known in the cathedral schools of the twelfth century. Chase concludes that Einar's subtle use of the *geisli* metaphor 'shows that his thought was on a par with that of the better theologians of the day' (p. 28). Chase also recognises that *Geisli* is a work of hagiography which deals with the martyrdom of a royal saint, and hence one would expect Christ's passion to be evoked in connection with King Óláfr's fall at Stiklastaðir. But although hagiographers invariably resorted to such common comparisons they often displayed considerable originality in the presentation of their material. In this context Aelnoth of Canterbury's *Gesta Swenomagni filius regis et filiorum eius* (c.1120) could be mentioned; here the martyrdom of King Knud IV is placed within a strikingly original framework. Martin Chase has done an important service in

showing how Einarr Skúlason—working within the traditional medium of skaldic poetry but deeply influenced by Christian learning—transformed the earliest known hagiographical work on St Óláfr into a composition that was both poetically satisfying for his distinguished patrons and ideally suited for religious contemplation.

Margaret Cormack's starting point in her 'Poetry, Paganism and the Sagas of Icelandic Bishops' is the interesting observation that poetry is absent from the earliest literature on the first Icelandic saints, Þorlákr Þórhallsson and Jón Ögmundarson. Moreover only two poetic works on saints, *Plácitus drápa* and *Geisli*, are known from the twelfth century. Cormack argues that the ecclesiastical establishment was suspicious of, perhaps hostile to, the application of skaldic poetry within a religious context because it was intimately associated with knowledge of heathen lore. It was only when Snorri Sturluson had rationalised the old gods by presenting them as historical figures turned deities that skaldic verse became an acceptable medium for religious themes. Thus by the early fourteenth century Icelandic monks composed both biographies and skaldic verses on St Guðmundr Arason. Cormack's thesis is both persuasive and elegant, although it should not be forgotten that in the second half of the twelfth century clerical writers did deal with religious themes in skaldic form. Gamli kanóki's *Harmsól*, for instance, culminates in Christ's passion.

Katrína Attwood examines *Leiðarvísan* ('Way-leader'), another late twelfth-century skaldic poem on a religious theme. The poem is based on the widespread medieval tradition of the 'Sunday Letter', which Christ was thought to have penned with the purpose of reminding his followers about the sanctity of Sunday, and other ecclesiastical restrictions. Although Attwood emphasises that her research on the subject is work in progress, she tentatively puts forwards the hypothesis that the Icelandic *Leiðarvísan* was adapted from a German homily that had been familiar to the composer of the Old Norse homily book. We may note that Attwood is preparing an edition of *Leiðarvísan* for the Skaldic Editing Project, which will also include an edition of *Geisli* by Martin Chase.

The section dedicated specifically to medieval poetry concludes with articles by Sverrir Tómasson and Gunnar F. Guðmundsson, who both examine from different perspectives the knowledge and influence of Latin liturgy in Iceland. Sverrir's erudite contribution brings to light just how much work there is to be done in this highly specialised field, while Gunnar gathers together and analyses the fragmentary evidence relating to lay participation in the Latin liturgy. The following three studies deal with the religious poetry of the Reformation period. Einar Sigurbjörnsson shows how early Protestant versifiers shifted the focus away from the Virgin Mary as saint to Mary as an ideal embodiment of Christian virtues. Guðrún Nordal looks at the so-called *heimsósóma kvæði* that are preserved in manuscripts from the post-Reformation period but which in some cases originated in Catholic times. Guðrún places these poems within a broader European context of satirical, though by no means secular, poetical tradition. Kristján Valur Ingólfsson discusses the hymn-book of Bishop Gísli Jónsson of Skálholt, published in 1558, which is distinguished less for its poetic qualities than for the insight it gives into a sensitive transitional period when the Catholic Mass was

being superseded by the Lutheran service. Kristján shows how Gísli's hymn-book reflects the wider international debate about the nature of the Protestant liturgy.

The theme running through all the contributions in this attractive and immaculately presented volume is the way in which Icelandic religious poetry adapted to foreign influences, often very creatively. This thematic coherence and the high quality of the contributions makes the book a worthy first instalment in Snorrastofa's new medieval series.

HAKI ANTONSSON

OLD NORSE-ICELANDIC LITERATURE. A SHORT INTRODUCTION. By HEATHER O'DONOGHUE. *Blackwell Publishing*. Oxford, 2004. x + 241 pp. 6 black and white illustrations. ISBN 0 631 23626 0.

In universities across the English-speaking world, courses without eventual vocational pay-off or immediate tie-in to contemporary preoccupations are evidently under threat. No students, no course, and in the end no job. The lecturer/professor trying to attract an audience is furthermore working a pool of students who usually do not have the sort of educational background once considered normal. They have not read Chaucer; they have not read Shakespeare; their literary knowledge may well be derived largely from visual media. In these circumstances it is vital to have textbooks to recommend which are both engaging and accessible, and Blackwell's have set themselves to fill this gap with a series of 'Short Introductions' which aim to be 'concise and stimulating . . . to inspire newcomers and others [including] general readers' (p. ii), and to do so simply, without an intimidating apparatus of footnotes and references and academic jargon. The intention is admirable, and one would have thought that the literature of edda and saga would lend itself readily to such treatment. Yet there are problems, which in the case of Heather O'Donoghue's book have mostly not been surmounted.

The main problem for her with 'Old Norse-Icelandic literature' (the careful academic qualification is characteristic) is that eddas and sagas already have a powerful 'brand image', if an unfortunate one, through Vikings, horned helmets, trolls, berserks, and all the rest of it. O'Donoghue sets herself from an early stage to argue this down, pointing out in Chapter One that Iceland had little to do with Viking activity, that accounts of such activity derived from the victims are bound to be partial, and that the literature does not preserve 'the voices of the vikings' (p. 5), for which one has to go to the more sober evidence of runestones. This is true, but already somewhat partial. What about *Jómsvíkinga saga*, which does at least give a later Icelandic image of the Viking Age, or indeed *Heimskringla*? The former is never mentioned, the latter treated on the whole through moments of comedy—no *Bjarkamál* before the battle of Stiklastaðir, no exchange between Harold Godwinsson and Haraldr harðráði before Stamford Bridge, to mention only two dramatic scenes. But such scenes would be too close to 'the popular image of the archetypal Norseman—the glamorous, independent, valiant

and overwhelmingly male Victorian Viking' (p. 121), and consequently attract no comment.

The use of the word 'Victorian' in the quotation just given furthermore increases the suspicion that O'Donoghue is above all concerned to correct rather than, in line with the declared aim of the series, 'to inspire'. A surprisingly small amount of this book's two hundred pages (plus appendix, glossary, a very few notes and short bibliography) is in fact about Old Norse–Icelandic literature. The first twenty pages are about Iceland itself, and the last hundred consist of two chapters on 'The Politics of . . .' and 'The Influence of Old Norse–Icelandic Literature'. The first of these takes us through Bishop Percy's translations, Gray's 'Odes' and other early responses, with an account of the start of academic study, 'the debate about saga origins', and quite a few pages on such connections as may be found or surmised between Old Norse and early English, *Beowulf* and the 'Cynewulf and Cyneheard' story leading on to Jarl Siward and Macbeth. Are these slight or dubious links really worth some six per cent of the book's total wordage, one wonders?

The sense of peripherality increases as the chapter on 'Influence' takes us from Blake to Scott, Kingsley and Haggard, to Landor, Arnold and Morris, and on through another clutch of allusions to Heaney and Muldoon, with Tolkien thrown in (for some reason out of chronological order) for good measure. It is hard to see the point of much of this. Students needing inspiration to read sagas are unlikely to find it through Walter Savage Landor, and the fact that Thomas Hardy made a few allusions to Old Norse myth tells us little about him or about the myths. In any case it would be easy to field just as convincing a team of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Old Norse fans who find no place here: Kipling, with his retelling of the Vinland sagas in 'The Greatest Story in the World', or Jane Smiley, author of *The Greenlanders*, or Henry Treece or the admirable Frans Bengtsson, not to mention successful and influential movies. Some of these, no doubt, would be too close to the 'archetypal Norseman' image O'Donoghue wants us to forget about. But the right way to deal with this, surely, is to provide a better image and better readings of the literature which creates it, and O'Donoghue has not left herself much space for that.

Her core chapters cover 'The Saga' and 'New Knowledge and Native Traditions'. Sagas are dealt with through a relatively extended account of *Hrafnkels saga* (which is translated in an Appendix), and three sample scenes from *Egils saga*, *Vatnsdæla* and *Laxdæla*. Much of what we are told about them is once again by intention corrective: Gísli's tragedy is that he lived 'according to the imperatives of a heroic society' (p. 25) which by his time no longer existed (so he was misled by literary images too); *Hrafnkels saga* is 'morally uncomfortable' (p. 43); the contempt for unmanliness seen there and in *Njáls saga* is 'one of the least attractive aspects of social mores' (p. 31) in the sagas, and so on. The eddic poems, to be brief, meet with similarly unenthusiastic treatment in the next chapter, morally 'far from attractive' (p. 81), glittering with 'perfunctory magnificence' (p. 83), the heroic ones of interest as having 'a basis in history' (p. 83). The great scenes of Högni laughing as they cut him to the heart, the brutal comedy of Hjalli, the table-turning defiances of Gunnarr and Völundr—the last of these is

oddly muted, the others find no place, any more than, from the sagas, the vengeful birth-proud incest of Signý the Vǫlsung or Skarpheðinn suicidally grinning and insulting his way round the Alþingi. Yet these and others like them are the scenes which have often seemed to define this literature, and not only for modern readers.

Could such topics have been treated without going back to the Viking stereotype? A possible strategy would be to note, as O'Donoghue does, how little the sagas (and eddas) employ the devices of the modern 'rhetoric of fiction'; but then to point out how they have their own rhetoric, often based on taciturnity, ambiguity, or silence. This is by no means confined to males: think of Guðrún Ósvífrsdóttir with her enigmatic greeting of Bolli returning from the killing of Kjartan, and her reply to her son at the end of *Laxdæla*. It appears not only in speech but also in the structure of entire sagas: one of the things that have given them enduring fascination is the impossibility of finding a final answer to questions like, who/what caused the death of Kjartan? Guðrún's spite? Bolli's inherited jealousy? Kjartan's own arrogance? Or maybe the fatal sword 'Fótbítr', which comes into the family through the avarice of Þorgerðr, a woman with troll in her bloodline. And then there is the question, in *Gísla saga*, of who killed Vésteinn, and whether it is family jealousies, or fate, or two women snapping at each other in a farmyard, which cause the tragedy.

Verbal and structural rhetoric open the gate to such issues as the Old Norse ideology of will-power and Ragnarök, the whole mythology revealed to a shocked world by the prose and poetic eddas, the sardonic amusement of *Hávamál*—all the issues, in fact, which have caught the attention of scholars and readers ever since Thomas Bartholin 'on the causes of the contempt of death among the still-pagan Danes'. But this is a gate O'Donoghue has no wish to go through. The version of Old Norse–Icelandic literature she presents is much nicer than Bartholin's. But modern students can find niceness anywhere. Eddas and sagas have long offered something much more distinctive.

TOM SHIPPEY

THE POST-CLASSICAL ICELANDIC FAMILY SAGA. By MARTIN ARNOLD. *Scandinavian Studies* 9. Edwin Mellen Press. Lewiston, 2003. x + 276 pp. ISBN 0 7734 6804 8.

Rather than a study of the post-classical Icelandic family sagas as the title promises, this book is an analysis of what makes the 'classical' sagas classical and how it was that such a classification arose in the first place. The genres into which medieval Icelandic prose narratives are organised and which modern scholarship takes for granted are themselves of fairly recent origin, as Philip Cardew has recently demonstrated (2003, 2–70). The subdivisions within the genres are equally modern, stemming in the most part from the literary and political agenda of Icelandic romantic nationalism. When Halfdán Einarsson (1732–85) was able to arrange in 1756 the publication by the Episcopal press at Hólar of two volumes of what are now termed *Íslendingasögur*, among the sagas he chose for the first volume, *Nockrer Marg-Frooder Sögu-Pættur Íslendinga*, were *Bandamanna saga*,

Víglundar saga, *Hávarðar saga*, *Grettis saga* and *Bárðar saga Snæfellsáss*, while the second volume, *Agiætar Fornmanna Sögur*, contained *Kjalnesinga saga*, *Króka-Refs saga*, *Harðar saga*, *Gísla saga* and *Víga-Glúms saga*. Both volumes seem to privilege texts which today would be considered 'post-classical', that is, sagas composed after 1300, works considered to be 'completely fictional', and suffering under what is seen as the baleful influence of European (and indigenous) romance traditions. Nevertheless it is clear that these are the sagas that were central to the canon of the time, a surmise which can be verified, because these late sagas are also consistently drawn upon by *rímur* poets when they want to use subject matter from the *Íslendingasögur* for their compositions. By 1856, however, a radically different canon was in place. This canon is exemplified by the classifications made by Guðbrandur Vigfússon in the 'Prolegomena' to his edition of *Sturlunga saga* (1878), where the sagas are divided into 'greater', 'minor', and 'spurious' (Arnold, pp. 90–95). Stefán Einarsson's literary history from 1961 contains an updated though little changed version (Stefán Einarsson 1961, 168–87). For him sagas are 'early' (1200–20); from the 'classical' period ('tímabil sígildra sagna'), which itself is divided into an earlier phase, 1220–75, and a later one, 1275–1325; or otherwise composed after 1300 and quickly dismissed as 'post-classical' ('síðbornar sögur'). The 'later classical period' is extended to 1325 for the sole purpose of confirming the 'classical' status of *Grettis saga*. In the most recent Icelandic literary history Vésteinn Ólason (1993, 42) divides the sagas into 'archaic' ('fornlegar sögur 1200–80'), 'classical' ('sígildar sögur 1240–1310'), and 'young' ('unglegar sögur 1300–1450'), although in the main body of the text the sagas are discussed according to theme rather than chronology or perceived aesthetic criteria.

Martin Arnold is intent on explaining how this new canon came about, and to do so he begins by attempting to come to grips with 'Medieval Icelandicness' and how this sense of ethnicity contributed to the writing of the classical *Íslendingasögur*. It is his claim that 'a crisis of ethnicity in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Iceland had a prescriptive effect on saga composition' (p. 4). That is, the composers of the classical *Íslendingasögur* were responding to the political crises of the thirteenth century which threatened Icelandic independence (and with it a unique sense of being 'Icelandic') by writing narratives set in the early centuries of settlement which were apparently free of crises of the current sort, in order to develop a sense of Icelandicness that might better resist the encroachments of the Norwegian crown. Leaving aside the case of those writers who apparently felt no 'crisis of ethnicity' as they composed a wide range of other prose narratives, including *Sturlunga saga*, this argument might be worth entertaining seriously, were it not for the corollary that is presented, namely that in the centuries following the loss of independence in 1262

Icelandic cultural production was effectively dis severed from any politicized ideological configuration of the historical present during the centuries following the dearth of the *Íslendingasögur* in the mid-fourteenth century (p. 60).

This is very much a recapitulation of the Icelandic national romantic version of Icelandic history which was 'confirmed' in Kirsten Hastrup's study of the period

1400–1800. During these years, she claimed, Iceland suffered from ‘Urchronia’, that is, a state of being ‘nowhere in time’ and lacking a sense of ‘progressive history’, with the result that the Icelanders of the period ‘lacked a contemporary comparative reality against which they could define their own ‘culture’, so that instead of facing the challenges of the present they retreated into the Lotus-land, non-past of Urchronia (Hastrup 1990b, 286–91). Thus ‘destiny became a natural fact, with which the Icelanders could not cope’ because ‘in contrast to the event-richness of the past . . . the present was event-poor’ (285, 292). At the conclusion of his first chapter Arnold endorses this position:

The classical *Íslendingasögur* are the last flourish of the reality of Iceland as a nation of independent people for over 600 years and reflect a consciousness akin to National Romanticism (p. 47).

Not only does this make his argument circular, but it is a gross distortion of Icelandic literary history. Martin Arnold’s view of Icelandic literature 1400–1800 shows that in some circles there has been no advance on the views Sigurður A. Magnússon presented in his 1977 volume *Northern Sphinx*, which I characterised as inadequate since ‘part of the problem is that the literary output [of the period 1400–1800] does not accommodate itself very well to the “Great Books” approach to which [Sigurður Magnússon] is committed’ (Hughes 1979, 50). In our post-modern age, when magical realism has become a signature device and Tolkien has been named ‘the author of the [twentieth] century’ (to the dismay of some, to be sure), the continued failure to come to terms with the ‘post-classical’ sagas and the literary interests of the writers of 1400–1800 seems short-sighted.

In Chapter Two Arnold turns his attention to how nineteenth-century nationalists worked to extract a canon of ‘classical’ texts from the huge variety of Icelandic medieval literature that had survived down to their time. This task, which was repeated many times elsewhere in Europe, was made particularly difficult in Iceland, because much medieval literature was still circulating among large sections of the populace who had their own very firm ideas about what was important and what was not. In company with the romantic nationalists, Arnold discusses the literary productions of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and then leaps over the intervening period to land in the nineteenth century as if nothing of interest had happened in the interval. The assumption is that Icelanders somehow lost their sense of ethnicity and gave up writing sagas and anything else of value. This is not exactly what happened. Creative energies were expended on the *rímur*, which became the dominant literary genre. Prose continued to be copied and the corpus of *Íslendingasögur* expanded slowly, among the most recent additions being *Ármanns saga ok Dalmanns*, composed by Halldór *sýslumaður* Jakobsson (1734–1810) and printed at Hrappsey (1782) and Akureyri (1858). As well as a canon of *Íslendingasögur*, there was also a corpus of *fornaldarsögur* and *riddarasögur* which continued to be expanded and modified well beyond 1800. All of this literary activity is often considered to be insignificant and irrelevant. But rather than seeing in the popularity of the *fornaldarsögur* and *riddarasögur* indications that in matters literary and political Icelanders had somehow lost their way, I would argue that the popularity of these genres in both prose and verse points to

the existence of an Icelandic sense of identity that saw itself not just as part of an isolated community in the North Atlantic but as a participant in a culture which moved imaginatively through landscapes in Europe, Asia and Africa. Instead of being fixated on an 'Icelandic ethnicity', Icelanders through these narratives became in their own way cosmopolitan. Therefore it was the most natural thing in the world for Jón Ólafsson (1593–1679) to visit India in 1622 or for Árni Magnússon frá Geitastekki (c.1726–?1810) to make it all the way to China in 1759, and for both of them to compose narratives about their journeys on their return. Furthermore, Africa had made its presence felt in Iceland in the form of the raids of Barbary pirates along the eastern and southern coasts of Iceland in 1627 which resulted in the taking of some four hundred hostages, of whom only about one in ten ever made it back to Iceland. Nor is the period 1400–1800 lacking 'any coherent political sense of Icelandicness that had been the hallmark of the Icelandic commonwealth' (Arnold, p. 59). This would have been news, for example, to such composers of *kappkvæði* extolling Icelandic heroes as Þórðar Magnússon á Strjúgi (c.1545–c.1610), who was so confident of his Icelandicness that he could poke fun at Icelandic heroes in his 'Fjósaáríma', or Steinunn Finnsdóttir (c.1641–?1710) who responded to a challenge to compose a *kappkvæði* featuring only Icelandic heroes with a poem containing 33 characters from the *Íslendingasögur*, including two women (Hughes 2005, 217). And so far as contemporary figures were concerned, their 'Icelandicness' is celebrated in countless *formannavísur* and *bóndarímur*, both important off-shoots of the *rimur* tradition. In fact the political and subversive nature of many of the *fornaldarsögur* and *riddarasögur* and, above all, of the *rimur* is a topic that has been insufficiently studied or appreciated. The opposition of the Icelandic élites to these works, to some of which Arnold makes reference (pp. 80–81), was because this was a literature they could not control and which often took political and social positions quite at odds with those they thought appropriate. In passing one should note that so far as the *rimur* are concerned, Jónas Hallgrímsson did not in his *Fjöltnir* review of 1837 succeed in 'silencing the genre' (Arnold 89, quoting Hastrup 1990a, 115). He may have turned some, if not all, of the intellectual élite against this form of verse, but the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were in many ways the Golden Age of *rimur* poetry. It was the demise of the *kvöldvaka* in the decades following World War I and the factors that contributed to that demise that shifted attention away from the *rimur*, just as some six centuries earlier the rise of the *rimur* had shifted creative attention away from the *Íslendingasögur*.

In their struggle with the Danish colonial authorities there was one issue that the Icelandic romantic nationalists did not have to take up, and that was the ownership of land, an issue which was to consume their fellow nationalists in the neighbouring British colony of Ireland. Between 1787 and 1841, 295 farms belonging to the episcopal see of Skálholt were sold at auction (Johnsen 1847, 416–24). The northern see at Hólar disposed of some 341 farms in the same manner in the period 1801–05 (425–34). The Danish government itself sold 232 farms from among its holdings during 1760–1840 (435–42). Since the total number of farms in 1845 is listed at 5621 (395) this means that some 15% of the total available properties in the countryside passed into private ownership. Other statistics bear

out what a radical change this was. In 1703, 95.1% of the farms were tenancies and only 4.9% had owner-occupiers. By 1842 the percentage of tenancies had dropped to 82.8% and the percentage of owner-occupancies had risen to 17.2% (*Hagskinna* 1997, 264). This meant that a new class of free farmers—*bændur*, in the old meaning of the word—had come into being. *Fornaldarsögur* and *riddarasögur* were all very well for a people coping with colonial rule, but this new class wanted different models. It might just be a coincidence, but Steinsstaðir in Eyjafjörður, where Jónas Hallgrímsson grew up, was one of the farms formerly belonging to the see of Hólar that passed into private ownership shortly before he was born. Without noticing this demographic shift, Arnold describes how the genre of *Íslendingasögur* was re-evaluated and reinterpreted, so that a new group of ‘classical’ sagas was discovered, sagas which appeared to celebrate the free and independent Icelandic farmer. As he explains later, ‘the classical saga is classical because it allows the possibility of rediscovering our contemporary critical axioms in the remote past’ (p. 120). The end result was that sagas that had maintained a high degree of popularity for more than five hundred years were now dismissed as ‘post-classical’ and of no real interest any more—all except *Grettis saga*, but that is a separate story. It should also be noted that the *Íslendingasögur* did not begin to displace the *fornaldarsögur* or the *riddarasögur* in the popular imagination until the Reykjavík bookseller Sigurður Kristjánsson (1854–1952) published them in an inexpensive and very widely sold edition of 38 volumes, 1891–1902 (*Víglundar saga* being volume 38).

In Chapter Three Arnold provides an analysis of *Hrafnkels saga* as an example of the particular features embodied in a classical saga. The Icelandic nationalists were interested in promoting literature which was in sympathy with the dominant genre of their own day: ‘realistic’ fiction, the ‘Great Tradition’, hostile to romance and the fantastic, whose most persuasive advocate was subsequently to be Sigurður Nordal. One of the reasons that *Hrafnkels saga* is ‘classical’ is that Sigurður Nordal said so, arguing that it belongs in any canon of world literature (it was included in the third edition of Norton’s *World Masterpieces* (1973–79), vol. 1, 745–65, but dropped from all subsequent editions). Arnold deftly negotiates the enormous body of literature that has grown up around the saga and, as he himself recognises, the features that make it ‘classical’ are not readily transferable to other ‘classical’ sagas.

Chapter Four looks at *Fóstbræðra saga* as a post-Independence example of the transition between classicism and post-classicism in saga writing. The effectiveness of this chapter depends upon accepting Jónas Kristjánsson’s argument that the saga is late, and it leaves the structural abnormalities of the text unresolved. Despite the confidence of the handbooks, there is much about saga chronology and dating that remains unresolved. Theodore M. Andersson is in the process of opening up some of these issues again, and in a recent lecture (‘Medieval Iceland and Literary History’, University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana, 28th April 2005) he proposed a set of formal criteria for dating the sagas. The oldest, dating from 1200–40, are those that construct their narratives in ‘blocks’, that is, independent non-integrated episodes, in the manner of the *konungasögur*. Among the early sagas by this criterion he would once again place *Fóstbræðra saga*. The

chronology and development of the sagas would then depend as much upon internal developments within the genre as upon responses to external social circumstances.

It is only with the fifth and final chapter that Arnold turns to the analysis of the post-classical sagas that the book's title seems to promise, and then he only discusses *Króka-Refs saga*. This is a pity, because a re-evaluation on their own terms of the sagas written after 1300 is long overdue. Many will be surprised at what they find there. As Vésteinn Ólason notes after discussing the influence of the *fornaldarsögur* and *riddarasögur* on *Víglundar saga*, the style of the saga is first-rate ('með ágætum') (Vésteinn Ólason 1993, 158).

For anybody interested in the *Íslendingasögur* and why we read the sagas we read there is much to be learnt from this volume. But the post-classical sagas are still given short shrift—and this in a book purporting to focus on them. Also, as should be clear from this review, I strongly disagree with the rhetorical strategy which apotheosises a small group of *Íslendingasögur* at the expense of everything else written in Icelandic until the nineteenth century. The non-canonical post-classical sagas were for many centuries cherished and considered to be of particular importance. To understand why this was the case is also to understand these centuries better and to give them the importance that is their due.

Two points in the text need correction. On page 61 it is stated that Guðbrandur Þorláksson's edition of the Bible (1584) was the first book published in Iceland. That honour belongs to the *Brevaria ad usum . . . Holensis Ecclesie* (Hólar, 1534), or perhaps Corvinus' *Passio* (Breiðabólstaður, 1559), the first book printed in Iceland in Icelandic. And on page 225, 'nítján vetr ok tuttugu' is translated as 'twenty-nine years old' instead of 'thirty-nine years old'.

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SHAUN F. D. HUGHES

COLD COUNSEL. THE WOMEN OF OLD NORSE LITERATURE AND MYTH. A COLLECTION OF ESSAYS. Edited by SARAH M. ANDERSON with KAREN SWENSON. *Routledge*. New York and London, 2002. 304 pp. ISBN 0 8153 1966 5.

Cold Counsel brings together fifteen essays on women in Old Norse literature, six of them (by Carol J. Clover, Helga Kress, Jenny Jochens, Marianne Kalinke, Jonna Louis-Jensen and Forrest S. Scott) reprintings or revisions of earlier work, and nine essays written expressly for the volume. The idea for the volume, the editor tells us in the Acknowledgements, arose at the International Congress on Medieval Studies at Kalamazoo and had as its motivating force half a dozen students associated with Cornell University's Medieval Studies Programme.

The subject of the volume has been broadly conceived to include comparative studies of translated texts and post-medieval material. Kerry Shea's contribution, 'Male Bonding, Female Body: The Absenting of Woman in *Bisclaretz ljóð*', presents an interesting analysis of one of Marie de France's *lais* that was translated into Old Norse, although the particularity of the Old Norse adaptation seems to come down to the wolf-husband tearing off the clothes rather than the nose of his duplicitous wife. More telling differences between an Old Norse text and a French original, in this case Chrétien's *Parceval*, are investigated in F. Regina Psaki's essay, 'Women's Counsel in the Riddarasögur: The Case of *Parcevals saga*'. She argues that the translator 'aligns himself with Parceval's mother's teaching rather than with the vavasour's' (p. 203), offering 'a sceptical view of knighthood and knight-errancy' (p. 217). Psaki ends her essay with a surge of questions (including 'Why should the narrative function and the ethical freight of the counsels of women differ so markedly from the indigenous to the translated sagas?'), a fine invocation to further work which is deflated by the tone of the footnote to the last of her questions: 'Gerd Wolfgang Weber's article is notable for engaging most of these questions, although ultimately I disagree with the answers he proposes' (p. 224). Some of the reasons for this are found in footnotes 9 and 10, but a more sustained debate with Weber's ideas might have stimulated further discussion. Another essay which compares Old Norse translations with their sources is Randi Eldevik's 'Women's Voices in Old Norse Literature: The Case of *Trójumanna saga*'. Eldevik analyses the use of embedded epistles by women characters in the β redaction and invented utterances by women in the α redaction and notes instances of what she regards as distinctively Scandinavian elements in the narrative style. The argument of the third section of the article, on 'Women's voices in an oral setting', is less compelling, becoming entangled in problems of definition ('One can only assume that Frank regards the mere mention of love as inherently romantic', p. 71) and in an over-generalised consideration of what 'lyric' might mean in Old Norse literature (the opposite of 'a stiff upper lip', to judge from her discussion).

My initial suspicion that the editors had drawn rather a long bow in including in this volume an essay entitled 'Saga World and Nineteenth-Century Iceland: The Case of Women Farmers' evaporated when it turned out that while Þórunn Sigurðardóttir's essay does touch on nineteenth-century evidence, it is substantially concerned with a survey of women's rights in medieval laws and sagas, particularly in relation to women farmers. In contrast, Shaun F. D. Hughes's essay, 'The

Re-emergence of Women's Voices in Icelandic Literature, 1500-1800', includes a short survey of women poets in the 'Old Norse' era (pp. 94-95) but is principally concerned with the later period. In what is effectively an appendix tucked within the 20 pages of footnotes, Hughes lists all the women authors across three centuries whose voices have left a trace in the records. The essay is no less interesting for its tangential relationship to the advertised subject of the volume—indeed, it is one of the most significant pieces of research in it—but it does indicate an unsteady sense of what *Cold Counsel* is all about.

The arrangement of the essays in alphabetical order by author does not aid the reader in perceiving connections between topics or engagement with the 'cold counsel' theme. Only a small number of the articles do in fact engage with this theme, though a few more consider *ráð* in one form or another. Still others, such as Sandra Ballif Straubhaar in 'Ambiguously Gendered: The Skalds Jörunn, Auðr and Steinunn', present useful, topical surveys, though I'm not sure that the stated aim of showing that there is 'a genuine, extragrammatical aura of gender ambiguity surrounding the skáldkonur tradition' (p. 261) is, or could be, achieved. Another form of methodological impasse is encountered by Karen Swenson in 'Women Outside: Discourse of Community in *Hávamál*'. Her endeavour to interpret *Hávamál* as 'ritual utterance' (p. 273) founders on the difficulty of establishing the context of such a ritual especially in light of utterances that are at once disconnected and allusive. Swenson's general observations about the way the poem functions 'as a symbolic discourse constructing a social definition of women' (p. 279) is reasonable enough, but since the definition is both social and mythological, it is hardly surprising that the donor of the mead, a giantess, who in Swenson's schema 'must be "good"' (p. 279), does not become a member of the community of the poem. Jenny Jochens's article, 'Vikings Westward to Vínland: the Problem of Women', is another topical survey in which she tests four conceptual models of reproductive behaviour among migrating European males (rape, concubinage, intermarriage and importation of women) against the evidence of four phases of Norse migration, to England, Ireland and the Western Isles; to Iceland; to Greenland; and to Vínland, providing succinct and interesting case studies of each region as she goes.

Eddic poetry is the focus of two of the essays in the collection: Jón Karl Helgason's "'Pegi þú, Þórr!'" Gender, Class, and Discourse in *Þrymskviða*', and Zoe Borovsky's "'En hon er blandin mjök": Women and Insults in Old Norse Literature'. Few could argue with Jón Karl's contention that *Þrymskviða* is about Þórr's loss of masculinity, though his argument that since Þórr is designated 'Jarðar burr' the burial place of the hammer is 'approximately in the bowels' of his mother (p. 161) might bemuse some. And rather than being 'a remarkable phase of linguistic development', Loki's change from silent assistant to forthright commentator in the poem might well have more to do with patterns of eddic staging and the farcical nature of the wedding scene. Jón Karl gestures towards another concern here: '[Loki's] linguistic success would, in fact, make him qualify as a candidate if we were interested in uncovering the anonymous narrator of the lay' (p. 165), an interest that quite sensibly is not pursued. Borovsky's article is an ambitious attempt to argue that the adjective 'blandinn' implies contamination, and that an interpretation of instances where it is used in eddic poems and sagas

offers some insight into notions of maleness and femaleness in Norse culture. Although the argument does not quite come off, the article is a stimulating exploration of ideas which deserve attention.

Of the five articles not written for the volume, only that by Kress has previously been unavailable in English (a version in Danish appeared in 1992), although some of the others have been revised to some extent. 'Taming the Shrew: The Rise of Patriarchy and the Subordination of the Feminine in Old Norse Literature' is a spirited survey in which Kress pulls no punches. That Old Norse literature 'is a literature in which the power of the text punctures male power' (p. 91) is a conclusion which might very well elicit varied responses. The articles by Scott (1985), Clover (1986), Louis-Jensen (1993) and Kalinke (1994) were originally published in collections and journals that are readily available, which prompts the question why it was considered necessary to reprint them here. Presumably the aim was to add gravitas, which they certainly all do—Clover's article, 'Hildigunnr's Lament', was groundbreaking at the time and continues to be an inspirational model of method and insight; Louis-Jensen's 'A Good Day's Work: *Laxdela saga*, ch. 49' demonstrates that philology is as exciting as it ever was and that manuscript readings must underpin any literary reading; Kalinke's analysis in 'Fathers, Mothers, and Daughters: "Hverr er að ráða?"' raises important issues about generic classification as well as offering a telling analysis of familial relations in *Víglundar saga*; and Scott, in 'The Woman Who Knows: Female Characters of *Eyrbyggja saga*', provides a thoughtful reading of the female characters of the saga, but one which, like the technology of the map of Snæfellsnes which appears at the close of his article, might now strike readers as rather old-fashioned.

Article by article, then, *Cold Counsel* has a lot to offer. As an edited volume, however, it is disappointing, primarily because it does not appear to have been edited. Referencing and footnoting styles are as various as the contributors, and there is no consistency in the provision of translations. Proof-reading too seems not to have been considered a responsibility, with numerous errors throughout the volume, perhaps the most startling one below the frontispiece where a manuscript called 'Möðruvallaból' is identified.

JUDY QUINN

ICELANDIC FOLKTALES AND LEGENDS. Second, revised edition. Edited and translated by JACQUELINE SIMPSON. *Tempus*. Stroud, 2004. 224 pp. ISBN 0 7524 3045 9.

Published first by Batsford in 1972 and again by University of California Press in 1979, Jacqueline Simpson's invaluable *Icelandic Folktales and Legends* essentially followed the model provided by Richard M. Dorson's excellent *Folktales of the World* series published by Routledge and Kegan Paul and the University of Chicago Press in the sixties and early seventies. (See especially Seán Ó Súilleabháin's *Folktales of Ireland* (1966), Katherine M. Briggs and Ruth L. Tongue's *Folktales of England* (1965) and Reidar Th. Christiansen's *Folktales of Norway* (1964).) The stipulated aim of this series had been that each volume would include 50–100 tales which were regarded as being 'representative of the national stock and oral

storytelling style of each country' (according to the editorial statement which opened each volume), and that each would in addition provide detailed introductions to the folktale research of that country. The *Folktales of the World* series, however, went even farther than this: the editors also made a principle of providing additional research material in the form of detailed bibliographies; detailed indexes; notes to each individual story about original storytellers, relevant articles, provenance, background and distribution; and—especially useful—references to the international motif types (MI) found in Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index of Folk Literature* (1955–58), story types (AT) found in Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson's *The Types of the Folktale* (1961), and other relevant indexes such as Séan Ó Súilleabháin and Reidar Th. Christiansen's *The Types of the Irish Folktale* (1963) and Ernst W. Baughman's *Type and Motif Index of the Folktales of England and North America* (1965). Much of this additional material, rarely found in other folklore collections before that time (or indeed since), appeared at the end of each volume as notes and tables, making them easily accessible for both a lay and a learned readership.

Perhaps the most striking—and in many ways most original—feature of the *Folktales of the World* series was the way in which it showed this most 'national' of material (legends and wonder tales) to be also in fact highly international. Migratory legends, for example, had clearly travelled between countries before they adapted themselves to local environments, cultures and existing belief systems. They simultaneously provided evidence both of cross-cultural connections between local traditions, and of local features of identity.

Jacqueline Simpson's *Icelandic Folktales and Legends* took the form offered by the *Folktales of the World* series and ran with it, at the same time going further with annotating the Icelandic material than the Icelanders had gone themselves (compare the recent disappointing edition of Einar Ólafur Sveinsson's *Um íslenskar þjóðsögur*, published in translation (*The Folk-Stories of Iceland*, London, 2003), which reflects essentially the state of the art in Iceland prior to the initial appearance of Simpson's book). For obvious reasons connected to the earlier struggle for independence and general Icelandic self-image, Icelandic folklorists prior to 1980 tended to turn a Nelsonian blind eye to the place of Icelandic folk traditions, folk beliefs and legends within a more widespread Scandinavian (if not also Celtic) tradition. There was also a reluctance to admit that if one wishes to understand the individuality of this material, the wider field must also be researched in order to compare the local material with that of the neighbouring countries in which it originated. Only in this way is it possible to decide what is 'national' and what is not. In earlier collections of 'Icelandic' folklore and tradition, one finds very little about the comparable material from other countries. It might be argued that it took 'outsiders' such as Jacqueline Simpson, Bo Almqvist and even Hermann Pálsson (an Icelander, but one living and working abroad), with an awareness of all the various traditions, to start breaking these walls down, while underlining how useful the (largely still untranslated) Icelandic material might be to other researchers in the world at large, not least because of the connections it offers to the even older oral tradition reflected in the Icelandic sagas and *Landnámabók*.

Today, *Icelandic Folktales and Legends* still stands alongside Reidar Th. Christiansen's *Folktales of Norway* (1964), John Lindow's *Swedish Legends and*

Folktales (1978), Simpson's own *Scandinavian Folk Belief and Legend* (1988) and *Legends of Icelandic Magicians* (1975), and Reimund Kvideland and Henning K. Sehmsdorf's *Nordic Folklore* (1989), *Scandinavian Folk Belief and Legend* (1991) and *All the World's Reward* (1999) as one of the most important doorways to Scandinavian folk belief and legend for those who cannot read the Nordic languages. Unfortunately and incomprehensibly, several of these key works are now out of print. The reappearance of Jacqueline Simpson's book is thus more than welcome, not least because Simpson has made a greater attempt than the editors of *The Folk-Stories of Iceland* to update her references and notes to the various legends contained in the collection. Her commentary, in an improvement on many of the works in the *Folktales of the World* series, regularly refers to Reidar Christiansen's highly useful, if incomplete, classification system of Norwegian migratory legends, given in *The Migratory Legends: A Proposed List of Types with a Systematic Catalogue of the Norwegian Variants* (1958).

So what is so special about this work? Over and above the learned introduction and the excellent notes about the context and provenance of each legend, it should be stated that this is almost precisely the range of legends that I would have chosen were I to put together a collection of 'typical' Icelandic legends for international students in Iceland (and after using the book as a coursebook for a term, I can vouch for its usefulness and readability). Here we find a total of eighty-five legends (taken mainly, as usual, from Jón Árnason and Magnús Grímsson's original two-volume *Þjóðsögur og æfintýri* (1862–64)). Twenty-one deal with *álfar* or *huldufólk*. These range from tales of their origins, and legends underlining the necessity of co-operation between Icelanders and their supernatural neighbours, to typical accounts of changelings (*umskiptingar*), elfin cattle, elf moving days, the building of church towers by supernatural beings, relationships between elves and Icelandic girls, and the common legends of elves taking over human buildings for dances at Christmas or New Year. (These last legends have particularly early international roots: in Norway, similar activities were carried out by trolls or ghosts; in *Beowulf*, Grendel opted for solitary feasts of raw human flesh instead of dancing or holding a communal party.) Fourteen legends deal with trolls, including the famous account of a troll preferring the *rímur* of Andri to the hymns of Hallgrímur Pétursson, Jón Árnason's discussion of the ancient figure of Grýla, the legend of Gilitrutt (compare the Grimms' Rumpelstiltskin), the account of an Icelandic bishop leaving a place for pagan trolls to live when he blesses some cliffs, and one of the more 'parental-guidance'-rated troll tales of males being abducted by female trolls, 'Trunt Trunt and the Trolls in the Fells'. Following this, there are seven tales dealing with water-dwellers such as *marbendllar* or 'mermen', sea cows, sea monsters and Icelandic water horses, and including the international account of the stolen sealskin; three on the finding of treasure; and seventeen on ghosts, including the famous 'Mother Mine, Don't Weep, Don't Weep', 'The Deacon of Myrka', 'Mori the Ghost of Irafell', 'The Boy Who Knew No Fear', and the excellent (and Conradian) 'The Ghost's Son', about the ghost at Bakki. (Eiríkur Magnússon and George Powell, in their *Icelandic Legends* (1864, reprinted 1995), for some strange reason entitled this tale 'The Son of the Goblin'.) Sixteen further legends provide a good introduction to Icelandic concepts of 'Black' magic.

These include accounts of a witch-ride; of the Icelandic witch-familiar, the *tilberi* (frogs and cats being relatively rare in Iceland); of Lappish breeches; and of *sendingar* (the dead brought back to life and sent to attack enemies on foot); and, most importantly, the still prevalent stories of ‘Thorgeir’s Bull’. Finally there are seven legends on relations between Icelanders, God and, particularly, the Devil, including the famous legends ‘My Jón’s Soul’ and ‘The Dance in Hrúni Church’, as well as ‘The Devil on the Church-Beam’ (the last two well known in collections from neighbouring countries).

With such an excellent range of legends, it is perhaps unfair to point to central canonical material that is missing. Nonetheless, I would have liked to see the legends of Icelandic magicians which Jacqueline Simpson published separately in a now unavailable volume incorporated into this book (if not republished as *Icelandic Folktales and Legends II*). The accounts of figures like Sæmundur fróði, Séra Hálfván af Felli, Eiríkur af Vógsósum, Galdra-Loftur and Straumfjarðar-Halla are still well known to most Icelanders today, and are central to the legend corpus. I would also have liked to see an example of an Icelandic wonder tale, and one or two of the more ‘daring’ Icelandic legends which rarely appear in translation: that is to say, the relatively common accounts of men being abducted by female trolls, and of priests slipping away into rocks to sleep with elderly elf women. Two other accounts used by Eiríkur Magnússon and Powell but strangely absent here are the (admittedly rarer, but illustrative) accounts of Tungustapi and Gellivör. I would also have liked to see one or two examples of legends from more recent collections such as Sigurður Nordal and Þorbergur Þórðarson’s *Gráskinna I–IV* (1929–36).

All in all, though, this is an excellent collection of material, and still by far the best introduction to Icelandic folktales available for anyone who does not have access to the texts in Icelandic. Not only are the choice of material and the accompanying notes and introduction based on a deep, international folkloristic understanding, but also the translations are very carefully carried out (something that is all the more striking when one realises that Jacqueline Simpson visited Iceland for the first time in 2005). Admittedly, I am a little unhappy about the Anglicisation of the Icelandic names (it is high time that we started teaching the world about the real forms of Icelandic names, not least to reduce the surprise of outsiders who start looking for someone by the name of Asmundarsson or Grimsdottir in an Icelandic phonebook), but of course Jacqueline Simpson is neither the first nor the last person to do this. Other than this, I have yet to find anything in the translations that I am uncomfortable about. (I might add that they also read well orally.)

For all of these reasons, I can state that Jacqueline Simpson’s *Icelandic Folktales and Legends* is a vast improvement on Eiríkur Magnússon and Powell’s *Icelandic Legends* (useful though this was in its time). It also surpasses the more recent popular folktale translations of Alan Boucher (*Icelandic Folktales I–III*, 1977), which lack any real annotation. The return of this book to the shelves is to be particularly warmly welcomed.

TERRY GUNNELL

THE MANUSCRIPTS OF ICELAND. Edited by GÍSLI SIGURÐSSON and VÉSTEINN ÓLASON. *Culture House Editions 2. Stofnun Árna Magnússonar á Íslandi*. Reykjavík, 2004. x + 194 pp. 149 illustrations, 1 map. ISBN 9979 819 88 X.

The Manuscripts of Iceland provides an introduction to the Icelandic manuscripts exhibited at the Culture House in Reykjavík during the winter of 2002. Although intended for a general audience, this volume will be useful to scholars and students of Old Norse needing basic information about the manuscripts, their place in medieval and post-medieval Icelandic culture and the twentieth-century issues in which they have played a part. As Vésteinn Ólason points out in the introduction ('The Manuscripts of Iceland'), the importance of the hand-written books containing Iceland's treasured medieval literature extends far beyond their value as textual repositories. The manuscripts were influential in Enlightenment historiography, Romantic literature, the Icelandic independence movement and the subsequent internal power struggles involving Iceland's cultural heritage. *The Manuscripts of Iceland* thus focuses on the reception, understanding, misunderstanding, and even the misuse of the manuscripts' contents by later generations. In addition to this introduction, the volume consists of sixteen essays by the editors and other contributors, a one-page list of works for 'Further Reading' and a large number of photographs and other illustrations, most of which are in colour.

Of the sixteen essays comprising the body of the volume, six deal with the Middle Ages. In 'Oral sagas, poems and lore', Gísli Sigurðsson gives a brief account of what we assume was the orally transmitted literature of Iceland. This essay concentrates on eddic poetry, touches on sagas and skaldic poetry, and concludes with an evocative analysis of what it must have meant to make the transition from oral tradition to written texts. In 'The Church and written culture', Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir examines how books gained a foothold in medieval Iceland and how they came to be written in Old Icelandic rather than in Latin. Her emphasis on the ecclesiastical need for books and other written texts is continued in 'Society and literature', another essay by Vésteinn Ólason. This survey of medieval Icelandic writings considers the integral relationship of the church and its clerics to the creation of these texts, the rise of secular written culture, and the sagas that form the pinnacle of its narrative achievement. In 'Book production in the Middle Ages', Soffía Guðmundsdóttir and Laufey Guðnadóttir set forth the process of making books from vellum, ink, paint and pens. They touch on writing conditions (which inspired some plaintive marginal comments by Icelandic scribes) and conclude with brief but clear descriptions of Icelandic manuscript art, illumination styles and bookbinding. In 'Writing', Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson provides an introduction to Icelandic palaeography from the earliest Carolingian minuscule to the Fraktur and scripts used after the Middle Ages. Each kind of script is illustrated, although transcriptions of the samples would have been useful here. 'The recreation of literature in manuscripts', by Sverrir Tómasson, bridges the medieval and the post-medieval; it gives examples of sagas being rewritten, commented on and imitated by later generations of Icelanders.

The middle seven essays examine the general cultural and political importance of the Icelandic manuscripts from the sixteenth century to the present. 'Árni Magnússon', by Sigurgeir Steingrímsson, is a biographical sketch of the eighteenth-

century Icelander who dedicated his life to collecting, preserving and studying Icelandic manuscripts. In 'The Nordic demand for medieval Icelandic manuscripts', Mats Malm goes back to the 1500s and 1600s to present the first scholarly uses of the medieval Icelandic material, primarily in Denmark and Sweden, which sought to give their nationalistic programmes a historical justification. In 'Eddas, sagas and Icelandic romanticism', Sveinn Yngvi Egilsson begins by reviewing Romantic literature of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Iceland that took Old Norse themes as its subject matter. He then proceeds to the influence of the saga tradition on nineteenth-century Icelandic novels and concludes with the adaptation of saga narratives for the stage, the movie screen and even rock music. In 'The "Germanic" heritage in Icelandic books', Óskar Bjarnason examines the nineteenth-century identification of Old Icelandic literature with 'Germanic' culture and its subsequent appropriation for political purposes in Germany during the World Wars. In 'The idea of the Old North in Britain and the United States', Andrew Wawn surveys the nineteenth- and twentieth-century Anglophone enthusiasm for Iceland. Whether in the form of prose translations or retellings in verse, saga narratives enjoyed great popularity in the late nineteenth century, as did imitative historical novels. Given that in the twentieth century the same material inspired both fantasy and realistic treatments in fiction, Wawn concludes that these traditions will continue to flourish, with modern works leading to an interest in the medieval sources, and the medieval sources giving rise to new artistic responses. In 'Parliament, sagas and the twentieth century', Jón Karl Helgason tells the fascinating story of the fight to control the publication of the sagas in 1940s Iceland. Most non-Icelandic students of Old Norse probably think of *Hið íslenska fornritafélag* (the Old Icelandic Text Society) as a scholarly institution untouched by national politics. Yet in 1941 the Icelandic parliament passed a law stipulating that the medieval literature could only be published in the artificial standardised spelling of Old Norse and that *Hið íslenska fornritafélag* had unlimited authorisation to publish Old Icelandic texts. Medievalists familiar with the international reputation of Halldór Laxness but ignorant of mid-century Icelandic politics will be surprised to learn of the consternation caused by a plan for Laxness to produce an abridged version of *Njáls saga* with modern spelling; it was this that led to the legislation mentioned above, which was eventually judged unconstitutional. Scholars might assume that debates about the historical value or fictionality of the sagas have always been purely academic, but Jón Karl Helgason shows how deeply attached twentieth-century Icelanders were to certain assumptions about their medieval heritage. In 'The saga tradition and visual art', Aðalsteinn Ingólfsson discusses the interaction between the Icelandic manuscripts and modern Icelandic art, both representational and abstract.

The final three essays deal with the specific cultural and political issues raised by the fact that so many of the manuscripts had been taken out of Iceland. In "'Bring the manuscripts home!'", Gísli Sigurðsson et al. give an account of the Icelandic struggle, eventually successful, to have Icelandic manuscripts in Denmark returned to their country of origin. 'Melsted's Edda: The last manuscript sent home?', another essay by Gísli Sigurðsson, continues the subject with the story of a paper manuscript from 1765 that features an illustrated copy of a printed

version of Snorri Sturluson's *Edda*. It was taken to Canada by an Icelandic woman who emigrated in 1876. The last essay, '“Our lot”', by Pétur Gunnarsson, is a humorous and poetic meditation on the demands that the return of the manuscripts to Iceland places on contemporary Icelanders.

The Manuscripts of Iceland is handsome and well-produced, with few errors and inconsistencies. One can, of course, imagine improvements; in addition to the transcriptions wished for above, it would be helpful in a popular English-language work to translate the Icelandic cognomens. Some of the captions provide explanations of the manuscript illustrations that are reproduced, but many do not. Does the drawing on page 33 from a law-book show a legal proceeding? What is the significance of the naked man in the illuminated initial from Flateyjarbók on page 119? Overall, *The Manuscripts of Iceland* is this decade's version of *Icelandic Sagas and Manuscripts* (Reykjavík, 1980) and *Icelandic Manuscripts: Sagas, History and Art* (Reykjavík, 1993), both by Jónas Kristjánsson; in keeping with contemporary academic tastes, it emphasises politics and sociology over literary history. For readers of *Saga-Book*, some of these essays will be more useful than others, but for anyone needing suggestions for further reading, those given are particularly well-chosen. Among the most welcome features of *The Manuscripts of Iceland* are the many colour photographs of details of the manuscripts, and here specialists and general readers will be equally pleased.

ELIZABETH ASHMAN ROWE

MAN AMONGST KINGS AND BISHOPS. WHAT WAS THE REASON FOR GODRED OLAFSSON'S JOURNEY TO NORWAY IN 1152/3? By IAN BEUERMANN. *Senter for studier i vikingtid og nordisk middelalder/Centre for Viking and Medieval Studies*. Oslo, 2002. 285 pp. ISBN 82 92359 04 4.

The increase in interdisciplinary and inter-regional studies has brought a welcome addition to the academic literature on relations within Europe in the Viking and medieval periods. Ian Beuermann's book, based on his M.Phil. thesis, is one of the small number of studies that cross regional and linguistic divides and that draw attention to source material and to scholarly work that may be unknown to those engaged in a subject from a different perspective.

Man amongst kings and bishops takes as its focus a single issue and seeks to place it within its historical and cultural context. The journey referred to in the subtitle was that of the then King of Man and the *Suðreyjar* (Hebrides), Godred. After a period of nearly fifty years in which relations between his kingdom and its ostensible overlord, the Norwegian king, were in abeyance, Godred chose to visit Norway apparently to seek support for his small island kingdom. The geographical position of the kingdom of Man and the Isles determined that its external relations were not only with Norway but also with Ireland, the English crown, the kingdom of Scotland and, marginally, the Welsh principality of Gwynedd. Consequently, the author seeks the answers to his question in the relatively few sources available from any of these areas. As an introduction, he sets the scene at the beginning of the twelfth century with the journeys of Magnus Barelegs, then develops his

theme, discussing the decade following the journey, and suggesting reasons why relations between Godred's kingdom and the kingdom of Norway changed.

The survey describes the situation in each of the neighbouring territories, and seeks to identify the reasons for the journey to Norway in the light of the kingdom's relations with its larger neighbours. Beuermann works through the journey from Manx, Norwegian, English, Scottish and Irish perspectives, both political and ecclesiastical, effectively handling the sources relating to each area of research. His conclusions are informed and logically presented.

The author contributes to our understanding by knitting together much that has previously been treated in a fragmentary way that reflects the national divisions of contemporary scholars more than the divisions of the period. He demonstrates the fluidity of the political boundaries of the region in the mid-twelfth century, and the extent to which ecclesiastical reorganisation influenced activity in the period. While the question he poses is narrow, the research undertaken indicates that the cross-regional approach can offer possible solutions to the seemingly intractable problems posed by the scantiness of sources. The Kingdom of Man and the Isles has been a subject marginal to most Scottish, Irish and Norwegian historical research, and scholars who have been exceptions to the pattern, such as Arne Odd Johnson, have until recently been few. The use of insular sources in conjunction with Scandinavian ones casts light on the wider picture of medieval Norse relations with these islands. The adventurousness of some of the interpretations offered is welcome, suiting the tone of the volume and encouraging much-needed debate. Beuermann's conclusion, that the journey of Godred to Norway was an attempt to offset interference from the see of Dublin, has not been suggested previously, and opens up new fields for research.

There is a degree of repetition in the volume, and the tone of enquiry, reminiscent of a detective story, will not suit all readers. At times some readers will find the terms used unfamiliar ('Norgesveldet'), or vague ('British Isles'). An extensive bibliography is provided, which includes recent research by Irish and Scottish scholars working from an Irish Sea perspective.

Man amongst kings and bishops is a useful contribution to a little-known area of historical research. Beuermann uses the full range of potential source material, and displays confidence in its interpretation. It is to be hoped that the author's forthcoming doctoral thesis will provide further insights for those interested in the historical associations and cultural implications of this fascinating and little-researched subject.

ROSEMARY POWER

CONTACT, CONTINUITY, AND COLLAPSE. THE NORSE COLONIZATION OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC. Edited by JAMES H. BARRETT. *Studies in the Early Middle Ages 5. Brepols*. Turnhout, 2003. xi + 254 pp. 46 black-and-white illustrations. ISBN 2 503 51291 7.

The millennial celebrations of Scandinavian exploration in North America produced a bumper crop of publications. This one (in the attractive Brepols series, *Studies in the Early Middle Ages*) focuses on the 'North Atlantic', defined as

including not only the more obvious locations—north-eastern and eastern Canada, Greenland, Iceland, the Faroes and North Norway—but also, less predictably, Ireland and Scotland. Balance is the editor's principal aim. He argues in his introduction that the wider historical significance of Scandinavian settlement around the northern Atlantic rim has been overshadowed by the attention lavished on Vinland—its furthest and most ephemeral episode. This has not only distorted our picture by foregrounding the most distant, so to speak, but has led scholars to ignore the interrelatedness of activity in this vast zone, thus downplaying the complexity of migration. Thoroughgoing 'interrelatedness' should, surely, have given us the Isle of Man, Wales, and (at least) north-western England as well, but you can't have everything. Eight regional chapters draw out the 'diversity of historical trajectories' from the Arctic to Ireland and demonstrate that each area, though distinctive, was not cut off from the others nor immune to influence from far afield.

Each of the eight studies is intended to summarise what is known, illustrate the value of reconsidering it in a new light and highlight gaps in current knowledge of the settlement contexts. Although the authors draw on a wide range of available evidence—place-names, historical and literary writings, genetics—they are primarily archaeologists, and their contributions represent, according to the editor, only 'one perspective within an interdisciplinary subject' (p. 2). In his view, by using archaeological data to overturn reliance on written sources of questionable historicity, the collection contributes to 'the rewriting of a Viking Age "prehistory"', although he cheerfully concedes that 'the results will inevitably prove naïve to the historian and the linguist' (p. 2). This disclaimer may have been felt necessary because historians and linguists have not been slow to criticise the way (some) archaeologists have handled written evidence in the past. But there may be other grounds. Among the goals of the collection outlined in the introduction is the 'attempt to construct models of culture contact informed by the instrumentalist school of Fredrik Barth . . . which views ethnicity "as a dynamic and situational form of group identity"' (p. 3). Although the idea that ethnicity is a complex creation is now conventional (even among historians and linguists), scholars of any discipline may balk at a method that applies a model formulated in advance rather than deriving interpretations from (and testing them against) the evidence in every case. Whatever methodological queasiness may be generated by this approach, it does not invalidate the book's substantial contents. The authors vary in their methods and have not always interpreted their instructions in the same way. Some dish out substantial helpings of archaeological theory with their data; others are primarily descriptive. (Few, however, shrink from using 'model' as a verb.) Although the editor states that the collection is not intended to be a textbook, but 'a contribution, from an archaeological perspective, to an ongoing dialogue' on colonisation in the Viking Age (p. 5), the detailed surveys of current knowledge, summaries of specialist studies and extensive bibliographies are highly useful, both for researchers in the field of Scandinavian studies and for those who teach it.

Bjørnar Olsen begins the regional studies of 'culture contact' with a discussion of Northern Norway during the Iron Age and early Middle Ages, focusing on the

issue through consideration of the Saami ‘cultural code’. The exclusion of other differences, such as language, from his conception of culture should perhaps not surprise, given the editor’s earlier warning. Olsen takes as his starting-point Knut Odner’s argument that Saami culture was in fact a creation—developed to distinguish hunting specialists from their farming neighbours as contact between the two groups increased—and argues that changes in the archaeological record demonstrate the ‘need to signal ethnic belonging’ (p. 27). In the Faroes, contact is not the issue (except perhaps for the *papar*). Steffen Stummann Hansen proceeds from a long and detailed account of early Faroese history and archaeology (with special emphasis on the career of Sverri Dahl) to propose models of typical settlement sites and farms and relate the archaeological data to discussion of the crucial themes of Faroese settlement: the *papar*, the date of the *landnám* and the origins of the settlers. He explains that, though often bracketed with that in Shetland, settlement in the Faroes had quite different environmental factors to deal with (primarily height above sea level).

James Barrett’s comprehensive piece reviews the new evidence, new science and new theoretical thinking behind current understanding of Scandinavian Scotland, where—judging from the density of place-names and ‘pagan’ burials—migration seems to have occurred on a substantial scale. He gives a clear and reasoned summary of major issues and methodological problems specific to the region and raises useful questions, such as how a Scandinavian settlement is to be distinguished from a native Pictish one, why a plethora of Scandinavian place-names may not always be accompanied by material evidence of settlement, and why pre-tenth-century settlement has proved particularly elusive. The lack of definite answers to these questions helps to explain why interpretation of events in this region has been so various. Barrett reiterates his argument from earlier work that changes in diet and economy, as revealed by evidence in the material record, are likely to be the result of large-scale immigration rather than the influence of a small élite, but he balances this with acceptance of recent DNA testing (in the Northern Isles) which finds a substantial proportion of non-Scandinavian ancestry among present inhabitants. In the end, he opts for a ‘multiplicity of possible contact scenarios’ across the region (p. 94). He also notes that the archaeology overall does not support any chronological distinction between initial contact and migration, as has been proposed on the basis of written sources.

Harold Mytum’s piece on Ireland divides Hiberno–Scandinavian activity into phases of interaction, constructed on the basis of dates taken from the Irish annals, which the archaeology is then brought in to illustrate. The interesting observation that there appears to have been no disruption of property plots at the Temple Bar site in the early tenth century, although the annals tell us the Foreigners were ‘expelled’ from Dublin at that time, is flagged as raising doubts about the narrative reliability of these sources. Why then use them to create a narrative framework to explain the archaeology, as is done here? New thinking on the interaction between the well-worn written evidence for Ireland’s Viking Ages and the archaeological material (old and new) could help move us forward.

In contrast, there is plenty of lively revisionism on offer in the chapter on Iceland by Adolf Friðriksson and Orri Vésteinsson. In the absence of two

'contacting' cultures, their study focuses on the *landnám*. At its heart is a plea for a change in archaeological direction, leaving behind once and for all the compulsion which, the authors claim, has always guided Icelandic archaeology, to confirm (or refute) in material terms the literary accounts of the settlement period. They propose that 'the representation of the past by Ari and elaborated to baroque proportions by the subsequent two centuries of scholarship, had very little to do with any "genuine traditions"', and has 'only tenuous links with actual events of the ninth and tenth centuries' (p. 141). The authors focus largely on *Landnámabók*, which, they argue, was written not so much to provide contemporary landowners with illustrious ancestors as 'to provide the Icelandic landscape with a history' (p. 146) (though exactly why, and why then, this type of history was wanted is not pursued). They argue that there had to be a certain amount of invention in the process, in the absence of complete information. This 'addition of flesh to the bones of place-names and genealogies' should not be confused with literature, however (p. 147). It was a scholarly undertaking involving systematic deduction, after comparison and analysis of the available data. In fact, 'we know almost nothing about Viking Age Iceland' (p. 157), and we need both new data and a new vision if we are to understand its colonisation. This new vision, freed from the tyranny of literary accounts, would focus on economic systems and processes and patterns of settlement.

Less radical is Jette Arneborg's survey of the history and economy of the Eastern and Western Settlements in Greenland, with a final focus on the end of the period. She argues that failing exchange with Europe may have been crucial in unsettling the whole social system, as farmers depended heavily on the export of surplus products (both cultivated and hunted). She also discusses the nature of contact between the Scandinavian and Inuit populations, a question which recurs in the examination of the Smith Sound Region (taking in Ellesmere Island, in the Canadian Arctic, and the north-western coast of Greenland) by P. Schledermann and K. M. McCullough. They give a detailed survey of the material objects of Scandinavian character found at Inuit sites and argue that direct contact, perhaps trade-related, is as likely as indirect contact (native 'treasure-hunting' at shipwreck or abandoned settlement sites). They admit, however, that the nature (not to mention cultural effect) of encounters between the two groups remains uncertain. Birgitta Wallace takes us once more to *Vínland*, which she subtitles 'an abandoned experiment'. She rehearses the well known archaeological data from *l'Anse aux Meadows* and analyses the saga accounts in some detail, with the goal of identifying 'points of possible historicity' (p. 212) and reconciling the two, using a technique much like that rejected for Iceland by Adolf Friðriksson and Orri Vésteinsson. She is surprisingly optimistic (and categorical) about what can be known on this basis. She is positive, for example, that *l'Anse aux Meadows* was the *Straumfjörðr* of the sagas, a trans-shipment point for resources collected in various locations, abandoned as unprofitable after a few years. She is also sure that no other Scandinavian sites of this type remain to be discovered. Finally, in the only non-regional contribution, Robert McGhee discusses whether knowledge of sea routes was filtered in the fifteenth century from Greenland to the early European explorers of the New World, and concludes that travellers from Iceland,

Northern England and the Hanseatic cities could have passed on their expertise (but did not necessarily) to those who embarked on the next stage of westward exploration.

At some time in the future, archaeologists will want to update both the theory and the data presented here. In the meantime, students of Scandinavian colonisation should find this a most useful collection of material.

LESLEY ABRAMS

THE CROSS GOES NORTH. PROCESSES OF CONVERSION IN NORTHERN EUROPE, AD 300–1300. Edited by MARTIN CARVER. York Medieval Press, 2003. 579 pp. 49 plates, 87 figures. ISBN 1 903153 11 5.

The Cross Goes North contains thirty-seven papers on the most diverse subjects relating to the conversion of Europe, from Constantine the Great to the conversion of the Baltic region in the fourteenth century. Martin Carver's introduction to this collection describes it as the fruit of a large conference that was held at York in July 2000.

The book is divided into four parts. The first is entitled 'Processes of Conversion' and consists of Carver's introduction, along with reflections on the theme of Christian versus pagan world-views in Central and Northern Europe (Premyslav Urbanczyk) and on the heterogeneous nature of Christian practice and beliefs (Aleksander Pluskowski and Phillippa Patrick). Whilst Urbanczyk's approach is necessarily general, his study shows what might be achieved by adopting a comparative approach to this elusive topic. The discussion of Pluskowski and Patrick ('"How do you pray to God?" Fragmentation and Variety in Early Medieval Christianity') is wide-ranging, erudite and thought-provoking, yet ultimately frustratingly discursive. It emphasises the wide spectrum of religious beliefs and experiences which co-existed in medieval Europe *per se*, and not, as the title implies, simply in early medieval Europe.

The remainder of the collection is divided along geographical lines. The second part is entitled 'Into the Celtic Lands' (ten papers); the third, 'Christianity and the English' (fourteen papers); and the fourth, 'From the Alps to the Baltic' (twelve papers). Most readers will probably focus exclusively on the articles that relate to their own geographical area or field of interest, which is unfortunate, for the book has much to offer those interested in acquainting themselves with unfamiliar areas. The wide range of methodologies adopted and topics covered in this collection provides a cross-section of the present state of Conversion studies, and underlines just what can be learned from other disciplines. I was particularly impressed by archaeological studies that, in dealing with the transition from the pagan to the Christian eras, concentrate either on relatively small geographical regions or on single urban centres. In this context one can mention the study by Philip Rahtz and Lorna Watts of Kirkdale, in North Yorkshire, from late Roman times to the arrival of the Scandinavian settlers, and Christoph Keller's examination of the development of the Bonn minster from the seventh to the eleventh century. Equally

impressive is Stig Welinder's innovative multidisciplinary study of Jämtland 800–1200. The collection also includes detailed textual or philological studies, such as that by Elisabeth Okasha on word separation in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, which uses inscriptions on stone slabs for comparative purposes, and Rambridge's examination of Alcuin's presentation of evangelism in his hagiographic oeuvre. Other contributors give unexpected twists to traditional topics. For instance, Catherine E. Karkov's Freudian-inspired reading of the legend and pictorial representation of St Æthelthryth, foundress of Ely, concludes with the original observation that her story, like Bede's account of the Conversion, 'is all about sex, desire and the absent woman' (p. 411).

Fortunately, women are present in the eight articles on the conversion of Scandinavia. Jörn Staecker continues where he left off in his *Rex reum et dominus dominorum. Die wikingerzeitlichen Kreuz- und Kruzifixanhänger als Ausdruck der Mission in Altdänemark und Schweden* (Stockholm, 1999) with the exploration of the role of women in the Conversion period (especially the tenth century) using the evidence of burials, artefacts and rune-stones. Staecker concludes that evidence from different parts of Scandinavia shows that women, particularly widows, were keen to express their faith in highly diverse ways. Annie-Sofie Gräslund also examines the evidence of burials and rune-stones to highlight the crucial part that women may have played in the acceptance of Christianity. Gräslund suggests that some aspects of the Christian message, such as the prohibition of infanticide and the hope of a more joyous afterlife, may have proved particularly appealing to women. She notes that in other historical contexts, for example during the Reformation, women were at the forefront of the adaptation to religious changes and expressed their beliefs on a very personal level. Two contributions deal with the conversion of Sweden from different perspectives. Linn Lager interprets the proliferation of rune-stones in eleventh-century Sweden, and particularly in Uppland, as a reflection of the scarcity of churches—and graveyards—and of the lack of effective ecclesiastical organisation. Alexandra Sandmark fleshes out the somewhat obscure role of the Swedish kings by placing it within a wider European context. Nancy L. Wicher's overview of Scandinavian decorative animal style from the Migration period to the late Viking Age is especially clear and concise. Wicher discusses the manner in which abstract, non-narrative style prevailed in this period but with some interesting exceptions: most notably the much discussed gold bracteates from the fifth and the first half of the sixth century that have been discovered in Scandinavia and throughout Northern Europe. According to Karl Hauck and his followers, some of the bracteates contain pictorial representations of the Germanic gods, most notably Óðinn, Þórr and Týr, which should be interpreted as statements of rulership ideology. Wicher convincingly challenges the hypothesis that one of the bracteates depicts Óðinn and Sleipnir, and demonstrates that these should be seen within the context of the goldsmith's ingenious use of limited space rather than any master-plan dictated by the patron. However, Wicher concedes that Hauck was correct in arguing that bracteate IK 190 from Trollhättan, Västergötland, shows Fenrir biting the hand of Týr, as is mentioned in *Lokasenna* and, one should add, in more detail in *Snorra Edda*. This, apparently, is the 'key example that Hauck uses to

bolster his contextual iconographic interpretation' (p. 535). It seems, however, decidedly problematic to associate the bracteate with these much younger Old Norse texts (see Marteinn Helgi Sigurðsson, 'Týr: the one-handed God of War', Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge, 2002, p. 13). First, there is no fetter—surely a key feature of the story—in sight. Second, the conspicuously petite 'Fenrir' appears to have hooves on his hind legs, which is not, surely, characteristic of wolves. Third, 'Fenrir' attacks the figure's left hand and not his right as told by Snorri. Last, and crucially, the animal is not biting off Týr's hand but rather nibbling on his fingers, a significant detail given Týr's reputation for one-handedness.

Included in the section 'Into the Celtic Lands' is James H. Barrett's measured and useful review of the complex evidence for early Christianity among the Norse populations in the Northern Isles. Barrett tentatively presents the interesting hypothesis that there were two competing political factions in tenth-century Orkney that identified with Christianity and paganism. Birsay may have been the centre of the pagan faction and, if so, Earl Porfinnr's establishment of a bishop's seat there c. 1050 represented a highly symbolic act. An obvious parallel which springs to mind is the establishment of the Swedish archbishopric at or near the site of the former pagan centre in (Old) Uppsala.

This is a valuable, handsomely bound and superbly illustrated collection which, unfortunately, is marred by some glaring presentational inconsistencies and sloppy proof-reading. No attempt, for instance, is made to standardise the systems of referencing. More jarring, however, are the occasional and obvious slips in proof-reading; these are especially noticeable in the papers relating to Scandinavia. Thus in the space of three harrowing pages (pp. 521–23) we have 'Chistianity', 'Chistianization', 'christianized' and 'Christianized', along with 'Snorre Snurlason'. A welcome and rare addition in conference collections of this nature is the inclusion of a fairly detailed index.

HAKI ANTONSSON

SCANDINAVIA AND EUROPE 800–1350. CONTACT, CONFLICT, AND COEXISTENCE. Edited by JONATHAN ADAMS and KATHERINE HOLMAN. *Medieval Texts and Cultures of Northern Europe 4. Brepols*. Turnhout, 2004. xvi + 369 pp. ISBN 2 503 51085 X.

This book is one of an increasing number of multi-authored volumes on the Viking Age and related issues which have appeared in recent years. Indeed, for those of us who wish to keep abreast of developments in this field, the prodigiousness of the output is slightly alarming. This increase in productivity is largely the result of an exponential growth in the number of active practitioners, who, on the whole, manage to be everything a scholar should be: industrious, original and useful. Yet it may be that this growth in production has been achieved at the expense of overall quality.

The present volume contains twenty-four papers, originally presented at a conference held in Hull in 1999 under the same rubric. The majority of these essays are important, a few refreshingly insightful, some even seminal, but

there are also several less striking offerings, some tediously narrow in their scope, others sadly diffuse in their aims. Without these this volume would have been outstanding, essential reading in its entirety for all students of the subject area. As it is, it will serve more as a showcase for the range of scholarship in this field than as the coherent treatment of a subject which most such volumes strive (or should strive) to become. There are, for example, two papers in the first section, both ungenerously criticising Nicolaisen's explanation of a particular distribution of place names, and both coming to exactly the same conclusion (although it must be added that Jennings's argument is at least supported by actual data). Compared to the following two papers, Michael Barnes's authoritative discussion of the runic evidence for Scandinavian languages in the British Isles and Gillian Fellows-Jensen's magisterial summary of the place-name evidence for Scandinavian settlement in the British Isles, these seem trivial in their aims and petty in their disputatiousness. Unfortunately there are more such examples; while none of these essays is without value they seem out of place in the collection as a whole.

Fortunately there is much more to enjoy, not least the basic concept of the volume, which seeks to unite in a single book papers on both the Viking Age and the following centuries—normally dealt with in the separate camps of high/late medieval history and literature. This is a most important aim, because while one of the main strengths of Viking-Age studies is its long tradition of multi-disciplinarity (well attested in this volume), a major weakness has been a lack of communication with students of the preceding and following centuries. Different sub-sets of Viking-Age scholars have sought links in either direction (e.g. archaeologists with the Iron Age; philologists with later medieval literature) but it is rare for a volume representing all disciplines to attempt to place the Viking Age in a wider context. It might be said that the geographical coverage is rather limited—there is not a word on Eastern Europe, for example—but with so much else to learn and be grateful for it would be unreasonable to complain. I found Brian Levy's description of images of Vikings in Anglo-Norman literature and Alan Murray's discussion of Middle High German poems about Danish kings particularly fascinating. Both are useful reminders (for some of us) that literature existed outside Iceland in the thirteenth century, and may even be worthy of our attention. And I was enthralled by Axel Bolvig's paper on wall paintings in Danish stone churches—although I suspect there is much in it to dispute.

The greatest value of this book, however, and the main reason it will not gather dust in the coming decades, is that it contains a number of extremely important survey articles, some of them the results of a lifetime's study. I have already mentioned the very important papers by Barnes and Fellows-Jensen, which strike me as definitive statements, while Judith Jesch's paper on the sources for Vikings on the European continent in the late Viking Age, and Elisabeth Ridel's overview of the linguistic evidence for the Scandinavian presence in Normandy very usefully describe the *Stand der Forschung* in these areas, clearing the ground for further research. Tore Nyberg's authoritative summary of the state of knowledge on early monasticism in Scandinavia is also extremely useful. And only the most hard-hearted post-processual archaeologist could fail to be completely fascinated by

Anne Pedersen's solid survey of the Danish archaeological evidence for Anglo-Danish contacts in the eleventh century. For me this was the most agreeable surprise in the book.

The many fans of Stefan Brink and Christopher Morris will find little new in their offerings, but they are nevertheless elegant statements of these scholars' views on the Christianisation of Scandinavia and the North Atlantic respectively. There are no surprises either in the final piece, Sverre Bagge's reflective and learned exploration on Scandinavian cultural identity in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. These three papers are all welcome introductions to the thinking of these leading scholars on crucial issues.

Other articles, though narrower in scope, offer thought-provoking insights into a variety of fascinating subjects: Chris Callow on Norwegians in thirteenth-century Iceland, Olwyn Owen on the Scar boat burial (with interesting ruminations on the chronology and development of Scandinavian settlement in the Northern Isles), Terje Spurkland on post-Viking-Age runes in Scandinavia, Úlfar Bragason on genealogies in *Sturlunga saga* and Jan Ragnar Hagland on marriage regulation in Norwegian law.

The volume is very nicely produced and lavishly illustrated. The editors and publishers should be commended for having placed a high priority on pictorial material, as is all too rarely the case in such volumes. Colour plates of Axel Bolvig's murals would have won it still higher praise.

This book contains many very important papers, which exemplify the erudition and vitality of scholarship in the fields of learning it represents. While there is some way to go before actual dialogue is established between Viking-Age studies and the study of the later Middle Ages, this volume represents an important step in the right direction.

ORRI VÉSTEINSSON

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1. Saga-Book is published annually in the autumn. Submissions are welcomed from scholars, whether members of the Viking Society or not, on topics related to the history, literature, language and archaeology of Scandinavia in the Middle Ages. Articles offered will be assessed by all five editors, and where appropriate submitted to referees of international standing external to the Society. Contributions that are accepted will normally be printed within two years.
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3. Footnotes should be kept to a minimum. Whenever possible the material should be incorporated in the text instead, if necessary in parentheses. Footnotes should be on separate sheets, also with double spacing, and arranged in one continuous numbered sequence indicated by superior arabic numerals.
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