



# SAGA-BOOK

VOL. XL

VIKING SOCIETY FOR NORTHERN RESEARCH  
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON

2016

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ISSN: 0305-9219

Printed by Short Run Press Limited, Exeter

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RODULF AND UBBA.  
IN SEARCH OF A FRISIAN–DANISH VIKING

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It is strange that, while students of other Germanic peoples have been obsessed with the identity and office of their leaders, Viking scholars have said very little of such things—a literal case of Hamlet without princes of Denmark!

(Patrick Wormald 1982, 144)

**R**ODULF WAS A PROMINENT Frisian-based Danish Viking leader in the third quarter of the ninth century. When he was killed in 873 while trying to wrest lands for himself in northern Frisia it was reported by Archbishop Hincmar in the so-called *Annals of St Bertin* that he ‘had inflicted many evils on Charles’ realm’ (*AB* 873, 184). The East Frankish *Annals of Xanten* reported that he had ‘wasted’ many regions over the sea (*transmarinas regiones plurimas . . . vastavit*), as well as everywhere in the kingdom of the Franks, in ‘Gaul’ and in Frisia (*AX* 873, 32). Rodulf was the epitome of a much-travelled Viking.

This article attempts to reconstruct some of Rodulf’s life and deeds. It will be suggested that his activities were not limited to Frisia and Francia but probably also encompassed Ireland, where a Scandinavian leader called Rodlaibh (Rodulf) was active in the early 860s, and possibly even earlier. More tentatively, it will be proposed that Rodulf could well be the same man as one of the early leaders of the Danish Great Army in England, called Ubba ‘*dux* of the Frisians’. It could be objected that some of what follows is conjectural; it is, but it is reasoned conjecture based on much persuasive, though admittedly circumstantial, historical, geographical and linguistic evidence. To borrow J. R. R. Tolkien’s words in another Frisian context, this investigation starts ‘with the initial advantage that it is based on what is *there*, and on explaining it, not explaining it away, nor on dismissing words and names’ (1982, 37). No use is made of later sagas. If Rodlaibh in Ireland in, at least, 860–62 was not the Frisian Dane Rodulf and if Ubba ‘*dux* of the Frisians’ in England was not the man who was called *dux* Rodulf in Frankish sources, then who were they?

*Rodulf’s Frisian background*

Before looking at the evidence in detail it is important to highlight Rodulf’s Frisian–Danish background and his family links to former Danish kings.

We can reconstruct the involvement of Danes and Danish Vikings in Frisia in the ninth century from contemporary and reliable Frankish annals. These include the *Royal Frankish Annals* (*ARF*; Scholz 1972), the *Annals of St Bertin* (*AB*; Nelson 1991), the *East Frankish Annals of Fulda* (*AF*; Reuter 1992), the *Annals of Xanten* (*AX*) and the *Annals of Fontanelle* (*AFont*). Although these contemporary witnesses are not without the occasional bias, these biases do not affect the veracity of the historical facts discussed in this paper.<sup>1</sup>

Rodulf was a member of the family of two former joint kings of Denmark: the brothers Harald (often called Harald Klak) and Hemming Hálfðansson (Coupland 1998, 101–03). Harald and his brothers Reginfrid and Hemming had been ousted from the Danish throne in 813 by the sons of the former king Godfrid (*ARF* 810–13, 133–37). They tried unsuccessfully to regain their position the following year, when Reginfrid was killed (*ARF* 814, 141). Harald went to the new Frankish emperor Louis the Pious to ask for help. Louis sent him to Saxony to ‘wait for the proper time when he would be able to give him the help which Heriold had requested’ (*ARF* 814, 141; Scholz 1972, 99). With Louis’s support Harald did eventually manage to reclaim a share of the Danish kingdom in 819 (*ARF* 815, 152). But after having been baptised in 826 in Mainz, with Louis standing as his godfather (*ARF* 826, 160–70; *AX* 826, 67; Faral 166–90), Harald was expelled from Denmark by the ‘sons of Godfrid’ the next year (*ARF* 827, 169–70), and after another attempt to return in 828 was finally forced to give up his pretensions to the Danish throne and retreated to his benefice of Rüstingen in northern Frisia, which had been granted to him by Louis ‘so that he would be able to find refuge there with his possessions if he ever were in danger’ (Scholz 1972, 119). His brother Hemming was at some point granted the Frisian benefice of Walcheren, where he was killed in 837 along with a Frankish count called Eggihard while trying to repulse a Viking attack, quite likely made by his own sons (*AB* 837, 28; Thegan, 256). Harald and Hemming were what Coupland aptly calls ‘poachers turned gamekeepers’ (1998).

The name of Rodulf, as he will be called throughout this article, is an early Frankish version of the Old Norse name Hróðólfr/Hróðúlfr. He was the son of Harald Klak’s nephew, also called Harald (Coupland 1998, 91). The younger Harald was probably the son of Harald Klak’s brother Hemming Hálfðansson. He was definitely a son of one of Harald Klak’s

<sup>1</sup> For a more detailed historical overview and analysis of this Danish involvement in Frisia than can be provided here see Coupland 1998, Helton 2011, Maund 1995, Bauduin 2009, Lebecq 2011, Vogel 1906, de Vries 1923, Blok 1978 and Braat 1954.

brothers, and in 841 Louis the Pious's son Lothar I granted him the same Frisian island benefice of Walcheren that Hemming had held before him (*AB* 841, 39; Nelson 1991, 51). The two other known brothers of Harald Klak, called Anulo and Reginfrid, had died in dynastic fights in Denmark in 812 and 814 respectively (*ARF* 812, 814, 136, 141).

It seems certain that the younger Harald and a brother called Rorik were involved in some of the raids on Frisia in the 830s, although it is unlikely that Lothar I incited these raids as part of his long struggle with his father Louis for his rightful inheritance of the Frankish empire, as has been claimed by a number of historians (e.g. Coupland 1998, 90–93; Henstra 2012, 35; Lund 1989, 47; Lund 2005, 31; Nelson 1991, 51 n. 9). The 841 grant of Walcheren to Harald was probably made either early in the year when Lothar was desperately trying to prevent Charles the Bald from crossing the Seine and joining forces with Louis the German, or more likely in the aftermath of the bloody battle of Fontenoy on 25 June 841 where Lothar was defeated by Louis and Charles and after which he was frantically looking for allies to support him (*AB* 841 39; Nelson 1991, 51).<sup>2</sup> Harald is named by the royal Frankish chronicler Nithard (a grandson of Charlemagne) as one of Lothar's army leaders on the Moselle in March 842 and Nithard also mentions that Lothar had called in the Northmen to help him (Lauer 1926, 114, 122; Scholz 1972, 164, 167); he died sometime in the course of the next few years (Coupland 1998, 92).

In 850 Rorik, who had been in exile for a few years in Saxony in Louis the German's realm following some supposed disloyalty to Lothar, collected a great fleet and army and together and with his cousin Godfrid, Harald Klak's son, raided and captured the important, though by now declining, Frisian *emporium* of Dorestad. Lothar I had no choice but to grant the town, which he had held before with his brother Harald in the time of Louis the Pious, to Rorik (*AF* 850, 39; *AB* 850, 59; *AX* 850, 17; Coupland 1998, 96). His cousin Godfrid got nothing and his part of the fleet continued to raid in Flanders, the Artois, Frisia, around the mouth of the Rhine and on the river Scheldt (*AB* 850, 851, 59, 63; *AF* 850, 39; *AFont* 850, 85), until in October 852 he sailed up the Seine. The next year the West Frankish king Charles the Bald was forced to pay him a tribute to leave (*AB* 852, 853, 65–66; *AF* s.a. 850=852, 39–40; *AFont* 852, 89). Another part of the large Danish–Frisian fleet of 850, under an unnamed leader, decided to head for England where they plundered London and Canterbury but were eventually repulsed in 851 by the West-Saxon king

<sup>2</sup> I explore these issues in more detail in Lewis, forthcoming.

Æthelwulf and his sons Æthelbald and Æthelstan (*AB* 850, 59; *ASC*, s.a. 851). Bloodied but not defeated, they then probably moved on to Ireland where they were called ‘dark heathens’ by the Irish (Woolf 2007, 72).

Following the death of the Danish king Horik I in 854 in a civil war with some family pretenders to the throne who had been forced into exile, when most of the royal family had been killed (*AB* 854, 70; *AF* 854), the cousins then attempted to grab the Danish throne for themselves the next year. When they failed they returned to Frisia (*AB* 855, 70–71; Coupland 1998, 96). Rorik made another attempt on the Danish throne in 857 and had more success, because the young Danish king Horik II had to grant him some Danish territory ‘between the Eider and the sea’ (*AF* 857, 47; Coupland 1998, 97),<sup>3</sup> but at some point he lost these lands and was back in Frisia by 863 at the latest.

Given what we know of the activities and dates of Rodulf’s various relatives based in Frisia, it is probable that he was born sometime around 830, give or take five years. Given the location of his father Harald’s benefice on the Frisian island of Walcheren, which had previously belonged to Hemming Hálfðansson, it is quite possible that Rodulf was born on Walcheren itself or in one of the neighbouring counties.

By the early 860s most of coastal Frisia, which extended at the time from the southern limits of Danish Jutland to the borders of modern Belgium, was effectively ruled by Rodulf’s uncle Rorik until his death sometime after he visited Louis the German in Aachen in 873 (*AF* 873, 78; *AX* 873, 32), but before 882 when the Northman Godfrid (not to be confused with his probable relative Godfrid Haraldsson) was granted the Frisian benefice that Rorik had held before (*AF* 882, 99; Coupland 1998, 100). Rorik had been a very effective gamekeeper for the Franks. Coupland says: ‘During the twenty-three years in which Dorestad and its region are known to have been under his control, there were just two recorded Viking attacks’ (1998, 101). At various times Rorik had served four Frankish kings: Lothar I, Lothar II, Charles the Bald and Louis the German. Coupland gives a very positive account of Rorik (at least as viewed by the Franks). Vogel was less laudatory, supported perhaps, as we will see, by the accusation that Rorik had probably allowed some Northmen to raid through his territory in 863, as well as the fact that on his nephew Rodulf’s death in 873 Rorik was called *fel Christianitatis* ‘poison/gall of Christianity’ in the *Annals of Xanten* (*AX* 873, 32).

<sup>3</sup> This was probably the coastal province between the Eider and the Elbe called Ditmarsh (see La Cour 1930, 243).

But unlike his uncle Rorik, Rodulf was never trusted by the Frankish kings. It is likely, Coupland suggests, that he was at some time granted some kind of benefice, ‘perhaps one inherited from his father Harald on the latter’s death in the 840s’ (1998, 102). He rightly adds that this is speculation, but that ‘the very few facts at our disposal suggest that Rodulf had some sort of territorial power in Lothar’s kingdom’. Whatever the case, Rodulf was, at least in the Franks’ eyes, the black sheep of the family, ‘the unacceptable face of the Danish presence on Carolingian soil’ (Coupland 1998, 101). As will be shown below, it seems that despite his efforts to receive proper recognition in Frisia from the Franks, and a position like his relatives Rorik, the two Haralds and Hemming, Rodulf never did manage to turn from poacher to gamekeeper; he was and remained an unrepentant Viking.

### *Rodulf in contemporary Frankish sources*

Explicit mention of Rodulf occurs in just three years in contemporary and reliable Frankish sources: in 864, twice in 872 and on his death in northern Frisia in 873. In 864 he is mentioned in the Middle Kingdom ruled by Lothar II, later called Lotharingia. The *Annals of St Bertin*, written at this time by Archbishop Hincmar of Rheims, say (*AB* Waitz, s.a. 864, 67; Nelson 1991, 112):

Hlotharius, Hlotharii filius, de omni regno suo quattuor denarius ex omni manso colligens, summam denariorum cum multa pensione farina atque pecorum necnon vini ac siceræ Rodulfo Normanno, Herioldi filio, ac suis locarii nomine tribuit.

Lothar, son of Lothar, raised 4 *denarii* from every manse in his whole kingdom, and handed over the sum in cash, plus a large quantity of flour and livestock and also wine and cider, to the Northman Rodulf, son of Harald, and his men, all this being termed a payment for service.

The payment was called a *locarium*,

a term which was consistently used by Carolingian authors to refer to payments for mercenary service, as distinct from tribute payments, which were denoted by the word *tributum* . . . ; this suggests that Rodulf was in some sense entitled to the payment (Coupland 1998, 101–02).

The Frankish kings frequently used the Northmen as mercenaries in their family fights. A *locarium* was often paid in advance for services to be rendered, perhaps more often than for services that had already been carried out. To give just one of many examples, Nelson notes:

When Salomon and Robert fought each other on the Loire in 862 Salomon ‘hired twelve (Danish) ships by a legal hire-contract (*locario iure*)’, while

Robert 'paid 6,000 lb and exchanged hostages' to secure the services of other Northmen who had recently arrived in the area (1992, 204).

The question thus arises: did Lothar pay Rodulf for services he had already undertaken or was this a payment in advance? Nelson and de Vries, among others, suggest that it was Rodulf who had made a raid up the Rhine from Frisia to Cologne the year before (863), as reported in the *Annals of St Bertin* (AB 863, 95–96; Nelson 1991, 104) and the *Annals of Xanten* (AX s.a. 864, 22–23) (Nelson 1991, 112 n. 5; de Vries 1923, 192–93). This might well be true, because after the raid Archbishop Hincmar wrote to Hungarius, the bishop of Utrecht, saying he suspected that Rorik had encouraged the raid up the Rhine on Lothar's kingdom, and if this turned out to be the case the bishop was to impose a suitable penance on Rorik. He also wrote to Rorik himself warning him 'to give neither counsel nor assistance to the pagans against the Christians' (Flodoard 1881, 529, 541). In addition, in the *Annals of St Bertin* Hincmar wrote that these 'Danes' had 'followed Roric's advice and withdrew by the same way they had come', i.e. back through Frisia (AB 863, 95–96). Hincmar's suspicions regarding Rorik's complicity seem reasonable, particularly as Rorik controlled most of Frisia and it would be hard to imagine that a Danish fleet had passed and withdrawn underneath Rorik's nose without at least his tacit agreement. Clearly, though, this was an attack on Lothar II's realm and so the payment for mercenary services made by Lothar to Rodulf in 864 cannot have been made to pay for a previous attack on his own lands; in any case it was Lothar who had fought these Danes on the Rhine. An argument against Rodulf's involvement in this raid might be that the Danes first attacked Dorestad (which Rorik usually controlled) before proceeding up the Rhine to Xanten and an island in the Rhine near Neuss; but as de Vries persuasively argues, this can probably be explained by the fraught relationship between the 'gamekeeper' Rorik and his Viking nephew Rodulf (de Vries 1923, 194–95, 391–92). The *Annals of Xanten* also tell us that a part of the army then reached Cologne but lost one hundred men and had to retreat, and that one of the Viking leaders called Calbi was killed (AX s.a. 864, 21). It is highly probable therefore that in 864 Lothar was paying Rodulf for future mercenary services.

After 864 there is a gap of seven to eight years in the Frankish records when Rodulf is never mentioned. Then in 872 he is mentioned twice as accompanying his uncle Rorik to meet the West Frankish king Charles the Bald, first in January at Moustier-sur-Sambre in the province of Namur and again in October at Maastricht (AB 872, 184, 188; Nelson 1991, 177, 180). The annals tell us that Charles came expressly to meet Rorik and

Rodulf on both occasions, and Nelson suggests that these meetings were to ‘forestall the alliance of these warlords with Carloman’, Charles’s son, who had recently rebelled against his father (Nelson 1991, 177 n. 2; Nelson 1988, 113). This finds support in Hincmar’s comment about the October meeting, that Charles

gave a gracious reception to Roric who had proved loyal to him, but Rodulf he dismissed empty-handed, because he had been plotting acts of treachery and pitching his demands too high. Charles prepared his faithful men for defence against Rodulf’s treacherous attacks (Nelson 1991, 180).<sup>4</sup>

Two matters are of importance here. First, Charles suspected that Rodulf had been plotting treachery, possibly with Carloman, and he expected future ‘treacherous attacks’. Second, Rodulf had pitched ‘his demands too high’, which clearly suggests either too high a *locarium* or, more likely in this instance, extravagant demands for an extensive Frankish-granted benefice, probably in Frisia. That Rodulf wanted a large territory of his own in Frisia is clear, because in the next year, just as Charles the Bald had suspected, Rodulf tried to grab a territory in Oostergo in northern Frisia, and was killed in the attempt. This is reported by the *Annals of St Bertin*, the *Annals of Fulda* and the *Annals of Xanten*. In the *Annals of St Bertin*, Hincmar wrote that Rodulf ‘who had inflicted many evils on Charles’s realm, was slain in the realm of Louis [the German] with 500 and more of his accomplices’ (AB 873, 193; Nelson 1991, 184). The East Frankish *Annals of Fulda* report what happened in greater detail (AF 873, 80; Reuter 1992, 72). To summarise: in June 873 Rodulf (called Hruodolfus, Ruodolfus or Hruodulfus according to the manuscript), ‘a certain Northman of royal stock, who had often raided Charles’s kingdom with pillage and arson’ arrived with a fleet in Oostergo in northern Frisia, which was now in Louis the German’s realm, demanding that the inhabitants pay him tribute. When the Frisians refused, claiming their adherence to Louis, Rodulf ‘invaded their lands’ and made ‘war against them’. A long description of the subsequent battle follows in which Rodulf was killed with ‘eight hundred men’. After his death Rodulf’s Danes ‘took refuge in a certain building’ surrounded by the Frisians, but were eventually allowed to leave ‘unwounded for their ships’ after they had given hostages, returned all the treasure plundered (when the hostages were released) and made an oath never to return to King Louis’s kingdom. They then ‘departed with great

<sup>4</sup> For the Frankish geopolitical context and interpretations of these Frisian/Danish meetings with Charles the Bald see Bauduin 2009, 179–87 and de Vries 1923, 200–05.

shame and loss, and without their *dux*, to their own country'. The *Annals of Xanten* tell a similar story, but add the facts that Rodulf (Ruodoldus) was a nephew of Rorik and that he had previously 'wasted' many regions over the sea (*transmarinas regiones plurimas . . . vastavit*), as well as everywhere in the kingdom of the Franks, in 'Gaul' and in Frisia (AX 873, 33). This annal also tells us that *Quamvis baptizatus esset, caninam vitam digne morte finivit* 'Even though he had been baptised he ended his dog's life with a fitting death' (Coupland 1998, 101).

It is important to note that Rodulf is called not only a Northman 'of royal stock' by the *Annals of Fulda*, which of course he was, being a member of Hemming Hálfðansson's and Harold Klak's family, but also a *dux* by the *Annals of Xanten*, while Rorik is called a *rex*. Even more interesting and relevant is what these contemporary Frankish annalists tell us about what Rodulf had done before his death. He had 'often' made attacks on Charles the Bald's West Frankish kingdom, as well as in other parts of Gaul (possibly in Aquitaine), and had devastated almost all Frisia (*pene totam Frisiam*) (AX 873, 33). This statement cannot refer to his unsuccessful 873 attack on Oostergo when he was killed. Yet we also hear that he had raided many 'regions over the sea', which given the context here can only mean Britain and/or Ireland. Coupland says this report 'presumably' means 'in the British Isles', which include Ireland (1998, 102). Steenstrup (1876, 125), de Vries (1923, 179–81) and Vogel (1906, 196) long ago suggested Rodulf's presence in Ireland. It is these probable earlier activities that should now be explored.

### *Rodlaibh in Ireland*

A Viking leader called Rodlaibh, which is an Irish form of the Old Norse name Hróðólfr/Hróðúlfr (Rodulf), is reported in the *Annals of the Four Masters* (AFM) and the *Fragmentary Annals of Ireland* (FAI) as being active in and around Waterford and on the Rivers Barrow and Nore from 860 to 862, and perhaps even as early as 855. As previously mentioned, Steenstrup, de Vries and Vogel identified this Rodlaibh with the Frisian Dane Rodulf, as more recently have Kelly and Maas (1995, 30–32; 1999, 132–37). We should start with what is most definite. For 862 the *Annals of the Four Masters* report: 'The base of Rauðulfr [*longphuirt Rothlaibh*] was torn apart by Cennétig son of Gáethíne, lord of Laigis, on the fifth of the Ides of September; and Conall Ultach and Luirgnen were killed, and other multitudes along with them' (AFM s.a. 860.11=862; Downham 2010, App. 1). The *Annals of the Four Masters* is an early modern compilation which includes 'some ninth-century parts from the so-called "Chronicle

of Ireland” (Rowe 2012, 44; see also Cunningham 2010). Given that the information found in this annal is very specific, it can probably be relied on for the identity of the Viking leader involved. The *Fragmentary Annals of Ireland* are a ‘mid-eleventh century compilation of earlier monastic annals, expanded with entire narratives’ (Rowe 2012, 57).<sup>5</sup> They report under the same year, 862: ‘Cerball son of Dúnläng and Cennétig son of Gáethíne (i.e. the son of Cerball’s sister) defeated Rodolb’s fleet [*longus Rodlaibh*], which had come from *Lochlann* shortly before that; and Conall Ultach was killed there, and Luirgnén, and many others’ (*FAI*, §308, 862). Clearly the core of this annal drew on the same source as the *Four Masters*; the addition of Cerball the king of Osraige (Ossory) to the winning side is perhaps to be expected, as this part of the annals is very much concerned with Cerball’s family (see Radner 1978; Downham 2005 and 2013), but there is no reason at all why the compiler should have invented Rodlaibh/Rodulf’s name.

These two rather short annalistic reports suggest that Rodlaibh’s ship-base and at least part of his fleet was destroyed on 9 September 862, either by Cerball the king of Osraige in league with Cennétig the king of Loígis or by Cennétig alone. The location of this protected ship-base (*longphort*) was most probably Dunrally on the bank of the River Barrow at Vicarstown, Co. Laois (Kelly and Maas, 1995), but the Viking base at Woodstown, Co. Waterford is possible; both *longphuirt* were probably Rodlaibh’s bases. Dunrally lies eighty kilometres upriver from the sea and the name is probably an Anglicisation of *Dún Rothlaibh*, the Fort of Rodulf (Kelly and Maas 1995, 30). Even before the discovery of the base at Woodstown in 2003, Kelly and Maas had suggested that such a base must exist to protect the Vikings’ rear in the Waterford harbour area (Kelly and Mass 1999). Yet although of interest for Irish history, whether it was the *longphort* at Dunrally or the one at Woodstown that was destroyed when Rodlaibh fled is of no great consequence for present purposes.

Something of the earlier history of Rodlaibh in Ireland can be reconstructed. It is likely that it was his fleet which raided up the River Nore towards Kilkenny in 860, a fleet which, according to both the *AFM* and the *FAI*, was defeated by Cerball at *Achad mic Erclaigh*, identified as ‘Agha, alias St John’s, near the city of Kilkenny’ (*AFM*, 858.6=860; *FAI*, §277, 860; Kelly and Maas 1999, 133). In an event that can probably be dated to 861 (but possibly as early as 856/7) Rodulf

<sup>5</sup> A mid-eleventh-century compilation of the early annals and chronicles that make up the *FAI* was proposed by their latest editor Joan Radner (1976), but this is far from certain.

(‘Roduilbh’) is named again. His forces were apparently defeated by Cerball at Slievemargy, close to the River Barrow in Co. Laois, three miles from Carlow town, near the important monastery of Killeshin. Earlier on the same river raid they had plundered the monastery of Lethglenn, only six miles downstream of Killeshin, where it is said they had taken hostages and killed a great number of the community (*FAI*, §281, 861). There is one final undated and very saga-like entry in the *FAI* (§249) referring to Rodulf (‘Rodolbh’), when his ‘armies’ came ‘to plunder Osraige’ but were defeated by Cerball at Áth Muiceda, which is unidentified but was probably on the River Nore towards Kilkenny. Whatever its worth (which can be debated), as Kelly has kindly pointed out to me, this entry is conventionally dated to around 855, given what comes before and after it; if this date is correct it would imply that Rodlaibh had been either permanently or intermittently in Ireland for seven years.

But what are we to make of events after the destruction of Rodlaibh’s ship-base on 9th September 862? Kelly and Maas, who confidently identify Rodlaibh with the Frisian Dane Rodulf, conclude (1999, 136):

His Irish career ends with the destruction of his important base on the River Barrow [i.e. at Dunrally] in September, 862—four months before the career of the continental Rodulf appears to have begun with the raid up the Rhine in January 863. The coincidence of the names and timing of these activities may suggest that we are dealing with one and the same person.

However long Rodlaibh was in Ireland, I follow Steenstrup, de Vries, Vogel and Kelly and Maas in viewing him as most probably identical with the Frisian Dane Rodulf. This can never be proved beyond any reasonable doubt, but the names are identical, the dates in Ireland and back in Frisia fit exactly, and we know from the *Annals of Xanten* that the Frisian-based Rodulf raided ‘many regions over the sea’ as well as on the continent.

There is perhaps one Irish fly in this Frisian ointment, and that is the reference in *FAI* §308 to Rodulf’s Northmen having recently come from *Lochlann*. The word *Lochlann* is usually taken to refer to somewhere in present-day southern Norway, but is only used from the eleventh century when clearly referring to the kingdom of Norway at that time (for example see Etchingham 2007 for a discussion of the possible location of *Lochlann*), which certainly implies a late date of compilation. If the mention of *Lochlann* has any worth at all here, which is doubtful, it would tell against an identification of Rodlaibh with the Frisian Dane Rodulf; but it needs to be stressed that the whole issue of the location of *Lochlann*

(and indeed of the earlier term *Laithlinn*) remains highly contested and, as yet, unresolved.

*Vikings on the Seine 865 to 866*

Whether, as Nelson, de Vries, Kelly and Maas and others have suggested, Rodulf was responsible for the raid up the Rhine towards Cologne in early 863, he was definitely paid a large mercenary fee (*locarium*) by Lothar II in 864. It has already been suggested that this could have been for future services. Certainly Lothar had not paid for a raid on his own territory and in the time immediately prior to 864 there is no other Viking raid that could be put down to Rodulf acting at Lothar's behest. Various contemporary Frankish annals tell us that Rodulf had 'often' attacked Charles the Bald's West-Frankish kingdom. We do not know the precise significance of 'often', but it was clearly more than once. I will not speculate about Rodulf's possible involvement in various earlier attacks on West Francia (see de Vries 1923, 182–92 for some interesting conjectures on this); we should note, however, that a raid by Northmen up the River Seine in Charles's kingdom in 865–66 was the last such attack on his northern realm for a decade. As will be seen, what is extremely interesting about this particular raid is that Hincmar of Rheims in the *Annals of St Bertin* explicitly links it with Frisia (*AB* 866, Nelson 1991, 131–32).

Northmen with fifty ships arrived on the Seine in the summer of 865 (*AB* 865). Charles tried without much success to defend his lands against them, but while *en route* to Quierzy he received the news that on 18 October the

Northmen had got into the monastery of St-Denis, where they stayed for about twenty days, carrying off booty from the monastery to their ships each day, and after much plundering without encountering resistance from anyone at all, they returned to their camp not far from the monastery. [Thereafter] the Northmen who had sacked St-Denis became ill with various ailments. Some went mad, some were covered in sores, some discharged their guts with a watery flow through their arses: and so they died. After dispatching troops to keep guard against those Northmen, Charles returned to Senlis to celebrate Christmas. (Nelson 1991, 128–29)

Having recovered somewhat over the winter,

Northmen sailed up the Seine to the fort at Melun. Charles's squadrons advanced on both banks of the Seine, and the Northmen disembarked to attack what looked like the larger and stronger squadron, commanded by Robert and Odo. The Northmen put them to flight even without a battle, and returned to their own people, their ships loaded with booty. (Nelson 1991, 129)

Charles then had to agree to pay them off, 'at the price of 4,000 lbs of silver, according to their scales'. While the Northmen waited,

Charles collected the amount he had agreed to pay those Northmen, both in silver and in wine. Furthermore, any slaves who had been carried off by the Northmen and escaped from them after the agreement was made were either handed back or ransomed at a price set by the Northmen; and if any one of the Northmen was killed, whatever price the Northmen demanded for him was paid . . . In June the Northmen moved from the island near the monastery of St-Denis and sailed down the Seine until they reached a place suitable for making repairs to their ships and for building new ones, and there they awaited the payment of the sum due to them. Charles marched to the place called Pîtres with workmen and carts to complete the fortifications, so that the Northmen might never again be able to get up the Seine beyond that point. In July the Northmen reached the sea. One group of them returned for a while to the Ijssel district [in Frisia] and enjoyed everything they wanted, except that they did not manage to make an open alliance with Lothar. (Nelson 1991, 130–31)

The Ijssel district to which the Northmen returned could be one of two places in Frisia: either the area around the river called the *Hollandse Ijssel*, which enters the sea quite near Walcheren, or, further north, the area around the *Gelderse Ijssel* which discharges into the Ijsselmeer, previously known as the *Zuiderzee* (see van den Bergh 1949, 39–43, 85–88, 122–23, 136). We cannot be sure which area of Frisia the Seine Northmen returned to in 866, but the fact that only the area south of the *Gelderse Ijssel* was in Lothar's realm (the northern part belonging to Louis the German), while the whole area along and around the *Hollandse Ijssel* was a part of Lothar's kingdom, and the fact that the *Hollandse Ijssel* is quite near both Walcheren and Dorestad, the centres of power of these Frisian Danes, maybe suggests the *Hollandse Ijssel* as more likely (see Vogel 1906, 217 n. 2 and de Vries 1923, 198–201). In addition the returning Northmen had failed to get recognition from Lothar, which might also support the view that they had returned to the *Hollandse Ijssel*.

No name is given for the leader of this lucrative (though costly) raid up the Seine, but clearly 'one group of them' had 'returned' to Frisia in July 866, where Lothar II had not been willing to 'make an open alliance' with whoever was the leader of this group, and so after 'a while' it clearly moved on elsewhere. The suspicion must arise that the Viking leader concerned was Rodulf. He had demanded and got a mercenary fee from Lothar in 864, possibly in advance as I have suggested, and it is possible that after raiding the territory of Lothar's uncle Charles in 865–66, perhaps as part of Lothar's continuing struggle with Charles, Rodulf had returned to Frisia expecting an 'open' grant of territory in Frisia, but Lothar had

been unwilling to comply. Nelson, the editor and translator of the *Annals of St Bertin*, writes: ‘Apparently these Northmen wanted to be granted land in Frisia, as previous groups had been’. She then refers to the 841 grant of Walcheren to the younger Harald (Rodulf’s father) and the grant of Dorestad to Rodulf’s uncle Rorik in 850 (Nelson 1991, 866, 132 n. 12). The fact that one of the Viking leaders on the Seine in 866 returned to Frisia in July, where he ‘wanted to be granted land’ by Lothar, would suggest previous dealings between this Northman and Lothar. In her biography of Charles the Bald, Nelson also rightly points out that the Northmen’s raid up the Seine in 865–66 was the last such raid on Charles’s northern heartland for another ten years (1992, 213), probably because Charles’s defensive measures were making such raids increasingly difficult and costly for the Northmen (see Coupland 2004).

Following this particular raid in 865–66, Nelson says: ‘Some Vikings went back to Frisia, while most of them seem to have turned their attention to England’ (1992, 213), and adds that the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (e.g. ASC A, s.a. 866) says that ‘a great army came to the land of the English’ (1992, 213 n. 128). Similarly, Smyth maintains that some of these Seine Vikings ‘undoubtedly headed for Eastern England to join the full-scale invading force bent on the conquest of that land’ (1995, 19). Abels, Sawyer and McLeod have suggested the same (1998, 114; 1971, 101 and 1998, 92; 2014, 132). De Vries also clearly identified part of this Frisian Seine fleet as coming to England and being a part of the early Great Army, and suggested that Ubba was its leader (1923, 198–201, 393). I believe that all these historians were right in suggesting that at least one part of the Danish army and fleet leaving the Seine in the summer 866 subsequently became a part of the early Great Army in England—whether this was the part that did ‘go back’ to Frisia or the part that did not, or both.

### *Ubba ‘dux of the Frisians’ in England*

Finally we can turn our attention to England. Was the Frisian Dane Rodulf also the *dux* of the Frisians called Ubba in Anglo-Saxon sources?

According to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* the Danish Great Army arrived in East Anglia in late autumn 865—the year at this time in the *Chronicle* started in September (see Beaven 1918). Asser called it a ‘great fleet of pagans’ (Keynes and Lapidge 1983, 238 n. 44). They over-wintered there and ‘made peace’ with the East Angles, who gave them horses (ASC A, 866). Probably in about October 866 they ‘went over the mouth of the Humber to York city in Northumbria’ (ASC A, s.a. 867) where according to Symeon of Durham’s early twelfth-century compilation the *Historia*

*Dunelmensis ecclesie* (HCD), they entered York on the 1st November 866 (Rollason 1998; *Symeon of Durham*, xv–xcv, xlii–xliv; Stevenson 1858, 654). All the mentions of the Great Army going ‘over the mouth of the Humber’, and in the version of the late tenth-century Anglo-Saxon chronicler Æthelweard being ‘transported across the River Humber’ (CA 1962, IV:2, §35), coupled with the fact that these Danes would scarcely have risked leaving their valuable longships behind in East Anglia, suggest, as Smyth put it, that it is ‘likely that the greater part of the host sailed north to the Humber in the all-important longships’ (1995, 21). It might well be that another part of the army made its way overland using the horses they had extorted from the East Angles, because the twelfth-century *Historia regum* says they ‘marched’ to York (Stevenson 1855, 488). After reaching and occupying York in early November it seems that over the next few months the Danes plundered throughout Northumbria as far as the Tyne and then returned to York (Stevenson 1855, 654). The only source which mentions the name of a Danish leader in 865–66 is Æthelweard’s Latin *Chronicon* (CA, IV: 2, §35; Rowe 2012, 53):

Enimvero Eðered successit in regnum post obitum fratris sui Æðelbyrhti. In eodem anno aduectæ sunt classes tyranni Iguares ab aquilone in terram Anglorum, hiemaueruntque inter Orientales Anglos . . . Scilicet post annum ipse exercitus, relicta orientali parte, transfretatusque est fluiuium Humbre in Nordhymbriorum prouinciam ad Euoracam urbem.

Æthelred succeeded to the kingdom after the death of his brother Æthelbyrht. In the same year, the fleets of the tyrant Inwær [‘Iguares’] arrived in the land of the English from the north, and they wintered among the East Angles . . . After a year, that army, leaving the eastern area, was transported across the River Humber into the province of the Northumbrians, and to the city of York.

Frank Stenton believed that this Iguare (Inwær) was the original leader of the Great Army (1971, 246 n. 2):

The form Igwares proves that the statement comes from an Old English source, and there is no reason to doubt that Æthelweard derived it from the very early manuscript of the *Chronicle* which was the basis of his work.

I can see no reason to disagree. The fact is that there is as yet no mention of the Danish ‘king’ Healfdene, who probably arrived somewhat later, or indeed of Ubba. Turning to Ubba, in the *Historia de sancto Cuthberto*, compiled in the tenth or eleventh century in Chester-le-Street or Durham but based on earlier sources (Craster 1954; *HSC*), we read (*HSC*, c. 10, 50 and 51):

Nam Ubba dux Fresciorum cum magno Danorum exercitu in regnum eius uenit, et in sanctos die palmarum apud Eboracum ciuitatem applicuit.

For Ubba duke of the Frisians, with a great army of Danes, came into the kingdom and on Palm Sunday approached the city of York.

Johnson-South, the latest English editor and translator of the *HSC*, has argued persuasively that this mention of Ubba is likely to be historically reliable (*HSC*, 4–8). Three things are of great interest. First, Ubba ‘came into the kingdom’ of Northumbria probably a little before 23 March 867 (Palm Sunday), when he ‘approached the city of York’ (*HCD* gives the date as 21 March, see Arnold 1882, i 55). The *HSC* then goes on to tell the story of how the Northumbrian kings Ælle and Osberht had tried to recapture York but were defeated and both killed by the ‘enemy’, though Ubba is not mentioned again by name. This may mean that Ubba only arrived in Northumbria in the spring of 867, and thus it is quite possible that he had come to join the earlier Danish warlord Iguuar/Inwær who had probably first taken York in the previous November. Of course we cannot preclude the possibility that Ubba had been with Inwær since November, but nowhere in the sources is there any support for this. Second, Ubba is said to be leading an army of Danes. That these forces in Northumbria in 867 are called Danes is no great surprise—whenever an ethnic name is given to any part or all of the Great Army they are always called Danes, or occasionally Danes and Frisians. But the identification of Ubba as a leader of Danes is important. Third, Ubba is called *dux* of the Frisians. As Rowe rightly says, this ‘need not mean that Ubba was a Frisian himself; control of Frisia was often in Danish hands at this time’ (2012, 62). Bremmer, the Dutch historian of the Frisians in Anglo-Saxon England, maintains (1981, 78):

Ubba *dux Fresonum* . . . cannot have been a Frisian himself, and it seems doubtful for the men whose leader he was. It might be possible, though, that his men were not Frisian proper, but had made a name for themselves in Frisia . . . Now Ubba might have come to England by way of Frisia.

As discussed earlier, leaders such as Harald Klak, Hemming Hálfansson, Rorik, Godfrid Haraldsson, the younger Harald and, of course, Rodulf himself were all ethnic Danes based in Frisia. So there can be little doubt that Ubba was ethnically a Danish leader who had been operating in Frisia and is now found wreaking havoc in Northumbria—leading an army of ‘Danes’. This is not the only place where we find Ubba of the Great Army called a *dux* of the Frisians. In the *HSC* we read (c. 14, 52, 53):

Igitur exercitus ille quem Ubba dux Fresonum et Healfdene rex Denorum in Anglicam terram adduxit in tres partes diuisus est; una Eboracam ciuitatem reedificauit, terram in circuuitu coluit, et ibi remansit. Alia uero quae terram Merciorum occupauit, et tertia quae terram Australium Saxonum inuasit, per tres annos multa mala egerunt omnesque regii generis interfecerunt, praetor

solum Elfredum patrem Eadwardi regis, qui his tribus annis in Glestigiens palude latuit in magna penuria.

The army which Ubba duke of the Frisians and Healfdene king of the Danes had led into England divided into three parts; one rebuilt the city of York, cultivated the surrounding land and stayed there. The second, however, which occupied the land of the Mercians, and the third, which invaded the land of the South Saxons, committed many crimes over the next three years and slew all those of royal stock excepting only Alfred, the father of King Edward, who for three years hid in Glastonbury marsh in great want.

Here we find a retrospective notice that *dux* Ubba and *rex* Healfdene ‘had led [the army] into England’ plus a notice that the Great Army (at Repton in 874) ‘divided into three parts’. The *Chronicle* names one of the leaders at Repton as Healfdene, who ‘went with some of the raiding-army into Northumbria’, and others as ‘Guthrum, and Oscytel and Anund’ who ‘went from Repton to Cambridge’, mirroring the *HSC*’s ‘invaded the land of the South Saxons’ (*ASC* A, 874). The *Chronicle* mentions the army splitting into two, not three. If there were three, who it was that led the third part ‘which occupied the land of the Mercians’ is not known.

Lastly, probably taking information from the *HSC*, or using the same early sources that lay behind it, the early twelfth-century *Annales Lindisfarnenses et Dunelmenses* also say that Ubba, the duke of the Frisians (*Ubba duce Fresonum*) ‘not long after Palm Sunday’ slaughtered ‘almost the entire Northumbrian nation with its kings’ (Rollason 1998, xlvi; Levison 1961, s.a. 868, 484). These Northumbrian-composed annals also report that in 855, when we know from the *Chronicle* that a Danish force was on the Isle of Sheppey in Kent (*ASC* A, 855), ‘an army of pagans, namely of Danes and Frisians, led by dukes [*ducibus*] Halfdene, Ubba and Inguar, landed on the island of Sheppey’ (Levison 1961, s.a. 855, 484). As Rowe suggests, this could well be a conflation of sources and a confusion of dates (2012, 80–81), but if not it would be a matter of immense interest—one, unfortunately, that I will not be able to explore here.

The earliest source mentioning Ubba is the French cleric Abbo of Fleury’s *Passio Sancti Eadmundi*, written between 985 and 988 when Abbo was at Ramsey abbey in Huntingdonshire (see Hervey 1907). Here he is called both Ubba and Hubba and is linked with Inguar. Abbo wrote that the Danes’ two *duces* were Hinguar and Hubba, who were both of equal depravity, although he suggests Hinguar was the senior, and that it was the two of them who killed King Edmund in East Anglia in November 869 (Hervey 1907, 19, 21). Abbo says he got his information from Archbishop Dunstan while at Ramsey and that Dunstan had heard it as a

young man from the old armour-bearer of King Edmund when he told the story to King Æthelstan (Rowe 2012, 52–53; Cavill 2005). Abbo’s story tells how, to use Whitelock’s words, ‘Hinguar and Hubba first came to Northumbria, which they overran. Leaving Hubba there, Hinguar came from the north to the east with a fleet’ (Whitelock 1969, 219). Whether Ubba was with Hinguar when he killed Edmund is not clear; most other sources giving a name mention just Inguar as the culprit. What is interesting here is Abbo’s statement that Hinguar had left Ubba (presumably in charge) in Northumbria when he sailed east ‘with a great fleet’ to East Anglia: ‘Having raked together their booty, Inguar left on the spot Hubba, his associate in cruelty’ (Hervey 1907, 20).

After the defeat of the Northumbrians in late March 867, the Danes installed a client-king called Egbert (*HCD*, Stevenson 1855, 652; Coxe 1841, 295) and left for Nottingham in Mercia later the same year (*ASC A*, 868=867), before returning to York for a year: ‘Here the raiding-army went back to York city and stayed there one year’ (*ASC A*, 869=868). The army left York again for East Anglia in 869 and over-wintered at Thetford (*ASC A*, s.a. 870). According to the *Historia Dunelmensis ecclesie* (*Symeon of Durham*, II.6, 98 and 99):

Inde altero anno diuertens, duce omnium crudelissimo Inguar Orientales Anglos inuadit, sanctissimumque regem Eadmundum diueris penis laceratum cum suo pontifice Hunberto peremit.

It [the Viking army] left in the following year and, under its most cruel of all leaders Inguar, it invaded the East Angles, and killed the most holy King Edmund, on whom had been inflicted various tortures, and with him his bishop Hunberht.

The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* says the Danish army ‘rode across Mercia’ to reach Thetford in 869 (*ASC A*, s.a. 870), whereas Abbo says Inguar sailed to East Anglia. They could of course have done both. But if Inguar did leave Ubba in York in 869 it is unlikely that he was with Inguar when he killed King Edmund in East Anglia in November of that year.

Also originating in Ramsey abbey is Byrhtferth’s *Life of St Oswald*, written around the year 1000 (Lapidge 2009). Byrhtferth was a former pupil of Abbo of Fleury (Rowe 2012, 56). Oswald had founded the abbey and his *Life* says that his own grandfather had come to England with the ship-army and that it had been led by ‘Huba and Hinuar’ (Lapidge 2009, 17).<sup>6</sup> Wormald commented that ‘this looks like oral

<sup>6</sup> Actually the *Life* refers to the father of Oswald’s uncle Archbishop Oda of Canterbury.

tradition of a pretty high order' (1992, 143), although others seriously question Byrhtferth's general reliability (see Smyth 1995). All other mentions of Ubba in England are derived from the sources already mentioned, and they will not be discussed here as they provide no more information; however, one suggestion that Ubba died in 878 in Devon will be considered below.

To summarise what we know about Ubba '*dux* of the Frisians' in England: He probably arrived in England in early 867 and took part in the defeat of the Northumbrians at York around the 21st or 23rd of March. Just conceivably he had already been with Inguar in York in November 866, although there is no evidence for this. In either case, if Ubba was one of the Viking leaders on the Seine in 866 (here suggested to be identical with the Frisian Dane Rodulf) there was ample time for him to get from the Seine or even from Frisia (having spent some time there) to York before March 867 or even by November 866. Ubba was probably with the Great Army at Nottingham in 867–68—for what it is worth, the twelfth-century Anglo-Norman Geoffrey Gaimar says he was (2009, 157)—before returning to York late in 868. He also seems to have still been in England in 869, either having been left behind by Inguar in York or possibly even being present and jointly responsible for the killing of King Edmund in November 869. And then—he is gone! There is not a single mention of Ubba in England after this date. It is telling that Ubba is absent from the long list of Danish kings and jarls given by the *Chronicle* as participating in the many battles the Danes had with the Mercians and West Saxons in 871, when we hear of the Danish 'king' Healfdene for the first time in the *Chronicle*. Inguar had disappeared by then too. Æthelweard says he died 'in the same year' as he killed King Edmund (*CA*, IV: 2, §36), that is, in late 869 or 870, although a popular theory would equate him with the Viking king Ímar of Dublin and have him returning to Ireland in 870, after which he died in 873 (Dumville 2005; Downham 2007, 64–67; Smyth 1977, 224–39; Woolf 2007, 71–73).

### *Scaldingi*

It has thus far been suggested that Ubba, a *dux* of the Frisians, was probably a Danish chieftain who had been active in Frisia before his arrival in England leading an army of 'Danes'. Additional, though not critical, support for the view that at least some of the early Danish leaders of the Great Army came from Frisia is the name *Scaldingi*, which might mean people of the *Scald*, i.e. the region of the River Scheldt in Frisia (in present day Dutch Zeeland and Belgium). It is the name given three times in the

*Historia de sancto Cuthberto* when referring to the leaders of the Great Army. The equation of *Scaldingi* with Danes from the river and estuary of the Scheldt, where Walcheren is situated, was supported by Lappenberg (1834, 212), Pertz (*AL*, 506), Storm (1878, 81), Steenstrup (1878, 178, 283) and Lieberman (1925, 95). Steenstrup wrote: ‘It has been shown . . . that the Vikings in England came from Frisland, and about this time a name for Vikings in England was *Scaldingi*, supposed, perhaps rightly, to denote warriors from the Scheldt (*Scaldis*) (1878, 178)’. Later noting an entry in the *Annals of Lindisfarne* for 911 referring to the Northman Rollo (also probably Old Norse *Hróðólfr/Hróðúlfr*) taking possession of Normandy, ‘*Scaldi* Rollo duce possident Normanniam’ (*AL*, 506), Steenstrup stated: ‘*Scaldingi* is the name of the Danish-English Vikings of the Scheldt (1878, 283).’ More recently Woolf has suggested the same (2007, 72):

The term *Scaldingi*, used in several places in the *Historia* as the descriptor for what the *Chronicle* calls *mycel here*, ‘the Great Army’, seems to mean ‘people from the River Scheldt’. This river is called *Scald* in Old English and Old East Flemish, and *Scaldis* in Latin, and may indicate that, within Frisia, Ubba came specifically from the island of Walcheren which lies in the mouth of the Scheldt. Walcheren was occupied by Danes for much of the ninth century, following the Frankish King Lothar’s grant of the island to the exiled Danish Prince Harold in 841. Lothar’s intention was that Harold would act as a poacher come gamekeeper and defend the coast against other Scandinavian raiders.

Except for Woolf’s understandable confusion of ‘Prince’ Harald Klak with his nephew the younger Harald (a prevalent though probably mistaken view, see for example Vogel 1906 and Maund 1995) this is all correct. Yet earlier Woolf writes that ‘Ímar was probably a Dane and possibly originated from the Danish colony on the island of Walcheren in the mouth of the River Scheldt’ (2004, 95). So Woolf’s argument that the ‘Dane’ Ímar (i.e. Inguar) came from Walcheren (2004) is replaced by his suggestion that it was Ubba who came from there (2007). I concur with the latter view, or at least agree that Ubba came from Frisia. Woolf regards ‘Ímar’, the Scandinavian ‘king’ who arrived in Ireland in 857 (at the latest) (*AU* 857), as being identical with Inguar, the early leader of the Great Army in England (Woolf 2007, 71–73; also Downham 2007, 1, 64–67). There is in fact not the slightest evidence that ‘Irish’ Ímar or even ‘English’ Inguar (whether or not they were the same person) came from Walcheren or even from Frisia in general. Downham’s and Woolf’s ideas on the ultimate origins of Ímar/Inguar differ. Before Ireland, Downham says ‘it is perhaps wiser to accept that we do not know what these [origins] really were’ (2007, 16). Woolf probably rightly links

the dark heathens' arrival in Ireland in 851 (*AU* 851.3) with the activities of the Danish fleet in Frisia and England in 850–51 discussed earlier (2007, 71–72), but then, like others, he erroneously links these 851 'dark heathens' both with the Dublin Scandinavian king Ímar and the Danish Great Army in England in the late 860s (Woolf 2007, 71–73; Downham 2007, 64–67; Smyth 1977. See Etchingham 2013 and forthcoming for the arguments against this view).

There are three references in the *Historia de sancto Cuthberto* to the *Scaldingi*: in chapters 7, 11 and 12 (*HSC* 2002, 49, 50, 51, 53). Chapter 11 simply refers to the time before the *Scaldingi* arrived in England. Chapter 7 says that (long) after the death of the seventh-century Northumbrian king Ecgfrith 'Scaldingi came and crushed York and devastated the land'. Certainly Ubba, the *dux* of the Frisians, was heavily involved in these events, and *Scaldingi* as a locational identifier would make complete sense for him and his army, but Inguar is heavily implicated in these early events in Northumbria too, even though the Northumbrian *HSC* never once mentions Inguar (unlike Ubba and Healfdene) in Northumbria, nor anywhere else for that matter, which might make us question the real importance and length of his involvement there even though Æthelweard's testimony suggests it was he who initially took York in late 866. There is no evidence that Inguar was from the River Scheldt or even from Frisia, and this may account for Woolf's substitution of Ubba for the Dane 'Ímar'. Chapter 12 of the *HSC*, having yet again touched on the defeat and death of the Northumbrian kings Ælle and Osberht in early 867, says that 'the *Scaldingi* slew nearly all the English in the southern and the northern parts [of England]'. This report of the 'slaying' of the southern and northern English after 867 can only refer to the various campaigns of the undoubtedly Danish Great Army in general, and thus it is not necessarily specifically connected with Ubba the *dux* of the Frisians or any other specifically Frisian Dane.

An alternative suggestion for the meaning of *Scaldingi* was proposed by historians of the Anglo-Saxons, Arnold (1882, 1, 200, 202), Plummer (1889, ii, 65), Stevenson (1904, 218, n. 1) and Collingwood (1908, 124), followed later by Binns (1963, 49–50; 1965, 184) and Frank (1997, 127). This theory is that *Scaldingi* is a remembrance by the compiler of the *HSC*, or more likely one of his sources, of the Frisian/Danish origins of the first Anglo-Saxons, as epitomised by the Old English poems *Beowulf* and *Widsið*, which they assumed to be well known in England at the time when the *HSC* was compiled (cf. Anderson 1999). Legendary events and peoples referred to in these poems were located in Frisia and Danish Jutland

in the fifth and sixth centuries, and two of the most significant people were called Healfdene and Hroþulf (Hróðólfr/Hróðúlfr, or Hrólfkraki in Norse sources), who were related but of different generations, and both of whom were members of the Danish royal ‘clan’ of the *Scyldingas/Skjöldungar*, with a legendary founder called *Scyld*. W. H. Stevenson wrote: ‘[*Scaldingi*] is . . . probably a somewhat corrupted form of *Skjöldungar*, the *Scyldingas* of *Beowulf*, the name of the royal race of the Danes, and, by extension, of the Danes themselves’ (1904, 218 n. 1). The linguistic and historical arguments for *Scaldingi* meaning *Scyldingas/Skjöldungar* (when any are given at all) are obscure and debatable, but it may not be a coincidence that English sources call the Danish leader of the Great Army Healfdene, with an identical spelling to that found in *Beowulf*, and that another leader was called Ubba ‘*dux* of the Frisians’, a name which, as I will argue below, may well correspond to the name Hroþulf (i.e. Rodulf) mentioned in both *Beowulf* and *Widsið*.

The view that *Scaldingi* does not mean ‘people from the River Scheldt’ precisely, but refers rather to Danes/Frisians in general, is quite persuasive. However, the indisputable fact that Ubba, one of the leaders of the early Great Army, was called a *dux* of the Frisians strongly implies that he at least had come with his fleet from Frisia.<sup>7</sup>

### *Was Ubba Rodulf?*

We now need to ask whether Ubba was the same person as Rodulf, the important, not to say notorious, Frisian-based Danish Viking warlord who was also called a *dux* by the Frankish *Annals of Fulda* on his death in northern Frisia in 873. Rodulf is totally absent from Frankish records in the years 865–71. Could he have been in England for some of this time? I refer back to the belief of Nelson, de Vries and Smyth that at least part of the Danish army and fleet on the Seine in 855–66 then went to England to join the Great Army. I suggest that Ubba the *dux* of the Frisians was quite possibly either a leader of those 866 Seine Northmen who had not gone back to Frisia in July 866 or, perhaps more logically, he was the leader of those who went back to Frisia and, not being granted land by Lothar II, shortly thereafter went elsewhere looking for better rewards. Besides the undoubted chronological fit and the Frisian connection, the evidence that will be presented for this tentative identification is the equivalence of the names Ubba and Rodulf, and the names of important Frisian and

<sup>7</sup> For more on the Great Army’s Frisian connections see for example McLeod 2014, 109–73.

Danish leaders given in other Northern/Scandinavian sources; after which Ubba/Rodulf's death will be discussed.

### *The names Rodulf and Ubba*

The Frisian Dane Rodulf is referred to in the Frankish annals as Hruodolfus, Ruodolfus, Hruodulfus and Ruodoldus. These are without any doubt early Frankish Latin renditions of the Old Norse name Hróðólfr/Hróðúlfr. The name is a dithematic or compound one, composed of *Hróðr* and *Úlfr*, and means 'famed wolf'. Exactly the same name is found with the same meaning in Old German (Hruodolf) and Old English (Hrōðwulf, Hrōðulf). For example, a German (Frankish) monk in the Rhenish monastery of Fulda signed his name Hruodolf between 780 AD and 796 AD (Dronke 1850, nr. 137, 77–78), and the name Hrōðulf occurs several times in *Beowulf* and *Widsið*. It is perhaps also of interest that Rollo, the Northman 'founder' of Normandy, was called Hrólfr in later Norse sagas such as *Orkneyinga Saga* (Finnbogi Guðmundsson 1965, 7) and *Heimskringla* (Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson 1941, 123–24), and this was also probably a diminutive form of Hróðólfr/Hróðúlfr (see de Vries 1923, 179, 218, 389, 398; Steenstrup 1876, 125). Indeed, predating these sagas the twelfth-century Latin *Historia Norvegiae* actually called Rollo 'Rodulfus' three times (Storm 1880, 90–92).<sup>8</sup>

Such compound names, both in the past and today, are often shortened. Alfred or Wilfred can be called Fred, Alf or Wilf, Siegfried can be called Sigg and Thorulf can be called Ulf. Rudolf can yield Rudi, Rude and variants. Shortened versions of the same original name produce Rolph, Rolf and Ralph. The use of Ulf/Úlfr as a diminutive for Hróðólfr/Hróðúlfr or Rodulf/Rudolf is explicitly mentioned in connection with an early eleventh-century Norman-born missionary who was called both Hróðólfr and Úlfr. He was one of the 'English bishops' of the Norwegian king and saint Óláfr Haraldsson. Sometime after Óláfr's baptism in Rouen in 1015, Hróðólfr went with Óláfr to Norway (Hudson 2007, 463–64). After Óláfr's death he spent nineteen years in Iceland before being granted the abbacy of Abingdon in England in 1051 by his 'relative' Edward the Confessor (ASC E, s.a. 1048=1051; A, s.a. 1050=1051), and died there the next year (Jón Jóhannesson 1974, 141). In *Íslendingabók* and *Landnámabók* he is

<sup>8</sup> Devra Kunin always translates 'Rodulfus' in the *Historia Norvegiae* as Hrólfr (2001, 9), perhaps because on one occasion the *Historia* says *Rodulfus—a sociis Gongurolfr cognominatus* (Storm, 90), and later in *Heimskringla* he is called Gøngu-Hrólfr (*Heimskringla* 70–71).

called Hróðólfr (Jakob Benediktsson 1968, 18, 65; Grønlie 2006, 10, n. 77), in Adam of Bremen’s Latin both Rudolfo and Rodolf (Adam of Bremen, Waitz 1876, c. 55 and c. 62) and in the Old English of the C and E recensions of the *Chronicle* Roðulfe (Conner 1996, s.a. 1050=1051; Whitelock 1954, s.a. 1048=1051). The Icelandic *Hungrvaka*, probably composed around 1200 or somewhat thereafter, refers to him as *Rúðólfr biskup, er sumir kalla Úlfr hétu, ok væri kynjaðr af Ruðu ór Englandi* (Ásdís Egilsdóttir 2002, 11), ‘Bishop Rúðólfr, whom some say was called Úlfr and was descended from people who hailed from Rouen in England’ (Basset 2013, 50).

So Úlfr is an historically attested diminutive form of Hróðólfr/Hróðúlfr (Rodulf). But what are we to make of the Ubba of the English sources, who was called Ubbe by the Anglo-Norman Geoffrey Gaimar (2009, 156)? There is no doubt that these are Anglo-Saxon Latin and Norman-French renditions of the common Old Norse name Ubbi, which is generally rendered Ubbe in old and modern Danish. Ubbi is found on at least two Swedish runes stones (Rafn 1854, 56–57; Brate and Wessén 1924, 223). In his *Gesta Danorum* Saxo Grammaticus (c. 1150–1220), probably a canon of Lund, uses the form *Ubbo dux Fresciorum*, while the thirteenth-century *Sögubrot af nokkrum fornkonungum* mentions *Ubbi friski* ‘the Frisian’ (McTurk 1991, 106). It might well also be that Hebbi, the name of one of the Danish king Hemming I’s important jarls or sub-kings who met with Charlemagne’s nobles at Heiligen on the River Eider in 811 (Scholz 1972, 811, 93; de Vries 1923b, 271), is also a Frankish-Latin rendition of Ubbi. It could be added that Ubba, as the name usually appears in Anglo-Saxon sources, is a typical Anglo-Saxon hypocorism, with a short vowel followed by a double consonant and an ending in ‘a’. So the question is: can people called Hróðólfr/Úlfr also be called Ubbi/Ubba? They can and they were.

The consensus among scholars of early Scandinavian personal names is that Ubbi (and its usual runic form Ubi) is a hypocorism or pet name derived from Úlfr. An alternative is that it derives from the Old Norse adjectives *úfr* (‘unfriendly/hostile’) and *ubben*, which has the meaning ‘fierce, stern, rough, severe, harsh’. Janzén said that Ubbi derives from Úlfr and that it can also derive from dithematic names such as *Ulfgestr*, *Ulfheðinn* (a type of wolfish *berserker*) or from names ending in *úlfr*, such as Hróðólfr/Hróðúlfr. Hornby (1947, 208), supported by Peterson (2002, 214), points out that the name Ulf can change to Ubbi. Brate and Wessén add that the name Ubbi was mostly found in the East Norse area (1924, 223). Following von Friesen (1897, 20), Hornby adds that Ubbi might also derive from the Norse adjective *ubben* (‘*barsk, bitter*’) ‘fierce, stern’.

Hornby (1947, 208) drew attention to a son of the eleventh-century Danish king Sven Estridsen (c. 1020–74) called Úlfr, referred to in *Knýtlinga Saga* as *Úlfr, er Ubbi var kallaðr* (Bjarni Guðnason 1982, 135) ‘Ulf who was called Ubbi’. This is clear evidence that a member of the Danish royal family called Úlfr was also called Ubbi (Ubba). It does not much matter whether Ubbi here is a hypocorism for Úlfr or a byname meaning ‘stern, fierce’. Of course this Úlfr’s grandfather was Jarl Úlfr Þorgilsson, who was well known in England in the early eleventh century; he served with King Knútr and married Knútr’s sister Estrid, and his sister Gytha married Earl Godwin, the father of the last Anglo-Saxon king, Harold.

*Was Rodulf a baptismal name?*

In his discussion of Rodulf, Bauduin makes the highly debatable statement that the name ‘Rodulfus’ is not originally Scandinavian and thus that it was probably a baptismal name (2009, 180–87, 363 n. 5). He says that Rodulf’s father, the younger Harald, was baptised at Mainz in 826 along with his relatives and that Louis the Pious’s son Lothar I was his godfather. This is quite possible, as Lothar stood as godfather to Harald Klak’s son Godfrid, although the nephew (*nepos*) of Harald Klak said by the early ninth-century Frank Ermold the Black to have remained behind for a time with his cousin Godfrid at Louis’s court (Faral, 188) is not named and could equally have been the younger Harald’s brother Rorik. Rorik was generally deemed a good Christian by the Franks, unlike his brother the younger Harald, who when he was granted Walcheren by Lothar in 841 was called a ‘demon-worshipper’ by Prudentius of Troyes (*AB* 841; Coupland 1998, 93 n. 48).

Bauduin mentions that Louis the Pious’s second wife and Charles the Bald’s mother, Judith, had a brother called ‘Rodolphe’ and that he had a son and nephew of the same name, and suggests that perhaps ‘Rodulfus’ was baptised when still very young, either in 826 or during a later ‘stay’ of his father the younger Harald at the Frankish court. ‘Rodulfus’ thus might have had a Welf godfather, since Judith’s father was ‘Duke’ Welf of Bavaria, the first of the ‘Welfs’. This speculation is problematic. We do not know the precise dates of birth of the younger Harald or of Rodulf. It is most likely that the younger Harald, if he had been baptised at Mainz, was still a young man in 826, even an adolescent, and Rodulf may not yet have been born. After 830 Louis the Pious was engaged in bitter struggles with his son Lothar I for hegemony in the Frankish empire, and from about 834 it seems that the younger Harald was engaged in raiding activities in Frisia.

If Rodulf was baptised at Lothar’s court or elsewhere in the 830s, it would make no sense for him to have received the baptismal name ‘Rodulfus’ after one of the family of Lothar’s stepmother Judith. Lothar was fighting against Louis the Pious precisely to try to prevent Judith’s young son Charles being given what Lothar regarded as his own rightful inheritance. Judith was his enemy. In addition, there is no need to conjure up a Bavarian Welf background for the name Rodulf. As we have seen, Rodulf and its variant spellings was a name going back a long way in the Germanic world, including Denmark and Frisia. Whatever its historical worth, the material of *Beowulf* and *Widsið* was very old and based mostly in Danish Jutland and in Frisia. But to clinch the argument regarding the age of the name Rodulf in Scandinavia, it can be pointed out that the sixth-century Jordanes in his *Getica*, discussing various early Scandinavian tribes, says that one of their kings was called ‘Roduulf’.<sup>9</sup> Rodulf was certainly baptised at some point, as the *Annals of Xanten* tell us (AX 873, 33). Many of his relatives were baptised too: Harald Klak, Hemming Hálfansson, Rorik and Godfrid, and maybe his father the younger Harald. Yet none of these people used any baptismal name. Why should Rodulf be the exception? Finally, Hróðólfr/Hróðúlfr is a perfectly fitting name in this Danish ‘royal’ family. As in most parts of the Germanic world there was a clear alliterative naming pattern. Witness for instance the names in Alfred the Great’s family: Æthelwulf, Æthelstan, Æthelred, Æthelbald, Æthelberht and so on. In Hróðólfr’s immediate family we find Hálfðan, Hemming, two Haralds and Hrørek (Rorik).

#### *Names of Danish leaders in Northern sources*

Writing in about 1072–76 about the third quarter of the ninth century, Adam, the director of the cathedral school of Bremen, said in his *History of the Archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen* that the names of the Danish kings during the life of Saint Rimbart are not given in his, now lost, saint’s life (*Gesta*) (Adam of Bremen, 36–37). But he says that according to the ‘History of the Franks’ Sigefrid ruled with his brother Hálfðan, and adds the names of ‘other kings over the Danes and Northmen, who at this time harassed Gaul with piratical activity’: ‘Of these tyrants the most important were Horic, Orwig, Gotafrid, Rudolf, and Inguar.’ The contemporary *Annals of Fulda* mention all these people except Inguar,

<sup>9</sup> Jordanes, ch 3, pp. 23–24. For an interesting discussion of who this early Rodulf was in the context of the Danes see Polzer 2008, 50–57.

and Rowe has suggested that Adam's otherwise unknown 'History of the Franks' might be these East Frankish Fulda annals (2012, 70). Sigefrid ('Sigifridi') was the joint king of Denmark in 873 with a brother called Hálfðan ('Halbdeni') (*AF* 873). Rudolf is obviously our man. Rowe suggests that Gotafrid was the Danish leader active in the 880s mentioned many times in Frankish sources (2012, 70), but he could as well be Rorik's cousin Godfrid Haraldsson (the two Godfrids were very probably related). If, as is most likely, this Horic is the earlier Danish king Horik II who took the throne in 854, then Orwig could be Rorik, while Ingvar is another story completely—he is never mentioned in any contemporary Frankish source.

Even more suggestive than Adam of Bremen's names are those given in the very slightly later Danish *Chronicon Roskildense*, probably composed around 1137–38 by a canon of Roskilde Cathedral (Gelting 2016, 13). A part of the *Chronicon* reads (Gertz c. 3, 16–17):

Ex tempore collectis [suis] rex crudelissimus Normannorum Ywar, filius Lothpardi, quem ferunt ossibus caruisse, cuius fratres Ingvar et Vbbi et Byorn et Vlf aquilonis gentibus.

In this time, Ywar, son of Lothpardus, the cruellest king of the Northmen, who was said to lack bones, whose brothers Ingvar and Ubbi and Byorn and Ulf ruled the northern people.

The Danish clerical scribe took many of the names he gives from Adam of Bremen, but it has been argued by the *Chronicon's* editor Gertz (1917, 14) that he also got additional information from an English cleric 'of whom there were many in Denmark at this time' (Rowe 2012, 89). Gelting has also shown that the cleric certainly heavily used Henry of Huntingdon's brand new *Historia Anglorum*, which talks of the *duces* 'Hinguar' and 'Ubba' together in England (Arnold 1879, 143). Gelting says: 'We may assume that Henry of Huntingdon was the source of the Chronicle of Roskilde for part of its description of the Viking raids of the ninth century' (2016, 9). We are not concerned with 'Ivar the Boneless' here, except to say that Janzén believed that the Danish cleric might not have realised that Ywar and Ingvar were variant forms of the same name (1947, 81; followed by McTurk 1991, 106, Rowe 2012, 90 and Gelting 2016, 10). The writer of the *Chronicon* also drew directly on Abbo of Fleury's *Life of St Edmund* for his description of Edmund's martyrdom (Gelting 2016, 9). Most important for our purposes is that the *Chronicon* names one of these ninth-century Danish leaders as 'Ulf', which not only clearly refers to the Rodulf found in Adam of Bremen's list but is also an extremely clear indication that at least in Denmark the Viking

chieftain Rodulf, as attested in Frankish sources, was sometimes referred to by the diminutive Ulf. The separate name Ubbi almost certainly also comes from Henry of Huntingdon. It can thus be cogently argued that as with Ywar/Inguar, the Danish cleric did not recognise Ubbi and Ulf as being the same person. Of course if Ulf and Ubbi/Ubba really were separate people then the tentative identification being made here would collapse, and we would be back at square one with no idea who Ubba ‘dux of the Frisians’ was.

*Did Rodulf return to Ireland?*

Before turning to Rodulf/Ubba’s death, we need to ask if there is any other mention of him in the sources. It has been shown that Ulf/Úlfr is a plausible and documented form of Rodulf. In the Insular world there is just one mention of an ‘Ulf’ in the ninth century. This is found under the year 870 in the laconic and highly reliable *Annals of Ulster* (AU 870.7):<sup>10</sup>

Mael Sechnaill m. Neill, leth-ri Deisceirt Bregh, interfectus est dolose o Ulf Dubgall.

Mael Sechnaill son of Niall, one of the two kings of southern Brega, was treacherously killed by Ulf the dark foreigner.

The *Annals of Ulster* are the ‘best preserved redaction of the so-called “Chronicle of Ireland”’ (Rowe 2012, 36). During this period they were probably being composed by an annalist in Brega, precisely where this fight happened (Charles-Edwards 2006, 9–24).

So a Viking called Ulf is in Brega, north of Dublin, immediately after Ubba disappears from England in late 869 and before Rodulf appears on the continent with Rorik at the beginning of 872. Of course, as Etchingham (forthcoming) says, this Ulf might well be ‘simply an Irish-based Viking’, although perhaps ‘other than a “regular” Irish gall or “foreigner”’, and perhaps we can infer nothing more. Yet Ulf is called a ‘dark foreigner’ (*dubgall*). In my view it has been well established that dark foreigners/heathens (*dubgaill/dubgenti*) are terms designating Vikings of primarily Danish origin and are used after an initial period in Ireland for such Scandinavians active in Britain or occasionally intruding into Ireland (see Etchingham 2013). Ulf might indeed have been such an intruder. The Viking kings of Dublin, such as Ímar and Amlaíb, were never called dark

<sup>10</sup> The same is reported by the *Annals of Clonmacnoise* (AClon, s.a. 868=870, 143) and the *Chronicum Scotorum* (CScot, 870).

foreigners or dark heathens, as the immediately preceding entry in these annals illustrates. It describes their joint attack on Dumbarton, calling them simply ‘two kings of the Northmen’ (*AU* 870.6). We will probably never know who this Ulf was, but it is certainly not ruled out that he was the Frisian Dane Rodulf who had already been in Ireland in the late 850s and early 860s.

### *Rodulf/Ubba’s death*

Rodulf died in Oostergo in northern Frisia in 873 while on a raid to extract tribute and land from the Frisians. Given what we know happened when Rodulf met Charles the Bald for the second time in 872, it is highly unlikely that he was teleguided by Charles against his brother Louis the German as Lebecq has suggested (2011, 160). He was much vilified by the Frankish annalists for being a bad Christian and for his many harmful attacks in Francia, Frisia and on ‘many regions over the sea’. Yet there is a suggestion that Ubba died in Devon in 878. If he did die in that year then obviously he was not the Frisian Dane Rodulf.

In early 878 a Danish fleet and army, that had been in South Wales during the previous winter, arrived in Devon, but was defeated by the West Saxons. In an entry in different manuscripts of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* under 877/878 we read (*ASC* A, s.a. 878):

And that same winter [877/78] a brother of Inwær and Healfdene [*Inwæres broðor 7 Healfdenes*] was in Wessex in Devonshire with 23 ships, and he was killed there and 800 men with him and 40 men of his war-band.

As Patrick Wormald pointed out, *Inwæres broðor 7 Healfdenes* is ‘certainly a strange phrase’ (1982, 143; de Vries 1923b, 272). In the *Life of King Alfred* Asser, who when he is in any way reliable got his information from the *Chronicle* (see Smyth 1995), added that they had come from *Demetia* (i.e. Dyfed in South Wales) and that it was ‘the king’s thegns’ who won the victory, and he names the place of the battle as *Cynuit* (probably Countisbury in Devon) (Keynes and Lapidge 1983, 83–84). Unlike the extant versions of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, the tenth-century chronicler Æthelweard, who was the ealdorman of western Wessex as well as a direct descendant of King Alfred’s older brother King Æthelred, and ‘who certainly used a lost text of the *Chronicle*’ (Wormald 1982, 143), stated in his Latin version of the *Chronicle* that the Danish leader who died in Devon was ‘Healfdene, the brother of the tyrant Inwær’ (*Healfdene Inguwares tyranni frater*) and that it was the Danes who eventually won (*CA*, IV: 3, §§42–43). In an early

part of the *Historia regum*, which was compiled by Symeon of Durham in about 1104–15 but whose first sections were possibly written by Byrhtferth of Ramsey in around 1000 (Lapidge 1982), we read that it was ‘*Inguar et Healfdene*’ together who arrived in Devon in 878 and were slain there, with no mention of any brother at all (Arnold s.a. 877, 83). Finally, Henry of Huntingdon, who usually took his information from the Peterborough (E) manuscript of the *Chronicle*,<sup>11</sup> interestingly says it was a brother of King Halfdan (*frater regis Haldane*) who arrived with twenty-three ships and was killed (Arnold 1879, 147).

The arrival of this Danish force in south-west England at precisely this time is understandable. In 877 Guthrum’s Danes were very much in the ascendant and King Alfred had had to hide away in the marshes on the island of Athelney. The situation of the West Saxons looked precarious. Most historians would accept that the Danes of the supposed ‘brother of Inwær and Healfdene’ had come to support their former ‘brother in arms’ Guthrum, or at least had come because they wanted to share in the spoils after King Alfred’s West Saxons were finally beaten—an expectation confounded by Alfred’s surprising victory over Guthrum’s Danes at the Battle of Edington in May 878.<sup>12</sup>

The unnamed ‘brother of Inwær and Healfdene’ referred to in the *Chronicle* was identified by the twelfth-century Anglo-Norman Geoffrey Gaimar in his *Estoire des Engleis* as ‘Ubbe, a most evil specimen’ (2009, 173). Downham suggests that Geoffrey ‘may have jumped to this conclusion from reading about Ubba’s association with Ívarr in the legends of St Edmund’s martyrdom’ (2007, 68 n. 25). This could very well be true. Referring to the event of 877/8, Rowe points out that ‘Diverging from all other sources that describe this event, Gaimar gives the credit for the killing to King Alfred rather than his thegns’ (2012, 88). But what is perhaps most astonishing, unbelievable even, is that even the West-Saxon chronicler of the earliest extant recension of the *Chronicle* knew the names of two ‘brothers’ without knowing that of the main Danish protagonist, the putative third brother. It is certainly true that the West-Saxon chroniclers were only really interested in and informed about the Danish armies when they impinged directly on the interests of Wessex,

<sup>11</sup> As he does here (though the *Chronicle* does not name the Danish chieftain involved), since he mentions the capture of the Raven banner, which is referred to in the E version of the *Chronicle* but not in the A version.

<sup>12</sup> See Blair 1939 for a discussion of ‘brother’ sometimes meaning ‘brother in arms’.

and particularly when they could present King Alfred in a good light. Concerning matters further north, they were usually vague in the extreme, and often completely silent. But the Danish army in Devon in 878 was clearly a direct threat to the West Saxons in their own territory and, at least according to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, the West Saxons defeated them and killed their leader. Why the chroniclers did not know this leader's name but knew the names of his two (by now supposedly dead) brothers is a mystery (de Vries 1923b, 272).<sup>13</sup> If the West-Saxon chroniclers did not know his name, which beggars belief, then how did Geoffrey Gaimar? Ian Short, Gaimar's most recent English editor, suggests local tradition (Gaimar, 156), while Rowe says that Gaimar had access to a lost northern recension of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and that 'it is tempting to guess that the re-introduction of Ubbe at this point in the *Estoire des Engleis* is due to the fact that this is where Ubbe is introduced for the first time in that source' (2012, 88). This guess is not very persuasive, particularly as there is nowhere even the slightest hint that Ubba was in England after the end of 869, and surely any lost northern recension of the *Chronicle* would have mentioned Ubba before his death, given his grisly reputation in the North.

Consequently, it must be admitted that we will probably never know the name of the Danish chieftain who fell in Devon in 878, although there is something suspicious here. Those who wish to accept Geoffrey Gaimar's words as historically true will obviously find the identification of Ubba with Rodulf out of the question; but it should be remembered that when he was not simply translating the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and Asser's *Life of King Alfred* Gaimar was a romancer or an historical novelist rather than an historian. He did after all introduce into his *Estoire* a Lincolnshire-derived legend of a Danish king Haveloc (later a model for Shakespeare's Hamlet), placing this story in King Arthur's time, and he even included references to Haveloc in his account of ninth-century events derived from the *Chronicle* and Asser.<sup>14</sup> For example, when describing the battle of Ashdown in 871 both the *Chronicle* and Asser include a list of the Danish leaders, one of whom was a 'Jarl Sidroc the Young' (*ASC A*

<sup>13</sup> Regarding the absence of a name for the fallen chieftain in the *ASC*, Smyth said that 'incidental information in early medieval annals may be all the more reliable because of its peripheral relationship to the prejudices of a compiler' (1995, 58), which fails to answer the question.

<sup>14</sup> For the Haveloc legend of Geoffrey Gaimar see Bell 1925, Kleinman 2003 and Burgess and Brook 2015.

871, Keynes and Lapidge 1983, 80); Gaimar elaborates: *le giovane Sydroc ki fu parent rei Haveloc* ‘the young Sydroc who was a relation of King Haveloc’ (Gaimar, 162, 164).<sup>15</sup>

*A tentative reconstruction of Rodulf’s life*

Rather than provide a summary I will attempt a brief tentative reconstruction of Rodulf’s life on the assumption that he was one and the same man as Rodlaibh in Ireland and Ubba ‘dux of the Frisians’ in England.

Rodulf was probably born to his father the younger Harald sometime in the years around 830, possibly on or near his putative grandfather Hemming’s Frisian benefice of Walcheren. His father died sometime in the 840s. Rodulf probably started his Viking career in the 850s, first raiding along the coast of Charles the Bald’s West Frankish kingdom, maybe even venturing south to Aquitaine as well. Perhaps as early as 855, but certainly by 860, he had moved his activities to Ireland, where he built ship-bases and raided around the rivers Barrow and Nore. He attacked various monasteries and fought with the local kings of Ossory and Laois. But in September 862 these Irish regional kings (or at least one of them) finally managed to destroy one of his ship-bases and some of his fleet—probably the base at Dunrally on the River Barrow—and Rodulf had to leave.

He returned to Frisia where he traversed his uncle’s lands and raided up the River Rhine towards Cologne in early 863. He was told to withdraw by his uncle Rorik (who was the Franks’ main ‘gamekeeper’ Northman in Frisia), which he did. But Rodulf still wanted to be granted a decent benefice in Frisia by the Frankish kings, as many of his relatives had been before. Then in 864 Lothar II employed Rodulf and his fleet as mercenaries in his fight with his younger half-brother Charles the Bald, as Lothar’s father had employed Rodulf’s father in his fights with his own family. In the summer of 865 a Viking fleet entered the River Seine. At least some of this fleet had come from Frisia and it is quite likely that Rodulf was one of the leaders of the fleet. Eventually they managed to extort a huge tribute from Charles the Bald and left in July 866. One part of this force,

<sup>15</sup> Kleinman is surely right when he concludes: ‘Gaimar is likely to have drawn his character names as he felt appropriate from historical sources at his disposal, but . . . the names were generally related not by historical events but by their close proximity in those sources or by their resemblance to a few well-remembered patterns that occurred in East Anglian or Scandinavian traditions’ (2003, 260).

possibly Rodulf's, went back to Frisia, but Lothar II refused to grant him any benefice there 'openly', and thus he and his men soon moved on elsewhere. Then Rodulf's 'Frisian' Danes went to England, arriving at York in March 867, being called the 'Danish' army of 'Ubba *dux* of the Frisians' in English sources. At York, probably joining forces with Inguar who had arrived in England earlier, he defeated the Northumbrians and killed their kings.

It seems that thereafter Ubba/Rodulf stayed in England for about three years. He was probably with the Great Army at Nottingham in 868 and either remained behind in York when the Danish army moved from there in 869 or accompanied Inguar to East Anglia, where together they killed the East Anglian king Edmund. In late 869 or early 870, but certainly before the many battles with the English in 871, Ubba/Rodulf disappeared from England. There is a chance that he might have visited Ireland in 870 before next reappearing in Frisia in early 872, in which year he twice went to meet Charles the Bald with his uncle Rorik. But Charles did not trust Rodulf and refused his excessive demands for land. A few months later, in June 873, Rodulf tried to grab himself a territory in Oostergo in northern Frisia in Louis the German's realm but was killed in the attempt.

### *Conclusion*

On his death Rodulf was much vilified by the Franks for his numerous attacks on Charles the Bald's territory and in Frisia, as well as for his devastation of 'many regions over the sea'. So who were Rodlaibh in Ireland and Ubba, the *dux* of the Frisians, in England, if they were not the Frisian Dane Rodulf? The tentative identification made here will not convince everyone, maybe not even the majority. The evidence is circumstantial, although ample, reasoned and, to my mind, compelling. It would certainly not stand up in an English criminal court of law where the standard of proof is 'beyond any reasonable doubt'. In a civil court, however, where the standard of proof is 'on the balance of evidence', it just might.

**Note:** I would like to thank various anonymous peer reviewers for their useful comments and suggestions on an earlier version of this paper. Thanks are due also to Rory McTurk, Simon Coupland, Colmán Etchingham, Eamonn Kelly and Lena Peterson who provided invaluable advice and support while the paper was evolving.

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## SHEDDING LIGHT ON THE KYLVER SLAB

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**I**N THIS ARTICLE I wish to draw attention to the rune-inscribed limestone slab from Kylver, Stånga, Gotland, Sweden. The stone is thought to have formed the side slab of a burial cist attributed to the late fourth- or early fifth-century AD (Hansson 1903–11, 8; Jansson 1987, 12; Spurkland 2009). It features two lines of runic inscriptions on one side, Line A and Line B.<sup>1</sup>

The lower of the two lines (Line B) comprises the 24-character elder Germanic *fubark*, followed by a cryptic symbol that is yet to be decoded.



**Fig. 1. The Kylver stone with both inscriptions**

Photograph: Christer Åhlin/ The Swedish History Museum

<sup>1</sup> Whilst in von Friesen's initial publication these are referred to as B (short row) and A (long row), in more recent sources the lines are referred to as A (short row) and B (long row). For consistency's sake I will use the more recent classification.

Above Line B a shorter runic inscription can be observed (Line A), which has to date been interpreted as the cryptic palindrome “SUEUS” (e.g. Spurkland 2009). This palindrome is believed to be an invocation or charm, the meaning of which is thus far unknown, but commonly believed to relate to the burial (e.g. Krause 1993, 59; Spurkland 2009, 2). This article will examine key interpretative problems concerning both lines, and present an alternative interpretation of Line A.

### *Research background*

Most of the recent discussions of the Kylver slab focus on the runic inscriptions, whilst not much is known about its archaeological context. Crucially, the circumstances under which the slab was found are by no means certain and this has a significant impact on the way the inscriptions can be understood.

The principal source for the initial findings on the Kylver slab is an extensive article, published in two parts by Hans Hansson and Otto von Friesen respectively in the *Antikvarisk tidskrift för Sverige* (1864–1924, 1–14) sometime after 1903.<sup>2</sup> The first article, by Hansson, is concerned with the slab itself, the discovery context, its landscape context and Hansson’s grounds for the suggested *c.* fifth-century date of the cist burial. The second part of the article is written by von Friesen (14–23), and deals with the runic inscriptions of lines A and B. This initial publication was followed thirty years later by Arthur Nordén’s (1934) and Birger Nerman’s (1935) work, which features both archaeological interpretations and analyses of the runes. Regrettably, however, these initial articles have not seen much, if any, discussion in more recent publications on the slab. In light of this, it is necessary to revisit the work of the earlier scholars on the archaeological context of the Kylver stone before I present my own interpretation of the inscriptions.

### *The discovery and history of the Kylver Stone*

The Kylver stone was discovered as part of a burial cist in the parish of Stånga, Gotland, Sweden, by a local boy in 1903 (Hansson 1903–11, 1; Enderborg 2009–13). Soon after its discovery the slab was sold to the

<sup>2</sup> Whilst no date is given for Hansson’s and von Friesen’s articles themselves other than the 1864–1924 range of the *Antikvarisk tidskrift*, they must have been published sometime between late 1903 and before 1911, as George T. Flom published a review of the two articles in April 1911. In this article this source will be dated 1903–11.

Statens historiska museum (Hansson 1903–11, 1; Enderborg 2009–13), where the slab is still stored. Upon its discovery, Hansson was asked for a professional opinion on the stone and he reports that he visited Stånga in late summer 1903 to conduct an investigation of the ancient burials in this area (Hansson 1903–11, 1). His article in the *Antiqvarisk tidskrift* contains a detailed description of the burial in which the inscribed slab was found, followed by his initial theory about the grave's supposed age as no later than AD 400 (see also Flom 1911, 323 and Nordén 1934, 99, which include this date). Hansson deduces his proposed date from the nature of the artefacts found near the slab—among which were a partly melted bronze fitting and a fragment of glass from the fill of the grave (SHM staff member personal communication; Nerman 1935)—as well as from the fact that cist burials are relatively rare in Gotland after AD 400 (Hansson 1903–11, 8). Hansson concludes from this data that the runes present on the slab must be the oldest known example of a *fupark* (1903–11, 8; see also Flom 1911, 323; Nylén 1988, 15). The security of this date, however, is questionable. Hansson states that upon his arrival the rune-inscribed slab had already been dug up by 'treasure hunters', and that it is not certain that the runic inscription had ever formed part of the original grave setting, nor where exactly the stone would have been placed originally (Hansson 1903–11, 2, 4). Furthermore it can no longer be stated with certainty whether the inscribed side faced into the cist or not (Nedoma 1998, 39). This is crucial for our understanding of this inscription, as it is the key to several interpretive problems concerning this slab. Given that the runes were not found in a sealed context, the date of the burial and the artefacts cannot be applied to the runes with the same confidence. In order to secure confident dating, the integrity of the find context must be certain (cf. Thrane 1998, 219). The doubts concerning the later robbing of the grave appear to have led to the inscriptions now being the primary basis for the fifth-century date (SHM staff member personal communication; and this is the core information most present-day sources will provide on the Kylver slab). The problem with this argument is its circularity. If the runes were initially dated on the basis of the burial cist, the runes cannot at the same time be the basis for their own date. Also, the date of the burial is not necessarily also the date of the inscriptions. It is obvious that there has, over time, been some confusion about the nature of the site, which may in part be to do with the imbalance of scholarly focus as outlined above. In sum, whilst the inscribed slab was associated with a cist burial, its original position is unclear, and as such the application of a fifth-century date to the inscriptions on the slab is questionable. In

the next section I will examine in more detail the nature of the inscription and discuss whether the runes themselves are of any aid in resolving the question of dating.

*The runic inscriptions of the Kylver slab*

The relationship between Line A and Line B remains enigmatic and any interpretations require scrutiny. Whilst there is sufficient reason to date Line B to the fifth century AD (or earlier) on first glance—mainly on the grounds of comparisons with occurrences of the elder *fupark* elsewhere (e.g. Markvad 2003; Barnes 2012)—the same does not apply to Line A. The inscription of Line A starts and ends with ᚱ (the left-hand ᚱ being reversed), a later version of **S**, whilst this rune does not feature in Line B. Line B encompasses ξ, an older version of **S**. Whilst ᚱ is known to have existed in some areas before the eighth century—e.g. Frisia and England, as demonstrated by the Old English *futhorc* (Barnes 2012, 40)—its presence as early as that is rare (Parsons 1999, 31). Aside from this, the question arises why a different type of **S** was used for each of the lines on the slab. Were both lines carved by someone who lived later than the fifth century with some knowledge of the elder *fupark*, using both variants? Or are we looking at a stone re-used for a burial on which (some of) the runes were already carved, as is suggested on Stånga’s parish website (Enderborg 2009–13)?

One interesting aspect may provide us with further clues. Line B, whilst on first glance summarising the entirety of the elder *fupark*, shows noteworthy characteristics that have already been brought to our attention by numerous authors, including von Friesen himself (1903–11), Erik Brate (1922, 10) Terje Spurkland (2009, 8) and most recently Michael Barnes (2012, 17). First, the fourth character (ᚠ “**a**”) and the eighteenth character (ᚢ “**b**”) are mirrored, as opposed to the other runes which are all displayed to be read left to right (Spurkland 2009, 8; Jansson 1987, 12). Second, the runes 13 and 14—ᚦ and ᚧ—are switched around into the order “ᚧ ᚦ”, whilst these runes usually follow the order “ᚦ ᚧ”. The same applies to 23 and 24—ᚨ and ᚩ (von Friesen 1903–11; Barnes 2012, 17). Striking, too, is the enigmatic twenty-fifth character of Line B, for the interpretation of which I have no suggestions to add in this article.

It seems worth noting that those runes from Line B whose order is switched—13, 14 and 23, 24—are among those that are omitted from the later, sixteen-character Scandinavian *fupark* (for a recent summary of the younger *fupark* see Barnes 2012, 54, Fig. 11), which may indicate that Line B was carved by someone who was more familiar with the younger

*fupark* but was trying to carve a much earlier set of characters along with contemporary ones. This explanation would make some sense of the occurrence of the later ʝ in Line A, a concept discussed later in this article. In any case, the ʝ is out of place on a slab believed to be one of the earliest examples of the older *fupark*.

The ideas expressed in the remainder of this article are not based on the assumption that the runes were carved around the fifth century, but allow for their having been carved at an uncertain later date, when the grave was opened. The remainder of the article will focus on the more cryptic line A.

### *A closer look at Line A*

At first glance, Line A's M would appear to be contemporaneous with Line B, being read as “e”, and this may be the main reason why the peculiar ʝ has not been given much attention to date. I would like to postulate, however, that we are not dealing with an M—or e—at all.

What we see *exactly* is not  $\mathfrak{S} \mathfrak{M} \mathfrak{M} \mathfrak{S}$  but  $\mathfrak{Z} \mathfrak{M} \mathfrak{M} \mathfrak{S}$ . The two ʝ runes are *mirrored* (McKinnell et al. 2004, 87) and it is likely that this was done with some intention. This would affect the overall interpretation of the line. The two instances of ʞ do not appear to be intentionally mirrored, yet given the shape of this rune, added to by the uneven surface of the stone, it is hard to detect any significant direction. The orientation of the “s”, however, appears deliberate, as the first ʝ is read right-to-left, whilst the second one is left-to-right. On the grounds of this, I drew a vertical line through the middle of M, creating two mirrored ʞ: “L L”. There is a possibility that one of the halves of M (depending on the orientation of mirroring) can be transliterated as “T”, yet this is much less plausible, as ʞ is more commonly observed, in both earlier and later *fupark* variants (cf. Barnes 2012, 62, Figs 15, 16, 17; Markvad 2003). Crucially, it needs to be considered that any existing classifications of *fupark* varieties, organised and clear as they may appear in scholarly print, do not fully reflect the numerous regional or even individual varieties between rune carvers in the past. It is therefore necessary to allow for diversities and exceptions that lie outside any established perimeters (Barnes 2012, 63). Nonetheless, the focus of this discussion will remain on the M being split and—deduced from the mirroring of ʝ—mirrored; to be read as a double “L”. The decision to split M can be further supported by the fact that M, whilst known from the elder *fupark*, is not contemporaneous with the ʝ of the later *fupark*, making it questionable for the two runes to feature within the same line. ʞ is a more plausible contemporary. Interestingly, von Friesen himself appears to have entertained the thought of M being read as “L I” instead of “E”, yet

he does not explain this thought in much detail, and it remains unsure in what way M would divide up seamlessly into an “L” and an “I” (on the basis of ʀ and l). In any case, von Friesen appears to abandon this theory within his own article, and it does not continue into later debates (Erik Brate remarks on it, albeit without much further detail, 1922, 9), wherein Line A is commonly accepted as reading “SUEUS”.

Continuing on the postulated basis of a split M, I will now bring forward a selection of suggestions for transliteration and interpretation. In the further course of this article I will suggest that the carvings stem from a secondary disturbance of the grave, postdating the burial itself. Importantly, there is no more certainty whether the mirroring of Line A relates to the mirrored runes of Line B than there is about any direct relation at all of the two lines to each other. Above all, transliteration and interpretation depend much on how the runes are mirrored and how this mirroring is to be interpreted. There is general awareness that much gets lost in translation between contemporary languages; even more is lost over the multiple stages of transliteration of runes, followed by translations into Old Norse and finally into several present-day languages. Puns and wordplay which may have been obvious to a contemporaneous reader of the runes may now be impossible to reconstruct in full, if at all. Any potential intention reflected in not only the words, but also the arrangement and nature (mirroring / folding) of the runes must be an unknowable aspect of a past mentality.

Based on these considerations, I set out my key transliteration and interpretations below. There are numerous possible options for the interpretation of these, and the many uncertainties concerning the age of the runes complicate any interpretation further. Therefore, the suggestions listed here are not exhaustive and should be viewed as suggestions for further debate.

1) “**sul lus**”: *inter alia* ON *sól ljós* ‘sunlight’ or ON *sól lauss* ‘sunless’. This is my primary interpretation to which I will return in the course of this article.

Alternatively, “**sul**” may be understood as ‘soul’ (ON *sál*), but this would only apply in a post-Conversion context (Alver 1989, 111; Cleasby and Vigfusson 1874, 516–17), being probably a borrowing from an ecclesiastical Anglo-Saxon and / or Christian Danelaw context (Cleasby and Vigfusson 1874, 516), derived from OE *sawol* / *sawel* / *sawul* (Clark Hall 1960, 290). If this were the case it would represent an interesting ideological alternative to the other interpretations offered here. Noteworthy parallels from OE include *sāwollhūs* ‘soul-house, body’ and *sāwollēas* ‘lifeless, without life; soulless, without soul’.

A close examination of this suggestion reveals that the runes are not merely mirrored, but, in fact, *folded*, which would not apply to the other options listed below. As was mentioned before, this folded arrangement may represent a palindrome, ‘a word or expression that can be read backwards as well as forwards either with the same meaning or a new meaning’ (Spurkland 2009, 16). Palindromes are mentioned within the context of runic scholarship, yet the Kylver inscription appears to remain the best known one to which most scholars refer (e.g. Spurkland 2009, 16; MacLeod and Mees 2006, 219; Markvad 2003, 11; Schwab 1998, 405). Importantly, however, the question remains whether a palindrome requires all characters to have the same orientation in order to be read in two directions in full, and whether a mirrored character would entail a different way of reading. The mirrored arrangement of both “s” may be indicative of two separate words that are each to be read from the outside towards the middle and/or vice versa, each ending or beginning with their share of the split middle-rune, rather than readable backwards as well as forwards as a whole (see Fig. 1). Therefore “sul sul” and “lus lus”—or to be read as both—are further options. This might entail a figurative way of bouncing the sun back from the slab, as will be discussed in more detail later. Notably, read from left-to-right the inscription begins with the mirrored “s” and ends with the original orientation of “s” (Fig. 2).

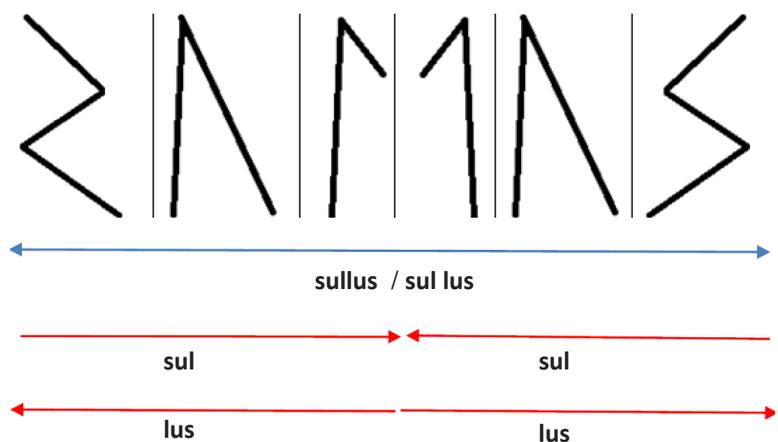


Fig. 2. A selection of possible ways the inscription can be read.

*When in doubt: it's magic!*

There is a joke among archaeologists, 'when in doubt: it's ritual!'. When findings are not straightforwardly understood from our present-day perspective, they are likely to be classified as 'ritual' or 'ceremonial'. The suggestion that an inscription is 'magic' or 'a charm' appears to be the runologist's equivalent of this phenomenon. Suggesting a particular belief system as the main impulse behind the runes is in itself not problematic. However, on its own this does not suffice as an interpretation without some endeavour to shed light on the ideological context of the time or, in short, *why* a charm was needed. Importantly, 'charms' do not exist for their own sake; they are expressions of an ideology and concepts prevailing at the time within which they are applied, much like anything that is written or depicted in the present. It is all too easy to seek 'magical' or 'ceremonial' motifs underlying the actions and artefacts of past societies, primarily because ideologies from the past appear enigmatic to us today (Gazin-Schwartz 2001, 266–67). However, opening the portal of hypothesised 'magic runes' without further specification brings with it the risk of wishful misinterpretations. Basing these hypotheses on evidence, or at least on the most solid possible arguments, is therefore crucial. Often past motives would not have been very different from those of the present day, as mankind is perpetually driven by the same core emotions concerning life, death, survival and our place in the world.

It has been suggested to date that Line A was intended as 'magic writing' (Spurkland 2009, 16; see also Nedoma 1998, 39), a '*Zauberwort*' (Schwab 1998, 405), carved either with the purpose of assisting the buried individual in their afterlife (e.g. von Friesen 1903–11; Nordén Jansson 1987, 13), or in order to keep the body in the grave from rising again, ranging from 'grave magic' (Nordén Jansson 1987, 13) to *Wiedergängerzauber* 'revenant magic' (Krause 1993, 59; see also Brate 1922, 10–11; Enderborg 2009–13; Spurkland 2009), but protection against grave-robbers has also been proposed (MacLeod and Mees 2006, 219). I accept the prevailing hypothesis that Line A is a 'charm' or invocation of some sort, most likely one related to fear of the revenant dead. The reasons for this suggestion, however, need to be explained in more detail.

Going to extreme lengths to keep the living safe from the 'restless dead' is not uncommon in Scandinavian folk belief (Kvideland and Sehmsdorf 2010, 11; MacLeod and Mees 2006, 220; McKinnell et al. 2004, 135, 170; see also several folktales recorded by Olaus Nicolaisen in 1872, Furset 2011) and, as indicated by a small number of examples



and grave goods), whilst the carving of Lines A and B is more likely to stem from a later date, most plausibly sometime after the eighth century (mostly based on the  $\mathfrak{h}$  in Line A, as outlined above). Perhaps the grave-robber(s) feared threat from ghosts or *draugar* after disturbing a grave, which may have led to the carving of (among other options) ‘sunless’ or ‘sunlight’, as suggested above. Given the continuity of folkloric beliefs into more recent times (see esp. Muir 1998; Kvideland and Sehmsdorf 1989, 138) this theory not only applies strictly to a medieval disturbance of the site, but would indeed also allow for such beliefs to have had a potent effect in more recent centuries. Merely the carver’s reasonable understanding of the older *fubark* would need explanation if this were indeed a more recent carving.

Perhaps the site was opened and, upon discovering a grave, the robber(s) felt the need for protection against any potential menace following the disturbance of such a place. In this case Line A could indeed be interpreted as a contemporary ‘charm’, whilst the less securely carved line in the elder *fubark* may have been intended either also as a ‘charm’, or indeed as an acknowledgment of the more ancient buried individual, through the carving of older runes. This idea would tie in with my earlier suggestion that the carvings may stem from a hand familiar with the younger *fubark* and less accustomed to the elder. The process of carving and the expenditure of energy that this entails would have been motivated by fear of any supernatural consequences unless the carving was completed. More tentatively, the backward orientation of parts of Line A could indicate the urge to ‘undo’ the contact of the sunlight with the grave and the dead.

Importantly, the Kylver stone was reputedly found as a side slab and not as a covering slab (Janssen 1987, 12), but this does not exclude the possibility that Line A was nonetheless intended as a protective ‘covering’ charm and, in the likely case of the runes stemming from secondary activity, it may have been a more easily accessible spot for carving, depending on the state the cist was in once disturbed. It may even be the case that there were two carvers at work, which would explain the corner placement of Line A, should both lines have been carved simultaneously. The mirrored (and eventually folded or palindromic) arrangement of Line A may add weight to the folkloric dimension, since it could be interpreted as a visual symbol for bouncing any light off the grave; however, there is no basis for this suggestion other than a visualisation of the indications in the aforementioned sources of the need to block out the sun by means of stone slabs placed over a burial.

### Discussion

The relation between Line A and Line B remains unresolved. Thus far there is no clear indication that the two lines are at all related, either intentionally or with regard to the respective types of runes used, nor can the date of the carvings be established with any certainty. What we can *see* on the Kylver stone represents only the tip of the iceberg, whilst the thoughts and concepts that informed the carvings are difficult, if not impossible, to trace. No certain answer can be provided about how, let alone if, the runic lines relate to the disturbed burial context they were found in. I would therefore like to close this discussion with an open question to readers, summarising the two main issues I have raised:

1. Whilst Hansson's argument for a fifth century date for the burial itself is plausible, I would question this date for the runic carvings. This is primarily on the grounds of Line A's  $\text{h}_1$ , added to by the uncertainties regarding the secondary disturbance of the site and the unclear conditions of initial excavation before Hansson's arrival.

Consequently, I would suggest that the carving of both lines, especially Line A, is more likely to have taken place sometime around the eighth century, without excluding the probability of an even later date.

2. On the basis of the mirrored "S" I postulate that Line A's middle rune is not an "E" but "L L" (or less likely: "T T" / "L T" / "T L") and that the inscription therefore should be read not as "sueus", but as "sullus" (including "sul sul" / "lus lus"). This is primarily based on the chronological aspects of the *fupark* varieties as outlined above, as well as the abundance of evidence for sun-related beliefs in early Scandinavia.

Unfortunately the uncertainties surrounding the Kylver slab and its inscriptions make it difficult to be firmer about interpreting the carvings or even about their date. This is difficult to prove or disprove, especially after the stone has been exposed for so long and even more because those people who dealt with the stone in 1903 are now dead themselves. More research into this enigmatic inscription may aid in shedding more light on past mentalities, and may further illuminate early Scandinavian afterlife beliefs.

**Note:** I would like to express my thanks to the following: Dr. Lisbeth Imer for her literature suggestion; staff of the Statens historiska museum in Stockholm for information on our prevailing understanding of the slab and for providing me with a photograph of it; and for proof-reading Eleanor Jackson, Owain Mason, Prof. Julian Richards, Dr. Matt Townsend and, not least, Prof. Alison Finlay and the editors of *Saga-Book*. Any remaining errors are my own.

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## EGILS SAGA AND THE OLD TESTAMENT

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IN HER ARTICLE 'SAINTS' LIVES AND SAGA NARRATIVE', Siân Grønlie has identified several episodes in *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar*, *Egils saga Skalla-Grímssonar* and *Flóamanna saga* that are derived from hagiographical motifs in Gregory the Great's *Dialogues* (Grønlie 2012). The presence of such elements in the lives of the Christian characters in *Óláfs saga* and *Flóamanna saga* is understandable, but why might they be included in *Egils saga*? 'Few', Grønlie supposes, 'would want to argue that the author of *Egils saga Skalla-Grímssonar* saw Egill as a saint, or even (overall, at least) as particularly saint-like' (Grønlie 2012, 13), and it is not my intention to include myself among those few. But I have some suggestions for why 'the saga author constructs [Egill] as both recognisably like a saint and at the same time, profoundly different' (Grønlie 2012, 17), all of which pertain to the possibility that he or she may have seen Egill as filling a role in the structure of Icelandic history comparable to that of an Old Testament figure in biblical history.

Pernille Hermann has argued that medieval Icelandic historians were members of a textual community, one held together not so much by a common ancestry or history as by their reliance on shared texts and ideas, all of which were fundamentally based on the Bible (Hermann 2005, 85). One of the most important influences that the Bible had on medieval writers was to provide them with a historiographical framework into which all other historical narratives could be incorporated, one that saw all of history as part of the same metanarrative which begins with the creation of the world and humankind's fall from grace and ends with the second coming of Christ, the final judgment, and the coming of the New Heavens and the New Earth. The drama is divided in two by its climax, Christ's crucifixion and resurrection, towards which all of history before that point builds. The narrative is linked throughout by a system of typology in which characters and events of the pre-resurrection world prefigure events in Christ's life, ecclesiastical history or the lives of the saints. In this relationship, the prefiguration in the pre-Christian period is referred to as the type (Latin, *typus*; Greek, *τύπος*) and the character or event prefigured is called the antitype (*antitypus*; *ἀντίτυπος*) (Tkaas

1999). Much of the spiritual and theological significance attributed to Old Testament figures by late antique and medieval theologians was derived from their premonitory relationships to antitypes of the Christian era. The linked narratives of the Old and New Testaments together with ecclesiastical history and the lives of the saints thus provided a unifying historiographical model within which all other historical events could be contextualised by exegetical interpretation. To put a finer point on it, all extra-biblical history can be treated as an extension of the biblical narrative and interpreted using biblical exegetical principles (Auerbach 1952, 5; Markus 1999, 432–34).

The histories of Northern European people groups were reimagined as types or reflections of the biblical *tempus*, with a single conversion event in each providing an intrusion of Christ into that people's history that functions as a type of Christ's death and resurrection and links the regional *tempus* with the greater world-biblical *tempus*. Thus Óláfr helgi's reign and Þorgeirr Þorkelsson's decision that Iceland should be converted conveniently divide Norway's and Iceland's *tempora* into pre-Christian and Christian periods comparable to the pre- and post-resurrection periods of the greater world *tempus* (Weber, 2001, 104–114). Important figures in Scandinavia's pre-Christian period could be seen in much the same light as Old Testament heroes, their virtues prefiguring—but inevitably falling short of—those of Christ, of Christian saints or of institutions like the Church, and their acts as tools of providence that help to drive their nations' histories toward their conversions and Christian eras. Gerd Wolfgang Weber has noted that Norway's pre-Christian kings in *Heimskringla*, including Hálfðan svarti, Haraldr hárfagri and Hákon Haraldsson, demonstrate behaviours that prefigure those of a Christian *rex iustus*, and that their reigns lay the political, social, and ethical foundations for Norway's evolution into a Christian society in a manner comparable to that in which the legal and political structures of pre-Christian Israel laid the theological foundations upon which Christianity was built (Weber 2001, 122–24). Similarly, Grønlie notes that in his prologue to *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar*, Oddr Snorrason draws a typological analogy between the titular Óláfr's prefiguration of Óláfr helgi and John the Baptist's prefiguration of Christ (Grønlie 2012, 8). The authors of *Íslendingabók* and *Landnámabók* also demonstrate elements of Catholic historiography by working typological elements into their descriptions of Iceland's settlement. Hrafna-Flóki, one of Iceland's early settlers in *Landnámabók*, uses ravens to help them find land, an image that may

be intended to invoke Noah's use of birds in the book of Genesis, thus giving the island's early history a biblical typology (*Landnámabók*, 36–37). Margaret Clunies Ross has observed that the island's history has a fittingly biblical beginning: when Iceland is first settled, it is described in *Landnámabók*, *Íslendingabók* and *Egils saga* much like a paradise or Promised Land (Clunies Ross 1998).

It is during this early period in Icelandic history that *Egils saga* takes place. Viewed through this historiographical framework, Egill's partial rather than full resemblance to a saint is consistent with his chronological place before the Conversion in Iceland's theological *tempus*. The hagiographical components of his life can be understood as prefiguring the sorts of feats performed by the saints after the Conversion, which themselves are reflective of the acts of Christ who came before them. Though the wild ways in which Egill demonstrates his amorality are certainly expressions of his unique personality, the fact that his actions are far removed from saintly morality is consistent with his typological connection to Old Testament figures, many of whom spend their lives alternating between sin and righteousness, prefiguring Jesus or the saints at times, but only 'as through a glass darkly'. Abraham is both the father of the Covenant and an adulterer; Jacob is a liar and a thief as well as the founder of Israel. It is not inconsistent with this biblical–historical model that the hagiographical structural elements in *Egils saga* are frequently laden with heinous and even amoral behaviour.

The analogy between Egill and an Old Testament figure is furthered by the thematic elements that his life shares with Old Testament narrative. Conveniently, Icelandic history provides several parallels to biblical narrative that encourage typological interpretations, some of which are integral to the plot of *Egils saga*. Skalla-Grímr and his family settle in Borgarfjörðr after fleeing a land ruled by a tyrannical king and crossing a sea, a pattern not unlike the Israelites' flight from the Egyptian king through the Red Sea and settlement in the Promised Land in the book of Exodus. Much like the wandering Israelites, Skalla-Grímr's family loses its leader *en route* to its new home; Moses dies before his people enter the Promised Land and Kveld-Úlfr dies before his family reaches Iceland (*Egils saga*, 71). When the ancestors of the Mýramenn arrive in their new home they find waters filled with seals and fish, land good for grazing and plentiful timber growing between the mountains and the shore (*Egils saga*, 72–73). As mentioned above, the implication seems to be that Iceland is something of a northern paradise or Promised Land.

*Egils saga* also echoes one of the most prevalent themes in the book of Genesis: the passing of a family inheritance from the preferred son to his brother who is a less conventional heir. Primogeniture is a cultural norm in the ancient Near Eastern society that the Old Testament depicts (Alter 1981, 6), but in the generations that are given in any detail in Genesis, oldest sons never inherit their fathers' estates; younger sons inherit instead. Þórólfr Kveld-Úlfsson and Þórólfr Skalla-Grímsson show more potential as future chieftains than their unruly younger brothers, but neither is able to inherit owing to his untimely death. In biblical narrative the younger son's inheritance defies social convention but proves to be the work of divine providence, made all the clearer once the historical narrative reaches Jesus's genealogies in the New Testament books of Matthew's and Luke's Gospels, both of which (despite their discrepancies) are traced largely through younger sons (Matthew 1. 1–18; Luke 3. 23–38). That this same providence is at work in the succession of the Mýramenn in *Egils saga* is implied once Egill's descendants are converted to Christianity in the last few chapters of the saga, when the Christian era is inaugurated with an annotated genealogy much as it is in the Bible (*Egils saga*, 299–300).

Though the Þórólfrs are, like their biblical analogues, first-born sons, the saga distinguishes them from their younger brothers as preferential heirs by their physical characteristics, temperaments and social skills more than by their seniority. In each generation, the older brother demonstrates the characteristics of a *gæfumaðr* while the younger exhibits those of an *ógæfumaðr*. The *gæfumenn*, Lars Lönnroth writes, are handsome, well liked, and display a knack for getting along well in a courtly setting, all traits demonstrated by the Þórólfrs. Þórólfr Kveld-Úlfsson is *manna vænstr ok gørviligastr . . . gleðimaðr mikill, orr ok ákafamaðr mikill í öllu ok inn mesti kappsmaðr; var hann vinsæll af öllum monnum* 'an attractive man and highly accomplished . . . a very cheerful man, eager and very impetuous in all things and the most energetic; he was beloved by all men' (*Egils saga*, 5). Of Þórólfr Skalla-Grímsson it is said *at hann myndi vera inn líkasti Þórólfi Kveld-Úlfssyni, er hann var eptir heitinn*, 'that he was very similar to Þórólfr Kveld-Úlfsson, after whom he had been named', and *varð hann brátt vinsæll af alþýðu* 'he became well-liked by all' (*Egils saga*, 80). *Ógæfumenn* tend to be ugly, moody, difficult to get along with and, in contrast to the often fair-haired *gæfumenn*, dark or red-haired. Grímr is a *svartr maðr ok ljótr*, 'a swart man and ugly' (*Egils saga*, 5). Egill is described in much the same way: *en er hann óx upp, þá mátti brátt sjá á honum, at hann myndi verða*

*mjök ljótr ok líkr feðr sínum, svartr á hár* ‘as he grew up, it quickly became visible in him that he would become very ugly and, like his father, dark-haired’ (*Egils saga*, 80). According to Lönnroth, the two types often represent contrasting social ranks, the *gæfumaðr* being the king or chieftain and the *ógæfumaðr* the serf or peasant (Lönnroth 1965, 59). As *gæfumenn* the Þórólfrs are more fit for chieftainship than their unruly brothers, but as they both meet untimely demises, *ógæfumenn* are left to inherit in their places. What is more, the traits of the *ógæfumaðr* are often linked to poetic talent and a passionate disposition that often erupts in a volatile temper, both of which are prominent elements of Egill’s personality.

The traits of the Norse *ógæfumaðr* and of the biblical younger son are both present in the biblical David. David is described as *rufus* ‘ruddy’ or ‘red-haired’, and, like an *ógæfumaðr*, has a reputation for composing poetry. That he perpetuates the younger-son motif is evident in his introduction in I Kings (I Samuel in the Authorised Version) when God sends the prophet Samuel to the house of Jesse to anoint Israel’s next king. Samuel is impressed by Jesse’s older sons and is surprised that God passes over them to anoint David, the youngest (I Kings 16. 1–14). Torfi Tulinius has argued convincingly that David may be seen as a model for Egill. He notes that both are poets from pre-Christian times who deliver their poetry to kings, David to Saul and Egill to Eiríkr blóðøx. Both have turbulent relationships with these kings, sometimes serving and sometimes opposing them, and are protected from their anger by influential friends, David by Jonathan and Egill by Arinbjörn (Tulinius 2005, 4). David and Egill also have similarly questionable relationships to morality, for each wishes to marry another man’s wife and plays a role in sending that man to his death in battle, and each of them loses a son born to him and the other man’s wife.

Like Egill, it might be said of David that his personality is bound up with his poetry. If the Psalms, many of which are attributed to David, are to be taken as an expression of the Israelite king’s personality, then they present a figure alternating as wildly between violence and peace and between faith and doubt as Egill does between heinousness and hagiographical parallel. But despite this, the influence of the Psalms on devotional literature and prayer in medieval Christian society is difficult to overstate. So significant is the manner in which David’s prayers prefigure those of a Christian saint that they possess spiritual value for Christian worshippers long after Christ’s resurrection. The art of poetry in *Egils saga*, then, parallels the Psalms and, therefore,

takes on a typological connection to a saint's prayers through Egill's connection to David. The prefigurative relationship that the Psalms have to Christian prayers helps to explain the apparent connection between Egill's poetry and the words or writings of a saint that Grønlie has noticed in such episodes as the destruction of Bárðr's ale horn and the composition of *Höfuðslausn*. There is even some reason to believe that, much like David's psalms or a saint's prayers, Egill's poetry has an element of salvific potential, if only for Egill himself. In the aftermath of Þóðvarr's death, Egill loses his will to live until his daughter, Þorgerðr, persuades him to write a poem, after which his spirits revive and he lives a long life. Poetry draws him away from death as well as from the potentially damnable sins of despair and suicide (*Egils saga*, 255). The typological connection between Egill's poetry and the Psalms suggests that the former, like the latter, can possess some value for the post-Conversion world unknown to its composer and can prefigure the prayers of a saint.

Fittingly, then, poetry is involved in much of the semi-hagiographical material that Grønlie has detected, such as Egill's destruction of Bárðr's ale horn. When Bárðr, at Gunnhildr's behest, gives Egill a horn filled with poisoned ale, Egill carves runes into it and recites verses over it, causing the horn to shatter (*Egils saga*, 108–10). She identifies Egill's destruction of Bárðr's ale horn as a hagiographical motif derived from an episode in Gregory's *Life of Benedict* in which the titular saint forms the sign of the cross over a pitcher of poisoned wine, causing the pitcher to shatter (Grønlie 2012, 14). The poisoned wine in Gregory's *Dialogues* is probably a rather thinly veiled play on Eucharistic imagery: a drink normally emblematic of life now disguises death, but Benedict's piety enables him to thwart the deception. Though wine is no longer the poisoned drink in *Egils saga*, the differing contents of the shattered vessels serve to confirm the distance between type and antitype. The intertext remains and is confirmed by the scenes' shared construction. Because poisoning the cup reflects the defiling of the Eucharist, Gunnhildr and Bárðr are shown to be sinners and Egill, by escaping the deception, prefigures a saint. Interestingly, as this episode progresses, Egill's life once again parallels David's, for just as Egill's performance of poetry in the king's court and subsequent escape from the king's wrath mark the beginning of his long-lasting feud with the Norwegian crown, so David's feud with Saul begins in an episode in which he performs a poem for the king and immediately has to flee the king's rage (*Egils saga*, 110–11; I Kings 8.10–11).

In a time of international trade, the pre-Christian of one region and the Christian of another are prone to meet, as happens when Egill and Þórólfr serve the English king, Aðalsteinn (Æpelstan). Because Aðalsteinn is a Christian, his kingship functions as a type of Christ's kingship, meaning that, by extension, England prefigures the Kingdom of Heaven. When Egill and Þórólfr enter into Aðalsteinn's service, they enter into a space that occupies a very different typological stance within the *tempus* from those in which they have operated previously. Egill's interactions with Aðalsteinn are, accordingly, laden with theological complexity.

Despite the apparent hindrance of chronology, the Old Testament provides one theological parallel in the blessing of Abram (later Abraham) by Melchizedek, the king of Salem (Jerusalem) and a priest of God, who serves a meal of bread and wine (Genesis 14.17–24). The author of the book of Hebrews draws a typological link between Melchizedek and Jesus, saying that Melchizedek is *sine patre, sine matre, sine genealogia, neque initium dierum neque finem vitae habens* 'without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither the beginning of days nor the end of life' (Hebrews 7.3), and that Christ, like Melchizedek, derives his power *secundum virtutem vitae insolubilis* 'according to the power of an indestructible life' (Hebrews 7.16). His connection to Christ is strengthened by the fact that the meal he presents to Abram is essentially a pre-Incarnation appearance of the Eucharist, a Christian sacrament, allowing him to represent Christ in Abram's life in much the same fashion that Aðalsteinn does in Egill's. Interesting, but perhaps coincidental, is the fact that both Abram's meeting with Melchizedek and Egill's meeting with Aðalsteinn take place after battles, involve alcohol and precede Egill's and Abram's acquisition of greater wealth. Also noteworthy is that both meetings precede contracts that promise progeny and land. Abram's meeting with Melchizedek comes just before his covenant with God in which God promises to make a great nation of Abram's descendants and to give him land (Genesis 14.17–15.21). Just after leaving Aðalsteinn, Egill returns to Norway where he marries Ásgerðr, who provides him with children and with a claim to her family property in Norway (*Egils saga*, 147–63). Just as Abraham never gains ownership of the Promised Land, Egill never recovers his wife's inheritance.

A crucial moment in Egill's stay in England takes place shortly after Þórólfr's death, when Aðalsteinn and his retinue are celebrating their victory at the battle of Vínheiðr. Egill sits across from Aðalsteinn with his head hanging low, his shield in front of his legs. He slides his sword in and

out of his scabbard while holding one eye open and the other shut (*Egils saga*, 143–44). The narrator emphasises Egill's threatening appearance as if to suggest that Egill holds Aðalsteinn responsible for his brother's death and wants revenge.

Aðalsteinn's response is to unsheathe his own sword, take a ring from his arm and use the blade to offer the ring to Egill over the fire pit. This offer is striking in several ways. By presenting the ring on his sword, Aðalsteinn demonstrates that he is equally willing to threaten violence if need be to maintain order in his hall. The action implies an offer—much like the one Haraldr makes to the Norwegian chieftains earlier in the saga—that Egill can accept the king's authority or be put to the sword.

The ring-giving scene gives a fair amount of theological weight to Aðalsteinn and Egill. In it we see Egill, a pagan chieftain, threatening a Christian king with insurrection in a time period that is post-Conversion for the Englishman and pre-Conversion for the Icelander. Tulinus has suggested that by opening and closing his eye Egill is imitating Óðinn (Tulinus 2001, 255). If this is true, then the author is drawing special attention to the religious difference between the two and the conflict that could result from it.

For Aðalsteinn, living in post-Conversion England, Egill's threat is one of both political insurrection and disruption of the Christian order in his court by a figure whose origins in a country that has not yet been converted make him symbolic of a sort of threat from an earlier time. We can compare the threat that Grendel, a creature whose origins are in a pre-Deluge race, poses to the post-Deluge court of Hroþgar in Heorot in *Beowulf*.<sup>1</sup> The description of Egill here hints at elements of

<sup>1</sup> The deluge in Genesis prefigures conversion much like the Israelites' crossings of the Red Sea and the Jordan. In each case we see the people of God cross from one period of their history into another, leaving behind their prior state to be closer to God. The flood divides Noah's descendants from the wicked ways and the giants of the antediluvian world, the Red Sea divides the liberated Israelites from their Egyptian masters, the Jordan from forty years of wandering in the wilderness, and the baptismal water of conversion from the convert's sinful past. When representative features of these past ages appear after their times they are treated as things to be avoided or overcome. Examples are the Israelites' encounters with giants when they first enter the Promised Land (Numbers 13.33–34), the commandment that the Israelites never return to or even conduct trade with Egypt (e.g. Deuteronomy 17.16), Christ's temptation in the wilderness (Mark 1.9–13), Paul's warnings against returning to sin by using the language of slavery (e.g. Galatians 5.1) or even the survival of the Grendelkin after the Deluge.

monstrosity associated with the skald, and like Grendel, Egill has the potential to disrupt the hospitality that the king is offering to his retainers in his hall. But Aðalsteinn is no Hroþgar, incapable of dealing with a potential threat himself, nor is he a pre-Christian warrior like Beowulf, who merely meets Grendel's monstrosity with violence. Aðalsteinn instead extends a ring to Egill, offering him a place in society, and in so doing looks beyond the threat that Egill poses to see his humanity. His presentation of the ring on the end of his sword shows that this is not a coy offer of payment to avoid violence, like those of Christian communities that tried to pay Viking raiders for security from their raiding. Aðalsteinn is not afraid of Egill, and his display of combined graciousness and power brings an end to Egill's imitation of Óðinn, and while this does not bring about the latter's conversion, it ends the potential threat of chaos posed by the pre-Christian world to the Christian space represented by the hall.

This transformation is important for Egill in a different sense. Though Egill is a pagan from a pre-Conversion society, Aðalsteinn offers him a place in post-Conversion England. In that sense the English king functions as a type of Christ in Egill's life, able to offer him the opportunity to transform himself from a part of a pagan world into a defender of a Christian kingdom. The fact that Aðalsteinn sees Egill as suitable for this role is also telling, for it does not require Egill to give up his warlike ways to become a monk, as might be expected in a saint's life, but instead suggests that the pagan warrior-poet's talents can be put to meaningful service in a Christian society. This is made even more clear by Aðalsteinn's gift of two more rings to Egill as a reward for his poetry, suggesting that the art of skaldic verse with which Egill is associated is a redeemable part of the pagan past that can be incorporated into the Christian present in the hands of Christian poets just as a pagan warrior like Egill can be offered a role in Christian society by a Christian king.

Weber notes that 'it is essential for the validity of an individual's conversion to the Christian faith that the latter should come about of this individual's own *free* will, without the use of immediate force' (Weber 2001, 131). This, he says, is a *topos* of Christian missionary theory that can apply to either individuals or populations when they are confronted with the new faith. On the literal level, Aðalsteinn demonstrates his respect for the importance of free will when he first accepts Þórólfr and Egill into his retinue by requiring only they *skyldi láta þrímshásk*, 'must let themselves be primesigned', a formality that,

in Egill's case, does not seem to indicate any sincere conversion (*Egils saga*, 128). On the more literary level, when Aðalsteinn offers Egill a place in his retinue following Þórólfr's death, he tells him that it will be Egill's decision whether or not he wants to remain in England (*Egils saga*, 147). This offer is made twice, and Egill turns it down twice to see to matters in Norway and Iceland (*Egils saga* 147, 196–97). But it is important to note that although Egill leaves England after each offer, he also says both times that he intends eventually to return to accept them. After the second offer, Aðalsteinn dies and Egill's opportunity to join Christian society passes with him, leaving him part of the pre-Christian Scandinavian world and his promise to return to the Christian king's service unfulfilled (*Egils saga*, 212).

Weber holds that in *Heimskringla* the conversion of Norway, much like the Incarnation, is meant to happen at a fixed, unchangeable point in time set by God's providence. This is why Hákon Haraldsson's best efforts to convert Norway before the reign of Óláfr helgi (or, arguably, Óláfr Tryggvason) inevitably fail (Weber 2001, 127). It is probable that the conversion of the Mýramenn, and certainly that of the Icelanders, is also preordained (though many Icelanders are converted before the conversion is made official by the Alþingi in 1000), and it may be that Egill is, for whatever reason, tied more permanently to his people's providential fate. If this is the case, then his hope to return to Aðalsteinn may be comparable to Hákon's failed attempt to convert Norway in that it prefigures a genuine convert's will to join the Christian faith which is prevented by the grand designs of Providence. It is a prefigurative hope, of course. On the literal level, Egill demonstrates no interest in conversion proper, but does express an interest in returning to Aðalsteinn's service in a Christian kingdom. A Christian kingdom and its king are types of the Kingdom of Heaven and of Christ; to be a Christian is to be what St Paul calls a citizen in the Kingdom of Heaven (Philippians 3.20). Egill's foiled hope is not a hope of conversion, but a hope of a type of conversion, an attraction to an earthly type of a heavenly kingdom and, therefore, prefigures the desire of genuine converts (like his descendants) to become Christian.

Egill's final prefiguration of a saint comes after his death. His stepdaughter Þórdís, a convert to Christianity, has Egill's remains exhumed and reburied under the altar of a newly built church. Margaret Clunies Ross has observed that the discovery of a body, or *inventio*, and its transferral to a new burial place, or *translatio*, are both hagiographical motifs, perhaps indicating some chance that the influence

of Providence in his life (indicated by his resemblance to typological models) worked to allow him some reprieve from hell (Clunies Ross 1978, 6). This may be the kind of interpretation that Þórdís chooses to believe when she goes so far as to bury her stepfather underneath an altar where one might expect to find saintly relics. Grønlie notes that in a saint's life the body of the saint, when discovered, is completely intact without any decay, but when Egill's body is exhumed, it has decayed and is only a skeleton, which is perhaps unsurprising for an unbaptised pagan (*Egils saga*, 298–99). But the theme of the corpse's posthumous indestructibility remains in imperfect form in *Egils saga*, for before Egill is reburied, Skapti Þórarinsson attempts to break his bones with an axe and cannot harm the skull (Grønlie 2012, 18). Tulinius has suggested that this is 'a playful inversion or parody of the *translatio*', suggesting that the skald remained 'true to his nature' even after death (Tulinius 2001, 277). A simpler reading might be that in the indestructibility of his skull, Egill is once again a prefigurative type of a saint for, as is standard for biblical types, he prefigures his antitype imperfectly. Thus Þórdís's apparent hope is refuted when Egill's bones are exhumed again and *logð niðr í útanverðum kirkjugarði at Mosfelli* 'buried on the outskirts of the churchyard at Mosfell' (*Egils saga*, 299) which, Grønlie notes, is where unbaptised children are buried (Grønlie 2012, 18), perhaps indicating that Egill has gone to Limbo, the liminal placement of his body reflecting a liminal destination for his soul. Egill's two reburials, then, seem to contradict one another in much the same way that his contrasting saintly and heinous acts do in life. He is neither near enough to Christianity to warrant Heaven nor so far from it as to warrant Hell.

Though Egill's spiritually ambiguous resting place is certainly not fitting for a saint, it has Old Testament precedent. When the Israelites are preparing to move into the Promised Land, Moses, who led them out of Egypt and through the wilderness for forty years, is forbidden entry and is buried on its border (Deuteronomy 34). Just as his family is being converted to Christianity, that is, the faith that the Promised Land of the Old Testament prefigures, Egill is buried at the border of a churchyard, the space that represents that faith (*Egils saga*, 298–99). Both figures are laid to rest in liminal states. Shortly before his death, Moses is permitted to view the Promised Land from the summit of Mount Pisgah. Shortly before his death, Egill sees several of his relatives become Christians. Both see the coming change in history but neither takes part in it.

The imperfect hagiographical motifs in *Egils saga* indicate that Egill may prefigure a saint and therefore occupy a place in Icelandic history that is comparable to that of an Old Testament figure within Christian history. Like an Old Testament figure, his actions foreshadow those of a Christian saint but demonstrate an unaware but pronounced inability to fulfil a saint's moral standards. This indicates a historiographical belief that Iceland's pre-Christian history, like that of Old Testament Israel, is building toward its Christian period. This is confirmed by narrative parallels with Old Testament narrative and with those episodes that prefigure hagiographical tropes. Within this narrative framework, though, there is ample room for theological creativity, as is seen in the interaction between the pre-Christian Egill and the Christian Aðalsteinn, as well as for expressions of complex and morally ambiguous personalities.

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# THE GOALS OF *GALDRALAG*: IDENTIFYING THE HISTORICAL INSTANCES AND USES OF THE METRE

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## 1. *Introduction*

IN STANZA 101 OF *HÁTTATAL*, Snorri Sturluson presents seven curiously repetitive lines of verse with nothing more than the name *galdralag* to describe them. Many have concluded that instances of *galdralag* in a *ljóðahátt* poem are intended to represent magic. This article tests that conclusion and comments further on the magic represented and how the metre worked in context. The meaning of the word *galdralag* itself must be considered in order to identify instances in the Old Norse poetic corpus. It is necessary to consider how genuine instances of *galdralag* may be separated from superficially similar examples, many of which involve poetic lists. Identification of *galdralag* instances in this article will be limited to structures consisting of full lines; however, it will be noted that *galdralag*-like structures occur in *ljóðahátt* long lines as well, suggesting the possibility that *galdralag* is a broader category than it is considered to be here. It is then possible to analyse the instances to identify repeated themes and the functional aspects present in their usage. Magical tropes are well represented in the themes, which include runes, fetters, memory charms and curses. However, not all instances of *galdralag* involve magic. In looking at the functional aspects, I categorise the instances according to whether they clarify, limit or expand their subject matter, and this approach reveals a possible vector by which *galdralag* could have been seen as magical speech within Old Norse culture.

## 2. *The word galdralag*

*Galdralag*, which occurs very infrequently in the Old Norse corpus, is understood as a compound of the much more common words *galdr* and *lag*. The Cleasby–Vigfusson dictionary defines *galdr* as follows (italics in original): ‘a song . . . but almost always with the notion of a charm or spell . . . hence . . . witchcraft, sorcery’. It also gives nineteen compounds with *galdra-* as the first element, all related to magic in some form or other.

Many of these, such as *galdramaðr* and *galdrabók*, are quite common. It suggests an association of the word with the verb *gala* ‘to crow’, ‘to chant, sing’. The second element of the compound, *lag*, has a greater variety of meanings, but as part of the name of a verse form, as in *fornyrðislag* or *tøglag*, it means ‘manner, rule, law or metre’. Thus, the compound means something like ‘metre of magic charms’.

Other than in Snorri’s text, where it occurs without commentary, and later in nineteenth-century philology, *galdralag* occurs only in two instances in the seventeenth-century *Píslarsaga séra Jóns Magnússonar*.<sup>1</sup> In both cases it seems to refer to magic or sorcery in general, and a more specific meaning of ‘magic song’ or ‘magic poetry’ is unlikely, although perhaps not impossible (*Píslarsaga* 2001, 132, 185). Neither is in the context of a discussion of poetic metre.

### 3. The *ljóðaháttir* corpus

In attempting to identify instances of *galdralag*, I have examined as much of the extant Old Norse *ljóðaháttir* poetry as possible, except for runic sources. I have generally accepted the line breaks established by the editors of those poems, disputing them in some cases, as will be seen later. I do not attempt to determine whether particular stanzas may have had *galdralag* inserted through interpolation or scribal corruption. The editions consulted are specified in the bibliography, and all quotations from the poems are taken from them. Some comments on these editions are in order.

Sijmons and Gering’s edition of *Die Lieder der Edda* is followed for the poems *Grógaldr* and *Fjölsvinnsmál*, which are not included in Neckel and Kuhn. All identifiable instances of *galdralag* are to be found within the Codex Regius, *Snorra Edda* and *Grógaldr*. *Tryggðamál* has *galdralag*-like constructions (see Heusler 1903, 129–33), but these are not included in my study as there is no establishment of regular metre. It is interesting that *galdralag* occurs only in poetry dealing with pre-Christian themes; although the two major Christian poems in *ljóðaháttir*, *Sólarljóð* and *Hugsvinnsmál*, have over 220 stanzas between them, they have no *galdralag*. This lack could be due to the rule-following regularity of an early literate culture, or perhaps to Christian attitudes toward pagan magic. A concern about offending Christian sensibilities could also explain why Snorri did not give any explanation of *galdralag*.

<sup>1</sup> As determined by a search of the *Icelandic Parsed Historical Corpus* and the *Íslenskt Textasafn*.

4. Defining the *galdralag* form

In order to identify its occurrences, *galdralag* as a poetic form must be defined, and the genres of poetry that it can be found in determined. Faulkes mentions that extra lines added to certain *dróttkvætt* stanzas might warrant comparison to *galdralag*, but adds, ‘Snorri seems to confine the term *galdralag* to *ljóðaháttir* with an extra line at the end of the stanza’ (2007, 51). Here I do likewise, considering *galdralag* to be something that is only found in *ljóðaháttir* and ignoring *galdralag*-like constructions in forms other than *ljóðaháttir*. These do exist; the ending of *Völundarqviða* 41 has a repetitive, *galdralag*-like construction in a *fornyrðislag* poem:<sup>2</sup>

Ec vætr hánom	I knew not how
vinna kunnac,	to withstand him,
ec vætr hánom	I could do nothing
vinna máttac.	to withstand him.

It might be suggested that Bøðvildr is complaining that Völundr has used magic on her to explain why she succumbed to him.

Now that *galdralag* is restricted here to a sub-class of *ljóðaháttir*, some remarks on *ljóðaháttir* itself will be helpful. Regular *ljóðaháttir* consists of stanzas of four lines, starting with a *fornyrðislag*-style long line composed of two half lines linked by alliteration, although it tends to have a less rigid syllable count, as a comparison between *Hávamál* and *Völuspá* will quickly show. Each half line generally has two stressed syllables. This long line is then followed by a peculiar structure commonly called a full line which generally seems to have two or three stressed syllables and internal alliteration. This combination of long line and full line is usually repeated to make a full stanza—but the half-stanza of two lines is the fundamental unit.

The long line needs no further comment here. The full line does, however, since it is critical to the definition of *galdralag*. In particular, it is characterised by how it ends. Turville-Petre says that a long disyllabic word was apparently forbidden as an ending, and that instead, the word used to end the line can be a short disyllable, a long monosyllable, a short monosyllable, or a trisyllable made up of a stressed long syllable, a half-stressed syllable and an unstressed syllable (1976, xv–xvi). Examples of these valid endings would be *fyrir*, *menn*, *hvat* and *Óðreri*, respectively. Evans elaborates on the nature of the disyllable (1986, 87):

<sup>2</sup> All translations in this article are my own.

The first syllable of a disyllable at the end of a *ljóðahátttr* ‘full line’ must be short. (A long vowel followed immediately by a short vowel, as for instance in *búa*, counts as short for this purpose.)

Thus, a long disyllable such as *rúnar* by itself would not be expected as the ending of a full line. However, Sievers allows the combination of stressed long, half-stressed long and unstressed, although it ends with a long disyllable (1893, 84). This suggests that word boundaries are important. The question of appropriate line endings will be used in evaluating some potential instances of *galdralag*.

Many have indicated that the identifying feature of *galdralag* is the addition of an extra full line in a half-stanza, one which often repeats the previous full line with some changes. This upsets the regular alternation of long lines and full lines that is characteristic of *ljóðahátttr*. According to Sievers (1893, 81):

Im *galdralag* wird die vollzeile einer halbstrophe (in dem musterbeispiel des *Háttatal* str. 101 die der letzten) in etwas veränderter gestalt wiederholt. So z. b. *Höv.* 105 . . . Aber auch in der ersten halbstrophe ist die widerholung gestattet und häufig, z. b. *Höv.* 1. . . ebenso die widerholung in beiden halb-strophen, z. b. *Höv.* 125.

In *galdralag* the full line of a half-stanza (in the prime example of *Háttatal* strophe 101, in which it is the last one) is repeated in a somewhat changed form. Thus for example *Hávamál* 105 . . . However, the repetition is also permitted and frequent in the first half-stanza; for example *Hávamál* 1. . . likewise, the repetition in both half-stanzas; for example *Hávamál* 125.

Here I disagree with Sievers and others and follow the approach of Anderson, considering to be *galdralag* any instance where two or more consecutive full lines occur in a half-stanza of *ljóðahátttr* poetry where the listener expects only a single full line. Thus, I do not consider the modified repetition of the previous line to be an essential feature. Anderson defines *galdralag* as follows with respect to *ljóðahátttr* (2002, 151):

There is a variation of this six line stanza called, significantly, *galdralag*, ‘incantation’ or ‘magic song’ meter. This variation involves the addition of another three stress line [‘full line’] to the *ljóðahátttr* stanza. The effectiveness of this variation is derived from its similarity to the basic verse form. Until the seventh line of the *galdralag*, which is linked by grammatical forms and complementary sentence structure to the sixth line but is not anticipated by the preceding lines, the two verse forms are exactly alike. The seventh line therefore comes as a surprise to the reader or listener, thereby assuming a power lacking in an ordinary stanza, a power which perhaps explains the origin of the term ‘incantation meter’.

Where I differ from Anderson is his assertion that *galdralag* is defined only by two consecutive full lines in the half-stanza. Although he notes a case of three consecutive full lines in *Locasenna* 23, he does not include this in his list of *galdralag* instances in that poem (2002, 151–52). Here, I do consider *Locasenna* 23 and other instances involving three or more consecutive full lines to be *galdralag*; they would also surprise the listener just as he indicates, but perhaps even more than a *galdralag* involving only two consecutive full lines.

Nonetheless, modified repetition is a common occurrence among *galdralag* lines even when defined in this manner, and there is a metrical reason why poets might use repetition in some instances but not in others. In introducing his discussion of Germanic verse, Russom notes (1998, 5):

Good poets often deviate from standard verse patterns, in part because what they wish to say makes it necessary to do so and in part to avoid metrical banality. In a poetic form intended for recitation, however, deviance must not create verses too complex for intuitive scansion. The complexity of an individual verse must be kept within tolerable limits, and a poem must not contain an intolerably high frequency of the most deviant verses.

Russom seems to be referring to deviations within lines, but the concept is also applicable to deviations between lines, especially in a form such as *ljóðaháttir* that uses varying line types. *Galdralag* is a break from banality, whether or not it was intended as such. However, it introduces complexity, and the ancient poets may have used repetition to reduce that complexity by making the deviance obvious to the listener—although repetition can also be used as an aesthetic element. Thus, in a poem of completely regular *ljóðaháttir*, consecutive full lines would be readily noticed, and repetition would not be essential, though it could still be used. *Locasenna*, in particular, is generally devoid of metrical irregularities (at least in the alternation of long lines with full lines) and is not very repetitive in its *galdralag* lines. However, in a poem that is not so regular (for instance, in one containing poetic lists that deviate from the metre), repetition might be more important to reinforce the effect of the *galdralag*. *Hávamál*, in particular, seems to have quite a number of deviations from the standard *ljóðaháttir* metre, whether in the context of poetic lists or otherwise, and its *galdralag* lines tend to have more repetition in them.

Apparent occurrences of *galdralag* within poetic lists are problematic. In her analyses of poetic lists Elizabeth Jackson argues that various metrical irregularities are probably deliberate and not a sign of textual corruption (1995, 82; see also 1994):

Among the various problems the lists have posed for editors of the eddic poems is the fact that they frequently display metrical irregularity and are consequently difficult to group into conventional strophes.

I have noted that *galdralag* involved situations ‘where the listener expects only a single full line’. However, metrical irregularities and poetic lists would be situations where the listeners’ expectations may be different. A good example of such a poetic list starts in *Grímnismál* 27. It begins with a typical *ljóðaháttr* long line, *Síð oc Víð, | Sækin oc Eikin*, but this is followed by *Svöl oc Gunnþró* which is not a full line, since it lacks internal alliteration. It cannot be a half line paired with the *Fiorm oc Fimbulþul* that follows, as the two do not alliterate. *Svöl oc Gunnþró* alliterates with the long line that opens the stanza—but this offers the unusual case of three half lines linked by alliteration. No matter how it is reckoned, it is an irregularity. As most editors have it, one can only assume that the metre in this and the following stanza has been suspended while the poet recites the list of rivers. The irregularity (three alliterating half lines) may be the poet’s way of announcing a suspension of metre that starts a list. Therefore, in stanzas where the *ljóðaháttr* has been suspended for the sake of a list, one should be more reluctant to identify an instance of *galdralag*. When the regular alternation of long lines with full lines has been suspended, two consecutive full lines would not confound the expectations of the listener. Of course, not every poetic list suspends the metre; *Grímnismál* 30 comfortably contains a list of horses while maintaining the regular alternation. The simplest case of such a list and the suspension of metre is that of a dense sequence of proper nouns separated by simple conjunctions (usually *oc*, sometimes *en*).

However, poetic lists can be more complicated than that and still entail a suspension of the standard *ljóðaháttr* metre. Jackson has done important work on such complex lists in Eddic poetry, especially lists in *Hávamál* which are more than just dense sequences of proper nouns (1995). She identified several such lists in *ljóðaháttr* poetry where regular metre seems to be suspended (1994; 1995). As in simpler lists, it is not meaningful to identify *galdralag* where there is no expectation of metre to be upset. Interestingly enough, some of these lists appear to start with *galdralag* lines, particularly ones that have strong repetition (1995, 84, 95–96). It must also be noted that lists sometimes seem to end with *galdralag* (1995, 99; 1994, 45). These usages can complicate identification of *galdralag* instances. Nevertheless, whether or not the poets are reciting lists must be a factor in identifying instances of *galdralag*.

5. *Galdralag* in Snorri's *Edda*

The definition of *galdralag* can now be tested on the occurrences in Snorri's *Edda*, such as Snorri's model stanza, *Háttatal* 101 (Faulkes 2007, 39):

Sóttak fremð,	I sought honour,
sóttá ek fund konungs,	I sought a king's meeting,
sóttak ítran jarl,	I sought a glorious jarl,
þá er ek reist—	when I cut—
þá er ek renna gat—	when I made run—
kaldan straum kili—	a cold stream with a keel—
kaldan sjá kili.	a keel over a cold sea.

Present is the modified repetition that is often characteristic of *galdralag*, and Snorri has used it to excess—it occurs throughout the stanza. Nowhere else in the corpus is repetition used to such extremes in a single stanza. Kari Ellen Gade says of Snorri's distinctions between various arrangements of sentence patterns in *Háttatal* that

The corpus of extant *dróttkvætt* poetry shows examples of all these variants, but they are nowhere as systematically carried through as in Snorri's *hættir*. It seems therefore that Snorri stylized certain peculiarities and made them normative, and his syntactic patterns must not be taken as prescriptive but rather as descriptive of phrasal arrangements that occasionally occur in *dróttkvætt* stanzas. (1995, 15)

It appears that Snorri did the same for *galdralag*, making peculiarities normative. (See also his distinctions between *fornyrðislag*, *bálkarlag* and *starkaðarlag*.) Indeed, it is unlikely that one could compose an extended poem in *galdralag*, at least not as Snorri has exemplified it, although Faulkes makes the interesting speculation that the lost poem *Heimdalargaldr* 'may have been entirely in this metre' (2007, 74). Although much emphasis is placed on the consecutive full lines as the mark of *galdralag*, there are some *ljóðaháttir* stanzas of normal length whose opening lines have repetition similar to Snorri's opening lines above, as will be discussed in the next section.

One other instance that Snorri may have recognised as *galdralag* is the fragment he quotes from *Heimdalargaldr* in chapter 27 of *Gylfaginning* (Faulkes 2005, 26):

Níu em ek mæðra mögr,	I am son of nine mothers,
níu em ek systra sonr.	I am son of nine sisters.

One may argue that without the rest of the stanza, we cannot be sure it is *galdralag*. Nevertheless, all signs point in that direction. Each line is a normal *ljóðaháttir* full line, and there is no other Old Norse poetic form

that such a pair could fit into. The fragment features the slightly restated repetition also found in *Háttatal* 101. Here the second line gives new information limiting, but not contradicting, the first line. In the first line it is possible that the nine mothers are unrelated; the second line restricts it to nine sisters specifically. Snorri's model stanza, however, does not give limiting information, except perhaps for the first three lines. Lines 4–7 merely say the same thing twice in different words.

The closing lines of Snorri's model stanza show the use of repetition for emphasis, a function that is not peculiar to *galdralag*. The *Heimdalargaldr* fragment and the opening lines of Snorri's stanza, on the other hand, demonstrate limitation with emphasis. There are further examples in the corpus of limitation with emphasis as a function of *galdralag*, alongside clarification and expansion.

#### 6. *Galdralag*-like structures in *ljóðahátt*r long lines

In this article instances of *galdralag* are restricted to consecutive full lines. However, *galdralag*-like repetition occurs in long lines and full lines in *ljóðahátt*r poetry without breaking the customary alternation between them, just as in the opening of Snorri's model stanza. In a different case, the alternation is disrupted by consecutive long lines instead of full lines. These suggest there is potentially more to *galdralag* than just the idea of repeated full lines.

In a recent article, Ilya Sverdlov considers the refrain Óðinn uses to open his last six questions in his contest with Vafþrúðnir (*Vafþrúðnismál* 44, 46, 48, 50, 52 and 54; also in stanza 3 in a slightly different form) to be a hidden form of *galdralag* in which the stanza opens with three full lines, instead of a long line followed by a full line, although they are disguised to look like a long line and a full line (Sverdlov 2011, 53–55). I disagree. I consider the line *Fiqlð ec fôr, / fiqlð ec freistaðac* to be a long line made up of two rhythmically correct half lines. To be sure, the line is unusual in alliterating on all four stresses, but Sverdlov notes cases where this occurs elsewhere, as in *Locasenna* 65 and *For Scírnis* 23 (2011, 50–51). One might merge these views and see the half stanza as both the combination of long line and full line that it is traditionally reckoned to be, and the combination of three full lines that Sverdlov argues for. Would we expect anything less to be put in Óðinn's mouth?

Such a merger of views may not be necessary, however. Sverdlov notes that in stanza 3, Óðinn is letting Frigg know that he plans to use magic on Vafþrúðnir by using those lines in advance of their deployment against Vafþrúðnir (2011, 64). What was not noted is that Frigg's reply

in stanza 4 opens with similarly repetitive lines: *Heill þú farir, | heill þú aprt komir, || heill þú á sinnom sér!* Frigg's long line does not have fourfold alliteration, so it cannot be a pair of full lines. Is Frigg using her magic here to protect Óðinn, besides letting him know that she realises what he is planning? Yes, since both Óðinn's refrain and Frigg's lines have something in common with a particular known *galdralag* stanza: Snorri's *Háttatal* 101.

Each of the first three lines of Snorri's stanza starts with *sóttá ek* or its contraction *sóttak*. In *Vafþrúðnismál* 3 each of the first three lines starts with *fiqlð ek*. In *Vafþrúðnismál* 4 each of the first three lines starts with *heill þú*. So while many have focused on that extra line at the end of Snorri's stanza, the repetition at its beginning may also be significant. Like *Vafþrúðnismál* 4, the stanza lacks fourfold alliteration in the opening long line and thus that opening cannot be a pair of full lines. Snorri may have been implying that *galdralag* could be put into a *ljóðaháttur* half-stanza without adding an extra full line, simply by using threefold repetition in the half-stanza—putting magic into it without disrupting the alternation of long lines and full lines.<sup>3</sup> The correspondence suggests that *Fiqlð ec fór, | fiqlð ec freistaðac* might be reckoned as a kind of *galdralag* without being a pair of full lines. Alternatively, these two phenomena—*galdralag* as threefold repetition in a long line plus a full line and *galdralag* as consecutive full lines—may have been viewed as separate, unrelated features by earlier poets which were later conflated by Snorri.

In *Hávamál* 141 the alternation of long lines and full lines is instead disrupted by an extra long line: *orð mér af orði | orðz leitaði, || verc mér af verki | vercs leitaði*. Jackson discusses the purpose of this line (1995, 96):

In this case the couplet closes the narrative of Óðinn's acquisition of the runes (138–41), preparing the way for the opening of the rune lore lists which follow. It differs from the *Grímnismál* example in that it is a couplet of long lines employing structural and some verbal repetition, rather than of full lines employing near-repetition, but its function is the same.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, *galdralag*-like constructions can be put to at least one of the same uses as genuine *galdralag*. *Hávamál* 137, depending on whether it is reckoned a list, an interpolation or something else, may be an extremely extended piece of long-line *galdralag* with five consecutive long lines. The audience is kept

<sup>3</sup> Exploring further examples of such threefold repetition, such as *Hávamál* 76–77, would be interesting but beyond the scope of this article.

<sup>4</sup> The *Gríminismál* example mentioned is the *galdralag* couplet in stanza 45: *Ægis becci á, || Ægis drecco at*.

in suspense waiting for the expected full line that keeps getting delayed. Nonetheless, Jackson also reckons this as a transitional stanza (1994, 39). There are more instances of long-line *galdralag* in *Hávamál* and *For Scírnis*.

Both types of repetition (that is, the use of multiple long lines or ordinary long line plus full line) may very well be examples of skilled poets pushing the boundaries of conventional practice. Having sufficiently defined the boundaries of *galdralag* and its possible expansions, we now turn to listing the instances of *galdralag* in the corpus.

### 7. List of *galdralag* instances

Here is my list of *galdralag* instances (using a, b or c to denote the half-stanzas, \* to denote those where two or more consecutive full lines have the same alliteration, and underlining to denote extended *galdralag* of additional full lines, but the latter only where certain): *Hávamál* 1a\*, 74a, 105b, 111c\*, 112a (the refrain and its 19 repetitions in 113–37, excluding 114, 118, 123–24, 133), 125b, 134c, 142a\*, 143a, 149b, 155b\*, 156b\*, 157b, 162b, 164a\* (first half only); *Vafþrúðnismál* 42b, 43b; *Grímnismál* 45b\*; *For Scírnis* 10a, 29b, 30b\*, 32a\*, 34a\*, 35c\*; *Hárbarðzlióð* 20b; *Locasenna* 13b, 23b, 54b, 62b, 65b; *Alvíssmál* 35b; *Helgaqviða Higrvarðzsonar* 26b, 28b; *Fáfnismál* 24a; *Sigrdrífomál* 13c\*, 14a, 18ab (first and second halves), 19ab (first and second halves), 25a, 35a; *Grógaldr* 10b; *Gylfaginning* 27; *Háttatal* 101b\*. That makes 64 instances of *galdralag*—45 unique, plus the 19 repetitions of the *Loddfáfnismál* refrain.

My list differs from that produced by Sverdlöv (2011, 51 n.5)<sup>5</sup> in excluding portions of poetic lists or other instances where the metre appears to be suspended. I have also identified some stanzas where Neckel and Kuhn's printing conventions give misleading results, and included instances of *galdralag* found outside the *Poetic Edda*. The classification is a tricky business, involving an attempt to get into the poets' minds, and must necessarily be at least slightly subjective.

*Hávamál* 80 is excluded. It shares with *Grímnismál* 27 the feature mentioned above: it appears to start with three consecutive half lines. Such a construal seems the only way to reconcile the text with the metre without emending the difficulty away. Thus, *inom reginkunnum* cannot be a full line nor part of a *galdralag* couplet or extended sequence, especially as it lacks the alliteration necessary for a full line. Furthermore, *Hávamál* 80

<sup>5</sup> Sverdlöv also discusses whether *galdralag* can be used to start a *ljóðaháttr* half-stanza, but that is beyond the scope of this article.

starts a list or other section of metrical irregularity, as the next three stanzas are composed using only long lines. Given these features in common with *Grímnismál* 27, it would be inconsistent to reckon one as *galdralag* and the other not. Beyond that, the last line of *Hávamál* 80 is suspect. It is not clear whether it is a full line or a long line, as the indentation that Neckel and Kuhn give it suggests (1983, 29). One may object that I include other instances of *galdralag* that occur in lists, but the key difference is that these use the *galdralag* itself to signal the start or end of the list. In *Hávamál* 80, however, the three linked half lines signal the departure from metre.

Similarly, *Hávamál* 142 clearly has a *galdralag* couplet in *mioc stóra stafí, || mioc stinna stafí*, but should the following lines be considered part of an extended *galdralag*, or simply part of a list as Jackson has reckoned (1995, 95–100)? Consistency suggests that once a list has been started with *galdralag*, further *galdralag* should not be reckoned in it except perhaps for an instance of *galdralag* to end it. Those following lines in *Hávamál* 142 are, of course, extremely similar to the ones in *Hávamál* 80 (*þeim er gorgðo ginregin || oc fáði fimbulþulr*). Thus, in a later section when I address extended *galdralag* sequences of three or more full lines, I do not make that reckoning exhaustive: I leave out stanzas such as *Hávamál* 142 where the extended nature is uncertain.

In *Hávamál* 111 I reckon the end of the stanza as three consecutive full lines, making it an extended *galdralag*: *Háva hóllo at, || Háva hóllo í; || heyrða ec segia svá*. Why is *Háva hóllo at* a full line instead of a half line here, especially when the next line, *Háva hóllo í*, is a half line in *Hávamál* 164? Sverdlov points out that half lines can migrate to full lines and vice versa (2011, 55–56). In deciding whether an ambiguous item is a half line or a full line, the expectations of the audience must be taken into account. The listeners know they are hearing *ljóðaháttur* and would reckon a full line if the material is valid as such in a position when they expect a full line. After the earlier lines of stanza 111, they would expect a full line, since the alternation of long lines and full lines has been regular, and *Háva hóllo at* satisfies the alliteration and stress requirements for a full line. The repetition in the following line, *Háva hóllo í*, underscores the fact that this is a second consecutive full line. Also, the syllable structure corresponds to the *galdralag* couplet in *Grímnismál* 45 as well: stressed long, unstressed short, stressed long, unstressed short, stressed long. Furthermore, *Grímnismál* 45 has the same grammatical structure of genitive noun, dative noun and preposition. The only structural difference is where alliteration falls. Sverdlov also notes the correspondence, pointing out that the two formulae and syllable structures are the same (2011, 54).

Jackson describes the inner structure of the list of rune-makers in *Hávamál* 142–43 (1995, 95–100). Though this is a list where ordinary expectation of metre has been suspended, *Hávamál* 143 is still included in the *galdralag* tally on the following grounds. *Dvalinn dvergom fyrir, // Ásviðr iǰtnom fyrir* is a strongly repetitious pair of full lines whose alliterative structure matches the formula *Háva hǰllu í*. As a short disyllable, *fyrir* is indeed a correct full line ending. (The match is not perfect, as *Dvalinn* has a short first syllable.) Also, this particular *galdralag* ends a list, complementing the *galdralag* that started it in the previous stanza. Jackson also indicates *Sigrdrífomál* 13 as an example of *galdralag* used to end a list (1994, 40, 45).

In *Hávamál* 164a *allþorǰfýta sonom, // óþorǰfiǰtna sonom* is a *galdralag* couplet, but I exclude the remaining four lines of the stanza from the *galdralag* tally. Although Jackson does not define stanza 164b as a list, the half-stanza perfectly fits the patterns she describes (1995). The *galdralag* couplet in lines three and four indicates departure from the normal metre and the start of a list. Lines five and six give the first two list items and state the principle of the list—those who are *heill* as a result of various activities—and then line seven provides variation (through use of *nǰóti* instead of a form of *heill*) as well as signalling the approaching end of the list. Next, line eight returns to the original pattern and completes the list. Finally, the last word of the stanza, *hlýddo*, is a long disyllable, suggesting that the last line is not a correct full line.

*Grímnismál* stanzas 27, 33 and 49 are all lists and therefore excluded. I have already discussed the metrical ambiguities of *Grímnismál* 27. *Grímnismál* 33 is a list as well, although it is very short and economical. It refers to four harts and immediately gives their names. The hart names all have two syllables, except for the last which has three; Jackson observes that the poet concludes a different list in stanza 48 in just this manner with the name *Farmatýr* (1995, 90). The classification of *Grímnismál* 49 is not so simple. Although the lines in question, *Þrór þingom at, // Viðurr at vígom*, resemble *galdralag* and are part of a list, I contend that the poet structured them deliberately to avoid *galdralag* at that point. The first line has the structure name, dative noun and preposition. The second line significantly reverses the dative noun and preposition. The names are metrically equivalent: the first is a single long syllable, and the second is resolved, using two short syllables in place of a single long. Were it not reversed, the repetition in structure would be just as glaring as in *Grímnismál* 45, and it would be a much clearer candidate for *galdralag*.

The poet's probable motivation for avoiding a *galdralag* couplet is that it could be seen to signal the end of the list, which does not occur yet. The reversal is especially effective in that *vígom*, as a long disyllable, is not a correct full line ending.

Unlike Sverdlov, I exclude *For Scírnis* 31. The lines in question are *þitt geð grípi, // þic morn morni!* Were it included, it would be the only instance in my tally that had the suspect full-line ending of a long disyllable—thus I reckon it a single long line, although the poetics of its alliteration pattern are clearly exceptional. The stanza is left with a pair of consecutive long lines which is no more problematic than the other irregular stanzas in the range of stanzas 27 to 35.

Sverdlov leaves out *Hárbarðzlióð*. The poem's rampant metrical irregularities indeed call into question whether the audience ever expects *ljóðahátt*, which is necessary for *galdralag*. Nevertheless, some stanzas deserve a closer look. In stanzas 18 and 20 there is the possibility of consecutive full lines, but only in stanza 20 is the *ljóðahátt* rhythm of alternating long lines and full lines before the extra full line established, and only stanza 20 has correct endings for all the full lines. Furthermore, the stanza is about magic and is spoken by Óðinn, a known user of *galdralag*. Lastly, the use of *gambanteinn*, which is also found in the *galdralag* of *For Scírnis* 32, reinforces the connection to magic. Therefore I include *Hárbarðzlióð* 20 in the tally.

Both halves of *Sigrdrífomál* 18 are included despite potential difficulties. In stanzas 15–17 the audience hears a list that is clearly not in *ljóðahátt*, so the expectation of alternating lines is still suspended. However, in 18a, the lines *oc hverfðar við inn helga mið, // oc sendar á víða vega* are repetitious grammatically, consisting of conjunction, verb, preposition, adjective and noun; the only difference is an article before the adjective in the first line. In 18b the lines *sumar með vísom vǫnom, // sumar hafa mennzcir menn* are perhaps more strongly repetitious. Furthermore, the full lines in both halves have correct endings.

*Sigrdrífomál* 19a is included. It is a list that has *galdralag* within it. The potential full lines, *oc allar qlrúnar, // oc mætar meginrúnar*, both end with the syllable sequence stressed long, half-stressed long, and unstressed (*megin* is a resolved stress). Stanza 19b is also included as *galdralag*; Jackson has noted its similarities to *Hávamál* 112 (1994, 46). The endings for its three full lines are all correct.

In summary, I have used Jackson's findings on complex lists to eliminate only *Hávamál* 164b from the tally. Among simpler lists, I have eliminated three stanzas: *Grímnismál* 27, 33 and 49. From these a principle

of evaluation can be gleaned: simply stringing together proper nouns cannot make *galdralag*. The exclusion of *Hávamál* 80 is parallel to that of *Grímnismál* 27. For *Scírnis* 31 is the only stanza eliminated on the basis of line endings alone.

### 8. *Galdralag as an indicator of magic*

There is broad critical agreement that poets used *galdralag* to portray magic. This can take three forms: first, the speaker uses magic against his interlocutor, as Anderson argues concerning the *galdralag* of *Locasenna* (2002, 151):

In *Lokasenna*, all four stanzas in *galdralag* (st. 13, 54, 62, 65) are spoken by Loki; they carry more weight than the basic *ljóðaháttir* stanzas, and they represent attempts by Loki to use magic to increase his power and influence in his confrontations with the gods.

Anderson does not regard as *galdralag* *Locasenna* 23, where Óðinn speaks with three consecutive full lines, although he remarks (2002, 152):

Odin's reply is an attempt to equal Loki and to outdo the latter's magic with a metrical *tour de force*. The addition of an eighth line is the poet's way of showing Odin's efforts at stronger magic.

Jan de Vries considered that the function of the *galdralag* used in *Hávamál* 105 was to add an air of solemnity (1964, I 53). I suggest rather that it conveys a hint that Óðinn used magic on Gunnlǫð during his theft of the mead—or it could be Óðinn's way of emphasising regret for his treatment of Gunnlǫð. Either seems more likely than solemnity.

Second, a speaker may use magic for the benefit of the one he is speaking to. Tangherlini claims an initiatory context for *galdralag* in *Hávamál* stanzas 111 and 134 with the magic making the initiation more effective (1990, 90, 105):

The instruction of Loddfáfnir [stanza 111] is possibly a form of ritual initiation, accounting for the location of the instruction and the partial *galdralag* metre . . . The fact that the strophe [134] is in *galdralag* implies that it is related to magic, as does the apparent role of *Loddfáfnismál* as an initiatory poem.

Third, the speaker may use magic on himself. Sverdllov notes the following general use of *galdralag* (2011, 60):

Known *galdralag* stanzas usually mark turning points of composition of the lays they are found in; the characters that utter them intend, at that point of plot development, to add further force to their words and actions, to aid themselves by resorting to (more) magic.

He identifies one such turning point in *Grímnismál* (2011, 60):

At the crucial moment, when the identity of the supreme god is finally within the reach of the tortured warlock Grímnir, soon to become Óðinn again, he reaches to grasp it with a *galdralag* stanza, *Grm* 45.

As previously noted, Jackson's work indicates that *galdralag* also had the seemingly mundane function of starting and ending poetic lists—but perhaps suspending the metre and resuming it later was also a kind of magic, one that was directed at the audience.

### 9. Themes of *galdralag*

While many, although probably not all, instances of *galdralag* represent magic, that is a rather broad statement. By comparing the instances, specific repeated magical topics can be identified. Recurring themes include fetters, runes, memory charms, insults, curses and the emphasising of advice. As Jackson indicates, it is also used for starting and ending lists, and I will remark on some stanzas that she does not mention.

Fetters are mentioned in *Hávamál* 149, *Grógaldr* 10 and *Helgaqviða Hiqrvarðzsonar* 26. The first two are about loosening fetters, while the last concerns the laying on of a metaphorical fetter.

*Hávamál* 149:

sprettr mér af fótom fiqturr,	a fetter springs from my feet,
enn af hqndom hapt.	and a bond from my hands.

*Grógaldr* 10:

ok stqkr þá láss af limom,	and then flees lock from limbs,
en af fótom fqtorr.	and from feet a fetter.

*Helgaqviða Hiqrvarðzsonar* 26:

hér sté hon land af legi	here she went ashore from the sea
oc festi svá yðarn flota.	and thus made fast your fleet.

The use of *galdralag* when mentioning fetters may be self-referential: the surprise of the unexpected full line was perhaps thought a fetter to restrain the mind of the listener, which suggests that magic (to the poets) was a means of binding or loosening. McKinnell notes the correspondence of the *Grógaldr* stanza to part of the *First Merseberg Charm*, indicating the antiquity of the theme (2005, 205).

*Galdralag* is very frequently used for references to runes, whether these be *fupark* staves or secrets and mysteries. The stanzas mentioning runes are *Hávamál* 111, 142–43, 157; *Vaffprúðnismál* 42–43; *Sigrdrífomál* 13,

18, 19. Of course, runes are mentioned in non-*galdralag* stanzas and lists, such as *Hávamál* 137 and 139 and *Fjölsvinnsmál* 26. Still, these *galdralag* instances are a significant fraction of all reference to runes in *ljóðaháttir* poems, giving a further indication that the poets reckoned a strong connection between runes and magic.

*Galdralag* is also frequently used in memory charms. The refrain of the section of *Hávamál* giving advice to Loddfáfnir, first occurring in stanza 112, represents the speaker's use of magic to help Loddfáfnir learn, remember and use the advice that is given. The speaker uses another *galdralag* memory charm on him in *Hávamál* 162. *Sigrdrífomál* 19b is a memory charm, as is suggested by its similarities with *Hávamál* 112 (mentioned previously). These uses of memory charms parallel those in the *fornyrðislag* of *Hyndlolióð* 45 and the prose after *Sigrdrífomál* 2 where reference is made to memory drinks which help the initiates remember important information.

*Galdralag* also adds force to insults, as Anderson has noted (2002, 152). *Locasenna* 13, 54, and 62 are all insults by Loki against Bragi, Sif and Þórr respectively. *Locasenna* 23 is a retaliation by Óðinn against Loki, using an extended *galdralag*. However, *Locasenna* is the only poem that uses *galdralag* to enhance insults. (This could make them curses, except that there is no overt harm or threat of harm in them.)

*Galdralag* is used for cursing in ten instances across multiple poems, a curse being defined as any magic used with intent to harm. Thus, *Alvíssmál* 35 is a curse—Þórr is certainly not trying to help Alvíss with *galdralag*. Sverdlöv notes (2011, 61):

We may surmise that the *galdralag* stanza forces Alvíss to look around and see the sun, and thus turn into stone (otherwise he could probably have disappeared hastily into the earth).

Thus we have a piece of *galdralag* functioning as a fetter instead of referring to one. Five of the six instances of *galdralag* in *For Scírnis* are in Scírnir's curse on Gerðr (stanzas 29–30, 32, 34–35). *Hávamál* 155 is a curse against the *túnriðor*. In *Locasenna* 65 Loki curses Ægir and his hall. *Hárbarðzlióð* 20 starts with talk of a love spell, but the *galdralag* lines at the end are clearly about harmful magic. *Helgaqviða Hiqrvarðzsonar* 26 recounts the curse of a witch or valkyrie on a fleet, causing it to become stuck.

*Galdralag* can also emphasise particular pieces of advice in a list. Instances of this include *Hávamál* 125, *Hávamál* 135, *Sigrdrífomál* 25 and *Sigrdrífomál* 35. Interestingly, both *Sigrdrífomál* stanzas refer to revenge,

which is one possible reason for their special emphasis. We must consider whether the *galdralag* in the list of charms in *Hávamál* is also used in this way to indicate that those particular charms are more important than the others. The list of charms includes five *galdralag* instances (stanzas 149, 155–57 and 162), but only one, *Hávamál* 156, is not covered in the uses already mentioned. It is a protection charm whose extended *galdralag* has three consecutive full lines. However, overuse of *galdralag* to emphasise items in a list might defeat its purpose; the use of *galdralag* in five of the eighteen charms suggests to me that its function here is not to emphasise particular charms. In contrast, the *galdralag* in the advice to *Loddfáfnir* occurs in two of twenty distinct pieces of advice. (We can safely exclude the refrain from this tally, since it marks the boundaries between the pieces of advice.) *Sigrdrífa* uses *galdralag* in only two of eleven pieces of advice to *Sigurðr*. Both fractions are lower than in the list of charms in *Hávamál*, and neither can be considered excessive.

As Jackson's work suggests, *galdralag* sometimes signals the start of a list and the suspension of ordinary metre (1995). She identifies *Grímnismál* 45, *Hávamál* 111 and *Hávamál* 142 as *galdralag* couplets that signal the start of lists (1995, 85, 95). Applying her methods, the following additional instances of *galdralag* also start lists: *Hávamál* 164a and *Sigrdrífomál* 14. As mentioned earlier, Jackson notes that *galdralag* sometimes ends a list, instancing the *galdralag* in *Sigrdrífomál* 13 (1994, 40, 45). She also implies *Sigrdrífomál* 18b and *Hávamál* 143 to be list-ending *galdralag* (1995, 99). To those, I add *Hávamál* 162 (which is already reckoned a memory charm) as signalling the forthcoming end of the list, although it does not itself end the list. Jackson observed that a pattern break was used to signal the end of the charms list here but did not comment on the *galdralag* in it (1994, 41). Both may have been thought necessary, since the charms list already has several *galdralag* stanzas in it. By this point, an ordinary *galdralag* could not suffice to signal the list's end. Thus, the poet has combined a pattern break with a most exceptional *galdralag* that consists of four consecutive full lines.

#### 10. Functional aspects of *galdralag*

Now we address some aspects of *galdralag* that are separate from subject matter and themes: extended *galdralag* and the functions of clarification, limitation and expansion.

First comes what I call extended *galdralag*: instances of three or more consecutive full lines. Many stanzas contain this feature, but as noted previously, my analysis only looks at the unambiguous instances. These

are *Hávamál* 111, 134, 143, 156 and 162; *Locasenna* 23; *Helgaqviða Hiorvarðzsonar* 28 and *Sigrdrífomál* 14, 19b, 25 and 35.

Extended *galdralag* has many uses. No consistent themes emerge. *Hávamál* 111 and *Sigrdrífomál* 14 are not magic *per se*, but rather markers of the beginnings of lists as was discussed above. *Hávamál* 134 is advice about the wisdom of elders, connected to magic through Tangherlini's interpretation of the stanza as referring to a 'sage dangling from the roof of a smoke house' in a wisdom ritual (1990, 97). *Hávamál* 143 and *Sigrdrífomál* 19b end lists that deal with runes. *Hávamál* 156 is a charm for safety in battle; *Hávamál* 162 is a memory charm. *Locasenna* 23 is a magically enhanced insult, as noted earlier. *Helgaqviða Hiorvarðzsonar* 28 refers to supernatural horses. In *Sigrdrífomál* 25 and 35 there is no obvious magic; as mentioned above, they add emphasis to items in lists. In addition to emphasis, however, they clarify the advice through additional details.

Considering the instances together, all they have in common is the purpose of intensification, to increase the emphasis for the audience beyond that of normal *galdralag*. We can also envision the same for the character spoken to: all the *Hávamál* and *Sigrdrífomál* examples appear to have an initiatory context, while the *Locasenna* example is emotionally intense. Perhaps emphasis *qua* magic would best summarise it.

Having just touched on clarification, we now consider it further, along with two closely related functions. As mentioned previously, the examples in Snorri's *Edda* indicate that one use of *galdralag* is for limitation. The opposite of that, expansion, should also be considered. Next are some stanzas that I include in each category. Not all instances of *galdralag* can necessarily be analysed in this way, but many of them certainly can. Ultimately, such designations must necessarily be somewhat subjective. Limitation and expansion seem more apparent where there is strong repetition between the full lines in question. In instances of limitation or expansion, there is the possibility of active magic—that is, magic causing change—between the first and last lines of the sequence. In instances of clarification, the magical function would probably be emphasis or intensification instead of causing change.

Examples of clarification include *Hávamál* 125, 134; *Locasenna* 23, 54, 62; *Alvíssmál* 35, *Fáfnismál* 24; *Sigrdrífomál* 25, 35. In *Hávamál* 125 the extra lines add detail to clarify or emphasise; they do not change the scope of the remarks or offer any other surprises. In

*Hávamál* 134 the extra lines emphasise the importance of the advice, while explaining what this *pulr* does. In *Locasenna* 23 Óðinn piles on the details of Loki's womanish ways in his retort. *Locasenna* 54 and 62 serve Loki similarly by adding detail to his insults. *Alvíssmál* 35 clarifies the predicament that Alviðss finds himself in. In *Fáfnismál* 24 the extra line adds details and does not limit or expand anything. Lastly, *Sigrdrífomál* 25 and 35 add clarifying details while emphasising the importance of the advice on taking revenge and avoiding being killed in revenge, respectively.

Examples of limitation include *Gylfaginning* 27; *Hávamál* 111, 164; *Grímnismál* 45. As noted above, *Gylfaginning* 27 provides limitation without apparent magical purpose. Heimdallr is not trying to work magic, and as far as we can tell from the extant lines, it seems he is merely boasting of his unusual parentage. *Hávamál* 164, on the other hand, is indeed magic that functions through limitation. Hávi's sayings are identified as being very useful to the sons of men, but the next line denies their utility to an entire kindred by declaring them useless to the sons of *jötnar*! The limitation in *Hávamál* 111 is subtler: the speaker specifies the location of Hávi's hall and limits it by adding that the important events take place inside it, not merely at it. This extended instance of *galdralag* concludes by narrowing the focus to the words spoken in the hall. *Grímnismál* 45 is also a limitation: it starts with the Æsir on Ægir's benches and is then limited to those who are there for Ægir's feast. Put another way, a simple physical location (Ægir's benches) is limited by a significant event taking place there (Ægir's feast).

Examples of expansion include *Hávamál* 1, 112, 149, 155–57, 162; *For Scírnis* 10, 30, 35; *Locasenna* 65; *Sigrdrífomál* 13, 19b; *Grógaldr* 10. *Hávamál* 1 starts the poem with an expansion when the listener is instructed first to look around and then quickly exhorted also to pry or search around. *Hávamál* 112 (the *Loddfáfnismál* refrain) is an expansion also. The speaker indicates that Loddfáfnir will use the advice if he learns it, but extends it by saying that it will be good if he understands it. *Hávamál* 162, which mentions Loddfáfnir again, is similarly expansive. *Sigrdrífomál* 19b is also expansive, in a manner similar to the *Loddfáfnismál* refrain. *Hávamál* 149 and the similar *Grógaldr* 10 are both expansive. The charms do not just release fetters from one part of the body, they release fetters from additional parts also. *Hávamál* 155 starts by affecting the physical forms of the *túnriðor* and then expands to include non-physical or spiritual aspects also. *Hávamál* 156 is perhaps the most expansive of all. Wholeness is bestowed not

just for going into battle, but also for returning from battle, and finally for persisting outside the context of battle. *Hávamál* 157 is a simple expansion: that the dead man walks is not sufficient; the magic must endow him with speech as well. In *For Scírnis* 10, Scírnir speaks a charm to his horse, declaring they must get over the tribe of *þursar* in addition to getting over the dewy mountain. Getting over the dewy mountain may have been easy for the horse, but getting over the tribe of *þursar* was probably harder—thus, magic is needed to increase the horse's ability. In *For Scírnis* 30, Scírnir constrains Gerðr by declaring that she will be without choice, and adds to her predicament by saying she will be wanting choice nonetheless. In *For Scírnis* 35 Scírnir points out that Gerðr's misfortunes shall be the result of her own will in choosing to deny Freyr, but he immediately expands this to add his own will in causing the misfortunes. *Locasenna* 65 is another expansion. Loki starts by having the flames play, but then actually burn. Lastly, the *galdralag* in *Sigrdrífomál* 13 proclaims a certain liquid as being from *hauss Heiddraupnis*, but then expands the origin of the liquid to a second source, *horn Hoddrofnis*, perhaps to establish some level of identity between them.

### 11. Conclusions

The word *galdralag* is inextricably linked with magic: the frequent occurrences of *galdr* and the scant occurrences of *galdralag* itself in the prose corpus support this. With a proper definition of *galdralag* as a poetic form, considerations of poetic lists and suspended metre, and criteria for identifying valid *ljóðaháttr* full lines, genuine instances of *galdralag* in the poetic corpus can be separated from material that merely looks like consecutive full lines due to editorial printing conventions. A brief analysis of long line structures has revealed that a more comprehensive notion of *galdralag* that goes beyond extra full lines could also be considered.

Themes of magic are well represented in *galdralag* poetry. Previous commentary has shown that the magic of *galdralag* can be used for or against another person, or by the user upon himself. My own analysis shows that the magical themes of runes, binding/loosening fetters, memory charms and curses all appear in multiple instances of *galdralag* poetry. The magic of suspending a poem's normal *ljóðaháttr* metre while delving into a list arranged according to different metrical principles is well represented, and *galdralag* is often used for restoring ordinary metre.

Functional aspects have also been revealed. Extended *galdralag* shows a primary purpose of strengthening the emphasis for the listener and the magic that is implied; such extended instances have little else in common. I have shown that many *galdralag* instances can be divided into three groups according to whether the additional full line clarifies the material of the preceding line, limits it or expands it.

Putting it all together reveals a way in which *galdralag* could be viewed as magical speech. First, the surprise of the additional line acts as a fetter on the mind of the listener. Then, into this moment of surprise, the language that continues past the expected end of the half-stanza provides emphasis or details to reinforce the message upon the listener, or it states a change to the conditions of the previous line, limiting them or expanding them according to the will of the speaker.

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HVERS MANNS GAGN.  
HRAFN SVEINBJARNARSON AND THE SOCIAL ROLE  
OF ICELANDIC CHIEFTAINS AROUND 1200

By TORFI H. TULINIUS  
*University of Iceland*

*The Dorothea Coke Memorial Lecture in Northern Studies delivered at  
University College London on 12 March 2015.*

GOOD EVENING TO YOU ALL. I am very grateful and honoured to be asked to give the 2015 Dorothea Coke Memorial Lecture. University College London is one of the major centres of Old Norse–Icelandic studies in the United Kingdom and the world, and the teaching and research of colleagues here at UCL, both past and present, is deeply appreciated in our community of scholars of Viking, or Old Norse, or Medieval-Scandinavian-cum-North-Atlantic—whatever we choose to call it—studies. In recent years, I have been in charge of an English-language MA programme in Old Norse–Icelandic and Viking studies at the University of Iceland and have had the pleasure of teaching several alumni from the Scandinavian Studies department at UCL. They have all come very well prepared and have contributed much to our programme. Thank you for that, but also, and very much indeed, for this kind invitation.

The background to my talk is threefold. First, I have a long-standing interest in the history of the Westfjords and the power struggle that went on there in the late twelfth and first half of the thirteenth century, especially the conflict between Hrafn Sveinbjarnarson and Þorvaldur Snorrason, the latter killing the former in April 1213 (*Hrafn's saga* 1987, 43). As is true of so many aspects of the history of Iceland during this crucial period, we know quite a lot about this conflict and yet so little. By this I mean that, though we have information about many events, there are many more that we don't know about. Also, the author of this saga, as is true of most of those who composed the Contemporary Sagas, does not bother to say what he expects his thirteenth-century Icelandic audience to know that we, for obvious reasons, don't. If we want to acquire a better understanding of what was really going on, we must therefore draw upon a knowledge of the context patiently gathered by the reading of many other sources, not only Icelandic.

This brings me to a second aspect of the background of this lecture. This is the efforts I have made, throughout my career and like so many others, to understand what was going on in medieval Iceland—not just the events, but also people’s behaviour, how they are represented, and cultural artefacts such as the sagas—as part of what was happening in western civilisation at the same time (Tulinius 2002 and 2014). A chieftain like Hrafn Sveinbjarnarson, active at the end of the twelfth century and the beginning of the thirteenth, with his extensive travels abroad, his medical knowledge and ties to foreign dignitaries and the Church, is certainly worth investigating from this point of view. As I hope to convince you, I believe his saga might throw some interesting light on how Icelandic society was evolving along similar lines to the rest of medieval western society at the same time.

This is of course not an entirely ground-breaking statement. Far from it, since so many scholars, especially those of the generations that immediately precede mine, have been showing us how not only the literature but also the religious conduct and even political behaviour of the Icelanders in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries obviously belong to the shared culture of the medieval West (Turville-Petre 1953; Bekker-Nielsen et al. 1965; Lönnroth 1965). I hope however that I might be able to add a further dimension to our understanding of what was going on by resorting to modern social theory—the third background element. Some aspects of Hrafn’s story—which is also presumably the story of other chieftains who were his contemporaries—might be part of an important and interesting mutation of western society which is beginning in Hrafn’s lifetime: the early development of what the French philosopher Michel Foucault called governmentality and/or biopolitics (Foucault 2007, 108).

All of these interests come together in a single word that is found in only one of the two versions of the saga of Hrafn Sveinbjarnarson, the so-called ‘separate saga’, i.e. the full version of the saga preserved independently, as opposed to the one that was integrated into the *Sturlunga saga* compilation (*Hrafn’s saga* 1987, cviii). This *hapax legomenon* is *mannavarðveisla* (*Hrafn’s saga* 1987, 4). What does it mean? It means ‘the protection or preservation of men’, and it is used to designate Hrafn’s social role as a chieftain in his part of the Westfjords, a role he inherits from his older brother. In other medieval Icelandic sources another word would be used in the same context. This is *mannaforráð*, which can be translated as ‘leadership of men’. Numerous examples can be found of this in Contemporary Sagas (*Sturlunga saga* 1988, 183; 227; 272) showing that it means authority over *þingmenn*, i.e. supporters at assemblies. It is even used in

*Hrafn's saga* (18) to describe Þorvaldur's authority over his men, thereby contrasting it implicitly with Hrafn's. Though *mannavarðveisla* carries the same meaning as *mannaforráð*, it is also related to an expression that is used to describe other important people living in the Westfjords during Hrafn's lifetime and which is also noteworthy. This expression is (to be) *hvers manns gagn*, that is, of use to each and every person, an expression that I have chosen as the title of this lecture.

Before I explain this further, a presentation of the saga is called for: of the people and events it describes, but also the way it tells its story and several conflicting views on how one is to interpret it.

Hrafn is a local chieftain in the Westfjords at a time when Iceland has not become part of the Norwegian realm and it still means something to be a *goði* or a *godorðsmadr*. The concentration of power in the hands of regional overlords has already started but is not complete, especially in the western and north-western part of the country. The sources that have been preserved, *Sturlu saga*, *Guðmundar saga dýra* and *Hrafn's saga*, describe different chains of events, in the Dalir area, in the Eyjafjörður area and in the Westfjords, that all seem to be connected in one way or another to this development. Indeed, these sagas of contemporaries, or *samtíðarsögur*, tell us of competition leading to violent conflict among local chieftains, each of whom seems to be trying to get the upper hand over his neighbouring *goði* (*Sturlunga saga* 1988, 51–99; 123–76; *Hrafn's saga* 1987).

It is the conflict between Hrafn and the chieftain of the northern part of the Westfjords, Þorvaldur Snorrason, the one narrated in *Hrafn's saga*, which interests us today. Þorvaldur and Hrafn are distant relations, though Þorvaldur's kin-group, the Vatnsfirðingar, seems to be better connected to the leading families of the country. Though Hrafn's sisters marry into these families, the Seldælir, as Hrafn's kinsmen are called, seem to be relative newcomers to the highest spheres of power. This statement needs to be taken with reservations though, because we don't really know much about the distribution of power in the country in the twelfth century. Nevertheless, Hrafn is already a chieftain in the first decade of the thirteenth, when Þorvaldur becomes one, upon the premature death of his brother Þórður (*Hrafn's saga* 1987, 18). Soon conflicts arise between the two, mainly, as is often the case in clashes between *goðar*, between their followers. The conflict escalates and Þorvaldur makes several thwarted attempts on the life of Hrafn, who doesn't retaliate. Quite the contrary—or that is what the saga says: Hrafn is intent on achieving peace with Þorvaldur and asks an overlord from the neighbouring Snæfellsnes area, Þórður Sturluson, to negotiate a settlement between the two. On two occasions, however,

Porvaldur neglects to come to a settlement meeting and on a dark and stormy night, over eight hundred years ago, manages a surprise attack on Hrafn's home in Eyri in Arnarfjörður. To spare the members of his household from dying in the burning of the manor, Hrafn gives himself up and is beheaded (*Hrafns saga* 1987, 32–44).

After Hrafn's execution, Porvaldur accepts that Þórður Sturluson should define the terms of the settlement. Hrafn's kinsmen are compensated generously and restrictions are imposed on many of Porvaldur's men. They cannot come to certain parts of the country, especially to the southwestern part of the Westfjords where Hrafn's supporters are in a majority. Many of Porvaldur's men are exiled permanently from Iceland. Porvaldur himself is sentenced to five-year outlawry, which can be reduced to three years if he goes to Rome and obtains absolution from the Pope, which he does (*Hrafns saga* 1987, 44–45). However, he retains his chieftaincy, an important fact that I will come back to later.

The saga is preserved in two manifestations, as indicated earlier. On the one hand, it is part of the *Sturlunga* compilation, found in the two fourteenth-century manuscripts that preserve most of the Contemporary Sagas about laymen. Unlike the majority of these sagas, *Hrafns saga* is also preserved independently, which makes it extremely precious because it contains so much introductory material not used by the fourteenth-century compiler, material which the compiler did not seem to deem necessary for the general story he was telling, as we can see by comparing the separate saga to the material from it in the compilation. This material is nevertheless of great value. One can only dream of the wealth of knowledge lost to us by the editing activities of the *Sturlunga* compiler, though one must at the same time acknowledge that without these we might not know anything at all (*Sturlunga saga*. 1988, 3 xci–xcvii).

What does *Hrafns saga* tell us about Icelandic chieftains around 1200 beyond what other contemporary sources do? Being a biography, it contains a description of Hrafn, both of his physical appearance—he is tall, dark and handsome—and of his many accomplishments. He is a good swimmer, archer, craftsman of wood and metal, lawyer and poet. He knows books and is a doctor. It is this last talent that has received the most scholarly attention through the years, because of the detailed description of the operation he performed on a man suffering from the obstruction of his urethra by a bladder-stone. This is a life-threatening situation and, when all other means have failed, Hrafn nudges the stone into an accessible position and maintains it in place by tying string around the urethra above and below the stone. He then cuts the poor man open using, as antiseptic,

olive oil, and as an anaesthetic, paternosters sung by the clerics who assist him in the operation (*Hrafn's saga* 1987, 6).

The description makes one feel grateful for modern medicine, and it is no wonder that this rather gruesome passage has attracted considerable attention. Indeed, it shows that Hrafn's medical knowledge was both learned and up-to-date for his time. Other aspects of Hrafn's description, however, have not been given as much consideration. One is the fact that he has all these talents. Maybe because of Hrafn's connections to the Orkney Islands—he went there at least once, probably more often—as well as to the Orkney Bishop Bjarni Kolbeinsson, who gave him a signet ring bearing both his name and the effigy of a raven, I have been reminded of the famous stanza by Earl Rögnvaldur Kali of Orkney:

Tafl emk þorr at efla;  
 íþróttir kannk níu;  
 týnik trauðla rúnum;  
 tíðs mér bók ok smíðir.  
 Skríða kannk á skíðum;  
 skýtk ok ræk, svát nýtir;  
 hvártveggja kannk hyggja:  
 harpslótt ok bragþóttu.  
 (*Skaldic Poetry* II, 576)<sup>1</sup>

Four of the nine skills that Rögnvaldur claims to have, poetry, books, archery and craftsmanship with wood and metal, are also attributed to Hrafn. Of course, this does not tell us anything about any kind of relationship between Hrafn and the Orkney aristocrats, but it does tell us quite a lot about what could be called the self-fashioning of a leader in Old Norse society, at least in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (Goeres 2015). It did not suffice to be born into the position, one had to acquire the skills needed to fulfil the expectations society had of a leader. Though different, both lists of accomplishments tell us that it was not enough for a man to know how to fight and lead men into battle to be a leader in his community. All kinds of other abilities were required.

Of special interest are those that have to do with literacy. This is a development that could be seen all over medieval Europe from the early

<sup>1</sup> *Prose word order*: Ek kann íþróttir níu. Ek em þorr tafl at efla. Ek týni trauðla rúnum. Mér er tíð bók ok smíðir. Ek kann skríða á skíðum. Ek skýtk ok ræ svá at nýtir. Ek kann hyggja hvártveggja, harpslótt ok bragþóttu.

*My translation*: I have nine accomplishments. I am eager to play chess. I hardly forget runes. I enjoy books and craftsmanship. I can glide on skis. I shoot and I row usefully. I understand harp-playing and the elements of poetry.

twelfth century onwards, when young members of the dominant ranks of the laity increasingly received a clerical education, even if they were not destined for holy orders. This did not only, or even essentially, mean that this training was a mere cultural veneer, albeit one that led to the appreciation and development of secular literature in the vernacular. Even more importantly, the advent of literacy among the lay dominant classes allowed the introduction of new techniques of government: the resurgence of Roman law, the development of embryonic bureaucracies around lords and kings, eventually the growth of government (Southern 1970, 35; Aurell 2011).

This is of course common knowledge for historians of medieval Europe, though it hasn't been thoroughly explored in relation to Iceland, mainly because of the nature of the sources, but also because of what has been constructed as a decisive break in the evolution of Icelandic society in 1262/64. If we look at the main lay chieftains in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, we can see evidence that they had what could be called managerial skills. One example would be Gissur Hallsson, father-in-law to Hrafn's sister, who died in 1206. He was a law-speaker, travelled repeatedly to Rome, achieved a high position at the Norwegian court and wrote a mysterious book called *Flos peregrinacionis*, some kind of itinerary for pilgrims, it is believed, possibly composed in Latin (*Sturlunga saga* 1988, 193). He managed the estate of Skálholt in the days of Bishop Þorlákur. A later law-speaker, Snorri Sturluson, also amassed considerable wealth and must have needed help in administering it. We know that he had several clerics living at his estate in Reykholt and they most certainly were involved in more than just the care of his and other local laymen's souls, and not only in the considerable production of written works we believe took place there (Benedikt Eyþórsson 2005, 112–13).

Clerics were of course experts in managing large estates in all their complexity, not on their own behalf but in the service of God. Think of the increasing estates of the monasteries and bishoprics, not just in Europe but throughout the North Atlantic area: Norway, Orkney, Shetland, Faroe Islands, Greenland and Iceland. There must have been an army of administrators keeping track of the properties, calculating rents, tithes and so forth. And making sure everybody was up to date on their payments, though that would also have been among the tasks of the lay magnate. At least we have an example of this in *Hrafn's saga*, where a prominent lay member of the community, Markús of Rauðisandur, is in charge of implementing a rule made by Bishop Þorlákur, demanding that landowners pay for the upkeep of places of worship on their land (*Hrafn's saga* 1987, 7–8). For

someone like Snorri Sturluson, who accumulated fabulous wealth in his time, and was in charge of church centres receiving tithes, having clerics in his household with this kind of skill would have been very useful indeed.

In a society in which wealth is essentially tied to ownership of land, the management of wealth is also control over territory, and with the territory come people as well. Taking care of God's property, or that of the king, or just a local lord, therefore meant exercising power over a population and a territory.

*Security, Territory, Population* was the title of Michel Foucault's teaching at the Collège de France in the years 1977 to 1978 (Foucault 2007). In the latter part of his career, prematurely cut short by AIDS in 1984, Foucault was working on the origins of the particular way in which power expresses itself in western society, especially in the modern period, which in the French tradition means from the seventeenth century onwards. He said this particular type of power in society was characterised by the increasing importance of norms which prescribe certain types of accepted behaviour in addition to laws which forbid certain things. All kinds of systems of knowledge but also of practices developed around the prescription of norms and the handling of that which deviated from these norms. They range from psychiatry to economics and criminology, with institutions such as the psychiatric ward, prison or the stock market. You cannot understand these developments by looking solely at the groups who exercised political power. A much broader spectrum of social actors need to be considered (Foucault 2007, 56).

I will not be giving you a lecture on Foucault, interesting as that might be, as his focus was not the Middle Ages. As he acknowledged himself, however, many of the aspects he highlighted in his analysis of the way power manifests itself in our culture were being put into place in the Middle Ages, and so they are relevant to what I'm trying to say here. In the first volume of his *History of Sexuality*, the *Will to Knowledge*, he talks about the obligation laid upon every Christian to confess one's sins once a year, a rule taken into canon law during the Fourth Church Council held in the Lateran Palace in Rome in 1215. He insists on how outrageous an imposition it was to force each and every individual in society to lay bare his soul in this way. He also talks about the technologies of care of the soul that had been developed in the intellectual preparation for the Council or were developed subsequently, all kinds of practices, but also written manuals such as the 'handbooks for confessors' of which there are so many in the medieval archive. They have also been preserved in Iceland, for example the *Skriptaboð* precept for confessors, associated with St Þorlákur, bishop

of Skálholt from 1178 to 1193 (Sveinbjörn Rafnsson 1982). They would eventually develop into a *scientia sexualis* characteristic of the modern period and our times (Foucault 1978, 58–63).

Given the usual pace of Foucault's output, there was an unexpected hiatus in his production of books after the publication of this first volume of the *History of Sexuality*, the next two not coming out until five years later. Since the publication of his lectures at the Collège de France during these years, we know now that his work was undergoing a radical change of focus, with the development of new objects of study and concepts such as biopolitics and governmentality. He was gradually realising that one of the main components of the particular way power is exercised in western society lies in the Church's practice of pastoral care. Though it seems to focus on the individual it is a set of practices and discourses that are also relevant for the government of society. Both the flock and the individual are important and here a key passage of Scripture is relevant, one of Jesus's parables reported in the Gospel of Luke 15:3–7:

Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbours together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

I will refrain from commenting on all the difficult problems raised by this parable, for example the questions, who tends the flock while the shepherd is looking for the lost sheep and why there is not just as much rejoicing—yes, even more—in heaven because of all of those who did not sin, as there is for the repentant sinner. What is important here is what this parable tells us about the structure of pastoral care. It is preoccupied both with each and every individual and with society as a whole. This is an important aspect of the techniques of power within our society. Power influences us through laws and rules, telling us what we cannot do, but also, and more insidiously, through norms that we must adhere to and that govern not only our behaviour but how we think and even how we feel. Pastoral care, in its extended meaning, is about intervening in the individual's life to encourage him to adhere to the norms and—when needed—either put him back on the right track or lock him up in some kind of correctional facility, be it a prison or a psychiatric ward. The proliferation of discourse on deviancy and the allocation of means to contain and correct it show society's fascination with the 'repentant sinner'.

A decisive period in the prelude to the development of the techniques of power that characterise western society in the modern period is that in which these techniques of pastoral care, previously developed within religious orders, start to be applied to society at large as part of the general movement in which the Church opens itself to the rest of the world with a new emphasis on spreading God's word to the laity and taking care of each and every soul. This is happening very much in the period that concerns us here. It is an ironic twist to my story that our sources tell us that two Icelanders were in Rome in the same year that the fourth Lateran Council was held there, and that one of them was Hrafn's killer, Þorvaldur Snorrason, seeking absolution for the slaying of his opponent.

I believe that this aspect of the work of Michel Foucault, his insistence on the historical importance of the ecclesiastical notion of pastoral care, can be of relevance to our understanding of Hrafn Sveinbjarnarson in particular, but also, in more general terms, of the diverse and changing—and possibly debated—role of the *goði* in Icelandic society during Hrafn's life and in the decades after his demise.

I now come back to the word *mannavarðveisla* which, as I have already mentioned, occurs only in *Hrafn's saga*. It is used to designate the power and position Hrafn inherits from his brother. In other words it is his chieftaincy or *goðord*. The word more commonly used would be *mannaforráð*. It is interesting to oppose these two terms. *Mannaforráð* is leadership of men, authority over them, the power to dispose of them. It is the type of power associated with one of the two organised bodies shaping medieval society in this period, that of lay aristocrats, princes, kings and emperors, those who exercise military power. *Mannavarðveisla* is the power of those who protect, but also take care of the flock. In Old Icelandic, *varðveisla* means taking care of cattle or sheep, but also wealth and property. The use of the term *mannavarðveisla* implies that Hrafn's social role is that of the caretaker, the administrator not only of power and wealth but also of the well-being of the people under his responsibility. It is a power closer to that of the other—and possibly stronger—shaping force of medieval society, that of the Church.

The question arises whether Hrafn, as a chieftain in Iceland around the year 1200, represents a new or alternative form of power? Or even whether his saga highlights aspects of the chieftain's exercise of power that other sources do not? One aspect of the Church's rise to power in twelfth-century Europe was its insistence on the links between government and service. This indeed is the theme of a recent book, *Gouverner c'est*

*servir* ('To govern is to serve'), by the French historian Jacques Dalarun, a specialist on St Francis and the origins of the Franciscan order (Dalarun 2012). He describes a strong tendency within the Church in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries to claim a notable difference between the way it exercises power and that practised by the lay aristocrats. It is not a power of domination but one that expresses itself through service. The highest must serve the lowest.

Here again, the Gospel is invoked in Christ's washing of the apostles' feet, a ritual taken up by the Franciscans. This idea of the figure of authority as servant also appears, however, in the Pope's designation of himself as *servus servorum*, the slave of slaves, or the decision taken by Robert d'Arbrissel, the founder of the abbey of Fontevraud, an abbey which had both monks and nuns, in the early twelfth century. Instead of appointing as its head an abbot, he chose an abbess who in addition had been a married woman in her previous life. This was not some kind of feminism *avant la lettre*. Indeed, quite the contrary, since if anything was, in religious terms, lowlier than a woman, it was a woman who had been married. To appoint her was to implement the idea of the leader as servant. Actually, this turned out quite well for the Order of Fontevraud, since the abbess Hersende of Montsoreau, as a widow of considerable means, had much experience in running her estate and became an excellent manager of the monastic domains (Dalarun 2012, 150–51).

The idea of leaders serving the community permeates *Hrafns saga*. Hrafn's cousin Ragnheiður Aronsdóttir, much admired by the saga's author for her wisdom, is said to be *hvers manns gagn*, that is, of use to each and every person (*Hrafns saga* 1987, 17). Note the resonance with the passage from Luke: serving the community also means serving each individual. The same expression is applied to Þorvaldur's older brother, who exercised the family's chieftaincy until his premature death. He was an extremely active and industrious man who manned a fishing boat to feed the people of his area. He also was *hvers manns gagn* (*Hrafns saga* 1987, 17). Though the saga does not use this expression to characterise Hrafn, he certainly renders service to his community. He does this with his medical abilities, his craftsmanship, for which he never requires payment, for the boats he maintains which ferry all those in need over Arnarfjörður and Breiðafjörður (*Hrafns saga* 1987, 4–5).

The question arises, however, whether this applies to the real Hrafn, the one who lived in the Westfjords and died in 1213, or whether it is an ideological construct by the unknown person who is believed to have composed *Hrafns saga* around 1240 (*Hrafns saga* 1987, lxxxviii). It is

certain that the separate saga of Hrafn is written with an agenda, as is clearly stated in the prologue to the saga. Lies will recede when they meet the truth and the saga will illustrate how God's will works through men to whom he has given the freedom to choose between right and wrong (*Hrafns saga* 1987, 1).<sup>2</sup>

Several points need to be made here which will lead me to my concluding remarks. The first one is that the idea of the ruler rendering services to the community he governs is evident in one of the Kings' Sagas, *Morkinskinna*, particularly in the famous dialogue between the brothers and co-rulers Sigurður Jórslafari and Eysteinn where they compare their respective merits. While Sigurður is a brilliant warrior taking his men all the way to the Holy Land, Eysteinn stays home, builds harbours, establishes monasteries and formulates a body of stable and equitable laws (*Morkinskinna* 2012, 133–34).

The second point is that the conflict between the Seldælir, Hrafn's kingroup, and the Vatnsfirðingar, Þorvaldur's, did not end with the settlement after Hrafn's death. It continued for decades after it, with Hrafn's sons killing Þorvaldur in 1228. Even after the death of all of Hrafn's sons a decade later, it may have continued through Hrafn's grandson, his namesake Hrafn Oddsson, and the widow and son of Þorvaldur, Þórdís Snorradóttir and Einar Þorvaldsson, who found themselves on opposing sides during the 1240s in the conflict between Þórður kakali Sighvatsson, leader of the Sturlungs, and Kolbeinn the Young Arnórsson, chief of the Ásbirningar (*Sturlunga saga* 1988, 528–29). The story of Hrafn and his fatal feud with Þorvaldur, casting the latter as the villain, would have been relevant at any time during this period and later.

The third point is that many scholars, Haki Antonsson among others, have discussed the links between the saga and hagiography, especially the stories of St Magnus of Orkney and St Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury (Haki Antonsson 2004, 63–64). Some have gone so far as to suggest reading *Hrafns saga* as an attempt to portray its hero as a Christian saint, most recently my colleague and friend Ásdís Egilsdóttir (2004). I think that this interpretation can be reframed in light of what I have already said. The picture the saga draws up of Hrafn is not that of

<sup>2</sup> 'En fyrir því, at aptr hverfr lygi, þá er sonnu mœtir, þá ætlum vér at rita nokkura atburði, þá er gorkz hafa á várum dögum á meðal vár kunnra manna, sem vér vitum sannleik til. Í þeim atburðum mun sýnask mikil þolinmæði guðs almáttigs, sú er hann hefir hvern dag við oss, ok sjálfraði þat, er hann gefr hverjum manna, at hverr má göra þat, sem vill, gott eða illt.'

a saint but that of a secular lord who exercises his power in a way that conforms to the Church's conception of power.

This leads me to my fourth point, which is that in the effort to achieve both of her or his aims, which are to tell the truth but also to show how Hrafn obeyed God's will, the author of the saga opens up the possibility of other interpretations of the facts than her or his own. The great mystery of Hrafn's behaviour—a question many people must have pondered when these events were recalled to memory over the years—is why he spares Þorvaldur's life on several occasions, ignoring his followers' admonitions, when it is clear that his opponent is determined to kill him. The author tells us that this is because Hrafn would rather suffer in this world than in the next (*Hrafn's saga* 1987, 32–33). He therefore refrains from violence towards Þorvaldur, even though he makes every effort to defend himself, only being betrayed at last by his own men's negligence on that fatal night in March 1213.

An alternative explanation might be proposed. Hrafn was a close friend and follower of Bishop Guðmundur Arason of the northern diocese. He and Þórður Sturluson were the only chieftains in Iceland who refused to participate in the attack on the bishop's seat at Hólar after the death of Kolbeinn Tumason in 1208, while Þorvaldur participated with great enthusiasm (*Hrafn's saga* 1987, 29). This must have weakened Hrafn's position in the balance of power in the country. Aware of this, he might have been wary of bringing his conflict with Þorvaldur to a head, possibly bringing about Þorvaldur's death. When we consider the settlement after Hrafn's killing, when Þorvaldur was only sentenced to five years of outlawry and was not deprived of his chieftaincy, we may ask ourselves whether Hrafn feared that he would receive harsher treatment if he were to get rid of his dangerous neighbour (*Hrafn's saga* 1987, 44–45). This could have been permanent exile or confiscation of his *goðorð*, especially because so many of the chieftains in the country, who would inevitably have been involved in the settlement, were ill disposed towards him because of his loyalty to Bishop Guðmundur.

I come now to my fifth and final point. In an article on *Eyrbyggja saga* which focuses on the peculiar way in which the farm of Fróðá is rid of its revenants by the exercise of law, I have suggested that the saga as a whole is a sort of inquiry into the role of the chieftain. It reveals not only a questioning within Icelandic society about the social function of the *goðar* but also a possible debate between the lay chieftains and the dignitaries of the Church in their relationship to the supernatural, i.e. to the divine or in other words to the metaphysical foundation of their power (Tulinius 2007,

61). Such a debate must have been inevitable because of the protracted conflict between the chieftains and Bishop Guðmundur, from 1208 until his death in 1237. I even suggest an intertextual connection between the story of Selkolla in which Guðmundur rids the Westfjords of a particularly nasty revenant, and that of the Wonders of Fróðá.

I believe that the attitude towards and the relationship to the Church is a neglected part of the background to the internal struggles of Iceland in the period we often call the Sturlung Age. The Icelandic chieftains are not only attracted by the rise of the royal state in Norway, separated from Iceland by five hundred miles of dangerous waters, or influenced by the strengthening of the aristocratic model of conduct widely distributed through Europe by this time, but are also constructing themselves and their social role in relation to a Church which is evolving fast in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Though we know a lot about Hrafn, his connections to bishops, both in Iceland and Orkney, and his alleged service to the community, it is far from impossible that other chieftains, of whom we know much less, may have behaved in a similar way. More research would have to be done on that, in order to glean what information we can from the sources.

Regardless of whether I will be able to do that at some point, I believe that I have been able to show you that the social role of the chieftains in Icelandic society was more complex, mobile and open to change and debate than you might have thought, and that I am not being presumptuous in hoping that this lecture may have been of use to each and every one of you: *Hvers manns gagn!*

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## REVIEWS

REYKHOLT. ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS AT A HIGH STATUS FARM IN WESTERN ICELAND. By GUÐRÚN SVEINBJARNARDÓTTIR. *Rit Þjóðminnjasafns 29. National Museum of Iceland and Snorrastofa*. Reykholt and Reykjavík, 2012. 368 pp. 127 figures, 29 tables. ISBN 978-9979-790-35-8.

At various times in recent decades, archaeological excavations have taken place at Reykholt in Borgarfjörður, the farm famously once home to Snorri Sturluson, and the scene of his death in 1241. This extremely well produced volume documents the excavation work carried out at what is known as the farm site (1987–89 and 1997–2003). A further volume will present excavation at the church site (2002–07), an area opened up about fifteen metres just to the north of the structures which are the main focus of this publication. The church excavation is also shown on many of the plans in this volume, however, and is discussed where relevant to interpretation of the farm site. The farm itself is of great interest, particularly in what the excavators identify as Phase 2, the twelfth to the fourteenth century, the era which includes Snorri Sturluson's occupation of Reykholt.

In keeping with its function as a site report, the volume comprises seven main chapters: 'Environmental History and Background'; a summary narrative of 'The 1987–1989 and 1997–2003 Archaeological Investigations'; 'Dating and Phasing of the Site'; 'The Archaeological Sequence'; 'Artefacts'; 'Paleoecological Evidence'; 'Summary and Conclusion', as well as detailed appendices on artefactual data and, as befits the site of the famous pool Snorralaug, a calculation on the volume of warm air that could have entered the farmhouse in the twelfth to the fourteenth century to heat the whole dwelling or create a steam room.

Occupation of the first of the superimposed domestic buildings on the site is dated by the excavators to c.1000, a dating based on a  $^{14}\text{C}$  date obtained from a charred (locally-grown?) barley grain found in the hearth of what appears to be a fairly conventional longhouse. Here, then, as at Hofstaðir in Mývatnssveit, we have a longhouse which does not date from the very earliest phase of Iceland's colonisation. Successive phases of east-west-aligned domestic buildings follow after this one, right through to the nineteenth century. The excavated area discussed here never allows us to see an entire farmstead in operation at any one time. Thus, for example, for Phase 2, *Sturlunga saga* describes far more rooms or buildings than it has been possible to excavate on what is a much disturbed and reused site. The dating of each phase seems fairly secure, based on a mixture of radiocarbon dates and tephrochronology.

Fortunately, Phase 2's buildings are much better preserved than those of Phase 1. This is the period for which the excavations have revealed not only the church, northernmost on the site, but also a smithy just to its south, and three other buildings. At first glance, the reconstruction drawing of what would have been the thirteenth-century farmstead looks oddly grand in an Icelandic context, with joined enclosures around both the farm and the church (Figure 33, p. 86), as well as substantial wooden buildings with stone foundations. The archaeology, however,

seems to show convincingly that the buildings here were more like those associated with administrative centres found elsewhere in the North Atlantic rather than Icelandic turf houses. Three Phase 2 buildings were identified, Buildings 10/11, and Building 12. Unusually, the separate Building 12 had a paved stone floor and a conduit running towards the hot water stream to the east; the building appears to have been heated with hot water or steam and the excavators' hypothesis is that this was some kind of sauna-like facility. Building 10/11, a square structure conjoined with a longer, rectangular one running east-west, seems to be some kind of dwelling of which only stone foundations and a possible cellar floor remain. This, the excavators speculate, had a wooden superstructure, much like some forms of medieval Norwegian buildings, the *stofur* found at the seat of the bishop at Hólar in northern Iceland and The Biggings, Papa Stour, Shetland. From Buildings 10/11 there were also remains of a subterranean passageway which led southwards towards the surviving hot pool, Snorralaug. All in all, this does have the look of the kind of home that a member of Iceland's wealthiest and most powerful social tier would have, especially someone like Snorri who had regular contact with the Norwegian court. The lack of artefacts associated with these structures can be used to bolster the argument for the existence of a cellar beneath Building 11. At the same time, the recovery of three fragments of imported medieval pottery would seem to confirm the site's high status even in the absence of other artefacts or the remains of wooden building materials (no doubt reused or burnt).

In answer to the question how the excavated structures relate to the description of the Reykholt farmstead in *Sturlunga saga*, it would appear that there is general agreement between them, but not a perfect match. The suggestion here is that Building 10 might be the *litlastofa* and Building 11 the *stofa* mentioned in *Sturlunga saga* (p. 95). This argument, as with so many in this detailed and thoughtful volume, is presented carefully but proposed cautiously. It is to be hoped that there will be further opportunities to excavate historically prominent farms in Iceland, or other farms in Borgarfjörður, to produce material with which to compare the Reykholt evidence.

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INTO THE OCEAN. VIKINGS, IRISH, AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE IN ICELAND AND THE NORTH. By KRISTJÁN AHRONSON. *Toronto Old Norse and Icelandic Series* 8. *Toronto University Press*. Toronto, Buffalo and London 2015. xvi + 245 pp. ISBN 978-1-4426-4617-9.

*Into the Ocean* is an exciting reconsideration of the evidence for early North Atlantic Christendom. Using a range of new data and techniques, it sheds valuable new light on the identity of the mysterious *pagar* said to have inhabited the region, including Iceland, prior to its Norse settlement. Though it is widely assumed that medieval references to such populations have a basis in history, the sparseness of

archaeological evidence has always loomed over the otherwise rather spectacular narrative of an Irish discovery and settlement of Iceland no later than the ninth century. However, Iceland remains a country with vast untapped archaeological potential; there is much knowledge still to be gained.

In this book, Kristján Ahronson makes some significant strides towards unlocking the secrets of what may have been Iceland's earliest human residents. To this end, he brings together an array of different lines of investigation, with the southern Icelandic region of Seljaland as its archaeological focus. First, he revisits the *Pap*-place-name evidence with a special focus on the Hebrides. He then turns to Seljaland, where he concentrates on an understudied group of caves and reports on his archaeological investigations of the area, starting with the caves' relationship to the surrounding man-made features. He soon moves to the dating of one of the caves, their correlation with the historical presence of woodlands and the taxonomy of a range of cruciform carvings in the caves, which he links back to the western Scottish *papar* discussed at the start of his investigations.

Ahronson brings a relentlessly Popperian approach to the task. Following an opening chapter discussing the long-discarded work of Eugène Beauvois, his second chapter reformulates the conditions of valid interdisciplinary exchange. Neither chapter is essential to his undertaking, but at least the latter details the assumptions underlying the book and explains its unconventional format. Proceeding from Popper's axiom that all scholarship shares a unity of method, Ahronson has formatted each chapter as a science article, using headings like 'Hypotheses', 'Method' and 'Results and Discussion' for each of its seven chapters, which feels rather out of place in the first two chapters but functions well in the others. The more meaningful Popperian policy he adopts is to formulate multiple rival hypotheses for each chapter, whose respective validity he then weighs after producing the data.

In his third chapter, for instance, Ahronson considers several pre-existing hypotheses to explain *Pap*-place-names in the Hebrides. Recapitulating his earlier, shorter publication, *Viking-Age Communities: Pap-names and Papar in the Hebridean Islands* (Oxford, 2007), he tests and dismisses the possibility that these could be Celtic names before proceeding to test and reject the scenario that *Pap*-place-names could have been introduced some considerable time after initial Norse settlement to refer to a bygone Gaelic culture. Unfortunately, the two sets of binary hypotheses in this chapter are formulated with just enough asymmetry and ambiguity to make the choice between them a little muddled. For instance, the winning hypothesis that 'the distribution of *Pap*-names reflects the character of earliest Norse settlement' (p. 66; cf. p. 74) should presumably be understood to mean that the place-names reflect current Celtic Christianity being incorporated into the Norse landscape, as opposed to Viking settlements having themselves been Christian from the outset.

It is from this point onward that Ahronson turns to archaeology, and it is here that he offers exciting data from excavations carried out in the early 2000s. His fourth chapter introduces the Seljaland caves, reports on a general archaeological survey of the area, and concludes that the caves do not form part of the Norse settlement landscape but instead represent a cultural landscape of their

own. Since one group of caves has the alternative (but possibly modern) name *Papahellir*, there is potential for a connection with the island's presumed pre-Norse inhabitants.

The fifth chapter therefore sets out to date the Kverkarhellir cave, which fits least well into the modern settlement pattern. This chapter steps up the archaeological rigour of the work, detailing the author's methods at length. Since the entrance to the man-made cave is above a steep drop, Ahronson assumes the construction debris would have been deposited immediately below. He has therefore dug two trenches (D1, D4) within the expected apron of debris, as well as two control trenches: one (D3) to establish the local stratigraphical fingerprint and another (D5) to establish the character of palagonite erosion material for this region.

Trench D4 in particular differs from control trench D3 at some distance (up to 25 cm) below the settlement tephra. The layer in question consists of palagonite pebbles consistent with construction debris. Trench D1 has a less pronounced profile that could nevertheless also result from construction. Unfortunately, morphological analysis of D4 material has yielded no evidence of contact with metal tools. Ahronson nevertheless makes a case for construction debris in this trench, as the pebbles it contains differ in size from those of control trench D5. The layer's depth below the settlement layer leads Ahronson to postulate a construction phase *c.*800.

Chapter 6 demonstrates a technique in which multiple datable layers in a single, larger trench are imaged from a bird's-eye perspective, thus providing an insight into such features as tree growth. A trench in Seljaland suggests that the area was wooded *c.*920, but not *c.*870. Furthermore, as small depressions in the settlement tephra layer are consistent with grazing, Ahronson speculates that the ninth-century absence of tree growth might be due to human clearance for this purpose.

Ahronson then returns to the Seljaland caves for his final and longest chapter, which compares the crosses engraved in the caves with cruciform engravings in other northwestern-European contexts. The Seljaland crosses are found to have most in common with Argyll crosses associated with the pre-Viking-Age Columban tradition in western Scotland, suggesting a connection with Gaelic monasticism of this early era.

*Into the Ocean* presents valuable archaeological work whose results combine with available data to offer glimpses of a persuasive *papar*-narrative. Its opening chapter, which revisits fanciful nineteenth-century conjectures, has no role in this undertaking, while Ahronson's generally healthy emphasis on the Popperian method leads him to expend more space than strictly required on discussing methods and rejecting weak hypotheses. The author's emphasis on standards of research also invites scrutiny of his own standard of inductive reasoning, encouraged in part by the labour-intensive nature of archaeology. Trenches D1 and D4 actually yield rather different results despite both falling within the expected apron of debris; furthermore, no external rationale is adduced to explain how the difference in pebble size between trenches D4 and D5 links the material of the former to human construction. The author's estimate of the cave's date at around 800 likewise lacks a detailed motivation, but conveniently matches the end of the pre-Norse era in the Scottish environment whose cross sculptures Ahronson compares to those of Seljaland. In

these cases, more detailed rationalisation could have bolstered Ahronson's case, even if additional analysis is no substitute for additional fieldwork. Despite these caveats, Ahronson's multi-pronged contribution to the field is most welcome. It will be fascinating to watch the discussion unfold from here.

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THE VIKINGS IN IRELAND AND BEYOND. BEFORE AND AFTER THE BATTLE OF CLONTARF. Edited by HOWARD B. CLARKE and RUTH JOHNSON. *Four Courts Press*. Dublin, 2015. xxxiv + 526 pp. ISBN 978-1-84682-495-1.

This large and lavishly-produced volume is one of a number of recent books from Four Courts Press on aspects of medieval Ireland. They can be of use in the field of Old Norse studies as a resource for modern research in a field that often appears difficult to engage with. This volume, dedicated *in memoriam* Richard Hall of the University of York, is edited by a historian and an archaeologist, and as can be expected from its connection with the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, a fair number of the collected essays concern archaeology and art. The high-quality illustrations are welcome, while the reproduction of maps of archaeological sites is helpful.

The collection originated in the 2011 one-day conference of the [English] Midlands Viking Symposium held in Dublin in the lead-up to the millennium of the Battle of Clontarf, but other contributions from an Irish perspective were added on its way to press. There are advantages for many scholars in having a collection of papers that reflects research published elsewhere and in other disciplines, often in journals that are not easily accessible. This volume's usage outside the field of early medieval and Viking Ireland is more likely to be for comparative work rather than adding to the still little-researched fields of direct contacts as manifested in later written sources.

The editors start by giving an overview of recent historiography of Ireland and the Viking Age from a largely Irish perspective. The assumption is that study of the Viking Age is replete with misconceptions. The various essays follow in more or less chronological order. An impressive array of subjects is covered, most with some referencing, albeit comparative rather than suggestive of connections between the Viking world in Ireland and the 'Beyond' that the title leads us to expect. Throughout, there are efforts to provide a new take on the evidence, and indeed the emphasis on historiography in the volume is helpful in displaying how academic fashions change. The inclusion of work by Scandinavian scholars may have helped us to see how the different perspectives we accept as normative are influenced by our own academic and national cultures.

There is little about Clontarf itself, which is a disappointment given the title of the volume and the expectation that the millennium has brought. However, Howard Clarke writes on Sitriuc, who appears in *Njáls saga* as 'Sigtryggr silkiskeggr',

the King of Dublin who fled the Battle of Clontarf, and whose long-continuing career is recorded in Irish sources. Máire Ní Mhaonaigh takes the same period in an assessment of the Mide [Meath] king Mael Sechnail, a significant figure at Clontarf but not one who made it into the Norse sources.

Catherine Swift deals with the wider world in a vigorous and in many ways ground-breaking article on Hiberno-Norse military culture, and the ways in which hints of Norse words may be preserved in Irish texts, delving into art history and poetry as well and showing how a close reading of the texts can indicate new areas of research. Clare Downham gives suggestions on the use of the term 'Gallgóidil' in the Irish sources in relation to the complex identities of the west of Scotland during the Viking Age. The Irish Sea area as a unifying system is explored by David Griffiths. Several stimulating papers cover art from the perspective of surviving artefacts and carvings. These papers indicate that the 'Beyond' is an area that can be explored fruitfully from a number of perspectives. Donnchadh Ó Corráin gives a finale on later medieval presentations of the Vikings as a catastrophe that caused social upheaval and artistic dislocation, suggesting that there was more continuity than has hitherto been believed. But his paper suffers from the somewhat inward-looking nature of the volume: for example, Ó Corráin refers to a *Brjáns saga* as a possible Dublin riposte to the *Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh*, without reference to the fact that many Norse scholars question whether there ever was a written saga concerning Brian bórama, and nearly all would reject a Dublin origin in the relevant time-frame.

This reviewer was particularly attracted to Linzi Simpson's contribution, with photographs that displayed, though somewhat repetitively, what could be learnt from the Dublin grave of a young man of some wealth and taste. He died, probably violently, during the earliest period of occupation, and was apparently buried with a new-born or prenatal infant. His grave may have been robbed: his lower body had been moved during the period of decomposition, and artefacts but no weapons other than small knives were found with him.

Inevitably when a large number of writers contribute there is a degree of repetition, which the editors might have addressed. Pruning could also have been helpful. Some papers seem to repeat material already published elsewhere: references to these earlier publications could have cut the word-length further, leaving room perhaps for the work of new scholars. It would have been helpful to have, rather than the editors' preface describing each paper, and another section for authors' bibliographies, a brief summary and the author's biography preceding each paper.

These matters do not detract from the achievement of the amassed scholarship presented here in a single volume. A copy would be useful in a university library or to scholars of the medieval period in Ireland, not least for the extensive references. There is much that is valuable for the student of Old Norse, and that may relate well to parallel discoveries and research elsewhere in the world of the Vikings and their descendants.

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FIBULA, FABULA, FACT. THE VIKING AGE IN FINLAND. Edited by JOONAS AHOLA and FROG with CLIVE TOLLEY. *Studia Fennica Historica* 18. *Finnish Literature Society*. Helsinki, 2014. 519 pp. Black-and-white illustrations. ISBN 978-952-222-603-7.

*Fibula, Fabula, Fact* focuses on the Viking Age in a region that is known today as Finland. The title is carefully thought-out. The fibula is a particular leg-bone and also a variety of brooch. 'Fibula' is therefore emblematic of the Viking Age in Finland and also symbolises the tangible evidence of that time. 'Fabula', on the other hand, symbolises the tales and narratives that give information about the Viking Age in Finland. The term also symbolises the intangible evidence of the Viking Age. 'Facts' can be achieved through this tangible and intangible source material.

The starting point for this volume was a collaborative international research project that began in Helsinki in 2011. These articles were presented in seminars hosted by the Department of Folklore Studies at the University of Helsinki. After an introduction by Joonas Ahola and Frog, the book is divided into three parts. Each of these parts begins with a short introduction to the theme in question and the articles included in that section. Altogether, there are nineteen articles in this volume, each of them viewing the Viking Age in Finland from different perspectives and disciplines.

The first part is entitled 'Time' (pp. 87–168). The first article, by Clive Tolley, offers an overview of the languages of the Viking Age in Finland. It is directed especially to readers who are not familiar with historical linguistics and its methods. This article functions as an introduction to the other linguistic articles in the volume. The second article, by Ville Laakso, similarly offers an overview of Viking-Age archaeology for readers who are not archaeologists themselves. This article discusses the dating of the Viking Age in Finland, an issue that is not so simple because the dating is based on Scandinavian archaeological material, which presents problems when it is applied to the Finnish context. The third article, by Samuli Helama, focuses on climatic variations and how these can be applied to the study of the Viking Age. The numismatic aspect is discussed in the fourth article, written by Tuukka Talvio. Coins can tell us about trade routes, as well as the unsettled times when coins are buried in hoards. The use of the term 'Viking Age' in historiography is the subject of the fifth article, by Sirpa Aalto. This article approaches the subject by examining the use of the term in four different Finnish archaeological and historical journals. The sixth article, by Petri Kallio, illuminates proto-Finnic linguistic diversification and demonstrates how one can trace a language back to the Viking Age by using the methods of historical linguistics.

The second part is entitled 'Space' (pp. 169–320). The first article, by Jukka Korpela, explores the question of distances, both mental and geographical. These distances affected how visible the Viking Age was in peripheries such as Karelia. In the second article Mervi Koskela Vasaru surveys the ancient Bjarmaland. It seems that Bjarmians were Finno-Ugric people and their main trade was in fur. It is more difficult to say where Bjarmaland was located, but this was most likely somewhere near the White Sea. In the third article Jari-Matti Kuusela examines

settlement patterns in northern Finland. Scattered finds from the Iron Age include many weapon and silver hoards, and these might suggest that violence was an important factor in the Iron and Viking Ages in northern Finland. Teija Alenius discusses pollen analyses in the fourth article. Several pollen samples give evidence of a rise in the cultivation of hops and hemp during the Viking Age, in addition to other, more common pollen types.

There is no continuous textual source material from the Viking Age, but the analysis of toponymy might help to compensate for this absence. In the fifth article Matti Leiviskä surveys place-names in the Siikajoki river valley, located in the Gulf of Bothnia. Place-names can give information about the livelihoods of people in the area, as well as peoples' movements in different regions. In the final article in this section, Lassi Heininen, Joonas Ahola and Frog write about the geopolitics of the Viking Age. This was the first time in the history of Finland when regional boundaries were drawn. At the same time, Scandinavian trade and pillaging networks reached the coastline of Finland, while Slavic languages spread to the north and east.

The third part of the volume is entitled 'People' (pp. 321–482). It opens with an article by Sami Raninen and Anna Wessman about the importance of Åland during the Viking Age. Åland may have been a central trading post for furs and other kinds of goods from Finland, and therefore had better contacts with the Scandinavian Viking Age than other regions in Finland. Elina Salmela discusses how genetic studies can be used to investigate, for example, how certain diseases might have been transferred from Scandinavia. Such studies are best suited for the study of long time spans, and conclusions can be drawn only when a decent DNA sequence can be found which dates to the Viking Age or earlier. A contribution by Joonas Ahola then shows that the Kalevala epic material includes themes that can be traced back to the Viking Age; by carefully examining these layers it is possible to discover themes that played an important social role during that time.

The Finnish language has words that date back to the Viking Age, as Kaisa Häkkinen then notes. Through these words, it is possible to survey Germanic or Scandinavian influences on Finnish during the period. This third section ends with an article by Frog on mythological thinking in the Viking Age. Each culture is reflected in its myths, and by studying these myths it is possible to understand their value; this is especially important in a period such as the Viking Age for which there is little textual source material left for us to study.

This volume presents an excellent cross-section of the study of the Viking Age in Finland from the point of view of different disciplines. The Viking Age in Finland has often been overlooked not only because of language barriers but also perhaps because it is so strongly associated with other parts of the Nordic region. Along with *The Viking Age in Åland*, this volume contributes greatly to the picture we are able to build as scholars of the Viking Age.

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THE VIKING AGE IN ÅLAND. INSIGHTS INTO IDENTITY AND REMNANTS OF CULTURE. Edited by JOONAS AHOLA, FROG and JENNI LUCENIUS. *Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae Humaniora* 372. *Finnish Academy of Science and Letters/Finnish Society of Science and Letters*. Helsinki, 2014. 427 pp. Black-and-white illustrations. ISBN 978-951-41-1098-6.

Åland is an archipelago that lies between Finland and Sweden and provides access to the Gulf of Bothnia from the Baltic Sea. It is centrally located, thirty-eight kilometres from the Swedish coast but at the same time contiguous with the Finnish Archipelago Sea. Today Åland is officially part of Finland although it is the only monolingual Swedish-speaking region in the country.

Sandwiched between Finnic and Scandinavian cultures, Ålanders have received cultural and linguistic influences from both sides. There are also numerous distinctive cultural features that are unique to the area. However, Åland offers several challenges to a scholar of its past. There is not much, if any, textual material; the archeological evidence also has its limitations. In addition, the strong images of the Viking Age in Åland built by earlier scholars were sometimes affected by the language debates of their own time.

*The Viking Age in Åland* provides a multidisciplinary discussion of the subject. Like *Fibula, Fabula, Fact: The Viking Age in Finland*, this volume is based on the discussions that took place at a seminar-workshop, in this case ‘Identity and Identification and the Viking Age in Finland (with Special Emphasis on the Åland Islands)’, held in Mariehamn, Åland in September 2012. The articles in the collection recreate the experience of personal interaction with the writers in the seminar, commenting on and engaging with each other fluently.

An informative introduction provides basic information about the cultural and social circumstances of the Viking Age in Åland, as well as a brief account of source material, supplemented by Jan-Erik Tomtlund with a wealth of illuminating examples. Part I, ‘Interpreting Evidence of the Past’ (pp. 37–152), includes three articles that provide background information about discussions of Viking-Age Åland. In the first, article Jenni Lucenius discusses the interpretations of identities of Viking-Age Ålanders that have been made in previous research. Language is an important factor in identity, and scholars’ accounts of the language of the Ålanders have varied depending on whether they have wanted to emphasise the eastern or the western influences on the island. In the second article Joonas Ahola brings forward the Kalevalaic epic that mentions *Saari* (‘The Island’) and this theme’s possible connection to Åland. The third article, by Per Olof Sjöstrand, focuses on settlement continuity from the Viking Age to the medieval period. Examination of the toponymy of Åland, textual evidence and archaeological material establishes that Åland was not totally abandoned after the Viking Age, although a decline in settlements did indeed take place.

Part II, ‘Between Sources and Their Lack’ (pp. 153–266), includes four articles. First, Rudolf Gustavsson, Jan-Erik Tomtlund, Josefina Kennebjörk and Jan Storå search for cultural identities in Viking-Age Åland by studying

its material culture, especially burial customs, and compare this data with that of burials from eastern central Sweden. Teija Alenius looks at pollen evidence, noting that the cultivation of barley, rye and hemp played an important part in the lives of Ålanders. The *Finnar* in Old Norse sources are the topic of the third article, by Sirpa Aalto. Åland as such does not appear in Old Norse sources but Finno-Ugric and Sámi people do; it is argued that attitudes towards them might also reveal attitudes towards Ålanders. Historical linguistics is discussed in the article by Joonas Ahola, Frog and Johan Schalin. It seems that toponymy research in its present state cannot offer answers to the questions of language in Viking-Age Åland. Nevertheless, archaeological material implies a multilingual environment, and that the preferred language might have varied in different regions.

In Part III, 'Context, Contacts and Perceptions' (pp. 267–414), Johan Schalin and Frog survey toponymy in connection with seafaring. Seafarers invented many of Åland's toponyms, which were still in use in later times. The changing language situation is discussed by Mikko Heikkilä in the second article. Evidence suggests that Finns, people speaking Scandinavian languages and even 'Lapps' have all been responsible for place-names in Åland. An article by Lassi Heininen, Jan Storå, Frog and Joonas Ahola addresses geopolitical perspectives in Åland. The archipelago is strategically situated in the Baltic Sea, and this means that the population of Åland changed constantly through immigration and emigration, and that the archipelago was important in establishing power relations in the region. In the final article Frog explores mythology in Viking-Age Åland. A lack of evidence makes it difficult to discuss the mythological matrix on Åland but some conclusions can be drawn on a general level. In particular, the clay-paw rite that is a distinctive cultural phenomenon on Åland is studied in detail, and it is argued that this might reveal a high appreciation of beavers or bears on the island.

*The Viking Age in Åland* is an important foundation for future research on the Viking Age. This small yet undeniably important archipelago has been left out of Viking-Age studies, but it is hoped that this volume will bring it to the attention of scholars. The book approaches the archipelago from different academic disciplines that illuminate identities and the way of life of Viking-Age Åland. Because some earlier research is outdated in some respects according to modern academic standards, the efforts made in several of these articles to re-evaluate it may seem repetitive to some readers. Perhaps because of the shortage of material evidence, there is also repetition in the emphasis on particular themes, such as Åland's position between east and west and the problems of interpreting the surviving material. Nevertheless, this collection of articles is an important addition to studies of the Viking Age and a must-read for everyone who is interested in the Viking Age in the Baltic Sea.

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THE CONVERSION OF SCANDINAVIA: VIKINGS, MERCHANTS AND MISSIONARIES IN THE REMAKING OF NORTHERN EUROPE. By ANDERS WINROTH. *Yale University Press*. New Haven, 2012. xi + 238 pp. 24 black-and-white illustrations. ISBN 978-0-300-20553-4.

This book has stepped into a market that is at the same time crowded and quiet. While there is no shortage of surveys of the period of Viking raids, Scandinavian expansion and conversion to Christianity, there is a shortage of good, short surveys by single authors: most recent efforts by academics have taken the form of collaborative tomes which, although worthy, do not always issue such a gentle invitation to prospective undergraduate or non-academic readers. On the other hand, there are any number of popular books on the subject which, though shorter and easier-going, offer up little but clichés. It is thus to the author's great credit that he has produced a highly readable work which consciously avoids reinforcing romantic images of the adventurous Viking and of a war between a native paganism and a colonising Christianity—and although, as other reviewers have noted, this much is hardly controversial amongst academics, the flip-side of the growing appeal of all things 'Viking' in popular culture is that such notions are increasingly widespread, notably among fresh undergraduates. So an approachable book which disabuses the reader of such preconceptions without killing the lure of the subject for the newcomer is to be welcomed. (Extra points should be awarded for using the word 'Vikings' in its correct sense, and not making it the largest word on the cover, which is also mercifully unadorned by ships, swords and axes, although the choice of a non-Scandinavian artefact, namely the Anglo-Saxon Franks Casket, to grace the front may strike some as odd.) It is also a book with two sides: beyond offering a general survey of the period, it does argue a specific thesis that marks it out as an academic monograph.

It is not, however, free of problems. One of these is that there are a handful of minor errors, such as the claim (p. 90) that Archbishop Adalbert of Hamburg-Bremen visited Birka in Sweden (Adalbert was dissuaded from visiting Scandinavia on the advice of the Danish King Svend Estridsen, who probably feared that the Archbishop's personality—which, to borrow a phrase from *Blackadder*, was the worst in Germany—would cause a setback to Christianity in the North worse than any pagan reaction; it was in fact Bishop Adalward, a missionary, who made this visit), or the mis-dating of the tenth-century Karlevi stone to the ninth century (p. 43). There are also some linguistically odd forms such as *godord* for *godord* on p. 54—why keep one *ð* but not the other?, and *skraelinger* for *skraelingar* on p. 55—why use a Scandinavian form of an Icelandic word in a book in English? Nit-picking, perhaps, but these are the sorts of errors which are likely to find their way into undergraduate notes and essays and result in confusion. It is a shame that this should reduce the book's usefulness for undergraduate teaching, an area where it has distinct potential.

This potential derives partially from the overall tone of the book, that of a good lecture delivered to undergraduates: flowing, conversational and with enough repetition of key points and themes to really drive the message home. This raises the problem that some things are imprecisely phrased in a way that may give readers

the wrong impression: thus on p. 54 it is stated that Ingólfr Arnarson settled and ‘was residing in Reykjavik, which has maintained its predominance into modern times as the capital of Iceland’. This gives a false sense of continuity and suggests that Reykjavík was a city, and a capital city at that, in the ninth century. Similarly, the description of Beowulf as ‘giver of rings’ presents the statement ‘he gave rings’ (*beagas geaf* in Old English) as a title. But these concerns are, admittedly, minor.

A larger problem is that the author’s take on complicated subjects on which there has been much debate can be presented as simple fact, as in the assertion that Harald Bluetooth moved his father Gorm’s body from the burial-mound at Jelling to the Church (p. 114). Similarly, the ingenious though not yet universally accepted revisions to the career of the missionary Anskar, produced by the author’s erstwhile student Eric Knibbs, are presented as fact, as is (more problematically) Henrik Jansson’s highly controversial thesis that the Temple of Uppsala was pure fiction created by Adam of Bremen for propaganda purposes (p. 148). The other assertions about Adam’s point of view—such as the claim that he was ‘implicitly’ attacking English missionaries and the kings who used them (pp. 123–24)—add up to what is, in my opinion, a rather unfair assessment (albeit a fairly widespread one) of the great *magister* and his work. Adam’s attitude towards English influence was not straightforwardly negative, as (for example) his thoroughly approving judgements of St Olav and the bishops and priests he brought with him from England show. Perhaps the simplification of these issues is inevitable owing to the function of the book as a survey, but some acknowledgement of the complexities underneath would be desirable. Nonetheless, these points do not greatly hinder the author in making his arguments. The author also cannot be blamed for the fact that three years after the publication of his book, new evidence of permanent habitation in early Ribe was published which now contradicts what he writes on p. 75, that it was only a seasonal market in the eighth century (Sarah Croix, ‘Permanency in Early Medieval Emporia: Reassessing Ribe’, *European Journal of Archaeology* 18:3 (2015), 497–523).

The argument of the book is as follows: the conversion of Scandinavia should not be seen as a proto-colonial endeavour in which Scandinavian pagans passively had Christianity and the trappings of European society imposed on them, but rather as part of a lengthy process growing out of long-standing relationships with Europe, which intensified in the period of the Viking raids. An academic reader will not find any of this controversial. Winroth argues for the interconnection of raiding, trade, crafts and conversion through social and political structures. Building on the traditional model of the chieftain who has to gain booty to reward his followers (a model, as he rightly notes, that was not unique to the Scandinavian world), he ties into it not only the more obvious phenomena of raiding and trade, but also the growth of towns as centres for trade and crafts, which turned materials into more valuable gifts for followers. His main thesis is that Christianity itself was also a kind of ‘gift’ that kings could use to reward their followers, and a highly prestigious one at that: not only was Christianity the religion of the great kingdoms of the West, but the bond of god-parentage allowed for a strong and personal connection to a ruler.

It was the fact, Winroth contends, that Christianity could create stronger bonds than paganism that allowed Christianising kings to defeat their rivals. It was also the desire to destroy their pagan rivals' ability to bind followers to themselves through rituals and spaces associated with them, more than a religious concern with stamping out idolatry *per se*, that led to the violent suppression of paganism. His argument for the superiority of Christianity in this regard makes sense—unlike paganism, Christianity required a hierarchy of ordained priests and bishops and specially consecrated spaces, and so could be controlled more effectively by a ruler who introduced it—but the proof of this argument seems largely to be the fact that Christianity triumphed, which presents us with something of a circular argument. Nonetheless, this is a compelling thesis with a good deal of merit to it, and is worthy of further discussion.

All in all, this is a strong offering from a noted medievalist who has hitherto been known for his work in other fields. In an age where hackneyed ideas about Viking heroism and a sudden conflict between a 'native' Scandinavian paganism and a 'foreign' European Christianity are increasingly propagated in the popular media, a readable account that is free of such nonsense is welcome and refreshing.

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THE VIKING EXPERIENCE. By MARJOLEIN STERN and RODERICK DALE. *Carlton Books*. London, 2014. 63 pp. Colour and black-and-white illustrations. ISBN 978-1-78097-495-8.

This well-illustrated book opens up research about the Vikings to an interested public. What distinguishes *The Viking Experience* from the many other books that seek to narrow the gap between academic research and the public understanding of the Viking Age, however, is its specially visual character. This volume, the publication of which coincides with a new vogue in Viking studies, is notable for its inclusion of fifteen removable inserts—high-resolution facsimiles of maps, manuscripts and other documents—that enable its readers to inspect the kinds of sources available to those who do research into this period. Although it is not intended for a specialist readership, its inclusion of these facsimiles will interest those who teach or research the Vikings at all levels.

At sixty-three pages this is a slender volume. In the introduction, Stern and Dale discuss the adoption into English of the Scandinavian word 'Viking', used in Old English to denote a pirate, and its re-emergence in more recent times as a term to cover all Scandinavians in the Viking Age. In common language, the term 'Viking' is often over-extended, but the authors of this volume use its wider sense to instruct a public, more familiar with the term 'Viking' than 'Norse', about this complex period in history.

Each chapter examines a traditional theme in Viking studies. Chapter One, 'Origins of the Scandinavian Nations', leads with a description of the period in Scandinavian prehistory that set the conditions for the Viking Age. Chapter Two,

'Exploration', reveals the geographical scope of Scandinavian activity across Russia and the Slavic lands, the Middle East and Byzantium, and the North Atlantic. Chapter Three, 'Raiding and Trading', centres on the well-documented Viking predations on Britain and Europe, and the economic situation to which these attacks contributed. Chapter Four, 'Settlement Abroad', concerns the establishment of new colonies overseas, and the long processes of integration and assimilation in Kievan Rus, Normandy and the British Isles. Chapter Five, 'Everyday Life', guides a reader through the evidence for what life in the Scandinavian homelands was like, covering family life, house and home, and the Vikings' religious beliefs. Chapter Six, 'The End of the Viking Age', relates how the Scandinavian territories became part of Europe, through their establishment as monarchies and their adoption of Christianity. Chapter Seven, 'The Viking Legacy', provides an overview of the linguistic and cultural impact the Vikings had on the areas they visited, with a note on the notoriously misconstrued genetic evidence for Scandinavian settlement in Britain and elsewhere. This chapter helpfully illuminates the ways in which antiquarian interest in the Vikings has helped, since the sixteenth century, to shape their public perception. The authors helpfully correct a number of common misconceptions, from the myth of horned helmets to the alleged magical properties of runes, and are careful to inform the reader where academic knowledge is speculative or gaps loom. Of course, in a book intended for a non-academic readership, historical events and modern historical debates are presented anecdotally, but the authors strive to keep in sight the wide range of sources from which we take our information.

The strength of this volume is its fifteen removable facsimile items, labelled 'memorabilia', which are inserted into sleeves within the book. Among these items are the AD 793 entry in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, recording the attack on Lindisfarne, and a page from the Stockholm Codex Aureus, plundered by Vikings in the ninth century. Some of these manuscript facsimiles, such as 'Item 10: The *Edda* of Snorri Sturluson in the Codex Upsaliensis', are not widely reproduced or available online, and enable readers to handle well-known sources in forms that they have not seen before. The authors also introduce the reader to some of the documents produced in the course of academic research, such as the Carn nan Bharraich (1891) and Buckquoy (1971) excavation plans, which enable readers to glimpse the academic research cultures that lie behind wide-access books such as this. Through these fifteen items the authors educate a general public in the nature of the sources available to researchers: in facsimile, we see that the sources are sometimes thin, malleable and subject to interpretation, and their variety shows the wide range of disciplines that intersect in modern Viking studies.

*The Viking Experience* will certainly appeal to its intended readership of non-specialists, and the authors helpfully provide a back matter of further readings, internet resources, and information about British and Scandinavian museum collections. The book might also find honourable mention on undergraduate reading lists, however; its facsimile reproductions have the potential to be useful resources for teachers at all levels. This book appears at a time when increasing emphasis is being placed on the impact of research outside the academy. Academics are

increasingly involving themselves in discussions with a wider public, and this book is a notable contribution to this conversation.

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66 MANUSCRIPTS FROM THE ARNAMAGNÆAN COLLECTION. Edited by M. J. DRISCOLL and SVANHILDUR ÓSKARSDÓTTIR. *Museum Tusulanum Press*. Copenhagen, 2015. 237 pp. Multiple colour illustrations. ISBN 978-87-635-4264-7.

This book provides a fabulous introduction to the immense variety of the 3000 Icelandic, Danish, Swedish and indeed Spanish manuscripts and fragments gathered in Iceland in the early eighteenth century by the famous Icelandic collector Árni Magnússon (1663–1730) and his assistants. In commemoration of the 350th anniversary of his birth, sixty-six manuscripts are featured in the book, one for each year of his life. The various entries serve to demonstrate the exceptional diversity of manuscripts housed in the respective collections at Det Arnemagnæanske Institut in Copenhagen and Stofnun Árna Magnúsonar í íslenskum fræðum in Reykjavík. A total of thirty-five experts, all of whom are in some way associated with one of the two research institutes, have contributed articles to the present volume. The large number of individual contributors alone indicates the great efforts that have gone into producing this book.

The large number of manuscripts featured includes not only famous medieval Icelandic codices such as Codex Wormianus (AM 242 fol.), Skarðsbók Jónsbókar (AM 350 fol.), Hauksbók (AM 371 4to), Reykjavíjarðarbók (AM 122 b fol.) and AM 595 a–b 4to, but also lesser-known and rather peculiar examples from the AM collection. These include the Codex runicus (AM 28 8vo), an early fourteenth-century southern Swedish (then Danish) manuscript entirely written in runes, and AM 586 4to, a manuscript featuring censored parts of the erotic legendary saga *Bósa saga ok Herrauðs*. Other examples are AM 795 4to, a twelfth-century Spanish liturgical parchment, and AM 187 8vo, which is an early fifteenth-century leechbook from Roskilde. Of particular interest are the descriptions of selected diplomas from the AM collection. Despite the impressive number of diplomas (totalling 14,000 from Iceland, Denmark and Sweden), which form an important feature of the collection, they have largely escaped the notice of previous scholars.

‘Manuscripts on the brain’, by co-editor Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir, introduces Árni Magnússon’s life and the overall cultural environment in which his profound interest in manuscripts was established. It provides a concise overview of Árni’s education in Iceland and Denmark, and of his increasing interest in the medieval and early modern Icelandic manuscript corpus during his initial travels around Iceland in 1702, when he was tasked, together with the vice-lawman Páll Jónsson Vídalín, with creating an Icelandic Land Register. The introduction goes on to describe the establishment of Árni’s collection up until the Great Fire of Copenhagen in 1728, which turned out to be less catastrophic for the manuscript

collection than for the collector himself, who died in grief some two years later. The following sub-chapter features a short description of the establishment of the AM institute in Copenhagen and a review of the negotiations between Iceland and Denmark leading to the return of many of the Icelandic manuscripts to Iceland in the latter half of the last century. The introduction closes with an up-to-date account of the two AM institutes, highlighting several recent scholarly activities such as the digitalisation of the complete collection via the purpose-built website [www.handrit.is](http://www.handrit.is). A highlight of this introduction, as well as of the following short presentation of each individual manuscript, is undoubtedly the well-designed appearance of the text, which features not only high-quality images of related photographs, but also many interesting side-notes such as (translated) comments by Árni himself. Excellently directed by the editors, a commentary relates many of the manuscripts featured in the book to the life and cultural surroundings of Árni; it thus provides not only an example of the vivid variety of literature written in medieval and early modern Scandinavia, but also a link to the core of the whole collection, the collector himself.

This lavishly-bound and high-quality colour volume looks nothing short of spectacular. In particular, the stunning quality of the manuscript images, one of the most striking features of the book, is astonishing. Generally, the pictures are given much more space than the scholarly articles. Several of the most picturesque manuscripts, such as AM 227 fol. and Codex runicus (AM 28 8vo), are each given a full two-page photo, thereby showing not only the sheer beauty of the featured illumination of AM 227 fol. for example, but also the unconventionally executed writing of AM 28 8vo. Similarly, manuscripts such as *Reykjafjarðar-bók* (AM 122 b fol.) and *Reynistaðarbók* (AM 764 4to) are given two full-page photographs, since they both undoubtedly represent extraordinary examples of the broad codicological features of Old Norse manuscripts. The book closes with an account of 'Icelandic book production in the Middle Ages', written by Soffía Guðný Guðmundsdóttir and Laufey Guðnadóttir, with additional texts by Anne Mette Hansen. Albeit rather general in content, the concluding chapter features a coherent and complete description of the production of a medieval manuscript from start (parchment making) to finish (writing, illuminating and binding). Together with the introduction to the life of Árni Magnússon and the establishment of the AM collection, the concluding chapter on the actual production of manuscripts provides a very suitable frame for the main content of the book.

The large number and size of the photographs, together with the unusual layout, indicate that the book is not intended to be read only by a scholarly audience. The lack of bibliographical references, discussions of general philological aspects or mention of shelfmarks in the chapter titles are obvious signs that the intention of the editors was not to create a book exclusively for the scholarly public. Rather, the volume is designed first and foremost for general readers interested in the AM collection. It provides an intriguing introduction to the great variety of manuscripts in the AM collection. Fittingly, it is written in an easy-to-read yet still scholarly way and thereby stands out as the best and most informative introduction to Old Norse manuscripts currently available. It will undoubtedly act as a starting point

for many future students pursuing interests in one or more of the many sub-fields of Old Norse manuscript studies.

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WRITING AND READING IN MEDIEVAL MANUSCRIPT CULTURE. THE TRANSLATION AND TRANSMISSION OF THE STORY OF ELYE IN OLD FRENCH AND OLD NORSE LITERARY CONTEXTS. By STEFKA GEORGIEVA ERIKSEN. *Medieval Texts and Cultures of Northern Europe 25. Brepols*. Turnhout, 2014. 257 pp. Multiple colour illustrations. ISBN 978-2-503-54779-4.

This rigorous study by Stefka Georgieva Eriksen provides a well-designed and carefully directed interdisciplinary approach to medieval literature and internationally-led manuscript studies. It discusses three versions of the same source text, the mid-thirteenth-century Old French epic poem *Elye de Saint-Gille*, as preserved in three manuscripts, in the context of three distinguished medieval European manuscript cultures: those of northern France, Norway and Iceland. The book is presented in the spirit of new philology, treating the manuscripts from a holistic point of view with a particular focus on textual transmission.

Eriksen divides her book into five chapters, three of which are concerned with the different manuscripts. In Chapter One she establishes her method, which covers both the textuality of the text's three versions and the materiality of the manuscripts in which they appear. While being influenced by Itamar Even-Zohar's literary polysystem theory, Eriksen provides an in-depth introduction to current synthetic thinking on medieval literary and translation theories, and mainly follows Rita Copeland's and Gideon Toury's conclusions about the nature of medieval translation practice. Eriksen, however, also discusses many contextual aspects of the manuscripts, such as oral theory and the general capability of medieval listeners and writers in their respective literary cultures. Furthermore, three important new philological theorems are laid out in the introduction (pp. 9–10). Eriksen is seemingly less interested in the classical Lachmannian method of searching for a stemma between the manuscripts, since 'each version of a text work is an intelligent response to a previous version, and all versions may be regarded as significant' (p. 9). Furthermore, in line with the conventions of new philology, Eriksen considers the equality between material and textual aspects of a manuscript as a whole. This is strongly linked to the third main aspect of her method: the importance of the social, cultural and historical context in which a text has been translated, written and received by the target audiences. Following previous works by Busby and Kwakkel, Eriksen divides her approach into three different levels of description: the *mise en livre*, *mise en page* and *mise en texte*. In the first, she discusses in particular the codicological and textual structure of a manuscript, while the second reveals the previously established textual structure with regard to initials, including their size and relation to the text proper, as well

as the content and size of the rubrics. Also related to this level are contemporary marginal additions, historiated illuminations and their text-image links in relation to the whole of the manuscript structure, and any iconological relations to the contemporary medieval audience for which the manuscript was produced. At the third level she discusses the punctuation system of the specific manuscript in relation to other contemporary medieval vernacular manuscripts from the same scribal surround, as well as previous influences such as the Latin *punctus* and *punctus elevatus* marks, all of which are present not only in Old French but also in Old Norse texts. A further important aspect of the *mise en texte* is the use of abbreviations, which is once again set in relation to other manuscripts from the same scribal area, suggested patronage and use.

Since it is the only Old French manuscript containing the *chanson de geste Elye de Saint-Gille*, Eriksen discusses Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Fr. 25516 in great detail in the first of the three case-studies in chapter two. In particular, the contemporary French and Flemish cultural background, literary production and suggested aristocratic commissioners are presented, as well as a detailed analysis of the manuscript as a whole, all of which closely follows the three-level method proposed in Chapter One. Eriksen's conclusion is that MS Fr. 25516, featuring four romances, two of which are closely related, is a typical manuscript of northern France, possibly related to the established House of Flanders. It is 'a coherent production unit', with a structurally and codicologically uniform appearance (p. 98). It may have been used for public vocal performance, as well as for smaller listening circles where the audience was able to make use of the miniatures provided in the manuscript. MS Fr. 25516, however, appears to be an average, professionally produced Old French vernacular manuscript according to its size, illuminations and number of folio leaves.

The third chapter takes a similarly rigorous approach to the Old Norwegian manuscript Uppsala Universitetsbiblioteket De la Gardie 4–7 fol. Eriksen sets it in the aristocratic context of the court of King Hákon Hákonarson, who is known to have had a strong interest in the translation of *chansons de geste* and other courtly French literature. De la Gardie 4–7 fol., which possibly originally featured only romances translated from Old French works, is discussed in relation to contemporary Norwegian manuscripts from the late thirteenth century and, like Fr. 25516, appears to be a typical manuscript for its time and area. De la Gardie 4–7 fol., however, is distinguished from other thirteenth-century Norwegian manuscripts, since it includes an unusual number and combination of texts in the same genre. Written in an otherwise 'prosperous, dynamic, and highly productive literary culture and milieu' (p. 155), De la Gardie 4–7 fol. is a work that appears to have been produced for an audience already acquainted with the content, judging by the common formulas, the content of the rubrics and the text-image structure of the minor initials. Furthermore, Eriksen claims that De la Gardie 4–7 fol. in particular was intended to be read aloud to smaller audiences, or to be used for private reading.

The fourth chapter presents and discusses the fifteenth-century Icelandic manuscript Stockholm Kungliga biblioteket Holm Perg 6 4to, an anthology of romances translated from Old French and Latin sources. It was mainly written by

a monk named Guthormr in or near the Benedictine monastery of Munkaþverá in northern Iceland, and appears to be a standard and coherently produced manuscript typical for its time and (monastic) place. Erikson concludes, owing to the high proportion of abbreviations in the text, its comparatively small size and only minor illumination, among other reasons, that Holm Perg 6 4to was most likely produced for a private library, and mainly for private reading. This fits in well with the general situation in early fifteenth-century Iceland, where foreign literature was less frequently translated and less valued than in previous centuries, as Eriksen concludes (p. 229).

The fifth chapter provides a conclusion to the three case studies and highlights the differences between the literary cultures that produced them. Interestingly, and according to the internal structures of the three examples, the two Old Norse manuscripts, despite some 150 years between the times of their production, have much in common in terms of their text, rubrics and minor initials, punctuation and use of abbreviations. According to Eriksen, 'this indicates that a translation process from one language to another implied greater changes than the intralingual rewriting over time' (p. 224). This factor, however, is found not only in the text itself, but in all three levels of Eriksen's methodology. It suggests that different versions of a text-work are much more subject to historical and cultural factors than the content of the text itself.

In conclusion, with this study Eriksen has contributed a new and illuminating approach to the field of translation and transmission of central European texts to Scandinavia. Despite its complex and interdisciplinary content, it is well-structured and the arguments are presented in a clear and concise way. In addition, her study is one of the first to accord to art-historical features of illuminated manuscripts such as stylistic and iconographic contents the same importance as philological ones such as textual variations, as well as codicological and palaeographical peculiarities. Eriksen not only fluently combines various linguistic methodologies with codicological, broader philological and even art-historical studies; she also sets the cultural background of the manuscripts in the same context as the content of the text, specifically the intended use of the text for the original audience.

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RIDDARASQUR. THE TRANSLATION OF EUROPEAN COURT CULTURE IN MEDIEVAL SCANDINAVIA. Edited by KARL G. JOHANSSON and ELSE MUNDAL. *Bibliotheca Nordica 7. Novus Forlag*. Oslo, 2014. 354 pp. 2 colour illustrations. ISBN 978-82-7099-806-7.

The medieval Scandinavian translations of Continental romances have enjoyed a surge of interest in recent scholarship, especially among scholars studying the transmission of texts and culture between the Nordic countries and the rest of Europe. Recent work by Sif Rikhardsdottir and others have shown how fruitful comparative work on the Old Norse translated romances can be, and this volume, which offers a

wide variety of approaches to the study of medieval translation, is another welcome contribution. The volume contains twelve articles, an extensive bibliography and helpful indices of personal names, works and manuscripts. The authors are a mix of specialists on Continental culture and specialists in Old Norse, many of them emerging scholars at the time of the 2008 Oslo conference on which this volume is based.

After Else Mundal's introduction, which gives a helpful summary of the translations' historical background, Keith Busby provides a 'modest practical model of adaptation' (p. 17), outlining a checklist of questions for scholars ranging from the relationship between source text and adaptation to the adaptor's own milieu and manuscript witnesses. In order to answer these questions, Busby notes, interdisciplinary collaboration between scholars of Old Norse and specialists in the various languages and cultures being adapted is crucial. This is a point well taken at the outset of a volume that reads the translated romances both as adaptations of foreign culture *and* as products of a particular Scandinavian environment, always stressing the complexity of the translation process.

The two next essays give the reader a sense of the conventions of the romances introduced to Scandinavia. Martin Aurell's essay 'Chivalric culture in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries' presents an excellent overview of chivalric ideology and technologies as they are expressed in both historical and literary record. Peter Damian-Grint's essay on translation *topoi* in Old French literature shows how literature in the vernacular uses such *topoi* (especially of texts as translations from Latin sources) in order to establish the authority of the text and the author.

In the first article on the *riddarasögur* themselves, Sofia Lodén carefully examines evidence for relationships between Chrétien's *Le Chevalier au Lion* and its Old Swedish and Old Norse adaptations. Her conclusion is that the adaptations represent 'different stages of literary transmission' (p. 105). She demonstrates the importance of comparative study: the innovations of the Swedish adaptor are better appreciated if read in conjunction not only with the French source, but also with the earlier Old Norse version that Lodén persuasively argues was a secondary source for the Swedish translation.

The next three essays focus on the functions of translation in Old Norse culture. Jonas Petterson argues for the use of Even-Zohar's polysystems theory to study the differences between the status of translations in Norway and Iceland, where the 'open' (p. 113) literary system of Norway would encourage literal translations of foreign sources, while the stronger literary system of Iceland would adapt texts to conform to local tastes. Suzanne Marti also picks up on the usefulness of polysystems theory as she argues that lexical analysis of specialised loanwords from French sources (in this case *dubba* 'to dub' a knight) should make us re-evaluate the sagas' chronology, especially that of *Tristrams saga*. That the use of words such as *dubba* presupposes an audience already familiar with the conventions of romance seems reasonable. Marti herself notes that a more extensive lexical study is needed to make her argument wholly persuasive, and this would be a valuable contribution to the field. Ingvil Brügger Budal addresses the function of the translations in an engaging article that also gives a terrific overview of the genre. Unwilling to see the translated romances either as pure entertainment or as

largely didactic in their introduction of courtly culture to Norway, Budal argues that the translation of romances was an instrument for King Hákon's cultivation of a loyal court. Budal reads the romances as literary gifts from the king to his subjects, entertaining stories that could also function as *exempla* of courtly conduct and as part of a political strategy.

Next, Jürg Glauser and Karoline Kjesrud address central visual motifs in the *riddarasögur*. Glauser productively reads 'medial constellations' (p. 199), striking images such as the white sails reported to be black by the jealous Ísodd at the end of *Tristrams saga*, as dense moments in which the texts highlight their own fictionality and where the problems of reported speech versus visual evidence are played out. Kjesrud notes the recurring motif of a knight killing a dragon to save a lion in six translated sagas and a carving on the Valbjófsstaðir door. This is a fascinating selection, and it would be interesting to see a more developed argument about the function of the motif across these verbal and visual texts.

Articles by Bjørn Bandlien and Stefka Georgieva Eriksen look at the manuscript famously containing the *Strengleikar*, De la Gardie 4–7, and make a nice pairing. Both authors carefully read the manuscript, with its mix of indigenous and foreign materials, as a meaningful unit of texts in dialogue (to paraphrase Eriksen). While Eriksen's primary interest is how the ethical dilemmas of Arthurian literature are transposed to the legal and cultural context of thirteenth-century Norway, Bandlien traces the hypothetical provenance of the manuscript, while also addressing the interest Norwegian courtiers would have had in the kinds of ethical concerns sketched out by Eriksen. Bandlien also shows how a manuscript such as DG 4–7 could have circulated among regional Norwegian élites, offering a model of internal transmission to complement what we know about the transmission of foreign materials.

Marianne Kalinke's 'The Evolution of Icelandic Romance' is a stimulating conclusion to the collection. She shows how Icelandic authors adapted foreign motifs to their own ends in a text such as *Partalopa saga*, the Icelandic reworking of *Partonopheus of Blois*. Here, the indigenous Icelandic motif of the maiden king changes the representation of female sovereignty in the romance, showing how the dynamic process of adaptation not only introduces new concepts, but also changes source materials.

As this overview shows, this collection spans diverse and sometimes competing arguments about the translation of courtly culture in the Nordic countries. The plurality of viewpoints is its strength: anyone interested in the *riddarasögur* and in translation more generally will learn something here, whether or not they take issue with individual contributions. The key contribution of the volume is that it keeps the *complexity* of translation front and centre: translation is not a one-way street, but a dynamic circulation of cultural concepts and practices. Although there are occasional lapses in the editing (including copy-editing and formatting, with some articles giving full translations of Old Norse into English, and others not), the volume as a whole will spur fresh inquiry into the wonderful *riddarasögur*.

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WOMEN IN OLD NORSE LITERATURE. BODIES, WORDS, AND POWER. By JÓHANNA KATRÍN FRÍÐRIKS-DÓTTIR. *Palgrave Macmillan*. New York, 2013. xiv + 192 pp. ISBN 978-0-230-12042-6.

Women have not been overlooked in research on early Icelandic and Scandinavian culture, with essential reading including well-known works such as Helga Kress's *Máttugar meýjar* (1993), Judith Jesch's *Women in the Viking Age* (1991), Jenny Jochens's *Women in Old Norse Society* (1995) and *Old Norse Images of Women* (1996), and a number of influential articles by Carol Clover. Yet much more work remains to be done, and Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir's book is a valuable contribution to and development upon the discussions to date. Moreover, by specifically focusing on the literary representation of women, much is gained. Instead of roping sagas in as source material for the debate over 'real' historical gender roles, the author treats literary representation as its own historical phenomenon, part of a cultural history of ideas. Whetters, for example, may or may not have actually existed in saga-age Iceland, but in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the image of the whetter was one among the ensemble of women's roles through which people could conceive of female agency and thus potentially structure their lives and personal narratives.

The book is divided into five chapters, each covering one broad female character type or role. These types, as Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir points out, also happen often to be associated with particular genres of Old Norse–Icelandic literature. Chapter One on 'Women and Words' throws into doubt the oft-implied view that women who speak in the sagas are primarily instigators of violence and strife. While the act of whetting is certainly important in various narrative contexts, the author reminds us that this performative function is not present to the same extent in all prose genres (being mostly restricted to the *Íslendinga-sögur*), and that various other outcomes resulting from the actions of voluble and loquacious women have been more or less overlooked in previous assessments. By presenting a variety of representations of women's speech (including ones with socially cohesive results) sourced from more than one genre, an important perspective is provided on the possibilities which were conceived of as being available to women. This is particularly useful when it comes to arguing against the necessary existence of the whetter as a social reality or nuancing the idea of the paucity of roles for women in patriarchally-determined Old Norse–Icelandic written culture.

The social reality of female agency also raises its head in Chapter Two, 'Women and Magic', where we are informed that 'what is most important is not whether the magic has some near-forgotten historical basis or is entirely invented by imaginative narrators, but rather . . . what the authors do with it and how it functions in the narrative' (p. 51). Prophetesses are a particular case in point. Their pronouncements frequently have no evident psychological grounding, but are rather plot devices which moderate how information on the events which are to come is presented to the characters and audience. In other cases, particularly *Fóstbræðra saga*, we see how magic gains significance for women's social participation owing to the fact that in many situations their agency is otherwise circumscribed. With spheres of action

such as physical contests and economic negotiations being generally out of bounds for them, women resort to magic to assert themselves and forward their agendas.

In Chapter Three, ‘Monstrous Women’, giantesses in the *fornaldarsögur* are dealt with under two main headings: ‘The Hostile Giantess’ and ‘The Helpful Giantess’. These contrasting images help to group many of the deep ambiguities that are visible in the representation of these complex female characters. The many potential characteristics and roles of such women are said to ‘engage with difficult (gendered) topics and explore certain preoccupations that are more complex than simply a binary opposite Other’ (pp. 76–77). The willingness not to enforce procrustean taxonomy on these multifarious giantesses is praiseworthy.

The ‘Royal and Aristocratic Women’ discussed in Chapter Four are shown to intercede on behalf of male relatives in a number of ways, often seeking to exert influence less directly than the kings and earls around them. Max Weber’s concept of power, and its subdivisions, is brought in to help explain the legitimacy of actions taken by female characters in various examples taken from the *konungasögur*, particularly *Friðgerðar þáttur*. While a rigorous theoretical approach to power is certainly something lacking in many similar discussions, even the author must admit that ‘Weber’s three types of power are difficult to match up with corresponding representation of queens in the *konungasögur* since there is no point in the texts at which acceptable or appropriate queenly behavior . . . is made explicit’ (p. 89).

Finally, in Chapter Five on ‘The Female Ruler’, the *meykongr* ‘maiden-king’ motif is thoroughly discussed in a number of examples from mostly indigenous romances. Examples such as *Hrólfs saga Gautrekssonar* show that maiden-kings can successfully perform traditionally male-designated roles, yet the ‘happy ending’ of marriage with the assumption of more traditionally female-designated behaviour is said to reveal the ultimate conservatism of many of these texts. Only *Nitida saga*, the last text to be discussed, contains hints of a proto-feminist outlook where the roles available to female characters (and women more generally?) might be otherwise.

Overall, Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir’s book is a pleasure to read and extremely thought-provoking. Particularly refreshing are the great number of examples taken from numerous genres and sources from off the beaten track, as well as the awareness that the author shows of subtle variations between different texts of one and the same saga. The effort expended in not choosing tendentious examples in order to prove a particular point is admirably carried out: the variation on offer may be harder to draw clear-cut and pithy conclusions from, but respectfully allows the range of potential for female representation to shine through. It would be interesting to see the insights drawn from this book made use of in the future with respect to Old Norse–Icelandic religious prose (female saints’ lives are mentioned in footnotes), narrative poetry and *æfintýri*, all areas ripe for gender-nuanced investigation. The bold steps that this book takes will certainly be an inspiration for future studies in those directions.

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TREE OF SALVATION: YGGDRASIL AND THE CROSS IN THE NORTH. By G. RONALD MURPHY. *Oxford University Press*. Oxford, 2013. xii + 239 pp. ISBN 978-0-19-994861-1.

*Tree of Salvation* can be read both as a meditation upon the cross and the genesis of Christianity in Scandinavia, and as a book concerned with scholarly work on the Conversion period and the role of the 'natural' world in this process. Murphy also clearly appreciates the extent to which his work is one 'that sails out of the range of the usual and familiar' (p. xi), tacking against the wind of conventional approaches to the period and its religious culture. This is definitely one of its strengths.

The book falls into three sections: 'In Wood and Stone'; 'In Poetry and Runes'; and 'In Yuletide Carol and Evergreens'. Chapters are short but focused, and their argument is straightforward and easily summarised. The first, 'Yggdrasil and the Cross', introduces the theme of the book and identifies important aspects of the similarities between the World Tree and the Christian *arbor vitae* and cross of crucifixion. In Chapter Two, 'Yggdrasil and the Stave Church', Murphy suggests 'that the stave church is a Christian Yggdrasil' (p. 29), on the basis that Yggdrasil serves as a refuge at Doomsday, as does the Cross. Murphy advances his argument on the basis of stave church architecture in an imaginative but convincing fashion, emphasising the physical properties of wood and trees which lend themselves to the construction of these buildings, and noting the 'resemblance of the roof structure to the cascading branches of an evergreen' in the case of the church at Borgund (p. 35). His reading of the Skog Church tapestry suggests that the transition from ancient beliefs to the new faith may have been seen as a confirmation of the 'old and hopeful story that salvation would come in the form of a tree' (p. 65), embodied in both the Cross and the physical form of these churches. Chapter Three pushes on into the Baltic, to the island of Bornholm, where Murphy draws connections between medieval round churches and the stave churches of the preceding chapter, continuing the argument that both were constructed with 'the contemplative aim of envisioning the new faith in concord with the poetic images of the old' (p. 68). Again, this draws upon both the architectural forms of these buildings and their decoration, but also emphasises experiential aspects of the way in which these churches' structures would themselves have structured medieval Christian worship. Chapter Four crosses the North Sea to focus on the 'two figured crosses from Viking-age Middleton' (p. 98). Through the exegetical prism of the *Heliand*, Murphy envisions these crosses and their interlace as a continuation of the tradition of tree-trunk coffin burials found throughout the 'Germanic world of the north' (p. 101), aligning these pre-Christian timber coffins with the trunk of Yggdrasil. The suggestion, as with the stave churches and round churches, is that the funerary monument, as a lithicised tree, will protect the soul of the dead in the manner of both Yggdrasil and the Cross.

The fifth chapter focuses on 'The Trembling Tree of *The Dream of the Rood*', a work of Old English rather than Old Norse poetry, but this discussion is necessary in order to establish the ground for 'Yggdrasil and the Sequence of the Runes in the Elder Futhork' (Chapter Six), in so far as the earliest surviving form

of the *Dream* is inscribed in runes on the Ruthwell Cross. Here, Murphy follows Richard North (and others) in aligning the speaking tree of the Vercelli Book *Dream of the Rood*, found in an earlier form on the Ruthwell Cross, with Yggdrasil (pp. 142–43). Whilst there seem likely to have been English parallel(s) to this cosmic tree, this does assume rather than demonstrate an Anglo-Saxon pre-Christian Yggdrasil on the basis of later analogues, when contemporary beliefs are likely to have been more disparate. The discussion of the runes of the Elder Futhork, whose study Murphy declares to have been impeded by ‘an unnecessarily restricted, literal, and nonmythological notion of religious magic’ (p. 154), will not please all, whether or not these comments are valid. He argues that the sequence of the futhork is ‘rooted in the Germanic myth of the nature of the runes as staves seized by Woden as he hung from the tree Yggdrasil’ (p. 156). Elaborating on the ‘possible mythopoetic meaning of the rune arrangement’ (pp. 160–61), Murphy develops a reading in which Christ ‘must have been seen by the runemaster who created the futhork as a parallel to the hanged god, Woden’ (pp. 170). Once again, he argues that form reflects origins, in this case that the ordering of the Germanic alphabet ultimately reveals its Mediterranean origins, and spells out that ‘Father and Christ were one long ago in giving mankind speaking staves as hereditary property’ (p. 185). The concluding section, ‘In Yuletide Carol and Evergreens’, consists of the chapter ‘Yggdrasil and the Christmas Tree’. Here the discussion focuses on the relationship between the pre-Christian and post-Conversion Yuletide festivals, with an emphasis on the role of evergreens in Christmas traditions of northern European origin, and the promised regeneration of life after the cold of winter.

There is much to recommend in *Tree of Salvation*, though it is a book in which some recent commentators on this topic do not appear.<sup>1</sup> This aside, it is full of interesting and nuanced reflections on the relationship between the Cross and the central sacred tree of the pagan Norse cosmos, and Murphy has a keen eye for the exegetical potential of literature, architecture and artefacts. He demonstrates a sensitivity to the nature of belief which transcends mundane and reductive approaches to the subject, and offers a reflective reconstruction of the manner in which the tree served as a central symbol for mediation and meditation in the medieval North. It is on these grounds that Murphy makes his case, and on these grounds that this book is successful.

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<sup>1</sup> E.g. Clive Tolley. *Shamanism in Norse Myth and Magic*. Folklore Fellows Communications 296, 297 (Helsinki, 2009); Anders Hultgård. ‘The Askar and Embla Myth in a Comparative Perspective’. In *Old Norse Religion in Long-Term Perspectives: Origins, Changes, and Interactions: An International Conference in Lund, Sweden, June 3–7, 2004*. Ed. Anders Andrén, Kristina Jennbert and Catharina Raudvere (Lund, 2006), 58–62.

MAGIC AND KINGSHIP IN MEDIEVAL ICELAND. THE CONSTRUCTION OF A DISCOURSE OF POLITICAL RESISTANCE. By NICOLAS MEYLAN. *Studies in Viking and Medieval Scandinavia* 3. *Brepols*. Turnhout, 2014. 233 pp. ISBN 978-2-503-55157-9.

Given our dependence on uncontrollable, thus always threatening, external conditions, humans' desire for the power to manipulate their physical and spiritual surroundings at will may be considered an anthropological constant. The etymology of 'magic', a core means to this end, hints at an early origin, and throughout the history of Western literature we find many sophisticated thoughts on the matter. Unsurprisingly, magic in the Middle Ages, commonly simplified to an age of faith and superstition, has aroused particular scholarly interest from the nineteenth century onwards, the result being a plethora of publications.

In the context of this virtually unmanageable amount of academic writing, the historian of religion Nicolas Meylan resorts to introducing his present study—an edited version of his 2010 dissertation at the University of Chicago Divinity School—via a critical overview of a selection of scholarly positions, from Jacob Grimm to the present day. Significantly, his conclusive review indicates how early studies still have an influence on current theories and methods regarding the scholarly exploration of the phenomenon of magic in the Middle Ages. Moreover, and irrespective of his affirmation that all these studies have proved to be productive in one way or another, Meylan lists a number of objections against currently favoured ways of approaching the subject. According to his argument, criticism is all the more justified within the narrower field of Old Norse studies, with scholars tending to resort to unilateral reasoning. Meylan claims that from our modern point of view magic is above all a textual phenomenon based upon an ambiguous terminology dating back to antiquity. Consequently, having touched upon general theoretical and methodological matters, he devotes a whole chapter to the lexemic examination of 'Old Norse magic'.

Chapters Three and Four elaborate on the nature of magic in Old Norse literature as a mean of both invective and power. Whereas the book's title suggests a special interest in kingship—'how to deal with kings' (p. 9)—, Meylan's focus is not only on a selection of Kings' Sagas but also on the Sagas of Icelanders, Eddic poetry, *Gylfaginning*, law texts and so forth. The examples taken into account are mostly well-known, thus Meylan's overall assessment at the end of Chapter Four that 'magic was a fluid category, which received its definition in the relationship between enunciator and utterance' (p. 121) is not groundbreaking. Yet he continues this thought by claiming that medieval Scandinavia was characterised by 'the confrontation of two ideal-typical discourses and their attendant agendas, one that saw magic used as a weapon against too successful social inferiors by representing them as alien and chaotic, and another that constructed magic as an instrument that endowed its object with an aura of order-producing power' (p. 121). The fifth chapter, then, zooms in on this dialectical dimension via a close reading of passages mainly from the *Prose Edda* and *Egils saga Skalla-Grímssonar*, proposing that these texts operated a 'fundamental shift' on the 'definition of Icelanders' magic' (p. 158). Chapter

Six continues this supposed development by focusing on miracles and saints, with a special interest in *Jóns saga helga*. A brief conclusion summarises the preceding argument.

Meylan's book is a stylistically appealing read, somewhere between a general introduction to magic in Old Norse culture and an extensive literary case study. Seemingly with ease, Meylan paces across the field of Old Norse literature, demonstrating both a command of the overview and an eye for detail. The six main chapters are divided into a number of sub-chapters, which either provide background information regarding, for instance, politics in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Iceland, terminology, and a history of research, or close readings based on a variety of sources. By conflating these two kinds of scope, Meylan highlights both similarities and dissimilarities in the narrative treatment of magic in different texts, and thereby retraces aspects of the development of a 'discourse of magic' in the context of changing political circumstances.

Two criticisms, however, have to be made. To me, the main problem with Meylan's study is the lack of a sufficient definition of the frequently used buzz-word 'discourse'. Given that the whole thesis circles around a presupposed 'discourse of political resistance', I would have expected a careful elaboration of the concept's actual meaning in this context. To be sure, Meylan touches upon this question in the introduction, with his starting point being the observation that 'since the 1960s, different if converging approaches to this concept have been developed, often as reactions within various disciplines against ways of reading texts that emerged in the wake of structuralism' (p. 9). His subsequent listing of a number of canonical writings by, for example, Foucault and Bourdieu, however, hardly add to a deeper understanding of this complex construct and, despite his emphasis on the performative nature of discourse as 'an important shift in the analytical point of view' (p. 10), he does not place his study in a clear relation to this attribute either. Thus, his claim that the focus on 'discourses about other Icelanders whose acts are described with a discourse of magic' would allow for 'the analysis of magic as a dynamic, socially constructed, and historically determined practice' (p. 11) remains vague—although the subsequent examination goes on to compile a great many details.

My second complaint concerns a certain lack of interest in source criticism. As mentioned above, Meylan combines examples from various textual genres, thereby suggesting a wide-ranging argument; yet he does not show any significant interest in these sources' origins and specific nature, the result regularly being a rather superficial 'big picture'. This is all the more of a shortcoming because his final assessment that magic is 'a fundamentally discursive and protean category whose content could be adapted to fit with the wider political agenda of the text in which it was mobilized' (p. 198) is heavily reliant on presuppositions as to these texts' contexts. Thus Meylan's initial claim that his study aims to mobilise a range of sources 'for the mentalités current at the time of their redactions and reproduction' (p. 19) is realised only to a certain degree. For example, although he repeatedly refers to Snorri Sturluson, he refrains from taking up any position in the debate

surrounding Snorri's actual share in the *Prose Edda* and *Heimskringla*, not to speak of recently renewed discussions regarding the different versions of the *Edda*. As to the Kings' Sagas, to take another example, Meylan mentions *Fagrskinna* and *Morkinskinna* here and there, but a more systematic comparison of the different compilations might very well have added to his argument about political subtexts. Despite Meylan's initial accusation that current research on magic in Old Norse literature tends to be superficial, his own examination occasionally falls into the same trap by covering too broad a range of literary sources with too little regard for studies of individual texts.

That said, Meylan's monograph clearly has its merits. The author's conflation of textual evidence from a great number of sources ought to be a resource for subsequent scholarly debate on allegedly well-known matters. Meylan's study, combining a range of close readings with aspects of literary theory, must be considered a welcome narratological contribution to a debate that hitherto has mostly been dominated by (religio-)historical scholarship.

JAN ALEXANDER VAN NAHL

*Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum*

ERZÄHLEN IM MITTELALTERLICHEN SKANDINAVIEN II. Edited by ROBERT NEDOMA. *Wiener Studien zur Skandinavistik* 22. *Praesens*. Vienna, 2014. 209pp. ISBN 978-3-7069-0777-4.

This volume is the sequel to *Erzählen im mittelalterlichen Skandinavien*, ed. Robert Nedoma, Hermann Reichert and Günter Zimmermann (*Wiener Studien zur Skandinavistik* 3. *Praesens*. Vienna, 2000). As the editor states in his short preface, the eight contributors approach the topic from a wide perspective, broadening the term 'Erzählen' to 'jedem Aspekt von *narratio* im Altnordischen'. Most of the articles are concerned with saga literature, with the addition of one article on Eddic poetry and one on runic inscriptions.

Susanne Kramarz-Bein argues for a more conscious use of modern theory options in Old Norse studies and chooses two well-established approaches for her considerations of family history in *Karlamagnús saga*: literary anthropology and literary psychology. She focuses on the emotional relationship between Charlemagne and his chief paladin Roland, who is not only his nephew in the saga, as in continental epic versions, but also his incestuous son.

The following article by Hans Kuhn on *\*Andra saga* and *Andra rímur* discusses a *fornaldarsaga* that is known only indirectly through sixteenth- and nineteenth-century *rímur*. Kuhn does not consider the older *rímur*, but provides a synopsis of the younger version that stretches out over eleven printed pages. After reviewing genre aspects of legendary sagas and Sagas of Icelanders, Kuhn tries to position his saga in this discussion. Although he makes several highly interesting observations on the sophisticated development of meaningful objects and of characters in *\*Andra saga*, his findings are unfortunately discussed only briefly.

Hendrik Lambertus's article deals with the narrative function of magic in *riddarasögur*, examining passages from *Ála flekks saga*, *Viktors saga ok Blávus* and *Nitida saga*. He demonstrates very convincingly how magical elements and 'the other' ('das Fremde') are highly interwoven in this genre, and emphasises that magical elements work not only as markers of the other, but also as tools for alienating the familiar. Thus, he arrives at the conclusion that magic denotes the crossing of frontiers and should therefore be seen as a dynamic narrative device, which can for instance be used to estrange the hero from his familiar, courtly realm. This literary use of magic demonstrates the complexity and ambiguity of these sagas, whose structures are worthy of a thorough narrative analysis.

Egill Skalla-Grimsson's 'crisis management' facing the death of his son (*Egils saga*, ch. 78) is discussed by Marina Mundt, who builds on what she asserts to be the *communis opinio*: that *Sonatorrek* and its accompanying prose were composed by Snorri Sturluson. She argues that the lament of an elderly poet may be inspired by a similar episode in the Persian *Shahnama*, the 'Book of Kings'. Although major linguistic similarities are not to be expected, the constellation of grieving father—dead son—caring daughter in *Egils saga* seems to conform to the episode in the *Book of Kings*. Mundt claims that Snorri might have known the Iranian national epic on account of historical circumstances in the thirteenth century, but rightly admits that this consideration must remain speculative.

Editor Robert Nedoma presents a minute discussion of three terms used in Eddic poetry: *bláhvítr* (*Guðrúnarhvöt*, *Hamðismál*), *Ysia* (*Rígsþula*) and *ogur-/ógurstund* (*Völundarkviða*). His profound survey illustrates how valuable a detailed philological study of well-known texts can still be: these terms have generally been understood as 'blue-white/bluish white/blue and white' for *bláhvítr*, and 'the clamorous' ('die Lärmende') for *Ysia*, while several conflicting interpretations for *ogur-/ógurstund* have been proposed. Drawing on context and etymology, Nedoma convincingly argues for the following interpretations: 'shiny white' ('strahlend weiß'), 'the teeming' ('die Wimmelnde'), and 'time of terror' ('Schreckenszeit').

Andrea Rau and Markus Greulich examine the narrative and cultural constructions of masculinity in the Sagas of Icelanders, focusing on forms of physical and verbal violence in homosocial relations. Following the ideas of Carol J. Clover and Preben Meulengracht Sørensen, they argue that masculinity and honour are negotiated anew in every saga, most often in relation to other male characters. Introducing the concept of two constructions of masculinity, monologic (relating to other males) and dialogic (relating to female characters), they provide thoughtful readings of passages from *Laxdæla saga*, *Ólkofra saga*, *Hallfreðar saga vandræðaskálds* and *Fóstbræðra saga*. In addition, they emphasise the importance of other factors (e.g., different cultural conceptions of masculinity) and outline their thoughts concerning the arrangement of these texts and ideas in *Möðruvallabók*.

Michael Schulte's article originates in his chapter on 'Vikingtiden' in a new, four-volume *Norsk språkhistorie* edited by Agnete Nesse and Helge Sandøy (Novus, Oslo, 2016). In his essay he selects a group of twelve Norwegian runic inscriptions from the late Viking Age and asks whether they can be read as

historical narratives and, furthermore, whether some kind of Viking warrior ethos can be detected in their contents. All examples are accompanied by a discussion of established interpretations and a detailed linguistic analysis. Historical-narrative aspects can only be detected in three of the selected inscriptions, while in most instances pious, legal or genealogical contents predominate.

The final (and longest: 56 pages) essay is a contribution by Matthias Teichert, who guides his readers into the cabinet of horrors, discussing elements of horror fiction in Old Norse literature. Applying theories of the fantastic, the uncanny and the abject (most notably suggested by Tzvetan Todorov, Sigmund Freud and Julia Kristeva), he gives an insightful reading of various episodes involving monstrous creatures. He classifies these into the categories 'living dead', 'werewolves', 'artificial life', 'Doppelgänger', 'female demons' and 'dragons and (sea) monsters', suggesting a typology with regard to their narrative function. With reference to dark romanticism and modern horror fiction, Teichert singles out interesting thematic continuities and stresses the timeless narrative potential of these motifs. As his survey could only touch briefly upon this large corpus, one hopes that a more detailed exploration will soon follow.

Overall, this volume offers a heterogeneous range of essays, providing a cross-section of some current research trends in German-speaking Old Norse studies, with some articles providing insights into ongoing projects. The strict arrangement of the essays in alphabetical order by author emphasises the diverse nature of topics within the volume, which is highlighted furthermore by its non-uniform formal appearance. The volume concludes with a useful index of all primary sources.

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NEW FOCUS ON RETROSPECTIVE METHODS. RESUMING METHODOLOGICAL DISCUSSIONS. CASE STUDIES FROM NORTHERN EUROPE. Edited by ELDAR HEIDE and KAREN BEK-PEDERSEN. *FF Communications* 307. *Academia Scientiarum Fennica*. Helsinki, 2014. 230 pp. Black-and-white illustrations. ISBN 978-951-41-1093-1.

This volume forms an anthology of nine papers plus an introduction relating primarily to medieval Scandinavia, but also to an extent encompassing non-Germanic circum-Baltic areas. The basic thread is the use of later materials to enlighten earlier sources: in practice, this tends to involve the use of folklore materials, largely nineteenth-century, to illuminate written sources on medieval Scandinavia. Some treatments fall outside this, though, for example the discussion of the development of medieval field systems (Hans Antonson) or the use of medieval sources to illuminate the meaning of gestures on Migration-Age *guldgubber* (Rudolf Simek). There is relatively little discussion of the use of thirteenth-century materials to illuminate pre-Christian religion, though there is an emphasis (placed in particular by Terry Gunnell) on the fact that both medieval written sources and folklore sources are markedly post-Conversion products and should not be categorically separated.

The scope of the various articles varies considerably, from Simek's short and specific discussion of *goldgubber* gestures, to Frog's wide-ranging presentation of motifs related to the theft of the thunder god's instrument. Some, such as Jens Peter Schjødt's, deal more generally with the issues of using folklore material in discussing pre-Christian religion; Gunnell's is a useful and succinct presentation of what folklore is and how it should be used, but also presents a case study of grave-mound traditions. Daniel Sävborg discusses Scandinavian folk legends and later *Íslendingasögur*, showing how folk legends are more useful than earlier written sources in furthering our understanding of these sagas. Yelena Sesselja Helgadóttir discusses the development of medieval *pulur* into the rather different post-medieval *pulur*. Eldar Heide seeks to argue in favour of a linguistic-type model for semantic reconstruction of earlier understandings of words, and hence of their cultural contexts. Janne Saarikivi gives a basic, but useful, account of linguistic (and accompanying cultural) reconstruction.

The Introduction, and indeed the book's title, present the retrospective theme as part of an ongoing process. The editors note that the use of post-medieval materials to illuminate earlier sources tended to fall out of favour in the twentieth century, as these materials came to be viewed as hopelessly 'contaminated' by Christianity and other developments, but such use has recently been taken up again more enthusiastically. They argue, however, that there is a need to develop a more refined approach to using such materials than those used in the early twentieth century, and thus they seek to present a broad series of discussions and case studies in the volume. The publication, as noted, forms part of the active and developing Retrospective Methods Network, which publishes a regular newsletter with short articles. All this is to be applauded. What is less clear is whether there can be said to be any 'methodology' linking what is presented. Fortunately, discussion is mainly of 'methods' (though 'approaches' might be a more apt description of what is actually presented), and there is no attempt to force any one methodology. In reality, most of the discussion of methods emphasises that no one size fits all, and that each case has to be judged on its own merits—and this is as it should be. So 'retrospective methods' is really an umbrella term, which has its uses in bringing together many different approaches, with the prospect of scholarly cross-fertilisation taking place (which the Introduction notes as the aspiration of the volume). I would add, however, that the specifically chronological delimitation of retrospectivity only offers us one side of the coin: comparative work also tends to have a geographical or cultural aspect to it, with the chronological being but one part of a larger question: how we use material not derived from the site, in time and place, of a source to illuminate it. Perhaps another network could be formed with this in mind?

Overall the volume has much to offer, both the general discussion of the issues raised, and the more specific treatments of some of the Old Scandinavian topics addressed.

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THE ACADEMY OF ODIN. SELECTED PAPERS ON OLD NORSE LITERATURE. By LARS LÖNNROTH. *The Viking Collection* 19. University Press of Southern Denmark. Odense, 2011. 426 pp. ISBN 978-87-7674-589-9.

It is a pleasure to review Lars Lönnroth's *Selected Papers*, covering nearly forty years of their author's work, from 1965 to 2003. Some of them became classics in their time, others remain controversial, and all merit rereading. They are consistently written with clarity and wit, and are still capable of arousing that peculiar mix of assent and irritation which Professor Lönnroth intended: in short, they stimulate interest and argument.

The volume contains seventeen papers, divided rather arbitrarily into five groups. Under 'Origins', the author includes his important paper of 1965, 'European Sources of Icelandic Saga Writing'. Unfortunately or otherwise, he has much cut this major work. It was, as he admits, intentionally controversial at the time, and he no longer accepts, or at least has much modified, many of his earlier conclusions. But the bravado of the original work was needful, and it successfully stirred up a productive debate. We now have a much more nuanced understanding of the relationship between native and imported styles and content in the sagas, and if anything that makes them seem the more remarkable. This essay has become part of the history of the subject, and this reviewer would have wished to see it here in all its original vitality, even with Professor Lönnroth's later and appropriate caveats.

Two short papers in this section deal with problems of orality and literacy, and the supposed transition between them: 'Sponsors, Writers and Readers of Early Norse Literature' (1990–91) and 'The Transformation of Literary Genres in Iceland from Orality to Literacy' (2003). These reflect the rather brief period when 'Literacy' was a fashionable topic in medieval studies, and of course follow on from the ancient wars between Free-Prose and Book-Prose theorists. In the first, Professor Lönnroth takes up and much qualifies some of the earlier views expressed in 'European Sources', and in his 2011 postscript again extends and qualifies his discussion of 1990. Here the conflict is not so much between oral tradition and its written record as between aristocratic or clerical, and lower-status secular writing and performance of medieval Icelandic texts. Again the author is prepared to develop his originally rather strident opinions into much more subtle discussion. He may still over-emphasise the nature of 'aristocratic' and clerical performance and preservation. Medieval Icelanders even at their richest were still, by the standards of mainland Europe, peasant farmers; Icelandic monasteries were, at their best, small and poverty-stricken, and may not have been more than ordinary farms that happened to be inhabited by monks, a *familia Dei* rather than a family. So distinctions in Iceland between layman and cleric, 'aristocrat' and farmer, perhaps should not be considered so sharp. Similarly, any distinction between oral performance and written record is probably not very significant. As far as we can tell, sagas were performed orally to whoever would listen, and the written manuscript served partly as a much-abbreviated prompt-book, and partly as redaction, before or after the event, to suit and record the stylistic or interpretative preferences of the performer and his audience. Performance fed into manuscript

production, which was itself intended for performance. The saga texts themselves were both oral and literate, and remained so for many centuries, until the normalising authority of available printed editions.

The last essay in this section is a well-argued and useful presentation of the *topos* of the Noble Heathen (1969). Medieval Christian Icelanders were understandably reluctant to condemn their ancestors to eternal damnation, and one way of dealing with this problem was that of the pre-Christian Noble Heathen, a figure possessing only natural religion, as discussed in the *Prologue to Snorra Edda*, but capable of deducing and adhering to admirable ethical principles. He could in principle be redeemed from damnation, as the corresponding pre-Christian patriarchs and prophets of the Old Testament were released in the Harrowing of Hell. So figures from Iceland's pagan past were reburied in Christian churchyards, presumably with Christian funerary rites. Even Egill Skalla-Grímsson, perhaps, could be given hope by his Christian descendants.

Under 'Saga Rhetoric' there are three articles, 'Rhetorical Persuasion in the Sagas' (1969), 'Saga and Jarategn' (1999), and 'Dreams in the Sagas' (2002). The first of these argues against 'objectivity' in saga narrative, demonstrating the techniques whereby a saga audience may be directed to specific interpretation of its events and persons. It is entirely valid on its own terms, but in his Postscript the author notes distinctions put forward by some critics between 'author' and 'narratorial voice'. This terminology, perhaps, is less than useful, since the 'authors' of sagas are inaccessible to us, and the Sagas of Icelanders and Kings' Sagas at least rarely show an overt narratorial voice. However, there is a necessary distinction to be made between the surface presentation of a saga narrative, usually avoiding direct value-loading in its description of persons and events, and the expression of underlying ethical attitudes which can direct or provoke audience response. 'Saga and Jarategn' and 'Dreams in the Sagas' deal with prefiguring motifs, often in prophetic dreams, that indicate to an audience what may be going to happen. *Jarategn* in this context may not be an ideal term, since its usage in Norse is often religious, a 'sign' or even a miracle, denoting a person's religious status; dreams are rather more straightforward. Professor Lönnroth's discussions here are always sensible but somewhat laboured, and he does not discuss the obvious structural function of prefiguring: that of setting up narrative expectation, and so narrative tension until that expectation is fulfilled, maybe several hundred pages later.

Under the heading 'Structure and Ideology' there are three papers: 'Ideology and Structure in *Heimskringla*' (1976), 'Sverrir's Dreams' (2006) and 'Christianity, Revenge and Reconciliation in *Njáls saga*' (2008). The first of these, despite its all-encompassing title, deals with a single narrative about the relations of King Óláfr inn helgi Haraldsson of Norway with Óláfr the Swede. It shows convincingly and in detail how a relatively short tale is expanded and elaborated in *Heimskringla* to show the importance and value of mediating figures in royal conflict: counsellors, lawmen and farmers at legal assemblies. This is of course a *topos*, though it doubtless corresponds to some sort of historical 'reality': the *góðir menn* of the Norwegian king's council, analysed long since by Knut Helle (*Konge og gode*

*menn*, Oslo etc., 1972), the *gæðingar* of Orkney, and, earliest and most obviously, the *spakir menn* of Ari Þorgilsson's *Íslendingabók*, where the archetypal narrative of Þorgeirr Ljósvetningagoði demonstrates such mediation at the Conversion of Iceland. The article on the dreams of King Sverrir presents a close reading of the accounts of these dreams, showing for instance their underlying Biblical imagery. It does not, of course, prove that Sverrir was 'the Lord's anointed', but merely that he might have wished, at least intermittently, to present himself as such: the dreams are part of the characterisation of the figure within his saga. The article on *Njáls saga* shows how seamlessly Christian ideology is mapped onto the 'noble heathendom' of the pre-Conversion parts of the saga. Here it seems only necessary to note that, in a kingless society, the only available means for justice is feud. So when Christian ethics of good and evil are superimposed on the previous ethical system of honour and shame, feud may properly continue within Christian Iceland.

Under 'Edda and Saga as Oral Performance', Professor Lönnroth has selected four papers: '*Hjálmar's Death-Song* and the Delivery of Eddic Poetry' (1971), '*Iqrð fannz æva né upphiminn*: a Formulaic Analysis' (1981), 'The Double Scene of Arrow-Oddr's Drinking Contest' (1979) and 'Heroine in Grief: The Old Norse Development of a Germanic Theme' (2001). All these in their different ways deal with the application, or misapplication, of the oral-formulaic theory to Old Norse texts. As applied to literature of the ancient Germanic languages the oral-formulaic theory seems now to be an extinct or at least dormant volcano, and some of the studies that dealt with it now appear rather dated. Professor Lönnroth gives a well-judged comparison between *Hjálmar's Death-Song* and the lengthy dying speech of Beowulf in Old English, showing that the Norse poem has a relatively low number of phrases that could be considered formulae, and, interestingly, that these tend to cluster where the various texts of the poem, in *Heiðreks saga* and *Qrvar-Odds saga*, most vary. Unfortunately the Latin version preserved by Saxo Grammaticus is not discussed here. The choice of the *Death-Song* makes specific comparison with *Beowulf* easier, but introduces a further complexity. As Professor Lönnroth admits, the Norse poem is likely to be late, probably twelfth century, to judge from the possible presence of a romance motif. As he does not acknowledge, it may well therefore have been composed in writing. A written text would certainly have been composed for oral delivery, and perhaps recomposed in different versions for that purpose; it might even have been rerecorded in writing from an oral performance of a written text, passing in and out of the written record. Apparently oral variant readings do not preclude written transmission.

The paper dealing with the phrase *Iqrð fannz æva né upphiminn*, best known from *Völuspá*, provides a valuable analysis of a genuine formula preserved in a non-formulaic poetic tradition. Professor Lönnroth discusses its parallels in the Eddic poems *Þrymskviða*, *Vafþrúðnismál* and *Oddrúnargrátr*, in a Swedish runic inscription from Skarpåker, in the Old English poems *Andreas* and *Crist* and the Old English verse translation of the Psalms, and in the Old Saxon *Héliand* and the Old High German *Wessobrunner Gebet*. Some of these variants are rather removed from the central alliterative formula, but not unacceptably so. Professor Lönnroth argues persuasively that the contextual usage of this formula deals with

Creation or Destruction of the world, often in the context of wisdom demanded of a wise being; that is, that the formula was not inherited in isolation, but carried thematic significance with it. In his Postscript of 1981, he also cites two further instances noted and discussed by Gerd Wolfgang Weber, the Old English charm for unfruitful land, and an Old Danish runic inscription, and generously quotes Weber's subtle development of his own argument.

The following paper, dealing with Arrow-Oddr's drinking contest in Chapter 27 of *Qrvar-Odds saga*, employs the notion of the 'double scene': one of performance, one of depicted narrative. This runs the risk of vacuity, because it can be applied to almost any experience of narrative. Even Professor Lönnroth's book counts as a sort of performance, as he addresses his reader, over and above its content. The concept comes into its own, however, when performance itself is depicted within a text, and the relationship between content and depicted performance is admirably analysed.

The final article here discusses the 'Heroine in Grief', elegiac poetry set in the mouth of a woman, usually lamenting the death of a hero. Obvious instances of 'woman's lamentation' occur in Old English and, in Norse, are largely centred on the figure of Guðrún Gjúkadóttir in the various *Guðrúnarkviður* of the *Elder Edda*. This has been a matter of scholarly contention, some arguing that it is of ancient, Germanic origin, and some that it is a fairly late development, under Christian (religious) influence. Professor Lönnroth describes and discusses this debate in some detail, concluding that, at least in the case of *Guðrúnarkviða I*, neither position is strictly tenable, and that these poems represent reworkings of older motifs and terminology within the new frameworks of romantic love and of the Marian lamentation which culminated in the *Stabat mater*. The *hapax legomenon tresk*, (*Gkv I 16:4*), if it is an Old French loan-word as Professor Lönnroth follows Gering in believing, would confirm at least probable late reworking within this poem. This etymology seems now to be generally rejected, and certainly the *-sk* is difficult to derive from any Romance origin other than by sound-substitution from OFr *tresce*, medieval Latin *tricia / trecia*. Such sound-substitutions certainly occurred in England, where Norse settlers substituted *sk* for an English sound or sounds now written as <sh>, e.g. *Skipton* for 'sheep-town'. Alternative etymologies, however, seem even less plausible. Professor Lönnroth's *via media* in this heated debate may well be the best way forward.

The last section in this volume, 'Reception and Adaptation', contains three papers: 'The Riddles of the Rök Stone: A Structural Approach' (1977), 'The Academy of Odin: Grundtvig's Political Instrumentalization of Old Norse Mythology' (1988) and 'The Nordic Sublime: The Romantic Rediscovery of Icelandic Myth and Poetry' (1995). The first of these, a lengthy attempt to interpret the runic inscription on the infamous Rök Stone (pp. 279–356), fits into no category within this volume. Professor Lönnroth is not a paid-up member of the Guild of Runologists, and this paper was, as he laments, largely ignored. From a runological point of view, this neglect was largely justified: in terms of that discipline, much of this paper either repeats the work of others, omits necessary context and discussion or is in detail unacceptable. This is unfortunate, because although the attempt to

divide the text of the inscription into some sort of literary structure may be rather implausible, the discussion of literary parallels is valuable. Professor Lönnroth's discussion of the poetic form *greppaminni* 'mindfulness of poets' is particularly noteworthy. The form usually employs a pattern of questions with answers, usually in multiples of four. The questions concern specialised knowledge, often involving kennings. Although he does not cite it, there is even a related example attributed to Bragi hinn gamli (*Snorra Edda: Skáldskaparmál*, ed. A. Faulkes (1998), pp. 83–84). The application of this to the Rök inscription is, as Professor Lönnroth admits, inexact, but the riddling tendencies of the Rök runesmith are at least partly illuminated thereby.

The article on Grundtvig's politicisation of Norse mythology, from which the volume rather inappropriately derives its title, is a striking example of an early attempt to use Nordic mythology in education to inspire nationalist fervour in Scandinavia. This remains distasteful, even disturbing, for a present-day reader, several generations after World War II, but it is a reminder that as early as the mid-nineteenth century, a revered figure such as N. F. S. Grundtvig was using this material for nationalist, and his successors for militarist, even military purposes. Meanwhile, the final article on 'The Nordic Sublime' briefly recharts familiar waters: the romantic rediscovery of Norse literature, particularly poetry, culminating in the operas of Richard Wagner. The volume ends with a large and useful bibliography.

This rather mechanical progress through Professor Lönnroth's selected essays has at least the merit of showing his remarkable range of interest, and his ability to contribute to many aspects of our subject. It is frequently still possible to give assent to his past work, but even when one disagrees, the intellectual stimulus of that disagreement is immense, and not infrequently given impetus by his own critique of his earlier views. The volume is extremely accurately printed and is exemplary in presentation. It stands as a monument to a remarkable scholar.

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MYTHS, LEGENDS, AND HEROES. ESSAYS ON OLD NORSE AND OLD ENGLISH LITERATURE IN HONOUR OF JOHN MCKINNELL. Edited by DANIEL ANLEZARK. *Toronto Old Norse-Icelandic Series 5*. University of Toronto Press. Toronto, 2011. viii + 274 pp. ISBN 978-0-8020-9947-1.

Daniel Anlezark's purpose in editing the Festschrift *Myths, Legends, and Heroes: Essays on Old Norse and Old English Literature in Honour of John McKinnell* is to acknowledge McKinnell's contribution to research in the myths, legends and storytelling traditions of northwest Europe in the early Middle Ages—Old Norse and Old English in particular—by assembling new contributions that take as a starting point McKinnell's focus on encounters with the 'other' (p. 3). Indicating the collection's success is its list of contributors, a dozen of the top scholars in the

two fields; their contributions, furthermore, are characteristic of their best work. The collection, mirroring the career of the scholar whose work it celebrates, is slightly weighted towards Old Norse, and is arranged in four sections: 'Transforming Paganism', 'Using Poetry', 'Literary Histories' and 'Motifs and Themes'.

Judith Jesch's article on Norse gods in England and the Isle of Man pursues the theme of paganism in transformation, seeking to 'penetrate beyond' accepted Christian uses of inherited pagan narratives to 'discover an authentic and practised paganism' (p. 12) in the tenth century, the period to which most English and Manx sculpture depicting Scandinavian myths has been assigned. The evidence marshalled is wide-ranging: sites, place-names and personal names, artefacts in metal and stone, texts, standing crosses and sculpture are all surveyed. Similarly wide-ranging is Rudolf Simek's examination of elves and exorcism in runic and other lead amulets across medieval Europe. Simek usefully surveys and discusses the material within the context of medieval popular religion, engaging with the most relevant scholarship on amulets (his former collaborator Klaus Düwel foremost) and on elves (Alaric Hall), ultimately hypothesising in light of the evidence that inscribed incantations in lead amulets are intended to combat fever. Dealing, like Jesch, with pagan material filtered through Christian understanding of the world, Margaret Clunies Ross closes the first section with an article tracing what we can know of how the Old Norse cosmos might have been visualised, focusing especially on the heavily classically-influenced diagrammatic representations of later antiquarians, beginning with Finnur Magnússon's highly influential diagram in his 1821–23 *Edda* translation and commentary.

The area in which Professor McKinnell's research has been perhaps most influential is Eddic poetry. Opening the section on 'Using Poetry', John Lindow's allusively titled essay 'Meeting the Other' expands on ideas pursued by McKinnell in *Meeting the Other in Norse Myth and Legend* (Brewer, 2005). Applying McKinnell's interpretive framework and terminology, Lindow analyses cross-gender encounters between representatives of the world of gods and men and the Other World in two complementary *þættir* about visions, *Kumlbúa þáttir* and *Draumr Þorsteins Síðu-Hallssonar*. Alison Finlay's essay investigates how *Vafþrúðnismál* provides a mythic model for the head-wagering story told of several poets, most famously Egill Skalla-Grímsson. Ranging furthest from the direct use of poetry, Rory McTurk interprets Snorri's *Edda* as Menippean satire, first defining the form with reference to a number of scholars—from Mikhail Bakhtin to Howard Weinbrot via Northrop Frye and others—and applying the concept to *Snorra Edda*, evaluating the possibility that Snorri knew about Menippean satire and discussing its possible targets and purposes.

'Literary Histories' begins with David Ashurst's analysis of the alterations in the Old Norse–Icelandic translation of 1 Maccabees in *Gyðinga saga* that 'exhibit coherent though complex attitudes towards political and ecclesiastical questions' important to thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Icelanders and Norwegians (p. 134). In the first essay in the book explicitly focusing on Old English, Helen Damico proposes that, in addition to adapting and transmitting mythology and legend, the *Beowulf* poet 'may also have imaginately reinterpreted and transformed what we

may consider chief contemporary events into poetic form' (p. 150), especially in the poem's second fitt, 'Grendel's Reign of Terror'. Damico discusses how Danish attacks on England in the early eleventh century may be reflected in the wording, narrative focus and characterisation in that part of *Beowulf*.

Carolyne Larrington begins the 'Motifs and Themes' section by following McKinnell's lead in applying psychoanalytical and psychological theory (under-utilised in Old Norse scholarship, as Larrington points out) to Eddic poems. She argues that the heroic poems are organised and ordered to explore systematically 'sibling and affinal relationships in a gender and power politics which puts the interests of the clan group above consideration of individual happiness and personal honour' (p. 170). Joyce Hill's article traces the origins of the episode in *Morkinskinna* of Sigurðr Jónsalafari improbably burning walnuts in preparation for an imperial feast to a wider international tradition, identifying how *Morkinskinna*'s treatment of the motif uniquely reconceptualises it as a test and placing it within a series of prestige-building anecdotes. Maria Elena Ruggerini similarly places a literary episode within an existing tradition: she proposes as the possible origins of Christ's 'riding' into hell (a *hapax legomenon oþridan*) in the Anglo-Saxon poem known as *The Descent into Hell* the widespread 'liturgy of entrance', the Palm Sunday liturgies and processions dramatising Christ's arrival in Jerusalem. Daniel Anlezark closes the collection by examining how *Beowulf*'s marvellous swimming feats contribute to his characterisation, emphasising the hero's special relationship with the sea; Anlezark draws some striking narrative and linguistic parallels between *Beowulf* and the Old English dialogue poem *Solomon and Saturn II*, in which is attested another swimming hero, named Wulf.

In the sphere of early medieval scholarship in English, the relationship between the disciplines of Old Norse and Old English can feel uncertain, perhaps even uneasy. We wonder if it is proper to teach Old Norse in 'English' departments; whether when discussing either of the two literatures we are right to expect of our listeners (or ourselves) in-depth knowledge of the other; whether the terms 'Old Norse' and 'Old English' invite a misguided perception of proximity in subjects for which the alternative names 'early Scandinavian', 'Old Norse-Icelandic', and 'Anglo-Saxon' are available; and whether important discoveries about the characteristics of one of the two literatures really tell us much about the other. In short: do the subjects belong together?

Though *Myths, Legends, and Heroes* cannot and does not attempt a definitive answer, it does assert the validity of considering Old Norse and Old English together. The encompassing of both fields is appropriate in a collection dedicated to Professor McKinnell, the breadth of whose further medieval interests—Middle English and Scots literature, and especially medieval and Early Modern English drama—could prompt the question why contributions were not also invited in these areas. Anlezark's collection achieves a level of focus between the extremes of an earlier *Festschrift* designed broadly enough to include essays from each of the areas of McKinnell's scholarship, *Studi Anglo-norreni in onore di John S. McKinnell*, edited by Maria Elena Ruggerini with Veronke Szöke (Cagliari, 2009), and a collection narrowing the focus to only one particular area, the recent reissue

of a dozen of McKinnell's own essays on Eddic poetry *Essays on Eddic Poetry* (Toronto, 2014) (reviewed in *Saga-Book* XXXIX, 118–19).

The book is handsomely mounted and supplemented by useful features such as the black-and-white plates printed throughout Clunies Ross's article on images of Old Norse cosmology, a short list of standard abbreviations at the beginning of the volume and a comprehensive bibliography at the end. Though the depth of an index is always a matter of editorial judgment, the three-page index that closes the volume, though adequate, could be more extensive. It may be thought surprising, for example, that though Joyce Hill devotes four pages to analysing an episode related in more than one source concerning Duke Robert I of Normandy, Robert does not appear in the index. The book's typographical errors are minor and few, mostly limited to non-English names. Examples include 'Priðranda þátrr' for 'Þiðranda þátrr' (p. 78), 'Geirstðarálfr' for 'Geirstaðaalfr' (p. 87, elsewhere always spelled correctly) and 'Asmundar' for 'Ásmundar' (p. 230). One other oddity about the book is that the dedicatee's name does not appear on either the book jacket or the spine, where only a shortened title is printed.

These minor drawbacks notwithstanding, *Myths, Legends, and Heroes* presents a dozen valuable contributions to the fields of Old Norse and Old English studies and must be regarded as essential reading for students and scholars of either discipline interested in the myths, legends and heroes of the North. That the book celebrates the many already essential contributions to these subjects by our teacher and colleague John McKinnell is an added bonus.

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EDDUKVÆÐI I–II. Edited by JÓNAS KRISTJÁNSSON and VÉSTEINN ÓLASON. *Íslenzk fornrit. Hið íslenska fornritafélag*. Reykjavík, 2014. 469 + 466 pp. Colour plates. ISBN 978-9979-893-36-3 and 978-9979893-37-0.

The *Íslenzk fornrit* edition of *Eddukvæði* has been anticipated by the international scholarly community with both great enthusiasm and curiosity, as it represents not only a significant milestone in the venerable series, but also the first unnumbered volume, heralding the beginning of the second part of the series. All volumes published previously (twenty-nine out of a planned thirty-five) have belonged to a numbered series of editions of sagas pertaining in some way to the history of Iceland between the time of the settlement and the period in which the sagas were composed. This two-volume edition is the first of the second part of the series, originally planned to include a selection of significant Icelandic texts from the huge and varied corpus of other medieval genres. The evolving treatment of this body of material by the *Íslenzk fornrit* series is discussed by Jóhannes Nordal in his Preface to this edition.

The particular challenges facing editors Jónas Kristjánsson and Vésteinn Ólason are signalled from the outset by the question with which Vésteinn Ólason opens his

Foreword: ‘Hvað eru eddukvæði?’ The *Poetic Edda* is a nebulous and not altogether comfortable conflation of a particular manuscript anthology (GKS 2365 4to, widely referred to simply as the Codex Regius) and a genre of Old Norse poetry, codified by a tradition of scholarly practice and popular reception. This edition follows established practice in including a number of poems preserved outside GKS 2365 4to but felt to be closely related in terms of verse-form, style and subject matter. *Baldrsdraumar*, *Rígsþula*, *Hyndluljóð* and *Grottasöngur* are predictable choices, so frequently associated with the Codex Regius poems that they are included in most modern editions and translations of the *Poetic Edda*. *Grógaldur*, *Fjolsvinnsmál* and *Hljóðskviða* are less conventional, but equally defensible inclusions by the same criteria, and it is very welcome to possess at last such an accessible modern edition of these poems. The editors are also very up-front about the more debatable and subjective decisions regarding which poems to exclude. The inclusion of *Hljóðskviða*, for example, raises the possibility of considering other incomplete, or more or less prosimetric, sequences (not least from *Hervarar saga ok Heiðreks*). Though it would be desirable in some ways, the practical obstacles to an expanded selection of Eddic verse that includes fragments, *lausavísur* and quotations are obvious and understandable.

Similarly, the division of the two volumes of the edition into *goðakvæði* and *hetjukvæði* is defensible for an edition of the Codex Regius, which itself arguably arranges the poems along these lines, but problematic as a signal of generic categorisation of Eddic poetry more widely; hence the allocation of the extra-Regius poems *Grottasöngur* to volume I and *Grógaldur* and *Fjolsvinnsmál* to volume II is logical, but does not necessarily reflect medieval taxonomies. At the same time, the division also proves helpful in structuring the introduction. Discussion of the heroic poems in the second volume in groups rather than individually is necessary and productive, and one of the most valuable scholarly contributions of this edition is undoubtedly Vésteinn Ólason’s excellent elaboration of his previously published views on the textual genesis of the Nibelungen cycle.

The other poems are introduced individually with a variable format that is appropriate and effective. This reflects the diverse origins of the individual poems and the unique critical concerns surrounding each one, as well as the nature of Eddic scholarship, which has traditionally treated the poems individually or in small groups. The focus is fittingly on textual questions such as dating, form and transmission, although the literary features of the poems and aspects of their content and interpretation are also commented upon. As Vésteinn Ólason himself notes, a comprehensive account of the scholarship would be both impossible and out of keeping with the aims of the edition and the interests of its target audience. Instead the introduction concisely presents accepted current opinion with selected references, including to more expansive commentaries such as the *Kommentar zu den Liedern der Edda* (ed. Klaus von See et al., Heidelberg, 1997–2012). One of the most impressive feats of this edition is how well it caters to its heterogeneous audience, including both non-specialist Icelanders as well as the cohort of international students and scholars that the editors (no doubt rightly) anticipate will form the largest group of readers. The notes to the text provide the necessary

support to explain the language and indicate contended readings without becoming distracting: no mean feat.

The editions themselves are of the highest standard, presenting a careful text that takes into account scholarly findings in the years following the last published version of the standard edition by Gustav Neckel (rev. Hans Kuhn, 1983) and avoids speculative readings. As the Foreword wryly observes, there is a long tradition of highly interventionist editions of these poems and the editors resolve not to emend ‘nema þar sem augljóst virðist að þeir hafi aflagast’ [unless it is obvious the texts have been garbled in transmission] (p. 18). This is, of course, a subjective process, and individual readings could and doubtless will be debated. Among the major ways in which this edition improves on its widely used predecessors are the decision to edit three separate versions of *Völuspá*, and the general practice throughout of maintaining the order of stanzas as they appear in the manuscripts. The resultant text is both more accurate and more readable.

Spelling is normalised in accordance with the principles of the series, with the result that it differs from the manuscript orthography, and does not attempt to recreate the original language of the poems. While this limits the edition’s usefulness to philologists, it is a necessary concession to its popular and student audience. The design, layout and general production values of the volumes themselves are extremely impressive, with high-resolution, colour-plate images beautifully illustrating manuscripts of all of the poems included. No single edition of any group of medieval texts can cater to all possible users, and this is especially true of a body of material as formidably complex as the *Eddukvæði*. Yet this pair of volumes now represents the best all-round edition. It is an extremely valuable addition to scholarship on the subject and another testament to the learning of the late Jónas Kristjánsson (d. 7 June 2014), which will be celebrated as part of his tremendous legacy. It deserves a place on the shelf of all those interested in Old Norse literature and especially the *Eddukvæði*, which will be read with unprecedented pleasure in this edition.

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GESTA DANORUM. THE HISTORY OF THE DANES. By SAXO GRAMMATICUS. Edited by KARSTEN FRIIS-JENSEN. Translated by PETER FISHER. *Oxford University Press*. Oxford, 2015.

Saxo’s *Gesta Danorum*, composed in the decades around 1200, counts as one of the indisputable literary masterpieces of the medieval North. Nevertheless, it has had to wait until 2015 for a complete English translation. There is all the more reason to celebrate this splendid achievement by Peter Fisher since the translation is accompanied by a facing-page, updated critical text and an introduction by the leading Saxo scholar of the last four decades, the late Karsten Friis-Jensen (d. 2012). With all its paratextual material, this two-volume edition and translation

runs to more than 1800 pages of dense, systematic scholarship, of which about 770 give a creative, rich and precise English rendition of this monumental and demanding chronicle.

Saxo scholarship and translations have suffered from the modern partitioning of the text into a legendary part (books 1–9) and a historical part (books 10–16, covering the ninth century to 1185)—although Saxo worked very hard to compose a unified literary and historical monument. This unity attracted more attention in the 1970s and 1980s, not least in Friis-Jensen's scholarship, and this has finally given rise to a continuous English translation. Saxo's Latin is notoriously highly stylised and strictly modelled on a few *Leitautoren* (in particular Valerius Maximus, Curtius Rufus, Justinus and Martianus Capella), and the translation of both the earlier and the later books by the same hand obviously benefits from a deep knowledge of Saxo's language, acquired through an intense study of the whole work in collaboration with Friis-Jensen. Peter Fisher's translation can be perused as an extended reading experience as well as an elucidation of particular passages scholars might be interested in for all the different fields for which Saxo provides unique material: Old Norse mythology, history of religion, literary and cultural history of the North and of Europe, Danish, Nordic and imperial history, ecclesiastical history, medieval Latin linguistics, the reception of the classics, onomastics, narratology, archaeology, gender and value studies, social and economic history.

*Gesta Danorum* has something to offer for many different tastes and interests: intricate Horatian moralistic poems, the epic casting of the destruction of Lejre, novelistic pieces about Hamlet, Erik the Eloquent, Starkath, the star-crossed lovers Hagbarth and Signe, tales of the longlived magician Odin, and more. In the later books eyewitness reports from the original patron and informant of the work, archbishop Absalon (d. 1201) stand out: his escape with Valdemar (later the Great) from the Blood Feast of Roskilde, the destruction of the Wends' idol Svantevith, as well as Saxo's complex crafting of the portrait of King Sven Grathe, turning from friend to foe of the Valdemarian network. These famous episodes are now eminently readable in Peter Fisher's rendition, but they are only the tip of the iceberg; this new, complete translation will no doubt be instrumental in opening up more extensive parts of the work for twenty-first-century international readers and scholarship. The translation is a cornucopia of high-register and poetic language, reflecting the original very well, while at the same time allowing for the narrative flow one expects in a modern language unable to handle complex subordination and long periods as Latin does. Often Peter Fisher has managed to copy the alliterative qualities of the original as well as the less formal register of some of the verbal exchanges. To the present reviewer it also seems that he has hit on a balanced compromise between modernising and explaining the text on the one hand, and reflecting the concepts and mindset of the author on the other—even when that seems outlandish and verges on the incomprehensible.

The Latin text is essentially the same as that published by Friis-Jensen in 2005 in a similar two-volume format with a complete modern Danish translation by Peter Zeeberg (Gad, Copenhagen). Our knowledge of *Gesta Danorum* is dependent for ninety-nine percent of the text on the Paris edition of 1514 by the Danish

humanist Christiern Pedersen (indicated by 'A' in this edition); the medieval manuscript of the chronicle which he, with some difficulty, had obtained as the exemplar has since disappeared—and so have all other medieval copies except for some scattered leaves from a couple of thirteenth-century manuscripts. Given the fact that the printed Paris text is a high-quality work, one should presume that the philological task today was a fairly straightforward affair. But owing to a significant indirect textual tradition, the special register of Saxo's Latin and the interventionist character of nineteenth- and twentieth-century textual criticism, this is not so. Friis-Jensen's work is conservative in the sense that it has cleaned up layers of emendations (especially from the much-criticised last edition of 1931) and, in many instances, returned to the text transmitted in A. However, Friis-Jensen's edition is the first to take into account systematically the early-sixteenth-century chronicles by Albert Krantz, which paraphrase or quote substantial parts of Saxo based on a manuscript other than the exemplar of A. This edition is also the first to use computer concordances of Saxo and of his textual models. Moreover, medieval Latin is much better documented today than in 1931 through masses of databases and lexicographical work, including the crucial Saxo dictionary by Franz Blatt, which appeared in 1957 as Volume 2 of the 1931 edition, while having to question many of the choices made in Volume 1. What appeared to earlier philologists to be errors calling for emendation can now be established as standard medieval Latin or, at least, as Saxonian Latin. A curious instance of the latter is seen in the echoes of Valerius Maximus which we do not find in modern editions or as part of Roman Latin at all, but which, according to Friis-Jensen's research, are documented in the Valerius text that Saxo probably had access to. This does not mean that the whole text is now plain sailing. But the exemplary critical apparatus lists all variations from A and warns us when sharp minds like Stephanus, Müller, Velschow, Knabe, Gertz, Madvig, Svennung, Weibull, A. Olrik, J. Olrik, Kinch and Friis-Jensen himself have had reason to be on the alert; it also highlights conjectures, which are carefully weighed and supplemented by Friis-Jensen himself. In one instance only, the 2015 text improves on the 2005 edition, owing to the editor's rediscovery of an early publication (1627) by the later Saxo scholar and editor Stephanus (1644). It is comforting to note that almost all of his early suggestions were made independently by later philologists, but less comforting of course that a large number of nineteenth- and twentieth-century conjectures have now been relegated to the apparatus in favour of the original reading of A or of the indirect tradition.

There are other more tangible bonuses in this edition when compared to that of 2005. Friis-Jensen has extended his 2005 introduction, which focused on textual criticism, to include sections on the historical and literary contexts, as well as structure and important literary themes, the author and the subsequent influence of the text. It is also worth noting that Friis-Jensen made a strong case for the completion of *Gesta Danorum* just after 1208 in an important article from 2012 written after the introduction, in which he was more cautious (referring to the time frame 1208–19). Otherwise, the wonderfully precise introduction represents the high quality scholars have come to expect from Friis-Jensen's careful and

methodical approach. One might sometimes wish he had shed a ‘probably’—as in identifying Saxo as a canon of Lund and in other matters which his own scholarship has established beyond reasonable doubt.

The edition and translation is also furnished with modest, but extremely helpful notes. They mention important parallel references to persons and places, but also signal issues of particular thematic, structural or source-related interest. Other welcome additions are the genealogies and maps at the beginning of both volumes, which provide easy guidance through the maze of persons and places. Other painstakingly assembled paratextual materials are the key to the many metres used by Saxo, the long register of parallel passages, the index of allusions and quotations and the general index (which is a highly useful research tool because it includes themes like ‘murder’, ‘lies’, ‘love’, ‘exile’, ‘marriage’, ‘magic’ and many more). Finally, the bibliography is much more extensive than in the Danish edition of 2005, and has, of course, been updated.

The complex page layout and typography have mostly been handled well. One might be baffled by the frequent and somewhat disturbing asterisks within the text. The explanation is hiding in a parenthesis in the introduction (p. lxxviii): they refer to phrasings which Saxo has recognisably lifted out of his Roman models (there is of course a large grey area here, as Saxo’s language in general was formed by intensive study of certain authors). They do not indicate the extent of the borrowing, but only that the long register of parallels at the end of Volume 2 should be consulted. This seems to be a compromise between having a separate apparatus of parallels at the bottom of the page (as in the 1931 edition) and giving no indication at all (as in the 2005 edition). The solution makes sense, but is typographically somewhat intrusive.

As in other OMT editions the leading (the space between lines) in the Latin text varies from page to page so that it keeps pace with the translation. This can be argued for, but what is worse is that hyphenation of the Latin text has been used much too sparingly, resulting in clumsy spacing between words (see p. 530 and many other examples). The reason might actually be that no Latin hyphenation programme or expertise was at hand, as can be seen in a number of unfortunate cases, apparently following a standard for English (?) and sometimes militating against Latin morphology: *estuar-iis* (p. 10), *confoder-etur* (p. 308), *existimar-ent* (p. 712), *auctor-itate* (p. 720), *immer-entium* (p. 914), *uider-entur* (p. 1244), *syncer-itatis* (p. 1404) etc. One would expect better from a prestigious and costly series of Latin texts (the much cheaper 2005 edition is perfect in this respect).

The present reviewer has come across the following minor errors:

- On the left flaps the blurb mistakenly says ‘1285’ for ‘1185’.
- p. 109, note 7: ‘8th to 19th cc.’ should be ‘8th to 9th cc.’.
- p. 296: ‘... mala percipitur. aquis frangeris. . .’. Two Latin words have unfortunately fallen out from the main text, which should read: ‘... mala percipitur. Quod si aquis frangeris . . .’.
- p. 1480, note 27: The cross-reference ‘(see xiv. 28. 16, with n. 258)’ should be ‘(see xiv. 28. 16, with n. 188)’.

— p. 1669: ‘... brudstykke af et haandskrift af Saxo Grammaticus: Udgivet ...’ should be ‘... Brudstykke af et Haandskrift af Saxo Grammaticus: Udgivet ...’.

— p. 1671: ‘Den norske-isländske skjaldedigtning’ should be ‘Den norsk-isländske skjaldedigtning’.

The present work is a landmark in Saxo studies for many reasons, not least that the marvellous English translation will undoubtedly give rise to a new epoch of international Saxo scholarship. Given the cost and monumentality of this two-volume work, it would make sense if Peter Fisher’s gift to readers eventually became available on its own in a one-volume paperback, moving the target from scholarship to a wider readership. Meanwhile, the value of the present book of course remains unassailed for the twenty-first century and beyond.

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5. References should be given in the form illustrated by the following examples:

— Other death omens of ill-luck are shared by Scandinavian, Orcadian and Gaelic tradition (cf. Almqvist 1974–76, 24, 29–30, 32–33).

— Anne Holtsmark (1939, 78) and others have already drawn attention to this fact.

— Ninth-century Irish brooches have recently been the subject of two studies by the present author (1972; 1973–74), and the bossed penannular brooches have been fully catalogued by O. S. Johansen (1973).

— This is clear from the following sentence: *iðraðist Bolli þegar verksins ok lýsti vígi á hendi sér* (*Laxdæla saga* 1934, 154).

— It is stated quite plainly in *Flateyjarbok* (1860–68, I 419): *hann tok land j Syrlækiarosi*.

— There is every reason to think that this interpretation is correct (cf. *Heilagra manna sǫgur*, II 107–08).

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